

Impact of Marketing Communication Effectiveness and Customer Information Management on Organizational Success with Mediating Role of Competitive Advantage

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management on the organizational success of steel industry in China. The study also investigated the mediating role of competitive advantage between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success of steel industry in China. A sample of 357 employees from marketing department of steel industry in China participated in this study, who also acted as respondents to the survey questionnaires designed to gather the primary data. Smart-PLS was used to check the data reliability and the relationship between variables. The results reveal that marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management have a positive association with organizational success of steel industry in China. The results also exposed that the competitive advantage significantly mediates between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success of steel industry in China. The study would act as a guide to the regulators and policy makers to design suitable regulations to achieve organizational success using effective marketing communication and customer information management.

Keywords

Marketing Communication Effectiveness, Competitive Advantage, Customer Information Management, Organizational Success of Steel Industry.

1. Introduction

The success of any business depends upon its current clientele, ability to generate new ones and doing so sustainably. Success in business means not only to earn higher profits for a specific period but to keep business stable, not to



compromise on products quality, maintaining service quality, and being adaptive to customers' expectations. The presence of successful businesses is significant to business owners, society, and economic growth. The retention of customers with continuous addition in number of customers increases total sales and expands business to broader area. It generates higher profits for the owners as well as sustaining the quality of products and services, the successful business improves the brand name and goodwill securing its future (**Errida; Lotfi**, 2021). A successful business provides employment to a large number of people and it supports its employees giving them a comfortable environment and taking care of their needs. Moreover, because of its stronger financial condition, a successful business carries many social friendly programs like charity, free sampling, and support for human capital development (**Andrieiev et al.**, 2023). In addition, the successful businesses produce wealth for the economy at sustainable rate, improves infrastructure, accelerates human capital development, as well as the efforts for achieving organizational success and expands economic activities within and outside the country. However, despite having been discussed its wider perspectives, organizational success still needs investigation and exploration (**Khan**, 2022; **Sutoyo**, 2023).

Competitive advantage is defined as the sum of all matchless attributes and qualities of a business organization enabling it to outperform the competitors, letting the consumers prefer its production or services over those from competitors, and winning a considerable market share. Some most popular competitive advantage to an organization are operational efficiency, product positioning, product pricing, branding, patented technologies and innovations, product quality, sales and distribution network, customer experience, customer service, and any other factor making the products or services unique and superior to those from rivals (**Azeem et al.**, 2021). Organizational success depends on competitive advantage and is derived by factors like marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management.

Marketing communication is a basic and complicated part of an organization's marketing struggles. Marketing communication includes the messages and media deployed by organization in order to communicate with the target market. It includes advertising, direct marketing, online presence, branding, packaging, printed materials, sales presentations, PR activities, sponsorships, trade show appearances and more. Marketing communication effectiveness sets a significant brand position in market and sustains the sales level, as it also determines organizational success in the market (**Musheke; Phiri**, 2021; **Liu**, 2023).

Customers' information management is the system that facilitates the organization to manage information about customers or develop effective interaction between the organization and its customers. With an effective customer information management, company can be more adaptive, respond quickly, generate new customers, and sustain its sales rate. It leads the firms to make success (**Hilton et al.**, 2020; **Ruan**, 2023).

China's rapidly emerging economy and increasing rate of its development has placed the country at the top in the list of the largest world economies. The Steel industry is one of the main economic sectors significantly influencing the overall Chinese economy. In China, the steel industry has capacity to provide 1.23 billion tons of steel production annually, whereas, the country's annual steel consumption is 1 billion tons of steel. As per the data from 2021, China is the country producing steel in largest amount. It demonstrates more than half of the steel production across world (**Yang et al.**, 2022). China produces the most refined and high-quality steel. It meets not only the steel demand within the country but also fulfills the international demand of steel. Approximately 95% of the steel production is utilized at the national level to meet domestic demand. In spite of accomplishing large domestic demands, China's exports steel in the largest amount. During years between 1996 and 2022, the average rate of steel exports from China was 3006665.24 USD THO. The highest amount of steel exports China was recorded as 11882300.00 USD THO in February, 2022. By 2020, China's steel and iron industry was seen to produce 22.3%, 12.1%, and 16.4%, of nitrous oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) respectively. Some private regulators and state authorities have taken strategic steps to facilitate the production of steel and iron in China (**Yue et al.**, 2023; **Frantz et al.**, 2023).

Though, the Chinese economy is largely based on steel manufacturing industry which accomplishes the domestic needs as well as generates large amount of foreign exchange via exports. The steel manufacturing organizations need to attain business in the right meaning by sustaining their progress. In order to accomplish this need, the current study explored organizational success for steel industry in China. The main objective of the study was to explore the role of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management in attaining competitive advantage and organizational success.

Several previous studies have dealt with a subject like organizational success. The current study, however, still makes significant literary contributions. First, in previous literature, there have been discussion only about the relationship of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management with organizational success; but there are rare studies that have dealt with the impact of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management on organizational success at the same time. The current study, making a distinction in literature, presents combined research analyzing the relationship of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management with organizational success. Second, the achievement of competitive advantage is vital to organizational success. Previous studies have checked only direct relationship between competitive advantage and organizational

success, without giving attention to the mediating role of competitive advantage between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success. The present study, analyzing the mediating effects of competitive advantage between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success, makes a significant contribution to this domain. Third, the current study is distinct in the sense that it examines a collective and reciprocal relationship between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management, competitive advantage, and organizational success for Chinese organizations.

The current study is divided into five parts: the first part dealt with introduction; the second part presents the literature review and proposes research hypotheses to express the relationship between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management, competitive advantage, and organizational success. The third part contains research methodology and presents how hypotheses were tested for final results. The fourth part puts forward the results of the study. The fifth part presents the discussion of the research outcomes. In the end, there are study implications, conclusion, and limitations.

2. Literature Review

There has been a wide debate on the relationship between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management, competitive advantage, and organizational success. This section mentions these previous studies in order to construct hypotheses for this study. It has been felt that firms adopt effective channels and techniques for marketing communication, with the objective to better introduce their products, give clear and understandable information about products like price and portfolios, and to interact with company representatives, points of sale, as well as make the audience understand the company itself (Othman *et al.*, 2020). Krizanova *et al.* (2019) conducted a study on Slovak hotel industry, and examined the impact of marketing communication effectiveness on business success. The study found that firms which play an active role in making marketing communication effective, can reach the target audience, attract them to listen to company sponsors or influencers, inform them about the company products, and make them understand the products and company. The increasing customers' intimacy with the company and products results in their inclination to make purchases at consistent rate even at higher rate. These initiatives lead to sustainable higher profits which determines company success.

Labanauskaitė *et al.* (2020) state that business firms, applying an effective marketing communication, not only directly influence consumers perceptions about their products but they also guide influencers, channel partners, and retailers how to interact with the consumers while delivering the products as to impress them, gain customer retention and increase. Hence, business firms are able to expand their practices, earn more, and save for future. Such a strategy determine the achievement of long term goals and organizational success. Likewise, Cuevas-Vargas *et al.* (2021) check the relationship between marketing communication, marketing innovation, and business success. Data was obtained from a sample of 230 business owners from Aguascalientes and Mexico. The study found that, under an effective marketing communication, a company not relies only on traditional means of advertisement, communication, and transportation, but they also need to adopt innovative technologies and take support of internet services. Applying the modern means in marketing, it becomes easy to introduce and deliver products effectively in time. As a result, the company can achieve organizational success. This argument leads to the first hypothesis of the study.

H1: Marketing communication effectiveness has a positive association with organizational success.

One of the fundamental goals of a business organization is to set large market for their products and services and to sustain a firm marketing position. Different plans and strategies are formulated to accomplish this goal. An effective customer information management keeps the organizational management aware of customers' preferences, the brands which the majority of the customers are inclined towards, and the change in market trends. It helps to formulate and implement the organizational marketing plans and strategies to achieve its marketing goals. Hence, effective customers' information management enables organizations to attain success (Gil-Gomez *et al.*, 2020). Khan *et al.* (2022) examine the customer information management and organizational success. A total of 217 questionnaires were utilized to collect data from registered firms in Islamabad and Rawalpindi under the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). The study implied that business organizations which establish customer information management and implement its practices effectively, have influential contact with the customers. The committed customers evaluate the products of the same brand and have intention to purchase these products to fulfill the needs instead of trying the products from other brands. This often protects the company from sudden fall in total sales. Therefore, customer management leads organizations to attain success.

Prohl-Schwenke and Kleinaltenkamp (2021) examined the relationship between customer information management and organizational success. The study claims that when a business organization utilizes personal contacts, electric devices, different online or offline communication platforms, and websites, it also administers customers' information, and may evaluate the preferences common to its customers. Such organizations form strategies to achieve the operational and marketing goals according to the acquired knowledge from processed information. It brings an improvement in business

operations, products quality, and customer services. As a result, the customer information management enables the organization to be successful throughout its life. This argument leads to the second hypothesis of the study.

H2: Customer information management has a positive association with organizational success

Marketing communication effectiveness gives a chance to organization to inform consumers in target audience about product features, benefits, reduction in delivery time, and protection to consumers during interaction or use of the products. The effort to make effective communication enables the firm to achieve competitive advantage that turn the consumers to brand seeking their needs fulfilled. The expansion in group of customers linked to the company assures organizational success. Thus, competitive advantage mediates between marketing communication effectiveness and organizational success (Na *et al.*, 2019). Dwityas *et al.* (2020), too, investigated the relationship between marketing communication effectiveness, competitive advantage, and organizational success. A qualitative research approach with an in-depth interview technique was applied to collect data from Kompas Media Nusantara, Indonesia. The study posited that the focus of the company management on marketing communication effectiveness, stirs them to use agile and eco-logical friendly ways to interact with the target segment and deliver their products to customers. By reducing the sales cycle, improving responsiveness, cutting down the cost, improving products quality, and decreasing negative company impacts, it provides competitive advantage. With the acquisition of competitive advantage company may secure a specific position in the market. It assists the organization to attain success in implementing sales plans. Al Badi (2018) examines marketing communication effectiveness, marketing mix, competitive advantage, and organizational success. The study was conducted in SME industry of Al Buraimi region in Oman and data was collected from 100 SMEs through questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to infer about the research hypotheses. The study infers that organizational effectiveness in marketing communication, applying innovative technologies, marketing staff training, and incorporating eco-friendly techniques in marketing process, creates competitive advantage. As a result, the situation is favorable and organization success is easily achieved. Puspaningrum (2020) also explained that competitive advantage, associated with product quality, product pricing, and branding, can play a critical role in winning the market. Marketing communication is meant to deliver the company message towards the target audience, which can be effective to gain competitive advantage only when the company can offer best product quality, cheaper products, and top branding. The achievement of competitive advantage also strengthens the firms' position in the market and improve their capacity to earn higher over a long-term period. Thus, competitive advantage mediates between marketing communication effectiveness and organizational success. This argument leads to the third hypothesis of the study.

H3: Competitive advantage plays a significant mediating role between marketing communication effectiveness and organizational success.

With an effective customer information management, company representatives or influencers can better reach the targeted audience and can develop two-way communication with them. They can provide knowledge about the products features minutely, differentiate them from those of rival firms, share operational efficiency, and give a good knowledge about customer service quality. As a result, competitive advantage from effective two-way communication with customers, operational efficiency and product quality, and customer retention as well are achieved. Along with competitive advantage, firms are able to shed fear of rival competition and can perform actively with enacting their plans for business successfully. Hence, competitive advantage is a linkage between customer information management and organizational success (Farida; Setiawan, 2022). Distanont (2020) integrates the relationship between customer information, competitive advantage, and organizational success. For this purpose, questionnaires were distributed to 279 SMEs in frozen food industry in central Thailand. The analytical techniques like exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used. The study claimed that an effective customer information management increases intimacy between organizations and customers and results in the achievement of competitive advantage. The competitive advantage increases organization's potential against rivals and derives its success.

Haseeb *et al.* (2019) identify the relationship between customer information, competitive advantage, and organizational success. For the research, first-hand data were required and authors chose an email survey for data collection. A sum of 500 questionnaires were directed towards managerial staff of SMEs in Malaysia applying a simple random sampling technique. Smart PLS 3.0 was used for analysis. The study implied that organizations using the customer information management with digital technologies and applications to acquire, store, process, maintain, and distribute information about customers, get aware of the customers' wants and preferences. In an effort of accomplish the wants and needs, organization attain competitive advantage which make organization successful. This argument leads to the fourth hypothesis of the study.

H4: Competitive advantage plays a significant mediating role between the customer information management and organizational success.

Based on the hypothetical framework as stated above, a research model was designed as shown in Figure 1:

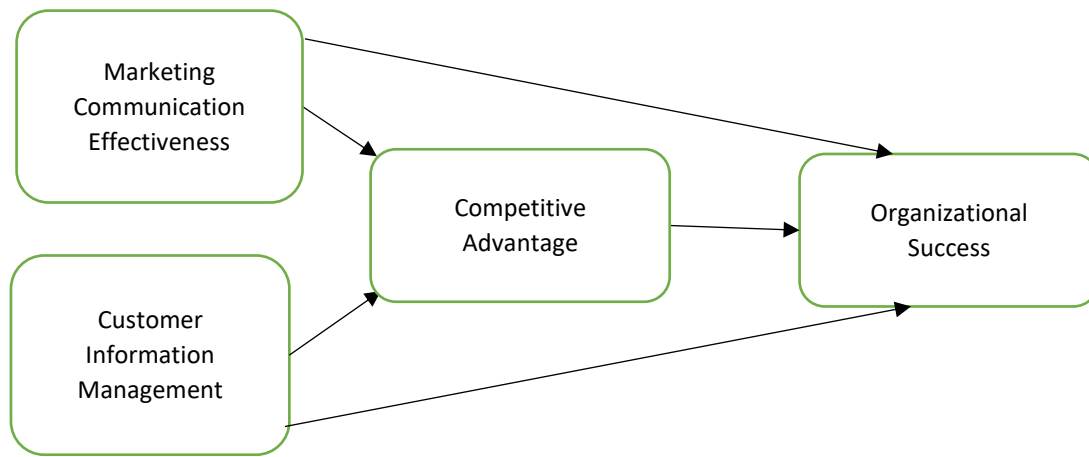


Figure 1: Research Model.

3. Research Methodology

This study examines the impact of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management on organizational success, and also investigates the mediating role of competitive advantage between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success of steel industry in China. The study used survey questionnaires to gather the primary data from marketing department employees of steel industry in China. The questionnaire items were retrieved from previous studies, for example, marketing communication effectiveness was measured with four questions extracted from **Hänninen and Karjaluoto (2017)**; customer information management was measured with five questions extracted from **Rodríguez and Boyer (2020)**; competitive advantage was measured with six questions taken from **Singh et al. (2019)**; and organizational success was measured with four questions adopted from **Yazici (2020)**. These measurements and constructs are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurements of the Constructs.

Variables	Items	Questions	Sources
Marketing Communication Effectiveness (MCE)	MCE1	Market evaluator contacts us with the adequate frequency. They provide useful information for our business.	(Hänninen; Karjaluoto, 2017)
	MCE2	They use suitable communications channels for us.	
	MCE3	Their communications are efficient.	
	MCE4	They actively communicate solutions for improving our production.	
Customer Information Management (CIM)	CIM1	I extensively use CIM technology to perform my job.	(Rodríguez; Boyer, 2020)
	CIM2	Compared to other in sales, I am oriented in the CIM system I utilize.	
	CIM3	I consider myself a frequent user of my company's CIM technology.	
	CIM4	I fully utilize the capabilities of our CIM system.	
	CIM5	I have completely integrated the CIM application into my sales process.	
Competitive Advantage (CA)	CA1	My firm's products are better than its competitors.	(Singh et al., 2019)
	CA2	My firm's R&D capabilities are better than its competitors.	
	CA3	My firm's managerial capabilities are better than its competitors.	
	CA4	My firm's profitability is better than its competitors.	
	CA5	My firm's image is better than its competitors.	
	CA6	My firm's competitive advantage is better than its competitors.	
Organizational Success (OS)	OS1	Perceptions on external organizational performance, such as increased market share.	(Yazici, 2020)
	OS2	Perceptions on external organizational performance, such as increased positive reputation of the organization.	
	OS3	Perceptions on internal organizational performance, increased employee retention.	
	OS4	Perceptions on internal organizational performance, increased customer value, project alignment with organization's sustainability vision.	

The sample comprised employees of the marketing department of the steel industry in China. Survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected employees using mail along with personal visits. A total of 606 questionnaires were distributed but only 357 valid surveys were received that constituted 58.91 percent response rate. The study used smart-PLS to check the data reliability along with association between variables. It is a commonly used statistical tool that deals with the primary data and provides best results even if researchers used complex models or large data sets (**Hair Jr et al., 2020**).

4. Results and Findings

The correlation among items was first checked to determine the convergent validity of the items. The outcomes exposed that factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values were not less than 0.50. In addition, the outcomes revealed that the Alpha and composite reliability (CR) values were not less than 0.70. These values exposed a high correlation between items. These values were given in Table 2.

Table 2: Convergent Validity.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Competitive Advantage	CA1	0.831	0.860	0.896	0.591
	CA2	0.824			
	CA3	0.736			
	CA4	0.773			
	CA5	0.759			
	CA6	0.679			
Customer Information Management	CIM1	0.908	0.904	0.929	0.723
	CIM2	0.815			
	CIM3	0.810			
	CIM4	0.823			
	CIM5	0.892			
Marketing Communication Effectiveness	MCE1	0.827	0.892	0.925	0.756
	MCE2	0.904			
	MCE3	0.885			
	MCE4	0.860			
Organizational Success	OS1	0.785	0.794	0.865	0.616
	OS2	0.811			
	OS3	0.777			
	OS4	0.767			

The study checked the correlation among variables called discriminant validity. The outcomes of Fornell Larcker and cross-loadings exposed that the values that exposed the correlation among variable itself were not less than the values that exposed the correlation among other variables. These values exposed a low correlation between variables. These values are given in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Fornell Larcker.

	CA	CIM	MCE	OS
CA	0.768			
CIM	0.472	0.851		
MCE	0.451	0.536	0.869	
OS	0.672	0.602	0.641	0.785

Table 4: Cross-loadings.

	CA	CIM	MCE	OS
CA1	0.831	0.380	0.434	0.610
CA2	0.824	0.378	0.289	0.541
CA3	0.736	0.449	0.406	0.527
CA4	0.773	0.295	0.351	0.500
CA5	0.759	0.304	0.229	0.463
CA6	0.679	0.350	0.338	0.425
CIM1	0.425	0.908	0.483	0.542
CIM2	0.398	0.815	0.425	0.522
CIM3	0.355	0.810	0.456	0.447
CIM4	0.387	0.823	0.459	0.511
CIM5	0.436	0.892	0.458	0.530
MCE1	0.303	0.467	0.827	0.466
MCE2	0.395	0.450	0.904	0.568
MCE3	0.389	0.451	0.885	0.608
MCE4	0.464	0.498	0.860	0.570
OS1	0.540	0.437	0.556	0.785
OS2	0.661	0.457	0.534	0.811
OS3	0.451	0.534	0.440	0.777
OS4	0.429	0.475	0.473	0.767

The study also checked the correlation between variables to determine the discriminant validity. The outcomes of Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio exposed that the values of all items were not bigger than 0.85. These values exposed a low correlation between variables. These values are given in Table 5 and Figure 2 showing the measurement assessment model.

Table 5: Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio.

	CA	CIM	MCE	OS
CA				
CIM	0.530			
MCE	0.501	0.599		
OS	0.794	0.712	0.751	

The outcomes revealed that marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management have a positive association with organizational success of steel industry in China; hence, H1 and H2 were accepted. The results

also exposed that the competitive advantage significantly mediates between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management and organizational success of steel industry in China and H3 and H4 were accepted. These associations are given in Table 6 and Figure 3 showing the structural assessment model.

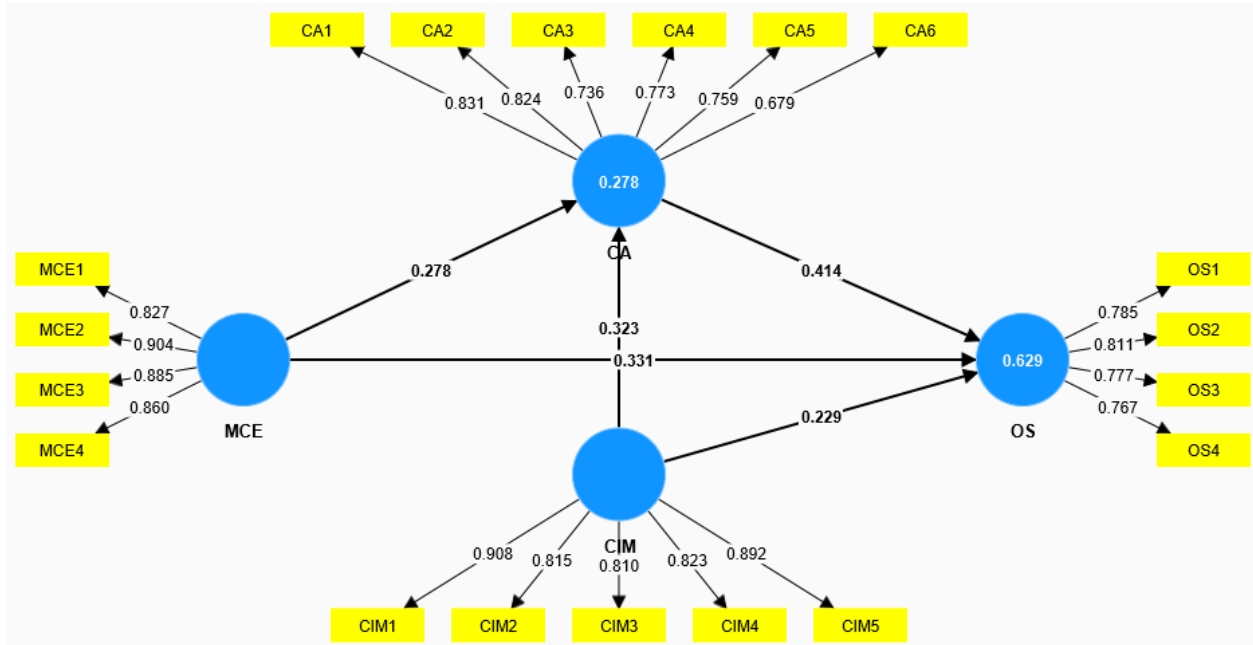


Figure 2: Measurement Assessment Model.

Table 6: Path Analysis

Relationships	Beta	Standard Deviation	T statistics	P values
CA -> OS	0.414	0.045	9.213	0.000
CIM -> CA	0.323	0.056	5.765	0.000
CIM -> OS	0.229	0.042	5.413	0.000
MCE -> CA	0.278	0.058	4.771	0.000
MCE -> OS	0.331	0.048	6.856	0.000
CIM -> CA -> OS	0.134	0.026	5.095	0.000
MCE -> CA -> OS	0.115	0.030	3.826	0.000

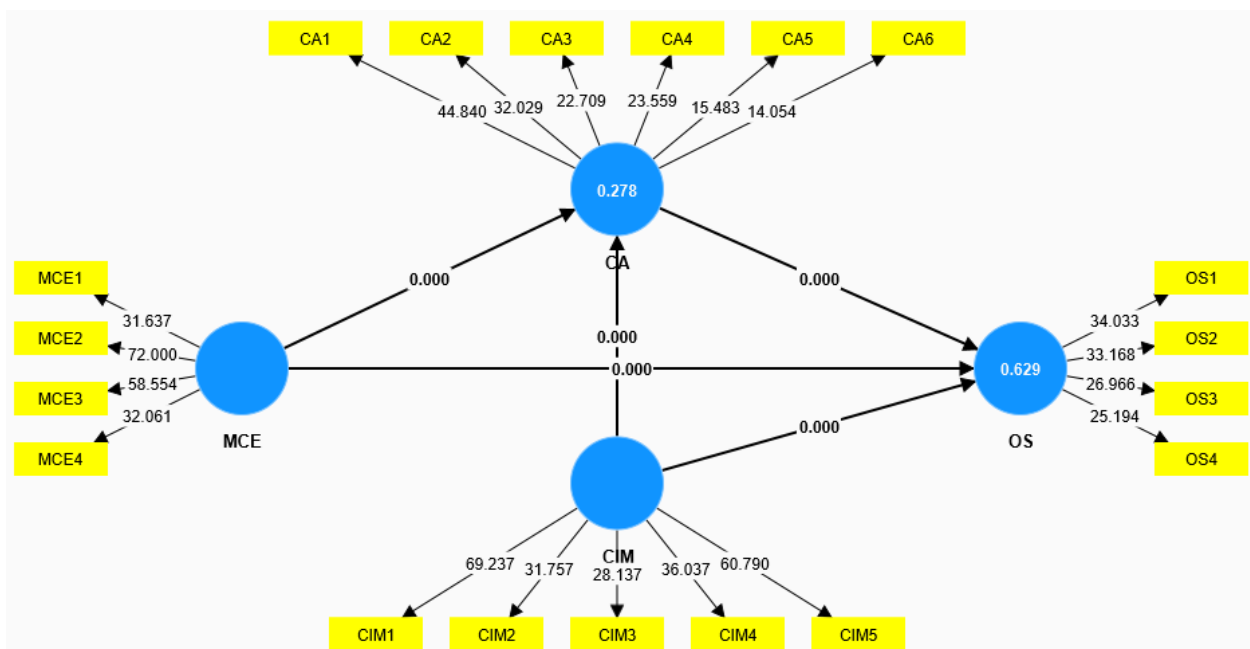


Figure 3: Structural Assessment Model.

5. Discussion

The study results reveal that marketing communication effectiveness has a positive association with organizational success. These results are supported by **Falahat et al. (2020)**, which also highlighted that through marketing

communication effectiveness consumers can be attracted towards the brand, in order to accomplish their needs, make new customers, and retain the potential customers. This helps in enlarging the sales scope and organizational success is possible for the firms to achieve. These results are also in line with **Dahiya and Gayatri** (2018), which examines the role of marketing communication effectiveness in organizational success. The study highlights that through effective communication in firms makes stakeholders aware of the company's social and environment friendly initiatives. It turns their inclination to the company for dealings and leads it to attain organizational success.

The study results also indicated that customer information management has a positive association with organizational success. These results are supported by **Varadarajan** (2020), which implied that organizations acquire periodical data about customers and generate information by processing the data. The information system itself and the knowledge about the changes in customers desires and preferences in market, motivates organization management to adopt innovative technologies or innovation in its culture. These changes prove to be value adding and enables the organizations to meet their goals successfully. These results are also in line with **Sutrisno et al.** (2023), which claims that customer information management enlightens the company representatives when customers wanted from company during interaction and purchase of the goods. The company representatives get ready to deal with the customers and influence them to be committed. In result of customer commitment, organizational success can be achieved.

The study results also showed that competitive advantage plays a significant mediating role between marketing communication effectiveness and organizational success. These results are supported by **Udriyah et al.** (2019), which proclaims that if marketing communication is effective, competitive advantage can also be achieved by the company. The achievement of competitive advantage helps firms outperform the rivals in market and secure a significant position. So, a situation is created that firms have a successful business. These results are also in line with **Herman** (2018), which proclaims that in an effective marketing communication digital technologies for communication and eco-friendly technologies for transportation were applied. These are the competitive advantage disclosing social-friendly efforts and company can raise market successfully. The study results indicate that competitive advantage plays a significant mediating role between the customer information management and organizational success. These results are supported by **Lorenzo et al.** (2018), which highlights that an effective customer information management, generates useful information about customers and provides a source to interact with the customers individually and more closely. Effective customer relationship is the way to attain competitive advantage and be successful in the market. These results are also in line with **Xuhua et al.** (2019), which posits that the competitive advantage achieved under an effective customer information management, adds to organizational success.

6. Conclusion

Authors wanted to explore the impact of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management on organizational success. Their aim was also to check the role of competitive advantage between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management, and organizational success. Authors adopted survey method and quantitative data were collected from Chinese business organizations. The study results showed a positive association of marketing communication effectiveness and customer information management with organizational success. The study results demonstrated that when a company carries effective marketing communication, it could transfer the right information regarding product, price, company effects, customer services, and sales points etc. to the target audience. It makes the customer understand and make purchase decision. It increases the total sales for a period and retain customers. Hence, effective marketing communication can lead the company to achieve organizational success. The results also highlighted that under an effective customer relationship management, information about customers is managed and strong relations with the customers are built. It enables the firm to enact business plans. In this situation, organizational management and operations are adaptive to changes in customers' expectations and marketing trends. It leads the organization towards success. The results also showed that competitive advantage plays a mediating role between marketing communication effectiveness, customer information management, and organizational success. The effective marketing communication and customer information management helps company attain competitive advantage which provides assistance for organizational success.

The success of a business means the success of economy. A nation's economy is the combination of multiple persons or organizations performing business practices. Hence, the methods identified in the current study to gain organizational success are significant to economies like that of China. The present study gives directions to businesses how to achieve the goal of organizational success. The study posits that company administrators, with the cooperation of employees, must pay heed to improve marketing communication effectiveness so that the primary goal of organizational success can be achieved. The study recommends that company administrators must establish customer information management and form policies to have quality information about customers. Hence, they may achieve organizational success. The study also suggests business administrators that through policy formation or modification they must struggle to improve marketing communication effectiveness. It would create the situation that company may attain competitive advantage and the goal of organizational success can be achieved as well. Furthermore, the study

conveys that company administrators should enforce policies to have useful customer information. It would be helpful to attain the competitive advantage and thereby, the company management may accomplish the organizational success goals. Finally, study can act as a guide to the regulators and policy makers to design such regulations that can help to achieve organizational success using effective marketing communication and customer information management.

The present study also faces some limitations and require some modification in its framework and methodology. The current study checks the relationship of only two factors like marketing communication effectiveness and customer relationship management with organizational success. It completely ignored the role of financial resources, technological innovation, and human resources management in organizational success even though these are the considerable factors. The future researchers may discuss these factors in relation with organizational success. Moreover, in order to conduct the present study data was managed from Chinese businesses. The relations proposed by the study may not be equally valid in other countries. Hence, future researchers should examine research models applicable on different countries.

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