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# A STUDY ON IMPROVEMENT MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF INDONESIAN ORNAMENTAL FISH EXPORTERS

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## **Keywords**

Export performance, market orientation, innovation, competitive advantage, Ornamental Fish.

#### **Abstract**

Export performance is an indication of the companies' success in the export. High export performance is important for companies in terms of ensuring sustainability in the long term. Indonesia expected to be a major player in the global economy especially for live ornamental fish export industry, so "how the marketing performance strategy in Indonesia for permanent success?" like this thought significantly raised. The objective on this research aims to examine the effect of market orientation, product innovation on competitive advantage and the effect of competitive advantage on company performance. Type of the data in this study is descriptive qualitative research. The data collection technique for this research was to conduct in-depth interviews, observations and data analysis as well as related documents. To collect quality and sufficient data, researchers will make observations and In-depth interviews for this study and will conduct interviews with 6 (Six) informants who have been selected who really understand the ornamental fish marketing in this business. Credibility or validity of the data used the triangulation procedure. The findings all participants agreed on this case study research. Overall, market orientation, product innovation, and competitive advantage are interconnected factors that can contribute to a company's market success and performance. By understanding customer needs, offering innovative products, and establishing a competitive edge, a company can position itself for success in the market.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Market performance is defined as being related to market share, sales determiners, revenue premium of the products, and services (Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou, & Hult, 2016). Considering the macro level, governments all around the world try to improve companies export performance because it is one of the economic growth indicators. Export performance is an indication of the companies' success in the export (Zehir, Köle, & Yıldız, 2015). The world market for ornamental fish is very large and wide. The demand for this commodity continues to increase both in quantity and type, especially in the export market. New types of both original and crosses continue to emerge from various corners of the world. Indonesia is a country rich in ornamental fish resources after South America. The number of ornamental fish species which are more than 300 species as much as 34% of them are in Indonesia. (Sakurai & Commins, 1995).

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The diversity and scarcity of certain types of ornamental fish owned by Indonesia make it a target for exports for international market consumers (Ramachandran, 2010).

The company's strategy is always directed to produce good marketing performance as well as good financial performance. (Kara, Spillan, & DeShields, 2005). Based on the information above, in brief, Indonesia expected to be a major player in the global economy especially for live ornamental fish export industry, so "how the marketing performance strategy in Indonesia for permanent success?" like this thought significantly raised. The objective on this research aims to examine the effect of market orientation, product innovation on competitive advantage and the effect of competitive advantage on company performance.

Based on the information above, in brief, Indonesia expected to be a major player in the global economy especially for live ornamental fish export industry, so "how the marketing performance strategy in Indonesia for permanent success?" like this thought significantly raised. Among the live ornamental fish products have the potential for production and export in Indonesia, therefore, this research will as principal research question as follow:

What factors can improve market performance for the ornamental fish export business?

Why market oriented and innovation can affect competitive advantage?

Why competitive advantage is the key to face the existing and future competition?

This research aims to answer the problem of how to create competitive advantage to improve marketing performance in the ornamental fish export industry. Expected this research can be useful as input for company management in an effort to improve the marketing performance of Ornamental Fish Exporters in Indonesia.

#### **Literature Review**

#### Performance

Export performance has role economically to contribute to the national product of a country. Maintaining export performance by improving quality of products, product differentiation and proper marketing strategy is carried out to remain competitive in the global market (Boehe & Barin Cruz, 2010). The concept of export performance is at the forefront conduct global expansion as strategic common business in the world (Ismail, 2017). Exporting to foreign markets is driven by main target to optimizing competitive advantage. In other words, the concept of marketing explains how firms enter foreign markets. To gain competitive advantage Competitive advantage is addressed by trust of export performance (Spyropoulou, Skarmeas, & Katsikeas, 2010).

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia's ornamental fish exports experienced a fairly high contraction. This can be seen from the export performance of ornamental fish in the first quarter of 2020. In the first quarter of 2020 the export value of Indonesian freshwater ornamental fish reached USD 4,948 thousand or decreased by 21.15% compared to the same period in 2019. Meanwhile, the export volume of ornamental fish in the first quarter of 2020 reached 182 tons, decreasing by 28.41% compared to the same period in 2019. Based on this, it can be seen that the export performance of Indonesian ornamental fish (seawater and fresh water) in the first quarter of 2021 is much better than in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, it tends to be higher than before the Covid-19 pandemic. (Peggy, 2022).

#### **Market Orientation**

Market orientation is something that is important for companies in line with increasing global competition and changes in customer needs where companies realize that they must always be close to their markets. Market orientation is a business culture where the organization has a commitment to continue to be creative in creating superior value for customers. (Narver & Slater, 1990) define market orientation as the most effective organizational culture in creating important behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers as well as performance in business.

In the exporting context, export-specific market-oriented behavior offers a valuable perspective to explain the firms' success with their export operations (Miocevic & Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011). As a result, many scholars have focused on research investigating the export market orientation (EMO, hereafter) and its performance outcomes. Collectively, research indicates that the EMO is a critical factor for success in exporting (Murray, 2011).

#### **Innovation**

According to (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997) suggest 3 (three) characteristics of innovation, namely product excellence, product cost and product credibility. Product innovations can fail simply for reasons of not offering a unique design or misrepresenting customer wants and needs. Product innovation should be able to provide added value compared to similar products (product advantages) so that it can make the company have an advantage over its competitors. In an export context, studies have consistently found a positive link between innovation and export performance (Fernández-Mesa & Alegre, 2015). To our knowledge, no export studies have analysed the impact of breakthrough innovation on export performance. Nevertheless, earlier research in a domestic context reports a significant and positive association between perceived performance and both tech-innovation and market-innovation (Zhou, Gao, Yang, & Zhou, 2005). More recently, a cross-country study found a significant positive direct effect between market-innovation and firm performance (Ozkaya, Droge, Hult, Calantone, & Ozkaya, 2015). Innovation culture is a culture of innovation that exists in the company. Technical innovation is innovation in the company's process in producing products. Product innovation is the company's ability to produce products according to customer desires.

# **Competitive Advantage**

In this study, competitive advantages refer to whether a firm performs better in price, product, or service advantages, in comparison with its competitors in international markets (Kaleka & Morgan, 2017). Specifically, price advantage means a firm is at a better position in terms of pricing when it comes to competing with other industry players in their international venture. Product advantage in contrast means that a firm is at a better position in terms of their product design, customization, adaptation, and/or overall quality in comparison with other industry players in their international venture. Additionally, a service advantage refers to a firm that is at a better position in terms of their reliability of service, timeliness of delivery, product accessibility, and/or overall service quality, and customer satisfaction. These three performance measurements are analogous to the concepts of lower cost strategy and differentiation strategy, in which differentiation can be studied either as product differentiation or service differentiation.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter would describe the methodologies and procedures to accomplish the study goal including the research design, research instrument, data collection methods involve reading documentation conducting interviews and the instrument used for the analysis.

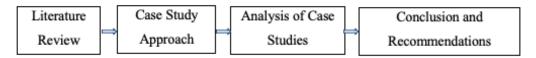
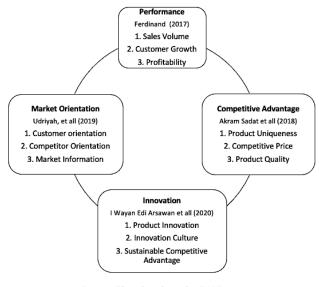


Figure 1 Research Methodology Flowchart



Source: Flow chart by Author(2023)

Figure 2 Conceptual framework

The starting point and arguably the defining characteristic of the case study approach is its focus on just a single instance of what is to be investigated. The research method is basically a scientific way to obtain data with specific purposes and uses. The data obtained through this research is empirical data (observed) which has certain criteria, namely valid, reliable and objective. Therefore, in general, the data that has been obtained from research can be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems (Sugiyono, 2018). The problems that will be studied by researchers in their research are social and dynamic problems. The qualitative evaluation case study that researchers using for this research is characterised by an emergent design with the potential to shift focus to a growing understanding of the case. The data collection technique for this research was to conduct in-depth interviews, observations and data analysis as well as related documents.

To collect quality and sufficient data, researchers will make observations and In-depth interviews for this study and will conduct interviews with 6 (Six) informants who have been selected who really understand the ornamental fish marketing in this business. For this study, the credibility or validity of the data used the triangulation procedure. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods, theories, and others in the study of the same phenomenon. Related to this research, theory used by researcher to support answering the research questions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Activities Episodic (In-Depth) Interview Inquiry

To gather evidence of a comprehensive structured narrative, episodic qualitative interviews were conducted. The purpose of the interviews was to gain the informant's understanding and knowledge to contribute to continued professional practice in the proposed outcomes of this study. During this activity, 6 participants were collected in-depth (episodic) for qualitative data.

Table 1 Participants detail
In-depth Interview (Episodic)
Participants: 6 respondent

The script includes some of the broader research issues to tackle, as well as recommended interview questions. The set days and times for each interview appointment were prepared in June 2023, ethical issues were carefully explored. Ethical concerns were woven throughout the interview inquiry process, and potential ethical concerns were considered from the start of data collection through to the final report. Confidentiality is emphasized to research participants, building trust and encouraging open and honest communication. the researcher informs them that any sensitive, personal or material matters disclosed, or that they choose to remain confidential, will be respected and not disclosed. To standardize this issue, all participants were asked to complete a participant consent form before being interviewed or participating in the study. Main research themes and boundaries on which this research is based:

Performance; Market Orientation; Innovation and Competitive Advantage

## **Interview Responses**

In search of the answer to the question, this research analysed and then extracted the views on Performance, Market Orientation, Innovation and Competitive advantage of all six in-depth interview participants.

Table 2 In-depth Interview extraction analysis	
In-depth Interview Participants	Extracted themes of what performance, market orientation, innovation and competitive advantage means for them
A	From my point of view, the thing that can be done to improve performance is how we focus on the business itself, the focus here means having win-win solutions between suppliers, customers and exporters. Sales volume will follow if we have good performance. Market orientation in my opinion is what the market really needs, so we have to really understand it. market innovation should always be studied before you enter the market.  Innovation is an important key in the success of all businesses. Especially the ornamental fish business. It is also very important to always have new innovation techniques for new things.  Competitive advantage is very important especially for business competitiveness. For example, our company has a computer system capable of analysing data from various aspects. All of this includes comparative advantages in our company which our competitors may not have.
В	In this live fish business, Performance is a determining factor for the continuation of a business. Profitability will continue if the company's performance is very good.  Market orientation is what kind of market we are going to go to, each country has different market information such as Asia, Middle East and others which have different characteristics. Of course the market strategy will be different.  Market innovation is very important to determine what strategies can be implemented, in this case innovation techniques are needed. Innovation is related to costs, for example what technology is used to improve product quality, especially live fish so that it can increase profits for exporters and customers because it is hoped that it will save costs.  In the ornamental fish business, payment transactions usually use Telegram Transfer / TT. This payment method has a high level of trust. The company PT Qian Hu has an extensive network so it has a good

6	image. So that this can increase the company's competitiveness against other competitors, which in turn competitive prices can be one of the determining factors in competitive advantage in the ornamental fish business today.
C	My view is performance is how we can maintain quality, variety, service, price and commitment by continuing to do well.  If this is applied then the end is an increase in profitability in the company. In this case market orientation is also very important, especially how we create quality products to meet market needs.  I think cultural innovation, technical innovation and product innovation are all three very important. But product innovation is very important to increase the ornamental fish trade.  Government policy is also important and does not have to be in the form of money, but policies that support ornamental fish exporters can support competitive advantage. The government wants a wide channel for exporters to support the ornamental fish business as technological advances can also be an opportunity for competitive advantage against
D	other countries because of easy access.  Based on my understanding, Performance, market orientation, product innovation and competitive advantage is basically how the marketing strategy can be maximized among all ornamental fish business people. Like farmers, collectors and exporters. If this fulfilled then the volume of sales and performance of the company will increase and of course provide benefits for the company.
E	In my practice, apart from establishing good relationships with old customers, we need to establish good relationships with new customers, in this case, customer growth is very important to improve performance.  Related to market orientation, the orientation here is how we provide products in the form of healthy fish to meet market needs. I am currently focusing on the Middle East market. So customer orientation is very important.  For Innovation, the variety of products is very important, especially in the field of exports and imports. Product uniqueness is the determining factor of an innovation.  From my point of view, how the products we offer really determine whether a customer wants to buy from our company or not, but the most important thing is trust to increase competitive advantage.
F	Related to the definition of performance, if referring to the terminology, performance is a measurable process within a certain period. In the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries we call it a Key Performance Indicator. The context of the government, in this case, is development protocol for economic growth. Where there are many aspects in the Directorate General for Strengthening Competitiveness, especially increasing exports and imports. If you look at statistical data related to supply and demand for ornamental fish, it continues to increase. In 2017-2021 it experienced a growth of 6.11% of the trade value. This is one of the interesting sides of the ornamental fish business. The government is very supportive of business actors in this business by continuing to make efforts to improve the performance of the ornamental fish business.

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The next finding is more focused on the central part of the problem being studied. Here again, the interviewee's subjective definition of emotions and moral attributes was mentioned first:

- Q. Why market oriented and innovation can affect competitive advantage?
- *Q.* Why competitive advantage is the key to face the existing and future competition?
- Q. Do you agree that Market orientation will positively influence on competitive advantage of the company?
- Q. Do you agree that Product innovation carried out, will positively influence on competitive advantage of the company?
- Q. Do you agree that Competitive advantage of the company will positively influence on company's marketing performance?

The statement from participant A regarding market oriented and innovation can affect competitive advantage is something that is very important, namely how we can be different from competitors to win the competition in this business. The importance of market research is also a determinant in winning business competition based on participant E's statement. Innovation is a differentiator from the others so that customers will consider which company has the best innovation according to participant B in their experience. Market demand greatly influences the competitive advantage of each company so that the latest innovations are needed to be competitive, this was also agreed upon by participant E.

Regarding why competitive advantage is the key to facing current and future competition, participant B said that having continuous innovation adapted to market needs will create a competitive advantage in the ornamental fish business. Participant C also believes that the 5 keys to success in winning the competition are consistently maintaining product quality, improving innovation, good service to customers, competitive prices and commitment between all parties. Because according to participant A, business is always about competition.

Furthermore, the answers from all participants related to their opinions about market orientation, product innovation on competitive advantage and the effect of competitive advantage on marketing performance. Present in Table 3.

Table 3 Semi-Structured Participants View on Market Orientation, Product Innovation, Competitive Advantage and Market Performance

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competitive advantage of the company?		
Do you agree that Competitive advantage of the company will positively influence		
,E,F		

All participants agreed on this case study question. Overall, market orientation, product innovation, and competitive advantage are interconnected factors that can contribute to a company's market success and performance. By understanding customer needs, offering innovative products, and establishing a competitive advantage, a company can position itself for success in the market especially for the Ornamental Fish Business market.

The last finding is related to the abstract point of view of all participants on the questions below:

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Q. In your Opinion, how the marketing performance strategy in Indonesia for permanent success?

Participant D provides a very significant focus on this question. The role of the government is very instrumental in improving marketing performance in Indonesia. The Blockchain system is considered ideal for maintaining the continuity of the ornamental fish business. Of course, there are many roles from all relevant agencies to help make it successful, starting from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Trade, the ornamental fish association and ornamental fish business actors must be related to one another. So that we can follow the example of developed countries like China in the success of the ornamental fish business. The role of academics in creating quality human resources is also an important factor. And in creating quality resources, the need for awareness from the community that this business is very promising for raising the standard of living, especially among farmers and cultivators. Participant F in this case is the government also supports the participation of related agencies to help the success of the ornamental fish business.

The current regulations have made it easier for ornamental fish exporters and businesses to export. This is evidenced by the increasing value of exports which have increased from year to year. Currently, the government is also helping ornamental fish businesses to be able to go international through domestic and international events such as the Interzoo event in Germany. Furthermore, the Indonesian government will create a National Quarantine Agency so that all fishery and agricultural activities can be well integrated in one direction.

Participant C is also of the opinion that reducing the tax burdened by exporters is something that must be considered in order to continue this business properly. Participant A and B agree that the government's role is very important in the success of this business. The existence of a support system from upstream to downstream will greatly affect the impact for now and in the future.

#### The Analysis

In the context of improving marketing performance for the ornamental fish business, triangulation can be applied to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing marketing performance. Here are some triangulation results that may emerge from studying the improvement of marketing performance in the ornamental fish business of this research:

**Customer Surveys and Market Analysis:** By conducting surveys and analysing market data, this research find that factors such as high-quality fish, unique species/varieties, and sustainable practices have a significant impact on customer preferences and purchasing decisions. Triangulating survey responses with market data can help confirm the importance of these factors in improving marketing performance.

**Interviews with Industry Experts:** Interviews with industry experts, including exporters, breeders, and distributors, can provide valuable insights into the strategies and practices that have effectively improved marketing performance in the ornamental fish business. Triangulating expert opinions with other data sources can help identify common themes and best practices.

Case Studies of Export Successes and Failures: case studies of both successful and failed export ventures in the ornamental fish industry can yield valuable insights. This research can identify common factors that lead to success or failure, such as market selection, differentiation strategies, compliance with regulations, or supply chain management.

**Observation of Marketing Activities:** Direct observation of marketing activities, such as trade shows, online marketing campaigns, or interactions with customers, can provide first hand insights into the factors influencing marketing performance. Triangulating observational data with other data sources can provide a comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies and tactics that contribute to improved performance.

These triangulation results can provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to improved marketing performance in the ornamental fish business. By utilizing multiple data sources and methods, this research can enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, leading to more robust insights and recommendations.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter links directly from the previous in which the project findings were presented. The project conclusion is detailed in the paragraphs that follow, based on this research and addressing the guidelines and goals stated in Chapter 1, 2 and 3 as well as this conclusion. Additionally, this research makes suggestions to the project's stakeholders, the exporting company based on its results. The chapter ends by discussing the novelty of the study's methodology and its overall findings, while also outlining key practical implications and potential future research directions.10 Factors can contribute to improving the market performance of the ornamental fish export business. Here are some key considerations:

## Quality

Offering a wide variety of high-quality, healthy, and visually appealing fish species is crucial. This includes ensuring proper feeding, care, and maintenance to enhance the overall quality and appearance of the fish. For example, Neon tetra has a high demand for sizes 2-3 cm, so upstream must pay attention to this size to meet demand, especially Asia, America and Europe which have high demand.

#### Sustainable

Implementing sustainable and ethical practices in the business operations can attract environmentally conscious customers. This may involve sourcing fish from responsible breeders or implementing eco-friendly packaging and transportation methods. For example, in flight, the packing criteria are regulated according to airline regulations, such as the mandatory use of IATA Live Animal Regulations.

# **Quarantine Measures**

Maintaining strict health and quarantine protocols is essential to prevent the spread of diseases among fish and maintain their well-being. This helps build trust with customers who prioritize disease-free fish. Ornamental fish entrepreneurs and exporters are required to have a CKIB certificate as a quality requirement in activities especially for Export of Ornamental Fish.

## **Airline Forwarder**

For timely and effective delivery of fish to clients, both locally and globally, it is essential to have a strong transportation network. partnering with trustworthy transportation providers. For the example, if we have a partner forwarder agent who is IATA International certified, we will be given a great opportunity to get space to be able to ship the fastest in 3-7 days. this will make it easier for us to arrange export shipments to the country we are going to.

#### **Market Research**

Conducting market research to identify target markets and their preferences is crucial. Understanding the demand for specific fish species, colors, sizes, and other characteristics can guide the breeding and stocking decisions to align with market needs. Online surveys, email surveys, or in-person interviews can be used to collect information on customer preferences, buying behavior, satisfaction levels, and market trends.

#### Marketing

Building a strong brand image and implementing effective marketing strategies can help create awareness and generate demand for the business. This can involve showcasing high-quality product images, engaging with customers through social media platforms, participating in trade shows, and leveraging online marketplaces.

## **Regulatory Compliance**

Complying with local and international regulations governing the import and export of ornamental fish is essential. Staying up-to-date with relevant laws, permits, and certifications ensures smooth operations and avoids potential legal issues.

## **Customer Service**

Providing exceptional customer service, including prompt responses to inquiries, efficient order processing, and assistance with any issues, can foster customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Export companies that already have international trading networks can be an advantage to gain customer trust.

## **Price Competitiveness**

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Offering competitive pricing based on market analysis and production costs is important. However, it's crucial to maintain profitability and ensure that pricing decisions align with the perceived value of the fish. Conduct a thorough analysis of the costs, including production or acquisition costs, transportation expenses, packaging, overheads, and marketing expenses.

## **Continuous Learning**

Staying informed about the latest trends, advancements, and customer preferences in the ornamental fish industry is key. Embracing innovation, such as exploring new breeding techniques or introducing unique fish species, can provide a competitive edge. For example, using social media and participating in international events such as Interzoo, Nusatic events on a domestic scale and other events can be a way to stay close to the market.

Considering that market performance is influenced by various factors, and it's important to adapt and evolve the strategies based on changing market dynamics and customer preferences. Market orientation and innovation can have a significant impact on gaining a competitive advantage in the ornamental fish business. Competitive advantage is key to facing existing and future competition because it enables businesses to differentiate themselves, establish a strong market position, achieve sustainable performance, foster customer loyalty, adapt to changing market dynamics, and drive financial success. By continuously nurturing and leveraging their competitive advantages, businesses can proactively navigate competitive challenges and seize opportunities for growth and success. By leveraging competitive advantages in the ornamental fish business export, such as differentiation, quality, health measures, sustainability, market knowledge, distribution network, branding, and compliance, businesses can effectively face existing and future competition. These factors contribute to customer loyalty, market positioning, adaptability, and financial success in the industry.

The limitation of this research is the need for further studies regarding the ornamental fish business other than Ornamental fish. The scope of the ornamental fish business can be very wide, especially for certain types of fish which are more specific and can be used as additional references as research objects. For example, the culture of ornamental fish enthusiasts, market satisfaction, and fulfillment of supply and demand in each country also have different characteristics. Therefore, in this particular instance, enhanced research will be quite beneficial for researchers who concentrate on the ornamental fish industry.

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