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Mind the gap: The mediating role of mindful marketing between market and quality orientations, their interaction, and consequences

Naresh K. Malhotra, Olivia F. Lee, Can Uslay,

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# Mind the gap

## The mediating role of mindful marketing between market and quality orientations, their interaction, and consequences

The role  
of mindful  
marketing

607

Naresh K. Malhotra

*Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

Olivia F. Lee

*School of Business and Management, Northwest University, Kirkland,  
Washington, USA, and*

Can Usley

*Rutgers Business School, Rutgers University, Piscataway, New Jersey, USA*

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to integrate the distinctive streams of research on market orientation, quality orientation, and organizational mindfulness, and examine the mediating role of mindful marketing between market orientation and quality orientation, and their linkages to two emerging key outcomes: mindful consumption and value co-creation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Based on extant orientation and organizational mindfulness research, a conceptual framework is presented to characterize the nomological network among market and quality orientations, mindful marketing, mindful consumption and value co-creation. In total, 14 propositions are extracted.

**Findings** – The paper proposes that the synergistic interaction of market and quality orientation has a direct influence on mindful marketing, which in turn influences two outcomes: mindful consumption and value co-creation. The dual moderating role of market structure is also incorporated among the findings.

**Practical implications** – The proposed framework demonstrates how managers can emphasize market and/or quality orientation in order to develop an optimal mindful marketing strategy that would take the stakeholders' intrinsic benefits into account. It is suggested that this approach will lead to mindful consumption and increase the opportunities for value co-creation among the stakeholders, which will ultimately lead to better organizational performance.

**Originality/value** – The paper represents a first attempt to integrate two strategic orientations, and the concept of mindfulness. It examines the intimate relationship between market and quality orientations and how they jointly lead to the development of mindful marketing. It also explores the role of two emerging constructs in marketing: mindful consumption and value co-creation.

**Keywords** Marketing strategy, Market orientation, Quality orientation, Organizational mindfulness, Mindful consumption, Value co-creation

**Paper type** Conceptual paper



At the time the research was undertaken, Can Usley was at Argyros School of Business and Economics, Chapman University, Orange, CA, USA and Olivia Lee was at the Department of Marketing and International Business, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA.

## 1. Introduction

Mindful marketing is an increasingly important notion that aligns marketers' and consumers' interests in the marketing process. Also known as exemplary marketing, mindful marketing carries an important mission to cultivate mindful consumption through effective, efficient, and ethical ways, while instantaneously considering the interests of both buyers and sellers (Sheth and Sisodia, 2006; Sheth *et al.*, 2011). The fundamental objective is for the marketers to seek ways to create win-win strategies by thoughtfully aligning marketing functions with consumers' interests in mind, and avoid being involved in wasteful, unethical, and/or dumb marketing (Sheth and Sisodia, 2006). As today's consumers are facing with many choices when making a consumption decision, often times the overwhelming choices and marketing propaganda diminish their motivation and ability to choose, and their satisfaction with the chosen option (Malhotra, 1984; Scheibehenne *et al.*, 2009). The consequent outcome is either under- or over-consumption (Sheth *et al.*, 2011). Recognizing this inherent dilemma, marketers must seek ways to develop relational solutions where consumers' needs can be optimally fulfilled.

Mindful marketing is a customer-centric approach that is inherently linked with the concepts of market and quality orientations (QO). Market orientation (MO) has been a cornerstone of marketing thought on the premise that its successful implementation will engender sustainable advantage, and satisfy customers more effectively than competitors (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). While MO has evolved as both a cultural and a behavioral philosophy that underpins the success of many organizations (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000), QO, on the other hand, is often adopted from an operation or service perspective. A concurrent focus on MO and QO is lacking in marketing literature even though they are both considered sources of superior business performance (Sittimalakorn and Hart, 2004), and product/service quality may be a part of the complex chain between MO, innovation, and organizational performance (Kirca *et al.*, 2005). Some scholars noted the need to identify and study additional barriers when adopting a single orientation (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Achieving an optimal or even an acceptable level of MO remains challenging especially when buyers and sellers disagree in their perceptions of it (Steinmann *et al.*, 2000).

This paper aims to fill this research gap by integrating three distinctive streams of research in MO, QO, and organizational mindfulness. It represents a first attempt to integrate marketing and organization research on mindfulness to date with market and QO perspectives. The proposed framework demonstrates how the two strategic orientations can be levered to facilitate the implementation of mindful marketing which in turn leads to desirable organizational and societal outcomes.

The organization of the rest of the article is as follows: first, we provide a review of the emerging literature on organizational mindfulness. Second, we examine the similarity and differences between market and QO, and present a nomological network that links these key constructs to mindful marketing, mindful consumption, and value co-creation. We then develop 14 propositions to substantiate the presented framework. We conclude with managerial implications and research directions.

## 2. A conceptual overview of mindfulness

Mindfulness shares conceptual ideas advanced by several philosophical and psychological traditions including ancient Greek philosophy, phenomenology, naturalism, existentialism, and transcendentalism. The term mindfulness originates

from the Pali language word *sati*, meaning “to remember” as a mode of consciousness that commonly signifies presence of mind (Guranatana, 2009). This seemingly simple concept has been widely adopted by various academic disciplines and theorized to have widespread effects on human functioning and behavior, in particular, on mental health and well-being, physical health, self-regulation, and interpersonal behavior (Brown *et al.*, 2007).

Early mindfulness research focused on examining its basic characteristics with relevance to social issues related to health, business, and education. Studies of health ramifications were among the earliest topics of mindfulness research. These works examined issues such as aging and control. Due to its potential business outcomes, managers were also eager to utilize techniques that would increase mindfulness in the work environment. Studies of mindfulness in business contexts found that a higher level of mindfulness is associated with increased creativity, and decreased burnout. Education is also an area that often seems to be affiliated with this topic. A summary of important educational ramifications of mindfulness are succinctly covered in the book, *The Power of Mindful Learning* by Langer (1997). Table I provides a synopsis of mindfulness definitions.

### 2.1 What is a mindful organization?

In recent years, mindfulness has been introduced into organizational studies via the examination of individuals and collective mindfulness within an organization. Organizational mindfulness is broadly defined as the connection and sharing of the mindfulness of individuals to create new meaning and knowledge that will help both individuals and the organization achieve greater congruence between their intentions and outcomes (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006). Being mindful is crucial to reaching strategic goals and overall mission, and it is central to leading and facilitating collaboration in communities and organizations. A mindful mode of operation involves a receptive state of mind, wherein attention is focused on the facts observed. It generates awareness and attention that permit individuals and organization to “be present” to reality as it is, rather than to react to it or habitually process it through conceptual filters (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007). Underlying organizational mindfulness is a high level of receptivity to failures and unexpected events. Interpretation of subtle cues occurs in operational processes as suggested by the organization’s environment; and flexibility and capacity

Perspective	Definition	References
Psychological	Mindfulness reflects refers to the cognitive qualities of individuals’ state of alertness and lively awareness that is characterized by: –Active information processing –Continual creation of new categories and distinctions –Explore and attention to multiple perspectives –Awareness of context	Langer (1989)
Psychological	Mindfulness is a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience	Brown <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Organizational	Mindfulness is an ongoing identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and current functioning. It requires constant scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement, and differentiation of expectations	Weick and Sutcliffe (2007)

**Table I.**  
Definitions of  
mindfulness

to engage in wide range of actions to effectively respond to potentially diverse and changing set of stimuli. It entails consistent patterns of interaction among processes of perception and cognition that “induce a rich awareness of details and a capacity for actions” (Weick *et al.*, 1999, p. 88).

### *2.2 Mindfulness versus mindlessness and less-mindfulness*

Mindfulness requires a desire to update situational awareness on a continuing basis, to cast doubt, and probe further to resolve doubtfulness. Mindlessness, on the other hand, is characterized by decreased activation of the cognitive; the resulting state is a reliance on past categories, like an “automatic pilot”. Mindlessness may also occur when individuals cannot do anything about what they see (Langer, 1989). Mindlessness is likely to take place when organizations are inattentive to possible failures and emerging threats, and overwhelmed with internal operations and external environments. When fewer cognitive processes are activated, organizations tend to rely on past categories and fixation on a single perspective without awareness that things could be otherwise. Although mindfulness and mindlessness appear to be on the opposite side of each other, Levinthal and Rerup (2006) argued that critical elements of less-mindful processes are essential elements underlying mindfulness. While mindful behaviors focus on novelty in response to changing and unique circumstances, less-mindful behaviors emphasize the role of continuity as a mechanism to preserve accumulated experience. Hence, these authors concluded that the complementarity of the two is helpful to understand overall organizational processes (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998).

## **3. Conceptual model and propositions**

Drawing from three separate streams of literature in MO, QO, and organizational mindfulness, we present a proposed framework that considers the interaction between MO and QO, the mediating role of mindful marketing, and the corresponding link to two organizational outcomes: mindful consumption and value co-creation.

### *3.1 Mindful marketing*

Mindful marketing transforms mindful consumption to a business and societal opportunity by generating win-win solutions that consider the triple bottom lines of planet, people, and profit (Sheth *et al.*, 2011). It brings about loyal and satisfied customers, productive and fulfilled employees, and happy shareholders by aligning the company and customers’ ultimately shared interests (Drucker, 1973; Sheth and Sisodia, 2006). In contrast, in the mindless (or traditional) view of marketing, the prevalent goal has been to sell more through market exchange, and therefore increase consumption (Sheth and Uslay, 2007; Sheth *et al.*, 2011). Such mindless, cluttered marketing can hurt marketers due to information overload and resentment (Malhotra, 1982, 1984; Malhotra *et al.*, 1982). Both consumer information overload and resentment can lead to sub-optimal decision-making and under-consumption. For example, it has been reported that overt product placements can destroy rather than create value (Karniouchina *et al.*, 2011).

Moreover, even when excessive marketing succeeds in persuading the consumers to buy, it can be harmful for the firm’s bottom line. That is, campaigns that are designed for market share growth without considering strategy and context can actually hurt the financial performance of firms, large and small (Uslay *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, mindful marketing can be useful by enabling the firms to achieve the size for optimal

performance in the short as well as the long run. Mindful marketing involves the revision of the whole spectrum of marketing and includes mindful product (e.g. mindful design), price (e.g. that includes environmental and societal costs), place (e.g. convenient, shared use), and promotion (e.g. reduced waste) (Sheth *et al.*, 2011). It also encompasses the service-dominant logic of marketing through a reassessment of people, processes, and physical environment. Overall, it also aligned with the emerging notion of marketing 3.0 where 1.0 represents product-centric marketing, and 2.0 represents consumer-centric marketing, and 3.0 represents human and values-centric marketing (Kotler *et al.*, 2010). Tables II and III depict the main ingredients to mindful marketing and contrast them to traditional marketing.

### 3.2 Market and quality orientations

*Market orientation.* The origins of MO can be traced back to the main pillar of the marketing discipline – the marketing concept (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990;

Mindfulness principles Weick and Sutcliffe (2006)	Mindful marketing Sheth and Sisodia (2006), Sheth <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Marketing 3.0 Kotler <i>et al.</i> (2010)
1. Preoccupation with failure	Advance mindful consumption-oriented marketing with precautionary principle approach; engage in ongoing scrutiny of expectations	Avoid brand name to be hijacked; allow consumers to co-create, and minimize product and service failure
2. Reluctance to simplify	Celebrate the fact that consumer preferences are not uniform	Take pride in corporate mission, vision, and values
3. Sensitivity to operations	Avoid over-marketing; aggressive pricing and promotions; over-hyped advertising; hard sell and inconsiderate techniques	Use functional, emotional, and spiritual value propositions to promote value-based marketing
4. Commitment to resilience	Promote the 3Ps of sustainability: planet, people, and profit	Promote the triple bottom line model to target mankind's mind, heart, and spirit
5. Deference to expertise	Organize membership clubs and community action committees; use mindful consumption evangelists to promote customer-centric sustainability	Encourage many-to-many collaboration; employees act as value ambassadors

**Table II.**  
Mindfulness principles and marketing

Marketing discipline	Traditional marketing	Mindful marketing 3.0
Product	The four Ps (product, price, place, promotion) Service-dominant logic (people, processes, physical environment)	Customer-centric value co-creation
Customer	Segmentation, targeting, positioning	Mindful consumption and communization
Brand	Brand building	Community and character building

**Table III.**  
Main tenets of traditional versus mindful marketing

Uslay *et al.*, 2009). It has been viewed as a form of organizational culture (Deshpandé and Farley, 1998), competitor and customer oriented, coordinated practices (Narver and Slater, 1990), and as organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to customer needs, dissemination and responsiveness of the intelligence across departments (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). Some authors have stressed that it can be problematic to examine and capture MO as an organizational culture even when investigating non-multinational, focused firms (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). The competitor focus and addressing customers' latent needs are intelligence-related activities. Hence, we adopt Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) view where MO is represented by three dimensions:

- (1) intelligence generation;
- (2) intelligence dissemination; and
- (3) responsiveness.

Intelligence generation refers to the collection and assessment of customers' needs and preferences, and forces related to task and macro environments (including those of competitors) that influence the development and refinement of those needs. Intelligence dissemination refers to the process and extent of market information exchange within the organization. Responsiveness is action taken in response to intelligence that is generated and disseminated (Kohli *et al.*, 1993). Organizations that embrace the practice of mindfulness are receptive to new information when assessing and collecting market intelligence. Being mindful increases awareness of discriminatory details, and engages in ongoing scrutiny and differentiation of existing expectations based on newer experiences. Such market intelligence does not normalize occurrences into familiar events but rather captures unique features that may provide insightful nuances that are useful for the mindful marketing process. Mindfulness in intelligence dissemination and responsiveness involve flexible communication structures where people are entrusted in decision making, and when necessary defer to expertise (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007). Thus, we propose that:

- P1.* Market orientation is positively related to mindful marketing through its underlying three dimensions (a) intelligence generation (b) dissemination, and (c) responsiveness.

*Quality orientation.* It has been defined differently in various disciplines with two fundamental premises:

- (1) Reducing variation in operational processes and routines.
- (2) Organization-wide commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of customer-perceived quality (Deming, 2000; Oliver, 2009).

Quality dimensions for product development and manufacturing goods, in general, focus on tangible aspect of product quality in relation to operation process and defective rate (Taguchi *et al.*, 2004). In contrast, the quality of service products focuses on unique characteristics including intangibility, inseparability, simultaneity, heterogeneity, and non-inventory (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). The contemporary variant of quality measures such as the six sigma focuses on zero defect rate or near-perfect product and services (Pande *et al.*, 2000).

Quality gurus are resolute in their insistence that strategic management commitment is a necessity for successful implementation of quality programs (Deming, 2000). With this in mind, we adopt the three strategic quality dimensions of:

- (1) customer focus;
- (2) continuous improvement; and
- (3) system perspective (Miles *et al.*, 1995; Sitkin *et al.*, 1994; Waldman, 1994).

Customer focus refers to meeting and satisfying customers' expectation by providing quality goods and services. Continuous improvement refers to the dedication and commitment to producing high-quality goods and services. System perspective refers to the synergetic organizational systems put in place to support the quality climate (Deming, 2000; Sitkin *et al.*, 1994; Taguchi *et al.*, 2004).

Mindful organizations develop quality indicators on defect rates and customer satisfaction. These indicators demand consistent attention on quality, and the ability to focus on clear and detailed comprehension of possible failures and factors that interfere with such comprehension. Faced with such dedication, mindful organizations are continuously preoccupied with failure as they scrutinize failure symptoms and locate pathways to recovery. Through individuals and collective commitment, mindful organizations develop effective systems for high operation reliability and strive for resilience in performance (Vogus and Welbourne, 2003; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007). Therefore:

- P2.* Quality orientation is positively related to mindful marketing through its underlying three dimensions (a) customer focus (b) continuous improvement, and (c) system perspective.

### *3.3 Interaction between market and quality orientations*

An overview of the literature on MO and QO reveals that the two constructs have some embedded similarities and overlap. As mentioned previously, a mainstream conceptualization of MO that is arguably equivalent to that of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) definition refers to MO as customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination (Deshpandé and Farley, 1999; Narver and Slater, 1990). From this lens, the customer orientation dimension of MO clearly overlaps with the customer focus dimension. Arguably, customer orientation with its emphasis on current and future needs is a broader construct and subsumes the customer focus of QO. Similarly, systems perspective and inter-functional coordination both improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency through similar communication and planning mechanisms. However, the systems perspective is much broader in scope and subsumes the inter-departmental coordination dimension of MO. Nevertheless, it appears that MO and QO reinforce one another and synergistic effects should be observed. For example, the notion of continuous improvement is unique to QO, and its interactions with MO dimensions can generate a learning/sustainable organization that conducts mindful marketing.

Although MO is externally focused and QO is internally focused relatively, they represent complementary customer-centric philosophies that aim to improve the success of a business (Mohr-Jackson, 1998). The core thrust of MO is to satisfy customers more effectively through market intelligence based on the needs and preferences of present

and future customers. Similarly, the call for organizational involvement and pursuit of customer satisfaction has been addressed by work on total quality management (TQM). The key concept of TQM fosters organization-wide commitment to satisfying customers by continuously improving every business process involved in delivering goods and services (Churchill and Peter, 1994).

The inter-functional coordination of market intelligence requires a resilient system in place. For instance, the production processes and customer service systems must work together to ensure customers' needs are consistently met. Continuously seeking ways to reduce errors and improve the quality of intelligence collection is strongly connected with the quality dimension of continuous improvement (Kohli *et al.*, 1993; Oliver, 2009). Most importantly, both orientations embrace customer-centric practices and focus on quality issues that are linked with the core values of mindfulness including preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006). The principle of total quality marketing dictates that quality and MO must be linked in order to create customer satisfaction (Kotler and Keller, 2008). However, maximizing MO or QO can have detrimental cost consequences. Uslay *et al.* (2004) suggest that (technology) firms with moderate levels of MO would perform best. Kumar *et al.* (2011) recently also reported that firms may not be able to compete without a moderate level of MO as it was the "cost of competing". Linking MO and QO constructs to mindful marketing which emphasizes moderation reveals new paths to performance (Table IV). Therefore:

*P3.* Market orientation and quality orientation have a positive synergistic effect on mindful marketing.

such that:

*P4.* Continuous improvement dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between market orientation and mindful marketing especially through its strengthening effect on responsiveness.

*P5.* Competitor orientation dimension of market orientation positively moderates the relationship between quality orientation and mindful marketing especially through its strengthening effect on continuous improvement.

*P6.* Customer focus dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between intelligence generation and mindful marketing.

*P7.* Systems perspective dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between intelligence dissemination and mindful marketing.

### *3.4 Additional moderating effects*

Although the inclusion of all moderators (external contingencies) would make our inquiry more complete, it would increase the complexity of the framework tremendously. Therefore, we examine the moderating influence of market structure (buyers' versus sellers' market continuum) which we believe serves as a reasonable proxy for several other moderators as well (e.g. competitive intensity, barriers to entry/exit, market concentration).

Consequences	Market orientation references	Quality orientation references	Implications for mindful marketing
<i>Customer</i>			
Customer satisfaction; loyalty	Slater and Narver (1994)	Sitkin <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Mindful consumption-oriented marketing focuses on intrinsic customer benefits such as reducing repetitive consumption, offerings that are easy to upgrade and repair, and allowing shared-use and reuse (Sheth <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
Perceived quality of products and services	Jaworski and Kohli (1993, 1996), Ndubisi (2011)	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> (1985)	
Superior customer value	Brady and Cronin (2001)	Pande <i>et al.</i> (2000)	
<i>Employee</i>			
Sense of pride; team spirit	Kohli and Jaworski (1990)	Pande <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Target the triple bottom line of employees' mind, heart, and spirit by providing economic (e.g. fundamental basics) social progress (e.g. create desirable work place), and environmental health (e.g. consider environment and social sustainability) so that employees will act as value ambassadors (Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Job satisfaction; reduce job conflicts	Siguaw <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Deming (2000)	
Commitment; corporation; involvement	Kohli and Jaworski (1990)	Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	
<i>Innovative</i>			
Firm innovativeness	Hult and Ketchen (2001)	Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	Creating brand names via primal belief system that generates customer passions (Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
<i>Improve new product performance (sales, profit, return on investment)</i>			
<i>Firm</i>			
Superior firm performance	Day (1994), Hult and Ketchen (2001)	Deming (2000), Pande <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Firms' long run success comes from creating shared value product and services that advance the competitiveness of the firm, and simultaneously advance the economic and social conditions of the communities (Porter and Kramer, 2011)
Continuous improvement	Kohli and Jaworski (1990)	Deming (2000), Taguchi <i>et al.</i> (2004)	
Competitive advantage	Narver and Slater (1990)	Pande <i>et al.</i> (2000), Taguchi and Clausing (1990)	

**Table IV.**  
Summary of market and quality orientation consequences and their implications for mindful marketing

Technically, a buyers' (sellers') market is a market state in which supply (demand) exceeds demand (supply). Since most all industries in the developed world today are buyers' markets according to this stringent definition, we relax the interpretation of these states to reflect a relative measure of power distribution in the industry. These states evolve, however are generally thought to be in a macro steady state for each industry at any given time. As customers become more demanding (i.e. buyer's market), the competition to acquire, maintain, and cultivate customer relationships become gradually harder, and firms are prompted to become more and more customer/market oriented in order to maintain status quo (Li and Calantone, 1998).

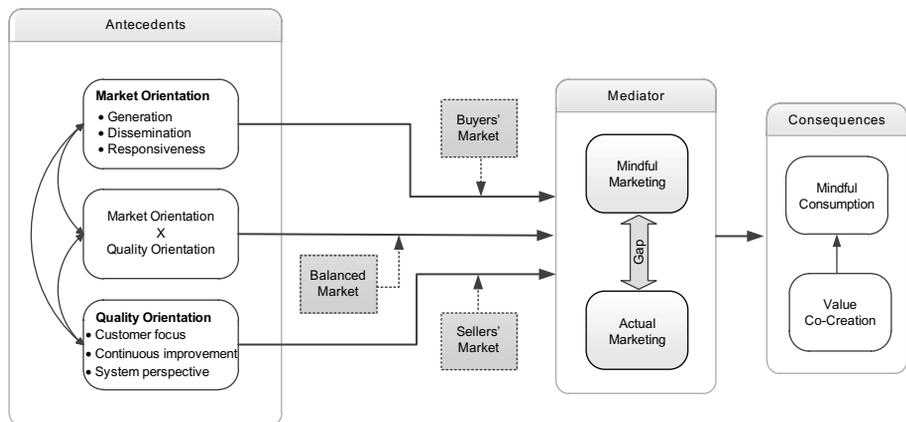
In contrast, when customer pressure and aggressive rivalry are absent, firms tend to enhance their profitability through efficiency and operational excellence, for which QO serves as an antecedent. Finally, an emphasis on MO and QO interaction emerges when the power distribution between the buyers and sellers is relatively in balance. Simultaneously emphasizing MO and QO is not necessarily the optimal strategy due to the high costs involved, and the lower likelihood of success as a result of diluted efforts (Rust *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, managers need to consider the market characteristics, as well as their outcome objectives in determining the relative importance of the dimensions and which one(s) to emphasize.

Song and Parry (2009) argued for a gap between actual and optimal levels of MO that needed to be addressed by the managers. We believe the notion of such a gap is appropriate for mindful marketing as well. The gap represents a discrepancy between optimal and actual levels of marketing spending (quantity) and effort (quality), which should be minimized. Persistently large gaps not only lead to lower performance but also haunt the decision makers in the long run in forms of lawsuits and regulation (e.g. fast food industry). Overall, market structure moderates the relationships between (a) MO (b) QO, and their outcomes, such that:

- P8. Buyers' market state positively moderates the relationship between market orientation and mindful marketing.
- P9. Sellers' market state positively moderates the relationship between quality orientation and mindful marketing.
- P10. A balanced market state positively moderates the relationship between the interaction of quality orientation and market orientation, and mindful marketing.
- P11. Aligning organizational emphasis (MO, QO, or both) with market state will decrease the gap between actual and mindful levels of marketing (Figure 1).

### 3.5 Organizational outcomes

The result of mindful marketing is greater alignment of strategic actions with organizational outcomes. Prior research indicates that successful implementation of



**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual model of  
mindful marketing as  
a mediator

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MO and/or QO will lead to higher sales growth, return on investment (Rust *et al.*, 1995), customer satisfaction, and superior business performance in general (Sittimalakorn and Hart, 2004). To limit the scope of this paper, we focus on mindful consumption and value co-creation but acknowledge that the aforementioned are possible performance outcomes for mindful marketing as well.

*Mindful consumption.* Mindful consumption-oriented marketing considers the environmental, personal, and economic well-being of the consumers. The core value of mindful consumption is based on consumers' mindset of caring for themselves, the community, and the nature. It transforms behavior into tempering their self-defeating surpluses associated with acquisitive, repetitive, and aspirational consumption (Sheth *et al.*, 2011). In that sense, mindful consumption is well-aligned with consumer well-being and quality of life (Malhotra, 2006). Excessive marketing causes the consumer wants to escalate (over-consumption) and insufficient marketing causes the consumer needs to be neglected (under-consumption) (Malhotra *et al.*, 2005). Therefore:

*P12.* Mindful marketing leads to mindful consumption.

*Value co-creation.* Value creation paradigm is sufficient to cope with the gradual shift from mass markets to segmented markets but it cannot cope with the complexity and interactive nature of customer-centric marketing in the new millennium (Sheth *et al.*, 2000). Value creation implies a single focal point (i.e. the firm) whereas value co-creation requires two or more participants, and is inherently a better model. Fulfilling the needs and wants of individual customers (i.e. personalization) requires a marketing function where the offering is conceived, designed, and sometimes consumed jointly. This can only truly happen with a value co-creation mind-set. Business-to-consumer examples of value co-creation include the higher education experience where the institution and students co-create value; business-to-business examples include contemporary marketing research where the client and the research firm work together closely. For example, film industry relies on the producers, financiers, and distributors to work together to co-create value. Most successful consulting practices also focus on value co-creation. The benefits of involving customers in product/service design are well documented (Sheth and Uslay, 2007). Even in the simple case of waste disposal, the customer adds value by collecting, sorting, and when possible helping recycle disposable items. Organizations have long realized that they can no longer act autonomously and design products, develop operation processes, create sales and advertising messages and distribution channels with little or no input from customers. Customers now seek to exercise their influence in almost every part of the marketing system. Indeed, the interaction between the organization and the customers is becoming the *locus* of value creation (Ramani and Kumar, 2008). Value creation is a special case of the broader concept of value co-creation which will play a central role in the future paradigm for marketing (Sheth and Uslay, 2007).

As more and more products and services feature consumer experiences, the markets are also becoming more and more interactive via technology connectivity (Lee and Meuter, 2011). The resulting interactions among organization and consumer communities provide organizations with a strategic weapon to generate effective co-creation experience as a basis for value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Since the process of value co-creation is driven by value-in-use, the derived value is an important underlying dimension (Vargo *et al.*, 2008). The relevance of value co-creation becomes

even more apparent when the increasing prevalence of self-service and automation is taken into account. For example, the ability to self check-in at kiosks has enabled many leisure/business travelers save time, and many airlines save on personnel costs. Similarly, the real-time communication integration via internet has enabled many businesses to streamline their supply processes to save both time and money for all involved. One of the outcomes of mindful marketing is a history of valued experiences resulting in committed customers. Marketing as an institution can only thrive with integrity (e.g. due to high-fixed cost investment in creating awareness/trial; increasing returns to scale/loyalty) and mindful marketing creates desired outcomes for parties involved. Mindful organizations exhibit high ethical values in their marketing processes with consumers' interest in mind (Table V). Furthermore, when consumers are an integral part of the value co-creation process they are more likely to appreciate the process, the outcome, and are more likely to consume for their well-being. Therefore:

*P13.* Mindful marketing leads to value co-creation.

*P14.* Value co-creation leads to mindful consumption.

A summary of our research propositions is presented in Table VI.

#### 4. Conclusion and implications

Mindful marketing is an important emerging perspective for reaching overall strategic goals. In particular, it appears central to bridging market and QO and create successful organizational and societal outcomes. In this article, we presented the mediating role of mindful marketing as an important marketing mindset and intermediary objective to achieve value co-creation and ultimately mindful consumption. Emphasizing the appropriate orientation (i.e. MO; QO, or both) based on the contingency market state

Benefits	References	Implications for mindful marketing
Collaboration, cooperation	Kalaignanam and Varadarajan (2006), Ndubisi (2011)	Join efforts among employees, customers, and firms to create sustainable win-win situations (Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Competency, competitive advantage	Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	Create shared value products and services that reinvent growth (Porter and Kramer, 2011)
Innovativeness	Lusch and Vargo (2006)	Create innovative products and services with a green approach that helps sustain the environment (Sheth <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
Integrated value chain	Kalaignanam and Varadarajan (2006)	Allow customer to be involved in the decision of designing channel of distributions (Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Knowledge, learning together	Ballantyne and Varey (2006)	Collective learning process reduces judgmental bias and promote intrinsic learning (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006)
Needs fulfillment	Jaworski and Kohli (2006)	Promote positive emotion and pro-social behaviors among stake holders (Sheth <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
Relationship building	Lusch and Vargo (2006)	Create long lasting relationship with caring attitude that considers the economic and societal needs (Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Sheth <i>et al.</i> , 2011)

**Table V.**  
Summary of the benefits of value co-creation: implications for mindful marketing

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Research propositions	
<i>P1</i>	Market orientation is positively related to mindful marketing through its underlying three dimensions (a) intelligence generation (b) dissemination, and (c) responsiveness
<i>P2</i>	Quality orientation is positively related to mindful marketing through its underlying three dimensions (a) customer focus, (b) continuous improvement, and (c) system perspective
<i>P3</i>	Market orientation and quality orientation have a positive synergistic effect on mindful marketing
<i>P4</i>	Continuous improvement dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between market orientation and mindful marketing especially through its strengthening effect on responsiveness
<i>P5</i>	Competitor orientation dimension of market orientation positively moderates the relationship between quality orientation and mindful marketing especially through its strengthening effect on continuous improvement
<i>P6</i>	Customer focus dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between intelligence generation and mindful marketing
<i>P7</i>	Systems perspective dimension of quality orientation positively moderates the relationship between intelligence dissemination and mindful marketing
<i>P8</i>	Buyers' market state positively moderates the relationship between market orientation and mindful marketing
<i>P9</i>	Sellers' market state positively moderates the relationship between quality orientation and mindful marketing
<i>P10</i>	A balanced market state positively moderates the relationship between interaction of quality orientation and market orientation, and mindful marketing
<i>P11</i>	Aligning organizational emphasis (MO, QO, or both) with market state will decrease the gap between actual and mindful levels of marketing
<i>P12</i>	Mindful marketing leads to mindful consumption
<i>P13</i>	Mindful marketing leads to value co-creation
<i>P14</i>	Value co-creation leads to mindful consumption

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**Table VI.**  
Summary of research  
propositions

(i.e. buyer's, balanced, or seller's market) decreases the gap between actual and mindful marketing which in turn increases mindful consumption.

The proposed framework allows managers to benefit from the synergistic effects of market and QO efforts and embrace a mindful marketing strategy that would consider the stakeholders' intrinsic welfare. In addition, our work also augments managerial thinking in terms of developing organizational commitment, system, and leadership. The implementation of mindful marketing requires not only attitude but also committed behavior. For a successful implementation, several considerations must be in place. First, all members of the organization must be committed willingly and exhibit a strong desire to accept their own critical role in the implementation process (Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Managers must plan for and provide necessary education and continuous improvement training to ensure that the employees are receptive to organization's core values and strategic actions. Second, a decentralized system must be in place for effective interdepartmental coordination and collaboration. Such a system empowers employees to make decisions, encourages volunteering, innovative behavior, and redefines productivity. A decentralized system also allows communication with channel members directly, and thus strengthens partnership, making it easy to create recovery pathways for unexpected events (Kotler *et al.*, 2010). Third, market and societal needs must be considered jointly for every product and service development in order to

establish shared value co-creation. Businesses need to develop links to and cater to communities to market its products and services. In turn, communities need businesses to provide employment and wealth creation. Understanding the interdependence relationship would allow firms to have greater access to communities and provide critical assets and supportive environment (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Finally, organizations must strive to strengthen their own capacity and leadership position for mindful marketing. Firms need to leverage creative new technologies such as social media/networking sites to generate positive word-of-mouth. Some common approaches include setting up relationship marketing web sites with appealing context to interact with potential and existing customers, create pro-social activities targeted to market segments, and facilitate new member registration. Previous studies have found that these efforts play important roles in referral programs, influence the adoption rates for new products and services, and ultimately customer lifetime value (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). When customers are convinced that organizations exert great efforts in service quality (Agarwal *et al.*, 2010) and have their best interest in mind, they can be satisfied, loyal and willing to develop a relationship with the firm (Ndubisi *et al.*, 2009). In a recent study of Malaysian healthcare service customers, Ndubisi (2011) found that mindfulness service procedures such as care and information reliability, along with proactive conflict handling can enhance customer orientation and satisfaction, and in turn influence their loyalty. Thus, mindful marketing can help firms to better understand the meaning and the process of value co-creation. This will enable managers to develop competitively compelling value propositions, and encourage mindful consumption.

### 5. Directions for future research

Admittedly, it is not easy to measure and quantify constructs such as mindful marketing, mindful consumption, and value co-creation. However, the recent movement of linking marketing actions to financial and performance outcomes has led to significant progress in a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, “*science is not and should not be synonymous with quantification*” (Malhotra and Uslay, 2009, p. 27, emphasis in original). Adopting mindful marketing requires top management to adhere and listen to the voice of the customers, which implies a more elevated status of the marketing research function in the organization (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006). Overall, there is a need to advance the examination of these key constructs with both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Mindful marketing concerns consciousness, which remains a demanding area of study (Chalmers, 1995). Our proposed framework integrates orientation research and organizational mindfulness studies and is still at an embryonic stage that warrants future investigation. Both mindful marketing and mindful consumption are new concepts that deserve further theoretical refinement. Mindfulness domain is in need of new theories that embrace the broadened roles of buyers and sellers (Malhotra *et al.*, 2008).

Future research should address the extent to which the benefits of mindful marketing are specific to mindfulness practices or whether they are a result of a more general self-control mechanism as raised by some mindfulness researchers (Brown *et al.*, 2007). Besides market structure, other moderating variables should be considered. Finally, mindful marketing researchers should also consider possible control variables such as firm size, strategy, and organizational structure (i.e. vertical versus horizontal hierarchy).

In summary, we integrate the disparate streams of research in MO, QO, and mindfulness to develop an integrated theoretical framework with value co-creation and mindful consumption outcomes. This framework incorporates the interaction between MO and QO specifying the dimensions of each construct that are involved and how they interact. It also recognizes the moderating role of the market state (i.e. buyer's, balanced, or seller's market), and the mediating role of mindful marketing. The 14 propositions we have derived present a fertile area for future investigations. These propositions along with the other directions for future research we have identified, we hope, will inspire more research in this nascent field.

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**Corresponding author**

Naresh K. Malhotra can be contacted at: [Naresh.Malhotra@mgt.gatech.edu](mailto:Naresh.Malhotra@mgt.gatech.edu)

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