

Sustainable Market Orientation: Its Applicability in Conservation and Tourism Management

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Abstract

This thesis explores the strengths and weaknesses of market orientation as a corporate management concept and identifies opportunities to increase its value through an increased focus on environmental and social management. It proposes the integration of two management paradigms; market orientation and sustainable development as sustainable market orientation. The market orientation attributes include market and customer responsiveness, market intelligence organisational integration, profitable performance. Sustainability management attributes include balanced strategic management of environmental, social and economic strategy elements, long term intergenerational strategy horizons and social equity. The second part of the thesis reports on exploratory research to evaluate the managerial usefulness of the SMO concept in both public administration and business management. Case study research was conducted in a New Zealand regional tourism community where the integration of economic, social and environmental management is a critical aspect of strategy management. The value of the SMO conceptual model as a management frame was confirmed in both the public and private sectors. Sustainability based management was found to be most advanced in the public sector case, but identifiable elements of sustainability strategy were found in the private sector cases. Management implications of applying an SMO are discussed. The most challenging is to develop mechanisms that achieve a balance in long term environmental, social and economic strategy.

The research provides a basis for replication research to further understand SMO management in different organisations, industries and cultures. The long term objective is development of normative management constructs and performance metrics.