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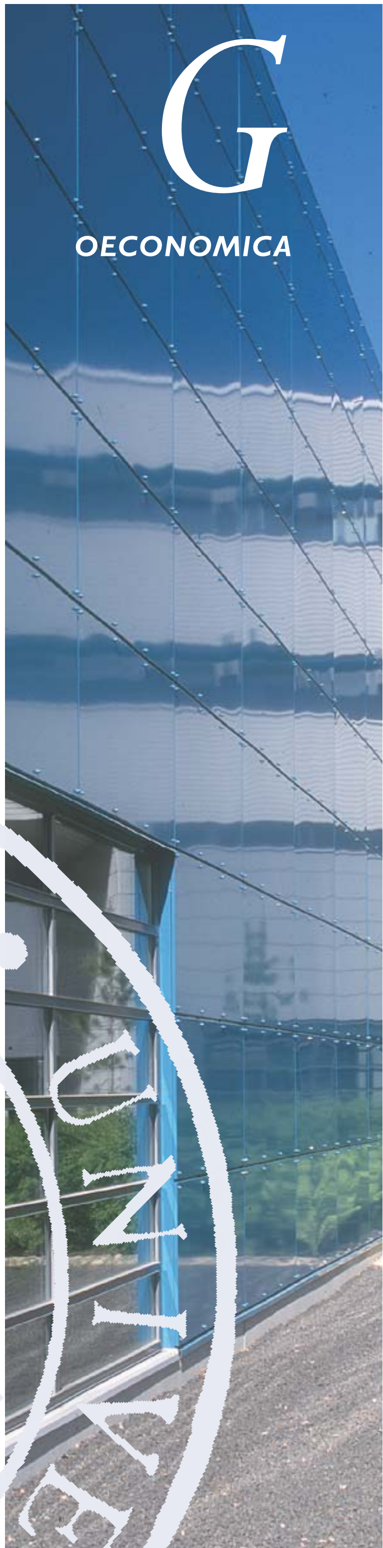

Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman

HOW MULTIPLE STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS AFFECT THE BRAND PERFORMANCE OF B2B SMES

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MUHAMMAD ANEES-UR-REHMAN

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Abstract

Scholars are interested in exploring strategies for better business-to-business (B2B) brand management because several strategic benefits of having a stronger B2B brand have been revealed. Contributing to this stream of research, this dissertation applies the concept of multiple strategic orientations for the purpose of improving B2B branding. The collective role of the brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations when used for improving brand equity, brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance are examined in the dissertation. Examining this phenomenon for B2B small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is an important and interesting topic because (1) SMEs are known for delineating multidimensional strategic orientation and (2) B2B SMEs have shown growth with the help of a stronger brand despite being less motivated to conduct branding activities and less resourceful when doing so. The results of this study could help to develop a more cohesive and coherent branding strategy for B2B SMEs.

The research question of the dissertation is addressed with the help of three articles. The first article sheds light on the theoretical framework of interaction between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. Findings of the first article led the selection of two perspectives on interactions for examination, which were subsequently examined in the second and third articles respectively. These two perspectives on interaction are strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction. The first article used the systematic literature review approach, while the second and third articles used regression analysis to examine the relationship between constructs by using the data collected from 250 Finnish B2B SMEs.

The results supported the presence of strategic hybrid orientation between brand and market orientations for the purpose of improving brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance. However, insignificant results were found which did not rule out the presence of moderating interaction between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations in improving brand equity. Further research studies are encouraged to advance the understanding of this approach of B2B branding in SMEs. The dissertation achieves novelty by being amongst the first to provide empirical evidence to support the concept of using multiple strategic orientations for B2B branding in SMEs. This study concludes by discussing the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of these results.

Keywords: brand awareness, brand credibility, brand equity, brand orientation, complementary moderating interaction, entrepreneurial orientation, financial performance, market orientation, strategic hybrid orientation

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Tiivistelmä

Vahvan brändin on todettu tuovan monia strategisia hyötyjä myös yritystenvälisillä (B2B) markkinoilla toimiville yrityksille. Sen vuoksi tutkijat ovat kiinnostuneita löytämään strategioita, joilla pyritään parempaan B2B-brändien johtamiseen. Tämä väitöskirja kontribuoi B2B-brändi -tutkimukseen soveltamalla strategisen moni-orientaation käsitettä. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan brändi-, markkina-, ja yrittäjyysorientaation yhteisroolia parannettaessa brändin arvoa, bränditietoisuutta, brändin uskottavuutta, sekä taloudellista tuloksellisuutta. Ilmiön tutkiminen erityisesti pienissä ja keskisuurissa B2B-yrityksissä on tärkeää, koska (1) pk-yritysten tiedetään käyttävän moniulotteisia strategisia orientaatioita ja (2) B2B pk-yritykset näyttävät kasvavan vahvan brändin avulla huolimatta mahdollisesti vähäisestä motivaatiostaan ja vähäisistä resursseistaan tehdä brändäämis-toimenpiteitä. Tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan hyödyntää kehitettäessä B2B pk-yritysten brändistrategiaa.

Tutkimuskysymykseen vastataan kolmen artikkelin avulla. Ensimmäinen artikkeli tarkastelee teoreettista taustaa brändi-, markkina-, ja yrittäjyysorientaatioiden interaktiolle eli yhdysvaikutukselle. Kyseisen artikkelin tulosten perusteella valittiin tarkasteluun kaksi näkökulmaa yhdysvaikutukseen. Nämä ovat hybridi interaktio ja moderoiva interaktio, joita käsitellään toisessa ja kolmannessa artikkelissa. Ensimmäisessä artikkelissa käytettiin systemaattisen kirjallisuusanalyysin menetelmää. Toisessa ja kolmannessa artikkelissa aineistona oli 250 suomalaisen B2B pk-yrityksen kyselyaineisto, jonka analyysissä hyödynnettiin regressioanalyysiä käsitteiden välisten suhteiden tarkasteluun.

Tulokset osoittavat brändi- ja markkinaorientaation muodostaman strategisen hybridi-orientaation parantavan bränditietoisuutta, brändin uskottavuutta sekä taloudellista tuloksellisuutta. Tulokset eivät kuitenkaan sulje pois moderoivaa interaktiota brändi-, markkina- ja yrittäjyysorientaation välillä brändin arvon lisäämiseksi. Väitöskirja on ensimmäisiä tutkimuksia, joissa empiirisesti tarkastellaan strategisen moni-orientoitumisen käsitettä B2B- brändeihin liittyen. Tulokset kannustavatkin jatkotutkimuksiin tästä näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen lopuksi keskustellaan tulosten teoreettisista kontribuutioista ja liikkeenjohdollisista päätelmistä.

Asiasanat: brändin arvo, brändin uskottavuus, brändiorientaatio, bränditietoisuus, markkinaorientaatio, moderoiva yhdysvaikutus, strateginen hybridi-orientaatio, taloudellinen tuloksellisuus, yrittäjyysorientaatio

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Thursday, 24 August 2017 Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman

Original publications

This dissertation consists of introductory chapters and the following research articles:

I Anees-ur-Rehman, M., Wong, H.Y., & Hossain, M. (2016). The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review. Journal of Brand Management, 23(6), 612-630.

II Anees-ur-Rehman, M., Saraniemi, S., Ulkuniemi, P., & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, P. (2017). The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 24(3), 585-606.

III Anees-ur-Rehman, M., & Johnston, W. (2017). How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs. Manuscript.

Contents

1 Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the collective role of multiple strategic orientations in regard to brand performance in business-to-business (B2B) small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Several studies have demonstrated the importance of developing organizational culture and behaviour based on the principle of having more than one strategic orientation because it benefits the firm (Hakala, 2011). It is believed that firms can generate performance-supporting practices to address contemporary business challenges by following the principles of multiple strategic orientations. While quite a few studies are available to show how multidimensional strategic posture of SMEs can improve their firm performance (e.g. M'zungu, Merrilees, & Miller, 2017), there is far less knowledge for same with regards to brand performance in B2B SMEs.

It is an important avenue of research because having a strong B2B brand can produce several strategic benefits for B2B firms (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). Therefore, learning about strategies which can strengthen a B2B brand is profoundly important. The collective role of the three strategic orientations (brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations) is evaluated in this dissertation. In doing so, this dissertation has adopted two theoretical perspectives to outline interaction between these orientations in regard to brand performance in B2B SMEs. The two perspectives of interaction are (1) strategic hybrid orientation and (2) moderating interaction. Three articles are appended to address the purpose of the dissertation. The background and importance of the dissertation are elaborated in the following.

1.1 Strategic orientation

A strategic orientation is a bundle of "principles that direct and influence the activities of a firm and generate the behaviours intended to ensure the viability and performance of the firm" (Hakala, 2011, p. 200). The strategic orientation of the firm provides crucial direction for strategic planning and execution, which enables firm to perform better. Three strategic orientations included in the dissertation have their strategic foci (see Table 1). A brand-oriented strategy considers a brand as a strategic asset of the firm and aims at the consistent delivery of brand values (Urde, 1999). A market-oriented strategy aims to cater for the needs of customers and strengthens the relationship with them (Horan, O'Dwyer, & Tiernan, 2011; O'Cass & Ngo, 2007b). An entrepreneurial-oriented strategy aims at exploiting business opportunities and matching them with the resources of the firm in order to gain a first-mover advantage (Eggers, O'Dwyer, Kraus, Vallaster, & Güldenberg, 2013; Reijonen, Hirvonen, Nagy, Laukkanen, & Gabrielsson, 2015).

Bowersox and Daugherty (1987) noted that firms' strategic planning and execution is rarely based on the principles of any one strategic orientation in an absolute form. Instead, firms' strategic planning and execution is governed by principles from multiple strategic orientations where the principles of one strategic orientation usually dominate. By collectively using the features of more than one strategic orientation firms can develop more effective solutions for complex business requirements and challenges. This notion has received support in several empirical studies. For example, market and entrepreneurial orientations have been found to collectively improve product innovation (Atuahene-Gima & Ko, 2001), and market and innovation orientations have been found to improve overall firm performance (Berthon, Mac Hulbert, & Pitt, 2004). Particularly when competitive intensity is high, as it is for SMEs, this approach allows a firm to devise a divergent strategy from that of their key rivals (Deshpandé, Grinstein, & Ofek, 2012).

In the context of SMEs, several studies have demonstrated that brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations can collectively improve firm performance. For example, the market and entrepreneurial orientations have improved business performance, customer value, profitability and product development (Baker & Sinkula, 2009; Frishammar & Åke Hörte, 2007; Nasution, Mavondo, Matanda, & Ndubisi, 2011); and brand orientation, when combined with market and entrepreneurial orientations, has led to business growth, profitability and market performance (Laukkanen, Tuominen, Reijonen, & Hirvonen, 2016; Reijonen, Laukkanen, Komppula, & Tuominen, 2012; Reijonen et al., 2015). Miles and Darroch (2008) also recommended integrating a brand-orientation strategy in SMEs, along with market, entrepreneurial and technological orientations. In the light of these findings, SMEs are likely to benefit from the simultaneous implementation of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations even if they are not beneficial for branding.

Hakala (2011) elaborated and classified theoretical frameworks which could govern the interaction between strategic orientations when two or more strategic orientations are adopted collectively. Based on the results of Hakala (2011) and the first article of this dissertation (Anees-ur-Rehman, Wong, & Hossain, 2016) two concepts of interaction between three orientations (brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations) were selected and later tested. These concepts of interaction are (1) strategic hybrid orientation and (2) moderating interaction.

These perspectives are elaborated on in Chapter 2 of the dissertation, but their brief descriptions are given below and provided in Table 1.

The *strategic hybrid orientation* proposes that brand- and market-oriented attributes can coexist in a hybrid form (Urde, Baumgarth, & Merrilees, 2013). It is believed that when the attributes of brand and market orientations are combined in hybrid form they could overcome the weaknesses of each other. In other words, the hybrid orientation provides the strategic strengths of both orientations while not being compromised by their weaknesses. *Moderating interaction* proposes that strategic orientations can moderate each other's effect on brand performance (Hakala, 2011). For example, the entrepreneurial orientation is found to positively moderate the positive effect of market orientation on firm performance in SMEs (Li, Zhao, Tan, & Liu, 2008). Similarly, it is expected that all three strategic orientations included in this dissertation would moderate each other's effect on brand performance.

Table 1. A brief overview of the constructs and concepts

Construct	Description/Definition
Entrepreneurial orientation (predictor variable)	This *"refers to the strategy-making processes that provide organizations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions"* (Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, & Frese, 2009, p. 762).
Market orientation (predictor variable)	This is *"the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise"* (Deshpande, Farley, & Webster, 1993, p. 27).
Brand orientation (predictor variable)	This is *"an approach in which the processes of the organization revolve around the creation, development, and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers with the aim of achieving lasting competitive advantages in the form of brands"* (Urde, 1999, p. 117).
Strategic hybrid orientation	The coexistence of brand- and market-oriented attributes in a hybrid form (Urde et al., 2013)
Moderating interaction	The interaction between strategic orientations where the effect of one orientation is moderated by the other orientation (Hakala, 2011)
Brand equity (dependent variable)	A brand which *"is capable of creating differentiation and preference in the minds of customers"* (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010, p. 1253)
Brand credibility (dependent variable)	This shows customers the ability and willingness of a brand to deliver its promises (Erdem & Swait, 2004)

Construct	Description/Definition
Brand awareness (dependent variable)	This is *"the ability of the decision-makers in organizational buying centers to recognize or recall a brand"* (Homburg, Klarmann, & Schmitt, 2010, p. 202)
Financial performance (dependent variable)	A reflection of the economic/monetary situation of the firm (Wong & Merrilees, 2008)

1.2 B2B brand management

The concept of branding has received significant attention and success in consumer markets (Keller, 1993; Schmitt, 2012; Wolfe, 1942). However, branding in the B2B sector has attracted scholars' attention and made significant progress within the last two decades (Glynn, 2012; Keranen, Piirainen, & Salminen, 2012; LaPlaca & Katrichis, 2009; Seyedghorban, Matanda, & LaPlaca, 2016).

B2B branding research suggests that even though B2B buyers use more rational parameters for purchase evaluation, they are inclined to consider the brand image of a supplier in order to reduce their purchase risk (Bendixen, Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004; Brown, Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston, 2011). The supplier's brand provides both functional and emotional values to B2B buyers in order to reduce their risk (Leek & Christodoulides, 2012). Consequently, a strong B2B brand can offer several strategic benefits for B2B suppliers, for example, customer loyalty, reduced risk, repeat purchases (Leischnig & Enke, 2011; Walley, Custance, Taylor, Lindgreen, & Hingley, 2007); they attract new customers, and effectively target and position the products for greater differentiation (Blombäck & Axelsson, 2007); they transfer knowledge of products and services to customers (Gupta, Melewar, & Bourlakis, 2010); and they command premium prices (Bendixen *et al.*, 2004; Persson, 2010). With such strategic benefits in mind, scholars have examined various antecedents, strategies and tactics for improving B2B brand performance (Glynn, 2012). To give the reader a brief background of this, some of these approaches are discussed in the following.

Early research studies in this research trajectory proposed that the marketing mix of the company has a fundamental role in improving their brand performance (Kim, Reid, Plank, & Dahlstrom, 1999; Van Riel, De Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005). Findings suggest that five elements of the marketing mix (product, place, people, promotion and price) could significantly influence customer's perception of brand and build brand equity (Van Riel et al., 2005). The more recent studies have tried to extend this basic concept of a marketing mix by looking into its individual elements.

For example, it has been argued that brand values should be well communicated in order to provide both functional and emotional satisfaction for B2B buyers (Elsäßer & Wirtz, 2017). To this end, certain B2B brand personalities (performance, sensation and credibility) have been identified as providing emotional and functional values for B2B buyers (Herbst & Merz, 2011). The salesperson–customer dyad interaction could be adapted to communicate emotional and functional capabilities of a brand in order to develop a stronger and more trustworthy relationship with customers (Lynch & De Chernatony, 2004; Lynch & De Chernatony, 2007). Also, the resellers and distribution partners are important in this context (Kim et al., 1999). Gupta et al., (2010) found that strengthening the relationship with resellers is important because it enable resellers to understand and spread brand-related information, resulting in positive brand evaluation by resellers and customers. Furthermore, Seggie, Kim and Cavusgil (2006) found that inter-firm system integration, IT alignment and a quick response from distribution partners can positively impact on brand equity.

Some scholars suggested that the role of strategic orientation in the firm should be examined more closely because functional and emotional values (which are beyond the scope of a marketing mix) largely depend on the strategic orientation of the firm (Glynn, 2012; Odoom, Narteh, & Boateng, 2017). By studying the role of strategic orientation, a better understanding can emerge about the principles that direct and influence the organizational activities and customer value proposition in regard to branding (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Van Riel et al., 2005). Regardless of the type of strategic orientation (as each strategic orientation has its own strategic focus and objectives), unambiguous strategic focus can help firm to keep clarity, consistency and continuity in the organizational processes, which are required for improving B2B brand performance (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2007).

All three of the selected strategic orientations (brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations) are dissimilar from each other, yet each has positive effect on B2B brand performance. *Brand orientation* has both direct and indirect positive effects on B2B brand performance (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Hirvonen, Laukkanen, & Salo, 2016; Zhang, Jiang, Shabbir, & Zhu, 2016). The *entrepreneurial orientation* has been found to have a direct positive effect on B2B brand performance while *market orientation* has been found to have an indirect positive effect on B2B brand performance (Lee, Park, Baek, & Lee, 2008; Reijonen et al., 2015). This dissertation uses the concept of interaction between strategic orientations to examine how these three strategic orientations can be used collectively for improving B2B brand performance. Because each orientation can significantly improve brand performance, it is interesting to learn their collective role as well.

This dissertation uses four concepts to measure the performance of a B2B brand. These are brand awareness, brand credibly, brand equity and financial performance. In contrast to any one performance dimension of a brand, we can learn about B2B brand performance in more detail by using these four concepts (Seyedghorban et al., 2016). Table 1 provides the brief description of these four concepts of brand performance.

1.3 Brand management in SMEs

SMEs manage their brand very differently than their large counterparts. The managers of SMEs have been found to hold a shallow concept of branding which is typically based on the logo, the product and the service or the technology sold (Spence & Essoussi, 2010). The investments of SMEs are typically more technology focused rather than brand focused (Ojasalo, Nätti, & Olkkonen, 2008). The marginal financial resources of SMEs also restrict their ability and willingness to pursue branding (Horan et al., 2011). They think that their survival depends upon the planning and execution of core business operations and that branding has limited usefulness (Centeno, Hart, & Dinnie, 2013). These findings can explain why their branding strategies are often less rigorous and experimental in nature (Centeno et al., 2013).

However, SMEs also aim for the growth and expansion of their business like any other commercial entity. Such business objectives can be achieved with the help of a stronger brand. Research shows that by overcoming the challenges of brand building SMEs have expanded their business, retained competitive advantage and increased financial return on investments (Agostini, Filippini, & Nosella, 2015; Berthon, Ewing, & Napoli, 2008; Eggers et al., 2013; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Laukkanen, Nagy, Hirvonen, Reijonen, & Pasanen, 2013; Reijonen et al., 2012). This suggests that branding is equally beneficial and important for SMEs (Odoom et al., 2017).

SMEs need to develop and retain heterogeneous attributes and a heterogeneous identity in order to distinguish their brand from the competition (Krake, 2005; Muhonen, Hirvonen, & Laukkanen, 2017; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Wong &

Merrilees, 2005). The authenticity of brand image can provide distinguishability they need (Beverland, 2009). Eggers et al., (2013) reported that the authentic brand image of an SME can increase the trust of the customer, with the consequence of business growth. Three attributes of an authentic brand are named: brand consistency, brand customer orientation and brand congruence (Eggers et al., 2013). Brand consistency is reflected through the consistent delivery of core brand values; brand customer orientation is based on the idea that brand values should be adapted to satisfy the needs of customers; and brand congruence is achieved when the employees of an SME relate with and support the entrepreneurial values of the firm.

These three attributes of authenticity are anchored in brand-oriented, market-oriented and entrepreneurial-oriented strategies respectively. This narrative is backed by empirical evidence. For example, the three strategic orientations have a direct positive effect on brand and firm performance in SMEs (Laukkanen et al., 2013). In the context of B2B SMEs, brand orientation (Hirvonen et al., 2016), entrepreneurial orientation (Reijonen et al., 2015) and market orientation (Lee et al., 2008; Merrilees, Rundle-Thiele, & Lye, 2011) have been recognized to provide better brand and firm performance outcomes. Although this highlights the importance of these three strategic orientations for branding in B2B SMEs, their collective role should also be examined, as argued by Odoom et al., (2017). The case for multiple strategic orientations is strong in SMEs because they are more flexible in simultaneously accommodating dissimilar strategic moves (due to different strategic orientations) compared to large firms (Spence & Essoussi, 2010).

1.4 Research question

So far, I have discussed that firms could do well based on multiple strategic orientations. By developing a business strategy on the principles of divergent but relevant strategic orientations, firms can optimize and improve organizational activities in order to compete in a competitive business environment. The empirical evidence to support this notion is well documented (Hakala, 2011). SMEs are no exception. Several studies validated this proposition for SMEs as well. In particular, the brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations can be used collectively to improve several performance dimensions of SMEs (Baker & Sinkula, 2009; Laukkanen et al., 2013; Nasution et al., 2011).

B2B branding literature has reported several strategic benefits of having a stronger B2B brand. These include commanding premium prices, a stronger buyer–seller relationship and reducing the buyer's risk. Hirvonen et al., (2016) presented empirical evidence to show that B2B SMEs have achieved high business growth due to having a stronger brand. These findings have highlighted the strategic importance and need for developing a B2B brand in SMEs. Therefore, researchers have explored various approaches to strengthening B2B brands, including the firm adopting a strategic orientation (Glynn, 2012).

Each of the brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations has positive effects on the brand performance of SMEs (Huang & Tsai, 2013; Laukkanen et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2008; Reijonen et al., 2015). Because all three orientations are positively related with brand performance, it raises the possibility of collectively developing these orientations for improved brand performance. With this approach, synergic or complementary interaction could be achieved to strengthen the branding process. Collectively, the three strategic orientations could develop the brand which is capable of materializing entrepreneurial opportunities, addressing the needs of customers and retaining its identity. However, their collective role for brand building in B2B SMEs has only been examined by a few studies (Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston, 2017; Anees-ur-Rehman, Saraniemi, Ulkuniemi, & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2017; M'zungu et al., 2017; Reijonen et al., 2015). Therefore, the role of multiple strategic orientations for brand performance in B2B SMEs is not yet fully understood. The research question of the dissertation is formulated as *How do multiple strategic orientations affect the brand performance of B2B SMEs?*

It is an important avenue of research because it draws our attention to a potentially very effective strategic approach to B2B branding. We can learn from this research study how these orientations can be used collectively. It would help us to understand the level(s) at which these orientations may interact with each other regarding improving brand performance. It would also tell us about the presence of any counterproductive interaction between these orientations. The context of Finnish B2B also makes this research interesting. Historically, Finnish SMEs are renowned for their entrepreneurial skills, which have accelerated their business growth (e.g. Soininen, Martikainen, Puumalainen, & Kyläheiko, 2012). However, the Finnish SMEs were thought to have weak skills for marketing. But recent doctoral dissertations show that Finnish SMEs are benefiting from marketing and branding strategies as well (Hirvonen, 2015; Reijonen, 2009). The findings of this dissertation are useful for laying out more precise guidelines for efficient and effective brand management.

1.5 Research strategy

The idea of using multiple strategic orientations is advocated on the assumption of synergic interaction between strategic orientations. Therefore, before the collective role of the three strategic orientations could be examined in regard to brand performance, it was necessary to specify the type of interaction which could govern their interrelationship of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. In this regard, Hakala's (2011) study is highly relevant. Hakala (2011) evaluated relevant literature on four orientations (market, entrepreneurial, technology and learning orientations) and he noted that interaction between two or more orientations can be explained in three different ways. First, his discussion explains the interaction at the levels of moderation, mediation and correlation. Second, his discussion explains the pattern and amount of each orientation required for optimal synergy. And third, his discussion revolves around the mechanism used to combine orientations.

Because Hakala (2011) did not include brand orientation in his analysis, how prior studies have viewed the complementary or synergic interaction of brand orientation with market and entrepreneurial orientations remains unknown. This issue is addressed in the first sub-question of the dissertation. The first sub-question is *How does brand orientation interact with market and entrepreneurial orientations?* The results of the first article (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2016) provides necessary information to answer the first sub-question of the dissertation. Based on the findings of the first article, two aspects of complementary interaction (strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction) between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations were identified. The findings of the first article and a detailed description of these two types of interactions are provided in the second and fourth chapters of the dissertation.

These two concepts of complementary interaction were then examined in the second and third articles. The second sub-question, and subsequently the second article, is as follows: *How is strategic hybrid orientation – constructed from brand and market orientation – related to the brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance of B2B SMEs?* The third sub-question, and subsequently the third article, is as follows: *How do brand orientation, market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (both directly and in interaction) affect the brand equity of B2B SMEs?* Research methodology of the dissertation is explained in the third chapter. Table 2 provides an overview of each article and the contribution of the primary author.

Table 2. A brief overview of the three articles

	Article I	Article II	Article III
Title	The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review	The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs	How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs
Sub-questions of the dissertation	How does brand orientation interact with market and entrepreneurial orientations?	How is strategic hybrid orientation – constructed from brand and market orientation – related to the brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance of B2B SMEs?	How do brand orientation, market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (both directly and in interaction) affect the brand equity of B2B SMEs?
Authors	Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman; Ho Yin Wong; Mokter Hossain	Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman; Saila Saraniemi; Pauliina Ulkuniemi; Pia Hurmelinna-Laukkanen	Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman; Wesley Johnston
Contribution of primary author	The primary author was responsible for several tasks including defining the scope of systematic literature review; searching for and collecting pertinent articles; extracting the required information from articles; data analysis; outlining future research recommendations; and writing.	The primary author performed all the major tasks. He contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection and analysis, and the writing of all sections.	The primary author was responsible for all the major tasks. He contributed in the conceptualization of the study, data collection and analysis, and the writing of all sections.

1.6 Positioning of the research

If a firm's strategic orientation has a multifaceted nature it allows the firm to attain a strategic posture which is hard to imitate and thus more effective (Deshpandé et al., 2012). This notion has received significant attention and empirical validation in management sciences (Hakala, 2011). However, the application of this approach for B2B brand building remains in its infancy (Reijonen et al., 2015). Therefore, this dissertation applies the concept of multiple strategic orientations from strategic management literature and aims to contribute to the theoretical discussion of B2B branding in SMEs. Strategic benefits attached with a stronger B2B brand call for effective strategies when brand building (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011; Seyedghorban et al., 2016). In this regard, this dissertation contributes to both practice and to the theoretical advancement of B2B branding literature.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

The rest of the dissertation has been structured in the following order. Chapter 2 provides the literature review of the constructs of the study. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology. Chapter 4 reviews the results of the three articles appended to this dissertation. Chapter 5 discusses the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and future research recommendations. Table 3 provides the breakdown of each chapter.

Table 3. The overall structure of the dissertation

Chapter		
Part I		
1	Introduction	
		Background; the research question and strategy of the dissertation.
2	Theoretical background	
		Entrepreneurial orientation; market orientation; brand orientation; strategic hybrid orientation; moderating interaction; brand awareness; brand credibility; brand equity; financial performance.
3	Research methodology	
		Ontological and epistemological perspectives; systematic literature review; empirical data collection and analysis.
4	The results from the articles	
		Article I: The progression of brand orientation literature Article II: The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance Article III: Direct and moderating interaction effects
5	Conclusion	
		Theoretical contribution; managerial implications; contributions; the limitations of the study; future research recommendations.
Part II		
	Original articles	
		Article I: The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review Article II: The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs Article III: How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs

This first chapter has provided the background and synopsis of the research. The next chapter will provide a more detailed theoretical description of all the constructs and concepts used in this study.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter provides theoretical background of the constructs and concepts used in the dissertation. First, pertinent literature on the three strategic orientations (brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations) is reviewed. Using a chronological order, the entrepreneurial orientation is discussed first, followed by market and brand orientations. Afterwards, four components of B2B brand performance (brand equity, brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance) are described. At the end of the chapter, the two perspectives of interaction (strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction) are explained.

In the dissertation, three strategic orientations are conceptualized as independent constructs while the four components of brand performance are taken as dependent constructs (see Table 4). It can be noted that the second and third articles use different dependent variables. This approach has two benefits. First, the exploratory nature of the second article enables us to examine the role of strategic hybrid orientation (a relatively new concept in branding) to improve the under-researched indicators of brand performance (brand awareness, brand equity and financial performance). Second, the confirmatory nature of statistical analysis used in the third article sheds light on the level of brand equity under the most common and empirically supported type of interaction in management sciences.

Table 4. The independent and dependent constructs in each article

	Article I	Article II	Article III
Title	The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review	The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs	How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs
Independent constructs	N/A	Brand and market orientations	Brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations
Dependent constructs	N/A	Brand awareness; brand credibility and financial performance	Brand equity
Type of interaction	N/A	Strategic hybrid orientation	Moderating interaction

2.1 Entrepreneurial orientation

A business environment never remains the same: it evolves and changes over time. New trends and market opportunities emerge while older practices gradually become obsolete. In the dynamic business environment, one way of creating value is by undertaking entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is a “new entry”, which simply means that firm searches for and targets new or untapped business opportunities, and the entrepreneurial orientation describes the process of how the new entry should be undertaken (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). An entrepreneurial orientation *“refers to the strategy-making processes that provide organizations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions”* (Rauch et al., 2009, p.762). The owner and employees of SMEs with an entrepreneurial mindset could implement this strategy at firm level. Therefore, when entrepreneurial orientation is implemented at the firm level it could nurture processes and activities that facilitate the act of entrepreneurship (Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999; Miller, 1983).

The strategic posture of entrepreneurship was first introduced by Mintzberg (1973) but the scholarly writings of Covin and Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) laid the foundation for the entrepreneurial orientation concept. Five characteristics of entrepreneurial orientation have been put forward. These are as follows: innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Wales, Gupta, & Mousa, 2013). However, three of the characteristics – innovation, proactiveness and risk taking – have been widely used to measure entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs (Covin & Slevin, 1989; Li et al., 2008; Wales et al., 2013).

Innovativeness reflects a firm’s tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes; *proactiveness* reflects the degree to which a firm maintains a forward-looking perspective by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities, and anticipating future problems and needs; and *risk taking* reflects the firm’s willingness and ability to accept the risk of investing resources into projects with high uncertainty (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996, pp. 139-149).

The review article of Wales et al., (2013) noted that prior research on entrepreneurial orientation has examined its effect on several outcomes of firm performance, but its effect on brand performance is far less researched. The studies of Reijonen et al., (2015) and Laukkanen et al., (2013) are among the recent studies that have examined and found a positive effect of entrepreneurial orientation on brand performance in SMEs, but Colton, Roth and Bearden (2010) found it to have an insignificant effect on brand strength. However, to my knowledge no study has reported a significant negative effect on brand.

The positive effect is possible because each characteristic of entrepreneurial orientation positively contributes to the brand development. This notion is based on Lumpkin and Dess's (1996) argument that the characteristics of entrepreneurial orientation are independent but complementary to each other and a firm does not need to equally emphasize these characteristics. Innovation has significant positive effect on brand performance because through innovation a firm can bring an innovative solution for its customers which would not have been possible if it had been solely dependent on customers' feedback (O'Cass & Ngo, 2007b; Viet Ngo & O'Cass, 2011). The proactive approach helps in creating a first-mover advantage, through which competition can be avoided and brand recognition can be established (Li, Huang, & Tsai, 2009; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). The risk-taking ability of the firm helps to absorb risk of product innovation, which is beneficial for the development of new brand names (Klink & Athaide, 2010).

2.2 Market orientation

In the beginning of the 20th century firms used to believe that their success lay in the expansion and improvement of the production processes (Dawson, 1969). However, with the gradual evolution in the business environment through the 20th century, the need was felt to move beyond the production-focused business philosophies and tactics (Levitt, 1960). The satisfaction of customer needs was becoming the must-have objective for businesses as their success increasingly depended on retaining profitable and satisfied customers (Day, 1994). Customers were becoming more empowered in their buying choices than before, thanks to lesser business barriers and an open world economy, which increasingly require the marketers to put more effort into attracting and satisfying high expectations of the customers.

The science of marketing started to take shape with the realization of the importance of customers and markets in the mid-20th century (Converse, 1945; Keith, 1960). Through this transition, however, some researchers viewed marketing as a process of the presentation of goods to the customers (Blois, 1980). But in the following years, several scholarly writings helped to not only clarify the concept of marketing and market orientation but also advocated its strategic role in business success (Deshpande et al., 1993; Grönroos, 1989; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Levitt, 1986; Lichtenthal & Wilson, 1992; Narver & Slater, 1990; Shapiro, 1988).

Market orientation is the implementation of marketing concepts (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). A market-oriented firm is keen to learn about customers and their needs, and accordingly, firm resources are organized to develop a value proposition for customers which is superior to that of their competitors. It is a market-driven or "outside-in" approach (Urde et al., 2013). Therefore, statements such as *"the customer is always right"* and *"everything for the customer"* reflect the approach of this paradigm (Baumgarth, Merrilees, & Urde, 2013). The performance of a market-oriented organization is often measured using parameters of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer lifetime value (Urde et al., 2013).

The market-oriented strategy has been conceptualized in cultural and behavioural perspectives. From the cultural perspective, it has been described as *"the organizational culture .... that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior performance for the business"* (Narver & Slater, 1990, p.21). From the behavioural perspective, it is *"the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it"* (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990, p.6). Both cultural and behavioural perspectives can be implemented separately in B2B firms (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005).

Customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination are three components of organizational culture in market-oriented strategy (Narver & Slater, 1990); whereas market intelligence, the dissemination of intelligence across departments and organization-wide responsiveness are three behaviours of market-oriented strategy (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Customer orientation, market intelligence and competitor orientation aim to gather information about buyers and competitors. In response to this information, the inter-functional coordination, dissemination of intelligence across departments and organization-wide responsiveness are responsible for producing superior value propositions for customers.

Collectively, the cultural and behavioural elements of market orientation target one objective – the satisfaction of customers. Customer orientation also aims to satisfy customers. As defined by Deshpande et al., (1993, p. 27), customer orientation provides *"the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise"*. Therefore, this study adopts the approach of Deshpande et al., (1993) who argued that market orientation and customer orientation are synonymous. This viewpoint particularly holds for B2B SMEs because competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination are less profound for them. That is, their smaller scale does not provide enough room for extensive inter-functional coordination (as might be needed in large organizations) and they usually avoid competition by occupying a niche business position and establishing a personal-level relationship with equally small B2B buyers.

Accordingly, the success of B2B SMEs largely depends on their ability to learn about the needs of customers and produce goods and services. In highly market-oriented small manufacturing firms *"the customer was the primary focus of discussion, such that understanding the customer and developing products and services based on the customer's needs were the center of concern"* (Martin, Martin, & Minnillo, 2009, p.100). Abundant empirical evidence exists to support this viewpoint as several studies have excluded the scale items of competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination based on statistical grounds in order to improve the scale measurement of market orientation (e.g. Jaakkola, Möller, Parvinen, Evanschitzky, & Mühlbacher, 2010; Laukkanen et al., 2013).

There is no shortage of literature which supports the positive influence of market orientation on several firm performance measures, including brand performance (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). The market-oriented strategy aims to align brand image according to the expectations of the customers (Urde et al., 2013). That is, the firm is primarily concerned with the customer's perception of a brand, and thus develops a brand image that will delight the customer at a psychological level (Schmitt, 2012). This approach of brand management has proved to be quite effective as a number of studies have reported the significant positive effect of market orientation on brand performance (Colton et al., 2010; Laukkanen et al., 2013; O'Cass & Ngo, 2007b).

2.3 Brand orientation

A brand-oriented strategy is an exclusive brand-focused strategy which was introduced more than two decades ago (Urde, 1994). It has been defined as *"an approach in which the processes of the organization revolve around the creation, development, and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers with the aim of achieving lasting competitive advantages in the form of brands"* (Urde, 1999, p. 117). It was noted in the case analysis that corporations had made a policy decision of viewing a brand as a strategic asset and had implemented an identity-driven branding process (Urde, 1999). These findings had challenged the long-established marketing and branding approach. The earlier concept of marketing was built on the notion that customer needs should unconditionally be incorporated in brand meaning and image (Baumgarth et al., 2013; Urde, 1999). This approach was merely a continuation of market-oriented strategy and lacks the intensity to initiate an explicit and thorough thought process to cater for the strategic importance of brand.

The strategic process of brand orientation begins by specifying an authentic, comprehensive, clear identity of a brand (often derived from corporate core values or mission statements) and then branding activities are adapted to reflect these brand values (Balmer, 2013; Muhonen et al., 2017; Urde et al., 2013). In other words, brand actions, brand promises and customer value propositions are not allowed to violate the preset and predefined boundary of brand purpose. This gives brand an identity – a meaning. Metaphorically speaking, a person's religious belief is sufficiently strong that they behave according to the doctrines of his or her religion (Otubanjo, Abimbola, & Amujo, 2010). With this approach, the target audience of a brand receives a consistent brand message every time and consequently recognizes and distinguishes it from the competition.

The brand-oriented strategy can be implemented at two primary levels: a cultural and a behavioural level. The cultural perspective encourages organizational culture to accept the strategic importance of a brand, while the behavioural perspective generates the necessary behaviours and actions intended to manage branding activities according to specified brand values. Both levels are independently relevant and effective for brand outcome (Bridson, Evans, Mavondo, & Minkiewicz, 2013; Hirvonen et al., 2016). However, in B2B firms the cultural level has been argued to precede the behavioural level (Baumgarth, 2010), but the brand-oriented culture of an organization alone can have a significant positive effect on B2B brand performance (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Huang & Tsai, 2013; Reijonen et al., 2015).

The brand-oriented strategy has been quite effective for improving the operations and several performance dimensions of firms in various contexts and circumstances (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2016). With regards to brand performance, results from both business and consumer markets tell the same story of its positive effect because this strategy brings high-order discipline and an explicit strategic focus for branding (e.g. Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2014; Zhang et al., 2016). The brand-oriented strategy is found to improve both brand and firm performance of B2B SMEs as well (Hirvonen et al., 2016; Reijonen et al., 2015).

2.4 B2B brand performances

Current literature has theorized and measured the performance of a B2B brand in a somewhat unidimensional fashion. For example, the concepts of brand equity and brand power have received far greater attention than other aspects of brand performance in B2B branding (Seyedghorban et al., 2016, p. 2672). Therefore, there is a need to use other components to fully understand the effect on brand strength. This dissertation has therefore used four components of B2B brand performance: brand awareness, brand credibility, brand equity and financial performance. These components of brand performance are explained in the following with respect to corporation/firm name because B2B buyers relate more strongly with the corporate name of B2B firms than they do with product names (Cretu & Brodie, 2007; Lai, Chiu, Yang, & Pai, 2010; Van Riel et al., 2005; Zaichkowsk, Parlee, & Hil, 2010).

2.4.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness in the B2B sector has been defined as *"the ability of the decision-makers in organizational buying centers to recognize or recall a brand"* (Homburg et al., 2010, p. 202). Brand awareness signals a credible brand image to the customer which reduces the risk and information cost for the B2B buyer and therefore plays a significant role in the market performance of a B2B supplier (Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006; Homburg et al., 2010; Seyedghorban et al., 2016). The members of the buying centre can recognize and remember a brand for a quite a long time (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). The brand knowledge and associated benefits of a brand are recalled when buyers evaluate purchase decisions. B2B buyers are prone to rely on their past experiences or peer-to-peer interaction when drawing up expectations and predicting outcomes for a suppliers' brand (Davis, Golicic, & Marquardt, 2008). Clearly, from the supplier's perspective, the goal here is to improve the perception (or remove any misperceptions) and understanding of brand meaning, a brand's values and its capabilities of delivering value propositions in order to tip the scales in its favour. However, the development of brand awareness may not be immediate. It requires consistent brand communication followed by the fulfilment of brand promises over a long period of time to influence the decisions of a B2B buyer (Yoon & Kijewski, 1996).

2.4.2 Brand equity

Brand equity is one the frequently used measures in both consumer and B2B branding literatures to examine brand strength. The concept of brand equity originated from consumer branding literature (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993), but several studies advocated its relevance for B2B sector as well (Kim et al., 1999; Seyedghorban et al., 2016; Van Riel et al., 2005). It has been described as *"the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand"* (Keller, 1993, p. 8). It also means that a high equity brand is capable of creating differentiation and preference in the minds of industrial customers (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010, p. 1253). With this concept, the aim is to understand the relationship between customer and brand. That is to say, a high equity brand is the one with which the customer has a strong relationship or is loyal to.

The requirements of B2B buyers are often very specific and quantifiable. For instance, B2B buyers know what are the desired product features, delivery terms, after sale services etc. Therefore, they usually follow a well-defined procedure for evaluating suppliers' offers against their specific requirements. This approach allows their behaviour to become more rational and less emotional, which enables them to purchase what is suitable for their requirements. However, this approach does not completely cover every contingency and risk associated with purchasing. In the B2B context, one of the primary objectives of a supplier's brand is to reduce the perceived risk for B2B buyers (Backhaus, Steiner, & Lügger, 2011). Therefore, the direct implication of brand equity would be to reduce risk and build customer loyalty (e.g. Van Riel et al., 2005).

B2B buyers are primarily uncertain as to whether or not the B2B supplier could fulfil the agreed terms and conditions. Therefore, B2B buyers consider the reputation of the supplier along with other quantifiable parameters, for example, price or delivery (Bendixen et al., 2004). Evidence from another study also suggests that B2B buyers tend to rely on the supplier's brand when their perceived risk is either low or high (Brown et al., 2011). B2B buyers positively review a brand when they are aware of its associated values, and they could eventually become brand loyal with successful brand experience over time. When it has an established brand a B2B firm can get premium prices, frequent modified rebuy and differential advantage (Bendixen et al., 2004; Davis, Golicic, & Marquardt, 2009; Persson, 2010; Zablah, Brown, & Donthu, 2010).

A number of antecedents have been examined to build B2B brand equity. A brand which can provide both functional and emotional values to customers would strengthen the brand–customer relationship and make the brand stronger (Herbst & Merz, 2011; Jensen & Klastrup, 2008; Van Riel et al., 2005). A well-balanced marketing mix (product, place, people, promotion and price) could satisfy the functional requirements of B2B buyers (Van Riel et al., 2005). Similarly, from an emotional perspective, competent sales personnel can provide hassle-free customer service which could establish a brand as trustworthy, professional and sincere – strengthening brand equity (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011; Biedenbach & Marell, 2010; McQuiston, 2004). Taken together, supplier competence and customer purchase value strongly impact on B2B brand equity (Han & Sung, 2008). In this regard, similarities in the brand personalities could also strengthen their strategic relationship and build brand equity (Campbell, Papania, Parent, & Cyr, 2010). Other antecedents of brand equity include corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Lai et al., 2010), the supplier's country of origin (Chen & Su, 2011) and brand-oriented strategy (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Zhang et al., 2016).

2.4.3 Brand credibility

A credible brand image performs two functions: it shows customers the ability and willingness of a brand to deliver its promises (Erdem & Swait 2004). Brand stability has been found to build customer loyalty and fetch premium prices in the B2B sector (Leischnig & Enke, 2011). According to Baek, Kim and Yu (2010) high brand credibility requires clarity in the brand's offering, consistency in delivering brand promises and the deployment of relevant and adequate resources. In turn, credible brand perception acts as a signal of stability, consistency and authenticity that reduces the perceived risk for the B2B buyer (Backhaus et al., 2011; Eggers et al., 2013; Leischnig & Enke, 2011; Seyedghorban et al., 2016). Put simply, by narrowing the gap between customers' brand expectations and the actual delivery of the promised brand values, the customer trusts the supplier and views it as more credible and less risky. As a consequence, stronger company brand credibility improves the likelihood of being selected by the buyer (Biong, 2013). Brand credibility is also an important dimension of B2B brand personality (Herbst & Merz, 2011). Seyedghorban et al., (2016) have recommended that future research studies examine ways to make B2B brands more credible because our current knowledge of how to do this is very limited.

2.4.4 Financial performance

The long-term survival of a commercial entity is not possible without accumulating adequate financial benefits. And because a strong B2B brand can obtain premium prices (Bendixen et al., 2004; Persson, 2010), B2B firms may able to achieve their financial targets by making their brand stronger. However, B2B firms were found to avoid brand-building strategy unless they were confident that brand-building investments would be financially rewarded (Lee et al., 2008; Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). The review article of Seyedghorban et al., (2016) highlights the deficiency of empirical studies examining the relationship between B2B branding and the financial performance of the firms.

B2B SMEs are particularly vulnerable because they have scarce financial resources. Therefore, B2B SMEs are highly reluctant to pursue branding strategy (Hirvonen et al., 2016; Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). Recent empirical findings do not help to clarify the situation as Hirvonen et al., (2016) found a small positive effect of brand performance on financial performance in B2B SMEs while Reijonen et al., (2015) found it had an insignificant effect. The dissertation measures financial performance by using the approach used by Wong and Merrilees (2008). They determined the financial performance of a firm on the basis of the growth rate in sales, market share, profitability and the overall financial outlook within the last 12 months from the time of assessment. This approach is suitable for capturing the overall financial situation of the firm, not just the premium prices or profitability.

In the first four subsections of this chapter the theoretical background of three strategic orientations and four components of brand performance were reviewed. The following subsections explain the concept of interaction between strategic orientations and elaborate on their significance for brand performance.

2.5 Synergic interaction between strategic orientations

The strategic orientation of a firm is one of the most widely researched areas in management, marketing and entrepreneurship scholarship. Some scholars argue that one strategic orientation could be inadequate or imperilled by limitations to achieving the desired performance outcome because firms face complex challenges. Therefore, multiple strategic orientations should be considered by the firms (Hakala, 2011; Reijonen et al., 2015; Rhee, Park, & Lee, 2010). A strategic posture of the firm developed under multiple strategic orientations would create a stronger competitive position and lead to better business performance outcomes (Hult, Hurley, & Knight, 2004).

Hakala (2011) reviewed the pertinent literature in order to understand the interrelationship between market, entrepreneurial, technology and learning orientations. Three different views – the sequence, alternative and complementary – exist in the literature regarding governing the interrelationship or interaction between strategic orientations (Hakala, 2011). The *sequence* approach examines how one strategic orientation develops or evolves into another strategic orientation. The *alternative* approach examines which strategic orientation is the best, depending on the current and future challenges faced by the organization at any given time. The *complementary* perspective aims to explore and examine the pattern in which several strategic orientations can be combined. Complementary interaction is the only interaction wherein two or more orientations can be used and studied collectively.

The complementary approach has been further divided into three discussions (Hakala, 2011). The first discussion adopts the concepts of correlation, moderation or mediation to explain the collective effect of strategic orientations on a given performance outcome. The second discussion addresses the amount (or pattern) of each strategic orientation which can be combined in a compatible configuration. The third discussion identifies the mechanisms enabling the combination of strategic orientations. All of these viewpoints are based on the notion that synergic interaction exists between the relevant strategic orientations and can be seen as *"the collection of performance-supporting practices"* (Hakala, 2011, p. 211).

Hakala (2011) did not, however, included brand orientation in his analysis. Hence, the interaction of brand orientation with market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation is identified on the basis of the results of Article I (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2016). The results helped to identify two perspectives on interaction (strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction). Strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction are examined in Articles II and III respectively (Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston, 2017; Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2017). These two perspectives are explained in the following.

2.5.1 Strategic orientations in hybrid form

Both brand and market orientations are relevant for brand building. However, Urde et al., (2013) argued that both orientations have some weaknesses, due to which they can be less effective for the desired brand outcome. Brand orientation can be focused on identity-driven branding to the extent that it overlooks the needs of customers, whereas market orientation gives such high emphasis to image-driven branding and customer needs that it could result in an undifferentiable brand image. Therefore, the concept of strategic hybrid orientation, constructed from brand- and market-oriented characteristics, was introduced in an attempt to overcome their weaknesses in brand building (Urde et al., 2013). Metaphorically, hybrid orientation is like a coin which has two opposite but integral sides. Collectively, brand- and market-oriented behaviours could synthesize a brand which knows how to address the needs of customers but also wants to maintain its identity and individuality in the marketplace – an approach which could develop a stronger brand.

By using the two-by-two matrix, four possibilities for strategic hybrid orientation were proposed in Article II (see Figure 1). At opposite ends of the continuum are the high–high strategic hybrid orientation, which is likely to exhibit the strongest emphasis on both brand- and market-oriented behaviour, and the low–low strategic hybrid orientation, which is likely to exhibit the weakest emphasis on both brand- and market-oriented behaviour. In between these extreme points of the continuum are two other types of strategic hybrid orientation, high–low and low–high, which alternatively emphasize high levels of brand- and market-oriented behaviours. This approach would help in examining the amount (or pattern) of brand and market orientations required for brand performance outcome. A similar conceptual approach had been used in several studies (Atuahene-Gima & Ko, 2001; Berthon, Hulbert, & Pitt, 1999; Berthon et al., 2004), and it was identified by Hakala (2011) as well.

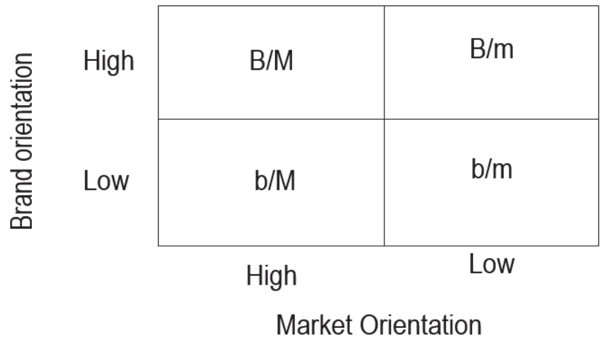

Fig. 1. The four possibilities of strategic hybrid orientation (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2017)

2.5.2 Strategic orientations in moderating interaction

The term *moderation* refers to when a moderator (a third construct) interacts with a predictor variable in order to change the strength and/or form of its relationship with the outcome (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This means that moderating interaction is possible when the effect of primary strategic orientation on brand performance is influenced by introducing another strategic orientation (Hakala, 2011). It means that one strategic orientation or strategic position is producing desired results for firms, but another strategic policy is introduced to complement earlier/fundamental strategic orientation. Article III has empirically examined the effects on brand equity of moderating interaction between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. The following figure, Figure 2, sketches the direct and moderating interaction effects of the brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations on brand equity.

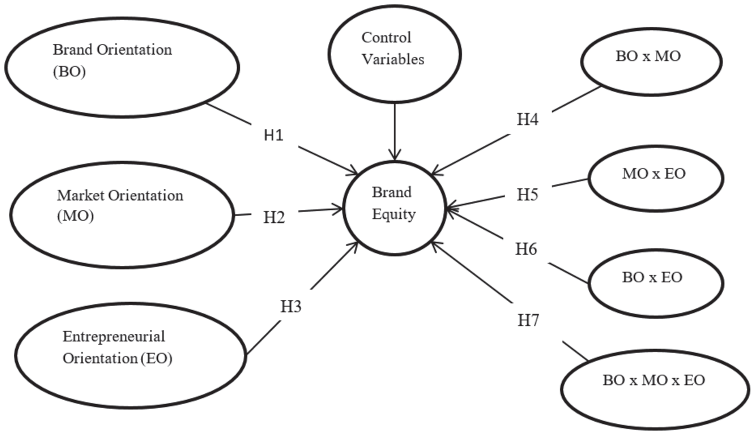

Fig. 2. The direct and interaction effects on brand equity of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations (Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston, 2017)

2.6 Multiple strategic orientations and brand performance

The second article used the concept of strategic hybrid orientation to examine its effect on brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance (see Table 4). The features of brand- and market-oriented strategies could help to keep the clarity of brand identity, ensure consistency in the delivery of brand promises, and deploy relevant and adequate resources. Brand credibility is likely to improve under this hybrid strategy because brand could consistently deliver its promised values in order to address the needs of customers (Baek et al., 2010). Similarly, the brand awareness is likely to improve because the customer would become more aware of the brand values and promises over time. Therefore, a strategic hybrid orientation is expected to generate more customer confidence in the brand and its promises, with the consequence of repeated sales and premium prices, directly affecting the financial performance of B2B SMEs. However, the effect size of each quadrant of hybrid orientation (see Figure 1) is expected to vary.

The third article examines the direct and moderating interaction effects on brand equity of the brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. It is expected that each of the three orientations would have a positive direct effect on brand equity because they generate brand-building practices (Laukkanen et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2008). The most interesting aspect of this article is the evaluation of moderating interaction effects. The moderating interaction effects are expected because these orientations generate market-focused capabilities and their theoretical approach overlap and support each other (Grinstein, 2008; Laukkanen et al., 2016). Several studies have shown the presence of moderating interaction between these orientations for various firm performance dimensions, though not for branding (Hakala, 2011).

The discussion leading up to the hypothesis for each interaction term is given in the third article. Briefly, it is expected that brand equity would improve when (1) an authentic problem-solving brand values nurture under brand- and market-oriented strategies, (2) the brand is committed to innovation under brand- and entrepreneurial-orientated strategies and (3) the brand provides proactive innovative solutions for customer needs (e.g. Bhuian, Menguc, & Bell, 2005; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Jones & Rowley, 2011; Li et al., 2008).

In summary, the second chapter has provided the theoretical description of the concepts and constructs used in the dissertation. The theoretical background and relevance of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations were discussed with the relevance to branding. It was argued that the strategic orientation of the firm is a conscious and implementable managerial decision. Then, four components of brand performance were explained. At the end, two concepts of interactions were elaborated on in order to propose the interaction between these strategic orientations. The next chapter of the dissertation explains the methodology used to examine the proposed relationships.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Ontological and epistemological perspectives

The purpose of scientific investigation is to learn about reality. The researcher's belief about reality – the ontology – is governed through the given philosophy of science. It means that the reality of the world and the phenomena it contains depends on researcher's philosophy of science. The ontological perspective of this dissertation is drawn from the positivist philosophy of science. Positivists believe that reality is real and apprehensible (Sobh & Perry, 2006, p. 1195). A positivist researcher accepts that reality is independent from the researcher (Creswell, 2013), and accordingly, positivist scientific research can learn about reality (epistemology) through objective scientific methods. For example, the causal relationship between constructs or phenomena can be determined by evaluating their correlation by using quantitative methods that are independent from the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Hunt, 1994; Mir & Watson, 2001). The positivist approach has been used in several research studies in both real and social sciences (e.g. Prior, 2012), and quantitative methods are normally applied in positivist research (Sobh & Perry, 2006).

The dissertation argues that the strategic orientation of the firm is a conscious, by choice and implementable managerial decision. Therefore, the strategic posture of a firm should be thoughtfully considered because it could have a significant influence on the firm performance outcome. Along this line of thought, this dissertation develops hypotheses based on theory in order to predict the effect of multiple strategic orientations (independent variable) on brand performance (dependent variable). Using the lens of positivism, the proposed causation was evaluated by collecting quantitative data through a questionnaire and using statistical techniques in the second and third articles.

However, the first article used the systematic literature review approach which reflects an ontological philosophy of critical realismt (Okoli, 2015; Rowe, 2014). A critical realist evaluates the aspects of the literature of choice and provides a critical analysis based on facts and her or his personal viewpoint. Okoli (2015) described in detail how the critical realist should carry out a literature review for "theory landscaping" using a systematic literature review, which is parallel with the objective and methodology used in the first article.

Following subsection explains the methodology of dissertation. The systematic literature review is discussed first because it was used in the first article and because the results of this article provided the basis for selecting the approach of interaction between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. The second and third articles have used the same dataset, which was collected from the questionnaire-based survey, and used similar statistical techniques for data analysis.

3.2 Systematic literature review

Several studies from all fields of sciences – not just marketing or management sciences – have reviewed the relevant body of literature by using a systematic review approach. Unlike meta-analysis, where the statistical quantitative results reported in studies are studied to find a common truth, the systematic review approach allows the researcher to examine the progress of the literature from multidimensional perspectives. For example, the systematic literature review approach can be used to examine a wide range of methodologies used in the literature (e.g. conceptual qualitative methodology, conceptual quantitative methodology, empirical qualitative methodology and empirical quantitative methodology) (Nakata & Huang, 2005). Thus, the information gathered from selected academic writings can be examined both quantitively and qualitatively.

The literature review process has four steps. First, the scope of the study was defined. Second, four databases were used to find 76 articles appeared in academic journals from 1994 to August 2015. Third, the retrieved articles were then examined and only those which were contributing to brand orientation literature were retained. Fourth, the necessary information was collected and coded from these articles. The collected information sheds light on brand orientation literature from four perspectives: publication activity, the integration of brand orientation, research design and the contribution of empirical findings. This article then proposes ten avenues of research for brand orientation literature. Hence, the literature review is consistent with the "theory landscaping" approach of critical realism (Okoli, 2015).

3.3 Empirical data collection and measurements

To examine the proposed relationships in Articles II and III, this study conducted a questionnaire-based survey to collect data in April 2015. The questionnaire has both independent and dependent constructs. The scale items to measure these constructs were taken from current literature. Selected scale items and their sources are provided in Appendix. Items used to measure *brand credibility* were slightly amended according to the requirements of this dissertation because these items were originally used in the consumer sector (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Changes in brand credibility scale items were made after discussion with esteemed scholars. Some minor changes were made to the scale items of other constructs which did not affect the meaning of the scale items. Furthermore, the questionnaire was translated into Finnish in order to make it clearer for native people of Finland. The received responses were ordinal in nature because a Likert scale was used. However, in analysis they were treated as continuous variables, which is general practice in management sciences (Finney & DiStefano, 2006).

The aim of sampling was to recruit SMEs which were operating in the B2B sector. The context of Finland makes this research even more interesting. Finland is a small open economy which incubates a large number of small firms. Finnish SMEs are known for their high-quality products, services and innovation. Moreover, it was easy to recruit B2B SMEs from Finland because the B2B sector is quite widely represented. Therefore, the database of Finnish companies, maintained by a renowned business consultancy firm, was used to select sample firms. First, industries were identified which primarily belong to the B2B sector. The codes of the selected industries are: 07, 09, 20–30, 33, 42, 62, 69, 73 and 82 (as per the Standard Industrial Classification TOL 2008 of Finland). Then, those firms were selected from these industries which satisfy the definition of an SME outlined by the European Commission. The definition of an SME is any firm which has less than 250 employees and has equal or less than €50 million annual turnover. Although this is a nonprobability sampling procedure, it still provides a pool of firms representing quite a few B2B industries.

This procedure created the list of more than 5000 firms that have their own website. Then, the email address of the owner-manager (where possible) or the primary company email address was noted. This provided us with 4720 shortlisted firms with email addresses, and subsequently, emails were sent to these firms with a hyperlink to the online questionnaire. A total of 260 firms responded after two reminders giving a response rate of about 5.5%. The possible reason for the low response rate is that mangers are less motivated to pay attention to an email from an unknown source (Sheehan, 2001). This response rate is comparable with the response rate of 8.6% reported by Reijonen et al., (2015) during a survey of Finnish B2B SMEs. Ten responses were removed from the data because these firms did not meet the definition of an SME. In the remaining 250 responses only a few values were missing which were replaced with the expectation-maximization algorithm. Table 5 provides the descriptive statistics of the observed characteristics of the sampled firms.

Table 5. The characteristics of the sampled firms

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No. of employees (firm size)		
0 to 9	89	35.6
10 to 49	106	42.4
50 to 249	55	22
Annual revenue		
€0 to €2 million	128	51.6
€2 million to €10 million	83	33.5
€10 million to €50 million	37	14.9
Age of firms (in years)		
0 to 20	123	49.2
21 to 50	104	41.6
51 to 142	23	9.2
Industries		
Manufacturing	105	42
Construction services	13	5.2
IT services	54	21.6
Accounting and business support services	14	5.6
Advertising and market research services	19	7.6
Others	44	17.6
Missing	1	0.4
Respondents		
Managing director	101	40.4
Marketing manager	43	17.2
Sales manager	34	13.6
Regional manager	29	11.6
Board of directors	25	10
Owner/CEO	4	1.6
Others	9	3.6
Missing	5	2

Source: Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston (2017)

3.4 Data analysis

Strategic orientations are expected to contribute positively towards brand performance. Therefore, three strategic orientations – brand orientation, market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation – are included as predictor variables, and four brand performance measures – brand awareness, brand credibility, brand equity and financial performance – are included as dependent variables in the analysis. To examine these relationships, this study has used two analytical methods in statistics, namely, regression analysis and one-way ANOVA.

ANOVA and regression analysis are often seen as completely different methods, but in fact they are very similar because both are types of a linear (correlation) model (Field, 2013, p. 430). ANOVA is designed to compare the means of three or more populations or groups, whereas regression analysis can estimate the change in the dependent variable due to the change in one or more predictor variables (Weiss, 2008). Historically, when scholars want to examine the causality between constructs, regression analysis is considered suitable for real-world research design and ANOVA is considered suitable in controlled experimental research design (Cronbach, 1957; Field, 2013).

ANOVA can determine whether the treatment groups are significantly different from each other. This allows us to identify and rationalize the causality. That is, by deliberately manipulating the treatment groups (the predictors), while controlling for confounding variables in controlled experimental research design, one can infer the causality based on significant difference in group means. For example, to determine the effectiveness of a new medicine, treated and untreated groups of patients can be compared. However, several issues may exist in the design of experimental research which then could limit the ability of ANOVA to identify causality (Northcott, 2008).

ANOVA has been successfully and widely used in non-experimental research design as well. Although it cannot detect the causal relationship in non-experimental research with certainty, it allows us to compare group means and even regress the impact of predictors on an outcome by using dummy variables (Weiss, 2008). In management sciences, this approach provides the opportunity to investigate the effect caused by those factors which cannot be manipulated otherwise. For example, ANOVA can be used to explore the role of business strategies for higher performance (Atuahene-Gima & Ko, 2001; Berthon et al., 1999; Odoom, 2016; Reijonen et al., 2012; Reijonen, Párdányi, Tuominen, Laukkanen, & Komppula, 2014).

Article II has examined the role of hybrid strategy when used for brand performance. By using a two-by-two matrix, the hybrid strategy has four variants or four groups of firms. It means that hybrid orientation is one independent variable which has four groups or levels. Therefore, one-way ANOVA was considered the most appropriate method to test whether these four groups are significantly different from each other with respect to brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance (Field, 2013). If so, this would help us to determine how the hybrid orientation could affect the brand performance outcome. A similar approach has been used in several similar studies (Atuahene-Gima & Ko, 2001; Berthon et al., 2004). Furthermore, regression analysis with dummy variables was used to complement one-way ANOVA results. The dummy variables, representing variants of hybrid strategy, were regressed on brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance. Details of the analysis and results are available in Article II.

Multiple regression, an extension of simple linear regression, allows us to estimate the effect of two or more predictors on one dependent variable (Weiss, 2008). Several studies have used the multiple regression method when it was required to measure the direct and interaction effects of predictor variables while accounting for the effects of control variables (e.g. firm age and size) (e.g. Morgan, Vorhies, & Mason, 2009; Wang, Shi, Nevo, Li, & Chen, 2015). The structural equation modelling (SEM) approach was not used because it does not calibrate the relative effect of control, direct and interaction effects (Morgan et al., 2009). Therefore, multiple regression was deemed suitable for Article III. When a stepwise approach is used to enter the predictor variables into multiple regression, some scholars call this *hierarchical regression* (e.g. Morgan et al., 2009). Accordingly, Article III has also used the term hierarchical regression because the control, direct and interaction effects predictor were entered in four steps.

3.5 Reliability and validity of the study construct

Despite the usefulness of regression and ANOVA, a poor dataset may provide misleading findings. Therefore, a number of analyses were performed to validate the data and the constructs. The results of measurement validation tests were satisfactory as a test for the proposed relationships using one-way ANOVA and regression analysis. Articles II and III explain their respective measurement validation procedures and their results in detail, but they are also briefly discussed in the following.

The data validation tests used in Article II include principle component analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, the reliability and validity of scales, common method bias, normality and outliers. Principle component analysis has shown that all scale items are measuring the intended theoretical constructs and that the sample size is adequate to estimate the model. The fit indices of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) further suggest a highly satisfactory model–data fit (CFI = 0.945, SRMR = 0.067, and RMSEA = 0.063), according to the index given by Hu and Bentler (1999). Construct reliability and validity were checked based on the results of CFA and correlation. The reliability of the constructs was supported because the values of the composite reliability of any construct were higher than 0.848, and constructs' discriminant and convergent validities were supported because average variance extracted (AVE) was higher than 0.5 and to any construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Common method bias is a variance caused by the measurement method that can spur the data. It was checked with Harman's single-factor test and single common latent factor in CFA. Harman's single factor test shows low variance explained by any one factor and a single common latent factor in CFA shows a very poor fit. Hence, common method bias is highly unlikely to have occurred (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Furthermore, normality and outliers were checked because ANOVA test results may get affected. Histogram and P-P plots, skewness and kurtosis were well within the acceptable range of normality and outliers.

Article III employed similar data validation methods. CFA shows a highly satisfactory model–data fit (CFI = 0.961, RMSEA = 0.051, SRMR = 0.057). Therefore, AVE and composite reliability were computed based on CFA results, which were well within the acceptable range. The composite reliability of any construct was higher than 0.79, and constructs' discriminant and convergent validity were supported because AVE was higher than 0.5 and to correlation of constructs. Hence, the constructs' reliability, discriminant and convergent validities were supported. Similarly, common method bias was checked with Harman's single-factor test and single common latent factor in CFA. The highest variance explained by any single unrotated factor was very low, and as well as the single latent factor in CFA has shown a quite poor model–data fit. These results suggest that common method bias was not present in the dataset (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.6 Evaluation of the research methods

The methodology used in the dissertation conforms with the positivist ontological and epistemological approach of the dissertation. Quantitative methods using statistical approaches are effective in determining the causation relationship in positivist philosophy. Another benefit of quantitative methods is that it offers the same systematic measurement process, which is independent from the researcher, to observe respondents' responses. This approach is particularly important for this dissertation because the conceptual description of strategic orientations could vary greatly between respondents and researcher. Furthermore, well-established statistical analytical procedures are available in quantitative methods which can precisely compute both interaction types (hybrid and moderating) in order to determine their effect on brand performance outcomes. In fact, nearly all previous studies aiming to understand the interaction and effects of multiple strategic orientations have used quantitative data and analysis (Hakala, 2011, p. 204). Therefore, the methodology of the dissertation is consistent with established academic practices.

4 The review of article findings

This chapter reviews the results of all three articles appended to the dissertation. The results are reviewed in the listed order. The results of the first article are elaborated on at the beginning because they provide the base from which to outline interaction concepts which may govern the interrelationship between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations regarding brand performance. The results of the second and third articles help us to understand the role of multiple strategic orientations in brand improvement. This chapter concludes by synthesizing these results.

4.1 A systematic literature review of brand orientation (Article I)

There is some understanding on how market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation interacts with each other (Hakala, 2011), but how these two strategic orientations interact with brand orientation has not yet been documented. Although my first article evaluates the overall progress of brand orientation literature, its findings provide important information with which to understand the interaction of brand orientation with market and entrepreneurial orientations (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2016). Article I found that the relationship between brand orientation and market orientation is more frequently examined compared to that of brand orientation and entrepreneurial orientation.

Both conceptual and empirical studies were found to describe the relationship between brand and market orientations. Among the conceptual articles, Reid et al., (2005) conceptualized that market orientation positively correlates with brand orientation and improve the integrated marketing communication strategy in order to develop a strong nexus of resources for effective communication to all stakeholders. Similarly, O'Cass and Voola (2011) proposed a model to suggest that market-oriented strategy can be used proactively to understand and learn about the voters and political landscape, and then brand-oriented strategy can be used to develop a competitive political offering which can be manifested in their party brand name. While these two articles have argued for a collective use of brand and market orientations, they did not provide theoretical grounds to describe interaction related to branding. However, the conceptual articles of Urde et al., (2013) and Urde and Koch (2014) have given theoretical illustrations describing the interaction between brand and market orientations with respect to brand management.

Urde et al., (2013) introduced the concept of strategic hybrid orientation – the existence of brand orientation and market orientation in hybrid form. That is, the firm can develop their strategic posture with the fusion of market- and brand-oriented characteristics. Such a strategic orientation can blend identity-driven and image-driven brand management processes for a better brand performance outcome. Urde and Koch (2014) illustrated the variants of brand positioning strategies based on the strategic hybrid orientation concept. M'zungu et al., (2017) found that SMEs have successfully developed firms' strategic postures on the principles of hybrid orientation constructed from brand and market orientations.

The empirical studies have shown that growing and growth-oriented SMEs have adopted both brand and market orientations (Reijonen et al., 2012; Reijonen et al., 2014). However, these studies did not discuss the interaction between brand and market orientations or their effect on brand performance. The results of Wong and Merrilees (2007) have shown that brand orientation plays a moderating role in improving the effect of marketing strategy on firm performance. Also, brand orientation has been found to mediate the effect of market orientation on financial performance in SMEs (Laukkanen et al., 2016). In another study, market orientation is found to directly improve the perceived brand orientation among church attendees (Mulyanegara, 2011).

These conceptual and empirical studies suggest that brand and market orientations have some collective role to play for the organization, but no single mechanism can govern their interrelationship. Furthermore, no new mechanism came to light other than those which Hakala (2011) already explained. For example, the concept of hybrid orientation put forward by Urde et al., (2013) is very similar to second stream of complementary interaction which *"concerns the pattern of orientations"* identified by Hakala (2011, p. 209). Similarly, interaction at the level of moderating or mediating, as suggested by some empirical studies (Laukkanen et al., 2016; Wong & Merrilees, 2007), is also consistent with the first stream of complementary interaction identified by Hakala (2011). Hence, based on current literature, two interaction perspectives (strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction) were selected for examination. The hybrid orientation concept is examined in Article II, and the moderating interaction between brand and market orientations is examined in Article III.

Article I identified the study by Reijonen et al., (2015) as the only empirical study to examine the collective effects of brand and entrepreneurial orientations on brand performance in B2B SMEs. However, Reijonen et al., (2015) neither conceptualize nor examine the interaction between brand and entrepreneurial orientations in relation to brand performance. Therefore, beyond the results of the first article, pertinent literature was reviewed to develop the theoretical framework in order to understand the interaction between these two orientations. Current literature provides some grounds to predict moderating interaction between brand and entrepreneurial orientations for brand performance. Therefore, moderating interaction between brand and entrepreneurial orientations is examined in Article III.

4.2 The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance (Article II)

This article outlines four possible strategic hybrid orientations by using a two-by-two matrix. Accordingly, the sampled firms were categorized into four groups. The result of ANOVA suggests that firms in which strategic hybrid orientation is strongly dominated by both brand- and market-oriented characteristics have the highest levels of brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance. Whereas, the lowest levels of brand credibility and financial performance were found in firms where the strategic hybrid orientation was weakly dominated by brand- and market-oriented characteristics. These trends can also be seen in the regression analysis which was conducted to complement the one-way ANOVA results. Furthermore, it was interesting to find out that when strategic hybrid orientation is strongly dominated by either brand- or market-oriented characteristics, the brand performance outcomes are not the same. ANOVA results shows that when strongly dominated by brand-oriented characteristics a hybrid orientation is likely to have a higher level of brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance than when dominated by market-oriented characteristics.

The exploratory nature of these findings provides an indication of the presence of synergic interaction between brand and market orientation, achieving high brand performance. By dividing the firms into four groups, representing each possibility of strategic hybrid orientation, it helped us to identify the optimal combination or pattern of brand and market orientations for strategic hybrid orientation. These results also suggest that a hybrid orientation enables B2B SMEs to develop ambidexterity in the organizational culture (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; He & Wong, 2004; M'zungu et al., 2017; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008). However, it is important to note that the ANOVA results do not provide enough information to identify the level (the sequence, moderation or mediation level) at which brand and market orientation may interact (Hakala, 2011, p. 210). In this regard, the findings of Article III are useful.

4.3 Moderating interaction and brand performance (Article III)

This article sheds light on the collective role of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations in building brand equity. The article examines the direct and moderating interaction effects of these strategic orientations on brand equity. The results of the study indicate that brand and entrepreneurial orientations have significant positive direct effects while the market orientation has a significant negative direct effect on brand equity. With respect to moderating interaction, none of the interaction terms has a significant effect on brand equity. Furthermore, the results indicate that only firm size can significantly improve brand equity.

Previous studies have theorized and empirically found that all three strategic orientations have a positive direct effect on brand performance. Brand orientation can both directly and indirectly strengthen the B2B brand (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Reijonen et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016), market orientation requires support from brand management system to improve B2B brand performance (Lee et al., 2008) and entrepreneurial orientation brings an innovative charter to the brand that strengthens the B2B brand (Reijonen et al., 2015). Hence, except for the effect of market orientation, the results of this article are consistent with the current literature.

Several empirical studies have shown that these orientations moderate each other to achieve high performance outcomes in organizations (e.g. Bhuian et al., 2005; Li et al., 2008; Wong & Merrilees, 2007). These findings, along with the theoretical narrative in the literature, have led this study to predict the presence of "moderating" interaction between these orientations when building brand equity. Because this article has found insignificant effects of all interaction terms on brand equity it does not rule out the presence of moderating interaction. The smaller insignificant change of R^2 in the regression model also indicates that interaction terms do not have a significant role (see Table 4 in Article III). Future research examining moderating interaction and other levels of interaction should bring more clarity.

4.4 Synthesis of the results

The primary question of the dissertation was formulated as *How do multiple strategic orientations affect the brand performance of B2B SMEs?* This main question was addressed with the help of three sub-questions. The first sub-question is *How does brand orientation interact with market and entrepreneurial orientations?* The first article found that brand orientation could interact with market orientation on at least two levels (in strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction), and with entrepreneurial orientation it could interact at the level of moderation. However, the first article did not find any direct empirical evidence to validate these proposed interaction concepts with regards to brand performance. These perspectives were therefore framed into two sub-questions and examined by the second and third articles.

The second sub-question is *How is strategic hybrid orientation – constructed from brand and market orientation – related to the brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance of B2B SMEs?* The second article provided empirical evidence to support the case for the strategic hybrid orientation of B2B SMEs. The results have demonstrated that brand- and market-oriented strategies can be simultaneously used in a hybrid form to improve all three components of brand performance. The stronger the presence of these orientations is in the firm's strategic planning and execution, the better the brand performance.

The third sub-question is *How do brand orientation, market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (both directly and in interaction) affect the brand equity of B2B SMEs?* The third article's results show that each orientation has an independent significant effect on brand equity: brand and entrepreneurial orientations have a positive effect but market orientation has a negative effect. With regards to moderation interaction, the results did not show a significant effect of any moderating interaction term for brand equity. While further investigation is needed to evaluate and validate these results on moderating interaction, the importance of these orientations should not be understated because of their individual effects. Table 6 summarizes the results of the three articles.

Table 6. Synthesis of the results

	Article I	Article II	Article III
Title	The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review	The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs	How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs
Sub-questions of the dissertation	How does brand orientation interact with market and entrepreneurial orientations?	How is strategic hybrid orientation – constructed from brand and market orientation – related to the brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance of B2B SMEs?	How do brand orientation, market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (both directly and in interaction) affect the brand equity of B2B SMEs?
Independent constructs	N/A	Brand and market orientations	Brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations
Dependent constructs	N/A	Brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance	Brand equity
Type of interaction	N/A	Strategic hybrid orientation	Moderating interaction
Methods	Systematic literature review	A questionnaire-based survey; ANOVA and regression analysis with dummy variables	A questionnaire-based survey; Hierarchical regression
Main results	Two perspectives on interaction were identified: strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction	The results explain the pattern in which brand- and market-oriented features can be combined as hybrid strategy to improve the dimensions of brand performance	The results explain the presence of the direct and moderating interaction effects of three orientations on brand equity

The results of all three sub-questions have advocated the case for the collective implementation of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations in order to produce higher brand performance in B2B SMEs. In a nutshell, these orientations can be implemented simultaneously because the results did not show that these orientations are collectively counterproductive for branding. The next chapter has extended this discussion and elaborated the theoretical contribution and managerial implications of these findings.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Theoretical contributions

The dissertation has recognized the importance of examining the role of multiple strategic orientations for brand performance in B2B SMEs. Previous studies have investigated the effect of only one strategic orientation on B2B brand performance (e.g. Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2016), with the one exception of a study by Reijonen et al., (2015). Therefore, this dissertation is among the first few studies to test and make the case for this approach to better B2B brand management in SMEs (Glynn, 2012; Seyedghorban et al., 2016). This dissertation has employed two concepts of interaction (strategic hybrid orientation and moderating interaction) to examine the collective role of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. Four components of B2B brand performance (brand awareness, brand credibility, brand equity and financial performance) were included to deeply understand brand's performance.

The strategic hybrid orientation, constructed from brand- and market-oriented strategic attributes, can increase the brand awareness, brand credibility and financial performance of B2B SMEs. Overall, brand orientation appears to be more influential than market orientation according to the results of Article II (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2017). M'zungu et al., (2017) also found that B2B consulting firms are inclined to strengthen brand-oriented strategy more than market-oriented strategy, which enabled them to achieve higher brand performance outcome. It also resonates with other studies where brand orientation is found to be more effective than market orientation for the growth of SMEs (Reijonen et al., 2012; Reijonen et al., 2014).

The brand awareness of B2B suppliers has been found to improve market performance and return on sales (Homburg et al., 2010; Yoon & Kijewski, 1996). It is therefore desirable for B2B suppliers to improve the awareness and understanding of their brand among customers and other stakeholders. In the B2B context, previous studies have found co-innovation practices (Wang, Hsiao, Yang, & Hajli, 2016) and a marketing mix (Kim & Hyun, 2011) to have a positive effect on brand awareness. This dissertation not only demonstrates that collectively both brand- and market-oriented activities are effective for building brand awareness but also explains the relative importance of each orientation. The results suggest that brand-oriented activities are more effective than market-oriented activities. The highest level of brand awareness was found in firms where brand-oriented philosophy strongly dominated, and the lowest level of brand awareness was found in firms where a market-oriented philosophy was strongly implemented. This dissertation contributes to our knowledge by showing that strategic hybrid orientation can also improve B2B brand awareness, which was not known previously (Kim & Hyun, 2011; Wang et al., 2016).

When the brand of an SME consistently and congruently delivers its promises and values, it builds its authenticity and trust, which fuels the growth of the firm (Eggers et al., 2013). Similarly, the credible traits of B2B brand personality are also extremely important (Herbst & Merz, 2011). Despite the importance of having a credible brand image for the B2B supplier, this concept has not received significant attention in the industrial marketing literature (Biong, 2013; Leischnig & Enke, 2011; Michell, King, & Reast, 2001). Therefore, Seyedghorban et al., (2016, p. 2674) suggested that *"future research could focus on how B2B brands can act as a signal of supplier's product or service credibility".*

This dissertation has responded to this gap and shows that strategic hybrid orientation is positively related to B2B brand credibility. Collectively, the higher levels of brand- and market-oriented measures assist the brand to consistently deliver its promises and values, which are also central to the needs of B2B buyers – making B2B brands sincere, reliable, honest and authentic. However, the results also show that the brand-oriented strategic measures are more influential in achieving brand credibility than market-oriented measures. Previous studies, for example, revealed that the CSR and corporate ethics of a B2B supplier build trust in company and its brand (Homburg, Stierl, & Bornemann, 2013; Hutchinson, Singh, Svensson, & Mysen, 2013). Both CSR and corporate ethics can be seen as by-products of brand- and market-oriented hybrid strategy. To this end, the dissertation findings are also consistent with previous studies.

B2B firms, particularly SMEs, are uncertain as to whether their brand-building investments will return financial benefits (Hirvonen et al., 2016). Therefore, B2B firms are usually more willing to invest in short-term profitable projects instead of long-term brand-building measures (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). The current literature is scarce and inconsistent in addressing this issue. For example, Hirvonen et al., (2016) found a small significant increase in business growth while Reijonen et al., (2015) found an insignificant increase in business growth under brand-oriented strategy in the context of B2B SMEs. Both studies measured business growth through financial parameters. Seyedghorban et al., (2016) and Leek and Christodoulides (2011) have encouraged the examination of the financial performance of the B2B brand-building process because there are only few studies to suggest a strong B2B brand can fetch premium prices (e.g. Persson, 2010). Responding to this call, this dissertation shows that the strategic hybrid orientation of B2B SMEs could directly result in a better financial outcome. However, the results suggest that a brand-oriented approach is likely to be more influential than a market-oriented approach when combined in strategic hybrid form.

The results of moderating interaction from the third article are equally important (Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston, 2017). Several studies have investigated the direct effects of brand, market and entrepreneurial orientation on brand performance. Nearly every study has reported a positive direct effect of each strategic orientation (e.g. Laukkanen et al., 2013; O'Cass & Ngo, 2007b; Reijonen et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016). Only a couple of studies have found an insignificant direct effect of entrepreneurial orientation (Colton et al., 2010), brand orientation (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2014) and market orientation (Lee et al., 2008). Therefore (omitting market orientation) the direct positive effect of brand and entrepreneurial orientations on B2B brand equity that are found in this dissertation is consistent and reinforces the current literature.

However, the negative direct effect of market orientation found in this dissertation provides the basis for hypothesizing an alternative perspective. B2B buyers need products and services to solve their industrial needs and requirements. Any offer from a B2B supplier which does not solve their industrial needs would stand a thin chance of qualifying for their consideration or purchase evaluation process. For example, Bendixen et al., (2004) noted that technology, price and delivery terms are more crucial factors than the supplier's brand image when B2B buyers evaluate a supplier. This can be interpreted in the following way. Because satisfying the needs of a B2B buyer is necessary, their satisfaction may not be enough to differentiate a supplier's brand from the competition – which limits the effectiveness of market-oriented strategy for brand building. Probably, as argued and found by Lee et al., (2008), the market orientation could only indirectly affect B2B brand performance. This alternative view can be supported with the study of Campbell et al., (2010) who noted that B2B buyers select suppliers whose brand image is similar to their own brand image – thus a brand personality alignment is more important than problem-solving capability. Therefore, given the different characteristics of the B2B sector compared to the consumer sector, the role that market orientation plays in brand building in non-B2B sectors would not be completely relevant to the B2B sector (Laukkanen et al., 2013; O'Cass & Ngo, 2007a; O'Cass & Ngo, 2007b).

Furthermore, despite having a strong theoretical basis, this dissertation did not find the presence of moderating interaction between brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations. While further empirical investigation is needed to reconfirm this finding, the insignificant results of moderating interaction give rise to the possibility of other types of synergic interactions. That is to say, it would be interesting to examine if these orientations interact at the level of sequence and/or mediation (Hakala, 2011, p. 210). For example, brand orientation could mediate the effect of market orientation on brand performance (Laukkanen et al., 2016).

The dissertation contributes to SME brand management literature as well. The entrepreneurial values and role of owner-managers as entrepreneurs for successful SME branding have been suggested (Boyle, 2003; Krake, 2005; Spence & Essoussi, 2010). Findings in this dissertation are consistent with Laukkanen et al., (2013) and Reijonen et al., (2015) because there is significant positive effect of entrepreneurial orientation on brand performance in SMEs. Previous studies on SMEs also highlighted the importance of a consistent brand-building process (a brand-oriented strategy) for strengthening the brand (Eggers et al., 2013; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Laukkanen et al., 2016; Laukkanen et al., 2013; Mäläskä, Saraniemi, & Tähtinen, 2011; Muhonen et al., 2017; Wong & Merrilees, 2005). This dissertation has also found a significant positive effect of brand orientation on brand equity. However, this dissertation found a negative effect of market orientation on brand equity, which contradicts with the positive effect reported by Laukkanen et al., (2013). But this dissertation reinforces the finding that growing and growth-oriented SMEs are practicing both brand- and market-oriented strategies simultaneously (Reijonen et al., 2012; Reijonen et al., 2014). This dissertation also extends this narrative by showing that hybrid orientation can lead to better brand performance outcome – providing support for developing brand and market orientations in hybrid form for the purpose of branding in B2B SMEs.

5.2 Managerial implications

The strategic orientation of the firm has an indispensable role (Kohn, McGinnis, & Kara, 2011). It provides the firm with direction for effective operations and management, which could profoundly help to achieve the desired performance outcomes. Based on the results of the present study the significance of all three strategic orientations shouldn't be marginalized for brand performance in B2B SMEs. Although brand, market and entrepreneurial orientations are theoretically dissimilar, they are found to be useful for brand performance. However, among the three orientations, brand orientation has the most positive impact. Some important managerial implications for simultaneous development for three orientations can be articulated from this dissertation.

B2B SMEs are often restrained due to limited financial and marketing resources. Therefore, it is extremely important for them to carefully plan and execute effective and efficient marketing strategy. While B2B SMEs are typically less familiar with the concept of branding, it does not make them any less successful at brand building (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). In fact, this dissertation adds to the growing evidence of the successful implementation of branding strategy in SMEs. The owner-managers of B2B SMEs are encouraged to discard their beliefs that marketing, specifically branding, has no or little significance for an organization compared to state-of-the-art operations and technology. In other words, it does not matter what you do but it matters how you do it! The image of the firm, reflected through brand, can influence the response from both external and internal audiences. The dissertation strongly recommends an intentional effort to get brand image right. In this regard, the core philosophies of brand, market and entrepreneurial strategies provide the actionable measures for brand building.

According to brand-oriented strategy, managers should consider integrating brand building into the mainstream management and operation of the firm. This requires a policy decision which would view a brand as a "strategic asset". As a strategic asset of the firm, the importance of a brand would be elevated and require an exclusive, thorough and independent process for its development and protection. The brand should be seen as a symbolic representation of authentic (firm) values. In this line of argument, the brand is nothing but a custodian and provider of a clear and comprehensive set of values. Therefore, the brand needs to be defined and the firm should consistently strive to deliver the brand's authentic values to all stakeholders, not just to the customers.

The employees and culture of the organization provide vital support in achieving this objective. An organizational culture is recommended which facilitates employees to speak brand language in internal and external communications. The employees need to be educated, trained and monitored for following brand values. The objective is to transform their behaviour so they can interact with other employees, customers and other stakeholders according to branding philosophy. It is further advised that a manager should be made responsible, or an independent managerial position should be created, to ensure that vital branding objectives and parameters are met. Among other things, this responsible manager needs to develop a periodic evaluation process which evaluates the brand image held by all internal and external stakeholders and to compare it with the desired brand image. Accordingly, a brand-building process can be adjusted in order to keep difference between desired and actual brand image to a minimum. Although adequate financial resources are indispensable for the brand-building process, it does not fill in for the need of investing time in deliberating the question of what should be done to make the brand better.

Current literature and this dissertation recommend that the managers of SMEs should incorporate entrepreneurial values into their brand (Eggers et al., 2013; Spence & Essoussi, 2010). A brand that believes in a forward-looking approach to finding new and better ways to solve the issues of B2B buyers and to introduce innovative ideas to the market has the advantage of establishing its identity as a market leader (Lipiäinen & Karjaluoto, 2015). It was found that three attributes of entrepreneurial orientation (being proactive, innovative and risk-taking) have the ability to work together. Therefore, the managers are recommended to explicitly show the brand's commitment and achievements for entrepreneurship. The external audience should receive a clear message on how much a brand takes pride in striving for entrepreneurship. However, the needs and requirements of customers should be considered as well. The managers are recommended to work closely with customers in order to understand their needs and create customized solutions. The customer value propositions should be derived from proactive, innovative and authentic values of brand. In a nutshell, organizational culture and behaviour anchored in all three orientations would improve brand awareness, brand credibility, brand equity and financial performance.

5.3 Limitations of study and future research recommendations

The contribution of the dissertation is subject to some limitations. First, the literature review does not cover publications from non-academic sources or books and articles in other languages than English. Second, the study design of the dissertation is cross-sectional, which is a commonly used design in management sciences. However, the cross-sectional study design could be inadequate for capturing the influence of multiple strategic orientations on brand's performance over a long period (e.g. three years). Measuring the strategic policy and outcome in a longitudinal research design would enable us to analyse the relationship as a process instead of being an ad-hoc assessment. Therefore, future studies are recommended to use a longitudinal research design to examine these relationships.

Third, the dissertation has used quantitative methods. It is recommended that future studies to use a case study or mixed-methods to closely examine how firms can develop processes to incorporate behaviours and cultures from multiple strategic orientations in order to achieve optimal brand performance. Fourth, the measurement scales were limited in terms of covering every aspect of any given strategic orientation, even though they are taken from the current literature. Hence, future studies could use more refined and revised scales for a better and deeper understanding of the internal structure of the various strategic orientations. Fifth, this dissertation has collected responses on independent and dependent constructs from the same person in a firm. Therefore, future research studies are recommended to collect the responses on independent and dependent constructs from the company and their customers respectively. This would reduce the possibility of a biased response from a firm's management.

Sixth, the response rate was comparatively low. The response rate of the survey could be improved by distributing the questionnaire through industry associations. For example, the Finnish Plastics Industries Federation (Muoviteollisuus) can be used to target the manufacturers of plastic products in Finland. Seventh, the same dataset was used to examine two interaction types (hybrid orientation and moderating interaction) in the dissertation. It would be thought provoking if these interaction types were examined with different datasets in future studies. For example, data can be collected from other economies (e.g. a developing economy) and/or consumer sectors, as well as researching how different factors from the internal and external environments of B2B SMEs (e.g. market lifecycle, customer type, domestic and international markets, departmentalization, product and service quality, advertainment and marketing expenses) influence this phenomenon.

Eighth, this dissertation has examined two aspects of interactions but empirical support is only found for one. While both aspects need further examination, this dissertation recommends that future studies evaluate other aspects of interactions as well, such as mediating and correlation interactions (Hakala, 2011). Furthermore, because only the third article has included entrepreneurial orientation, in order to test its moderating effect on brand performance, future studies could examine the role of entrepreneurial orientation in more detail. For example, the concept of strategic hybrid orientation could be used to determine the optimal pattern of entrepreneurial orientation with other strategic orientations. In this spirit, other strategic orientations (technology or learning) could also be studied. Ninth, different components of brand performance have been used in the second and third articles. Hence, these parameters of brand performance could be swapped in future studies. Similarly, other indicators of brand performance should also be considered.

Lastly, the dissertation focuses only on a brand's performance as a dependent outcome. Therefore, future studies are strongly recommended to examine other equally important aspects of a firm's performance under a multiple strategic orientation in B2B SMEs. Other performance indicators may include customers (e.g. customer satisfaction) and entrepreneurship (e.g. the number of new products).

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Appendix

Brand Equity

Q1: The following statements assess the response of your customers towards your company's corporate brand. Each statement is followed by a scale of agreement/disagreement. Please select the number which best reflects your customers' response. 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*

a) Our brand is better known than our most important competitor's
b) The quality of our brand as perceived by our customers is higher than our competitor's
c) A high proportion of the products under our brand umbrella are leaders in their markets

Source: (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010)

Brand Awareness

Q2: The following statements assess the level of your customers' knowledge about your company's corporate brand. Each statement is followed by scale of agreement/disagreement. Please select which best reflects your company's position. 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*

a) The decision-makers of our potential customers have heard of our brand.
b) The decision-makers among our potential customers recall our brand name immediately when they think of our product category.
c) Our brand is often at the top of the minds of the decision-makers in potential customer firms when they think of our product category.
d) The decision-makers can clearly relate our brand to a certain product category.

Source: (Homburg et al., 2010)

Brand Credibility

Q3: The following statements measure the level of trust your customers have in your brand. Each statement is followed by scale of agreement/disagreement. Please select which best reflects your company's position. 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*

a) Our brand reminds our customer of someone who is competent and knows what we are going.
b) Our brand delivers what it promises.
c) Over time, our customer's experience with our brand have led them to expect it to keep its promises, no more no less.
d) Our brand has a name our customers can trust.

Source: (Erdem & Swait, 2004)

Financial Performance

Q4: The following statements are designed to establish the financial performance of your company for the last one year. Please select the number which best reflects the financial position of your company. 1 = *decreased enormously*; 7 = *increased enormously*

a) Growth rate of sales in the last 12 months.
b) Market share in the last 12 months.
c) Profitability of your firm in the last 12 months.
d) Overall financial performance in the last 12 months.

Source: (Wong & Merrilees, 2008)

Brand Orientation

Q5: The following statements evaluate your firm’s commitment towards brand building and management. Each statement is followed by a scale of agreement/disagreement. Please select the number which best reflects your company’s position. 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*

a) In our company, we have a clear idea of what our brand stands for.
b) We recognize our brand as a valuable asset and strategic resource, which we continually develop and protect in the best possible way.
c) Brand equity (or brand strength) is a control factor in our company.
d) The development of our brand is not the responsibility of a small group within the company, but also the business of top management.
e) All business decisions are evaluated with respect to their impact on the brand.
f) The great majority of our company's employees understands and lives the brand values.

Source:(Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010)

Market Orientation

Q6: The following statements assess your company’s commitment to serve customers need better for their highest satisfaction. Please select the number that best reflects your company’s approach. 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*

a) Our business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction.
b) We monitor our level of commitment to serving customer’s needs.
c) Our strategy for competitive advantage is based on our understanding of customer needs.
d) Our business strategies are driven by our beliefs about how we can create greater value for customers.
e) Our company understands how everyone in our company can contribute to creating customer value.

Source: (Laukkanen et al., 2013)

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Q7: The following statements are meant to identify the collective management style of your firm's key decision-makers. Please select the number that best reflects your firms' management style.

In general, the top managers of my firm favour ...

a) Low-risk projects with normal and certain rates of return. [1 to 7] High-risk projects with chances of very high returns.
b) Owing to the nature of the environment, it is best to explore gradually via cautious behavior. [1 to 7] Owing to the nature of the environment, bold, wide ranging acts are necessary to achieve the firm's objectives.

How many new lines of products or services have your firm marketed within last past 5 years?

a) No new lines of products or services. [1 to 7] Many new lines of products or services.
b) Changes in product or service lines have been mostly of a minor nature. [1 to 7] Changes in product or service lines have usually been quite dramatic.

In dealing with competitors, my firm…

a) Typically respond to actions which competitors initiate. [1 to 7] Typically initiates actions to which competitors then respond.
b) Typically seeks to avoid competitive clashes, preferring a "live-and-let-live" posture. [1 to 7] Typically adopts a very competitive, "undo-the-competitors" posture.

Source: (Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999)

Company Information

Q8: What is annual turnover of your company? Please tick one only answer.

a) 0 to 2 million euros
b) 2 to 10 million euros
c) 10 to 50 million euros

Q9: What is total number of employees in your company?

____

Q10: When your firm was established (year)?

____

Q11: Which of the below is the industry of your company?

a) Manufacturing
b) Construction / civil engineering
c) IT
d) Business consultation and accounting
e) Advertisement and market research
f) Other

Q12: What is the job position of respondent?

a) Managing director
b) Marketing manager
c) Sales manager
d) Regional manager
e) Board of director
f) Owner/CEO
g) Other

Original publications

I Anees-ur-Rehman, M., Wong, H.Y., & Hossain, M. (2016). The progression of brand orientation literature in twenty years: A systematic literature review. Journal of Brand Management, 23(6), 612-630.

II Anees-ur-Rehman, M., Saraniemi, S., Ulkuniemi, P., & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, P. (2017). The strategic hybrid orientation and brand performance of B2B SMEs. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 24(3), 585-606.

III Anees-ur-Rehman, M., & Johnston, W. (2017). How multiple strategic orientations impact on brand equity of B2B SMEs. Manuscript.

These original publications are not included in the electronic version of the dissertation.

75. Sakko, Susanna (2015) Ulkomaisen työvoiman rekrytointi : aineistolähtöinen sisällönanalyysi kuntasektorin toimintatavoista ja prosesseista
76. Musial, Monika (2015) Exploring the organizing of work for creative individuals : the paradox of art and business in creative industries
77. Pietilä, Heli (2015) Strategiatyöhön osallistuminen : strategistit ja strategiaselviytyjät
78. Ramachandran, Sunder (2015) Understanding brand loyalty and disloyalty formation among consumers' of short life-cycle products
79. Keränen, Anne (2015) Business leaders' narratives about responsibility in leadership work
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