

The Core Marketing Concept: The Foundation of a Consumer-Oriented Business Strategy

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Abstract. This research is motivated by the demands of global competition in the healthcare sector, which places consumers at the center of business strategy, where the success of hospitals is determined not only by the quality of medical services but also by their ability to respond dynamically to patient needs. The purpose of this study is to examine theories and previous research on the core marketing concept and to explore the role of consumer orientation as the foundation of a sustainable business strategy. The method used is qualitative research with a literature study design through an in-depth review of books, scientific journals, and relevant literature selected purposively based on theme, credibility, and currency. The findings indicate that the core marketing concept significantly contributes to understanding consumer needs, wants, and demands, while also driving innovation, loyalty, and organizational competitiveness. The integration of consumer orientation into business strategies has been proven to foster sustainability, as it links organizational goal achievement with added value for consumers. The implications of this research emphasize that the application of the core marketing concept is not only theoretically relevant but also practical as a foundation for formulating business strategies that are responsive to market changes and oriented toward long-term competitive advantage.

Keywords: Business Strategy; Competitive Advantage; Consumer Orientation; Core Marketing; Health Services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies in the era of global competition face complex markets, where success is determined not only by product quality but also by the ability to respond to consumer needs (Kevira Eris Andini et al., 2024). The core marketing concept places consumers at the center of business activities, requiring strategies to be oriented toward customer satisfaction. Marketing success depends on selecting and implementing strategies that align with market changes. Therefore, studying the core marketing concept is essential as a basis for understanding consumer orientation as the foundation of business success (Atik Nurngaeni, 2021).

In marketing literature, customer orientation has long been regarded as one of the most effective strategies for enhancing company performance. Balakrishnan's theory, cited in Craven (2003), emphasizes that companies focusing on customer orientation while also considering competitor dynamics are better positioned to improve their competitiveness. The main dimensions of this orientation include customization, basic market orientation, and competitive benchmarking (Balakrishnan et al., 2012). Through customization, companies can

design products and services relevant to the unique needs of customers, even promoting the concept of mass customization that allows for large-scale yet personalized product delivery (Amstrong & Kotler, 2002; Krajewski et al., 2007). Similarly, Kotler (2006) highlights five marketing orientations production, product, sales, marketing, and societal marketing which evolutionarily demonstrate a shift from mere production toward the creation of sustainable value.

Empirical studies also indicate a strong correlation between customer orientation, innovation, and business performance. According to Racela & Thoumrungroje (2020), businesses that position consumers at the core of their strategy are capable of building long-term relationships that foster loyalty and generate new ideas for product development. This illustrates that the core marketing concept not only serves as the foundation of marketing strategy but also acts as a driver of innovation in meeting evolving consumer expectations. In other words, customer orientation forms the basis for business sustainability through continuous innovation and adaptation to market needs.

Nevertheless, previous research has tended to focus on classical marketing concepts as outlined by Kotler needs, wants, demands, value, satisfaction, exchange, and markets. Excessive emphasis on these classical aspects often overlooks the relevance of contemporary marketing practices, which place greater emphasis on consumer engagement in the value creation process. Studies by Suherly et al. in (Liliyan, 2020; Methasari et al., 2018) highlight performance measurement in terms of sales growth and productivity but provide limited discussion on how consumer orientation can enhance healthcare service quality and patient experience comprehensively. This indicates a research gap in linking the core marketing concept with consumer orientation in the context of hospital management.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to comprehensively connect classical marketing theory with contemporary consumer-oriented practices. Rather than solely discussing performance measurement from a sales perspective, this study emphasizes that the essence of business success lies in a deep understanding of consumers. Thus, this research addresses previous gaps by proposing that the core marketing concept is not merely a conceptual framework but a relevant and applicable foundation for formulating business strategies responsive to market dynamics.

The urgency of this study is further underscored by rapid advances in medical technology, healthcare digitalization, and rising patient expectations for fast, safe, and personalized services. Customer orientation is no longer limited to fulfilling basic needs but also requires proactive responses from hospitals to create distinctive value that is difficult for competitors to replicate (Sidiq & Astutik, 2017). Therefore, applying the core

marketing concept becomes a key strategy in building hospital competitiveness in the modern healthcare era.

In addition to delivering long-term value, customer orientation within the core marketing concept enables the integration of hospital business interests with social needs, such as improving patients' quality of life, service safety, and cost transparency. Patient loyalty fostered through positive experiences strengthens the hospital's position while supporting operational sustainability (Syah et al., 2023). Hence, implementing the core marketing concept with a focus on consumer orientation can be regarded as a holistic strategy encompassing profitability, innovation, and sustainability.

Referring to the above discussion, this study seeks to address two main questions: why is the core marketing concept important in business strategy, and how can this concept serve as a foundation for formulating consumer-oriented strategies? The objective of this research is to examine relevant theories and prior studies on the core marketing concept and explore the role of consumer orientation as the basis of successful business strategies. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute theoretically to marketing knowledge and provide practical implications for companies in formulating consumer-focused strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Concept

The marketing concept is one of the vital functions within a company that focuses on meeting consumer needs and wants, rather than merely engaging in sales activities. Basu Swastha (1984) explains that marketing is a comprehensive system that includes planning, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods and services to satisfy both actual and potential consumers. In line with this, Kotler (1995) views marketing as both a social and managerial activity that enables individuals and groups to fulfill their needs and wants through the process of value creation and mutually beneficial exchange, making marketing essentially consumer-oriented.

Marketing Management

In the context of marketing, management is understood as a set of strategic activities beginning with systematic planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of marketing activities to achieve corporate objectives (Griffin & Ebert, 2006). Kotler & Keller (2009) state that marketing management is a combination of creative skills and scientific approaches used to identify target market segments and build relationships with customers through the creation, delivery, and communication of superior value. Thus, marketing management serves as a strategic instrument to maintain and grow the customer base.

Consumer Orientation

Consumer orientation is a corporate strategy that places customer needs and satisfaction as the highest priority. According to Narver & Slater (1990), customer orientation involves a deep understanding of consumers to create sustainable superior value. This is consistent with Tjiptono (2008), who emphasizes that consumer orientation fosters positive customer perceptions and creates long-term satisfaction. Ferdinand (2000) adds that companies with a focus on customer satisfaction tend to be responsive, whether through after-sales services or complaint handling, thereby building long-term competitive relationships.

Marketing Performance

Marketing performance is regarded as a key indicator of the success of corporate strategy, reflected in the market performance of products as well as the ability to retain and attract customers. Ferdinand (2000) states that marketing performance reflects the impact of implemented strategies, both from marketing and financial perspectives. Similarly, Hatani (2000) affirms that market orientation contributes significantly to improving company performance. Tjiptono (2008) further notes that although it is difficult to measure objectively, marketing performance can be evaluated through profitability, productivity, and the success of new products in the market.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a literature review design, examining theories and previous research findings related to the core marketing concept and consumer orientation (Sugiyono, 2017). The research population comprises academic literature, including books, scientific journals, and other written sources discussing consumer-oriented business strategies, while the sample is purposively selected based on thematic relevance, source credibility, and information currency. Data were collected through literature searches in academic databases and digital libraries, using a literature review guideline as an instrument to ensure consistency in the analysis process. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive techniques through the processes of identifying, elaborating, interpreting, and integrating various perspectives and findings from previous literature to provide an in-depth understanding of the core marketing concept as the foundation of consumer-oriented business strategies. The research model is based on the conceptual framework of marketing as a consumer-oriented business philosophy (Basu Swastha, 1984) and (Kotler, 2014) theory on achieving organizational goals through the company's ability to satisfy target market needs more effectively.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relevance of the Core Marketing Concept in Business Strategy

The core marketing concept serves as a fundamental foundation in business strategy, including hospital management. According to Philip Kotler, this concept begins with an understanding of consumers' needs, wants, and demands. Needs refer to basic requirements that must be fulfilled for patient well-being, such as safe and effective healthcare services. Wants, shaped by culture and individual preferences, determine the specific types of services sought, such as specialist care or certain medical technologies. Demands arise when patients possess both the willingness and ability to access these services. In the context of hospitals, understanding these three aspects allows management to design services that not only meet patients' basic needs but also align with their preferences and capabilities, thereby creating a more relevant and valuable patient experience.

The evolution of modern market orientation introduces an important dimension to hospital marketing strategies by emphasizing value creation through continuous interaction with consumers or patients. This approach places patients at the center of attention rather than merely focusing on medical products or services. Hospitals that effectively apply the core marketing concept concentrate on building long-term relationships, maintaining trust, and tailoring services based on patient feedback. Research indicates that hospitals that implement strong market orientation can significantly enhance their marketing strategies and overall performance, primarily through a deep understanding of patients' needs, expectations, and market competitors (Kamalia et al., 2016).

One advantage of the core marketing approach is its ability to position service quality as the primary product being marketed (Purcarea, 2019). In healthcare services, quality is the most crucial aspect that differentiates one hospital from another. Marketing strategies based solely on production or sales, which focus on quantity or sales techniques alone, are less competitive compared to strategies that prioritize added value through service quality and patient experience. The core marketing strategy enables hospitals to align their offerings with patients' actual needs while simultaneously building sustainable reputation and trust (Sari, 2020).

Practically, the application of the core marketing concept in hospital management is reflected in various strategies, such as investing in advanced medical technologies, providing continuous staff training, developing telehealth services, and engaging with the community. These initiatives not only enhance hospital performance in meeting market needs but also strengthen their strategic position in competition. For instance, Hermina Sukabumi Hospital implements the core marketing strategy by focusing on maternal and child care specialization,

successfully reinforcing its position as a leader in this field through a patient- and value-oriented approach (Hodijah, 2023).

In hospital management, the relevance of the core marketing concept is highly significant as it creates a balance between market orientation and competitive advantage. By understanding patients' needs and wants through this approach, hospitals can develop adaptive and sustainable business strategies. Consequently, hospitals become not only healthcare providers but also trusted partners in patients' health journeys, ultimately increasing patient satisfaction, loyalty, and business success (Purcarea, 2019). Supported by Kotler & Armstrong (2018), consumer orientation lies at the heart of the modern marketing concept, where all business activities are directed toward understanding and fulfilling customers' needs, wants, and expectations in a valuable and sustainable manner. In hospital management, this means every marketing strategy must be rooted in a deep understanding of patient experience as the focal point. This approach emphasizes not only the quality of medical care but also emotional aspects, comfort, and trust key determinants of patient loyalty.

The Relationship Between Consumer Orientation, Innovation, and Business Performance

Consumer orientation is a highly significant strategic element in driving innovation and business performance. Empirical research demonstrates that consumer orientation contributes substantially to innovation capability and customer loyalty, ultimately enhancing overall business performance (S. Saputra & Hendro, 2024). Consumer orientation enables companies, including hospitals in the context of healthcare management, to deeply understand customer needs and wants, which serves as the starting point for creating relevant product and service innovations (Dahmiri, 2022). By integrating a customer-oriented approach, business entities can strengthen operational performance and consistently maintain their competitive position in the market.

Furthermore, consumer orientation plays a role in generating innovations that not only meet current consumer demands but also build long-term loyalty. A study by Racela & Thoumrungroje (2020) explains that by focusing on customization strategies up to mass customization, companies can develop personalized products and services on a large scale, thereby strengthening relationships with customers. In this regard, market orientation and competitive benchmarking serve as key drivers of new ideas that are adaptive to market dynamics. This is highly relevant in hospital management, where adaptation to patient needs and the development of innovative healthcare services are essential to improve patient satisfaction and institutional sustainability.

Moreover, consumer orientation not only impacts short-term customer satisfaction but also directly influences business sustainability. Customer loyalty, built through continuous

product or service innovation that aligns with market needs, results in sustainable competitive advantages. Data from research on SMEs in Batam indicates that innovation capability derived from consumer orientation and technology has a strong mediating role in improving business performance (Saputra & Hendro, 2024). In other words, companies that prioritize customer perspectives in their innovation processes can survive in highly competitive and rapidly changing markets.

In the context of hospital management, a consumer-oriented approach is highly strategic for developing responsive and innovative healthcare services. Hospitals that implement consumer orientation can identify opportunities to improve service quality through innovations focused on patient experience, thereby increasing patient loyalty and institutional reputation. Innovation driven by a deep understanding of patients not only improves service quality but also enhances resource management efficiency, which directly improves hospital performance in the long term.

Through proper management, particularly in service industries such as healthcare, integrating consumer orientation into innovation strategies can generate strong competitive advantages and ensure business continuity. Research and literature indicate that well-applied customer orientation strategies can strengthen customer loyalty and enhance a company's competitiveness in dynamic markets (Purwokajati, 2022; Racela & Thoumrungroje, 2020; Saputra & Hendro, 2024).

Referring to Kotler & Armstrong (2018) theory of consumer orientation and the concept of marketing as a consumer-oriented business philosophy (Basu Swastha, 1984), it can be affirmed that business success, including in hospital management, depends on the ability to comprehensively understand customer needs, wants, and demands. This orientation drives the creation of relevant innovations, improves service quality, and strengthens customer loyalty, ultimately enhancing sustainable business performance. The integration of this approach serves not only as the foundation of marketing strategy but also as an operational framework for creating superior value that ensures long-term competitiveness amid evolving market dynamics.

Implications of the Core Marketing Concept on Business Strategy Sustainability

The application of the core marketing concept does not solely focus on short-term targets such as increasing sales and profitability but also emphasizes the importance of integrating business interests with long-term social needs. This aligns with the view that sustainable marketing must address the challenges of evolving times and the growing consumer awareness of social and environmental issues (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Strategies incorporating social value create a positive reputation and strong brand image, which subsequently become enduring competitive advantages. Literature shows that companies

adopting this principle can maintain long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders, thereby creating solid business sustainability (Mufidah et al., 2021; Saputra & Saggaff, 2024).

The core marketing concept also has implications for creating sustainable competitive advantages by delivering unique value that is difficult for competitors to replicate. This sustainability of competitive advantage is not only focused on product aspects but also on a company's ability to build strong relationships with consumers and adapt to market changes. Such advantages stem from the synergy of resources, capabilities, and intangible assets such as reputation and innovative leadership. Thus, the core marketing concept drives companies to develop dynamic and adaptive marketing strategies that enable them to maintain a superior position over the long term (Mufidah et al., 2021).

In facing technological disruption and rapid changes in consumer behavior, the core marketing concept remains relevant as a strategic foundation guiding companies to remain customer-centric and innovative. Companies that successfully integrate this concept can implement green and ethical marketing strategies that strengthen consumer trust and loyalty. For example, implementing green marketing strategies not only enhances brand image but also creates strong emotional connections with customers who are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability (Saputra & Saggaff, 2024). This consumer awareness creates added value that is difficult for competitors to imitate, thereby reinforcing the company's competitive position sustainably (Aaleya et al., 2021).

The success of a business strategy based on the core marketing concept is measured by the company's ability to build and maintain long-term relationships with consumers while creating sustainable added value. These relationships are not merely transactional but are built on trust and active customer engagement, contributing to loyalty and retention. Ethical marketing, as part of the core marketing concept, plays a significant role in building trust and customer engagement, ultimately supporting business continuity amid intense competition and changing market behavior (Aaleya et al., 2021).

In this regard, the core marketing concept has important strategic implications for the sustainability of business strategies. This concept integrates business interests with social needs, creates sustainable competitive advantages, and provides guidance for addressing technological disruption and changes in consumer behavior. The successful application of this concept is measured not only by financial outcomes but also by the company's ability to maintain strong relationships with customers and build added value that is difficult for competitors to replicate, ensuring long-term business sustainability (Aaleya et al., 2021; Mufidah et al., 2021; Saputra & Saggaff, 2024).

The application of the core marketing concept, as previously described, directly aligns with Kotler & Armstrong (2018) view of consumer orientation, which emphasizes that business success relies on a deep understanding of consumers' needs, wants, and demands as the basis for formulating marketing strategies. Basu Swastha (1984), further asserts that all marketing activities must be directed toward creating value and sustainable customer satisfaction. Thus, marketing strategy becomes not only a tool for achieving short-term objectives such as increasing sales but also a long-term guide for building strong relationships, creating social value, and addressing market and technological changes through a dynamic and adaptive approach.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the core marketing concept and consumer orientation play a highly significant role in the development of business strategies, particularly in the healthcare services sector such as hospitals. The core marketing concept enables hospitals to gain a deeper understanding of patients' needs, wants, and demands, allowing the implementation of strategies that deliver relevant added value and foster long-term relationships with patients. Meanwhile, consumer orientation drives the creation of continuous service innovations, strengthens patient loyalty, and enhances hospital competitiveness amid market dynamics and technological developments. The integration of these two approaches serves as a strategic foundation for creating sustainable competitive advantages and supporting hospital business success, not only from a financial perspective but also in terms of social, ethical, and sustainability aspects.

Recommendations include the need for further research using an empirical approach across various types of hospitals, both private and public, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of strategic variations and their impact on organizational performance. From a practical standpoint, hospital management is advised to adopt increasingly consumer-oriented marketing strategies through the utilization of health technologies, continuous patient feedback systems, and capacity building of human resources. Furthermore, the application of sustainable marketing principles should be prioritized to ensure that hospitals not only compete effectively but also maintain patient loyalty and institutional reputation in the long term.

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