

The Relationship of Market-oriented Culture, Internal-market orientation, Service Climate, and Customer-oriented Service Behavior: Cross-Cultural Study of F&B Industry in Taiwan, China and the United States - Moderating Effect of Power Distance

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship of external market orientation, internal market orientation, service climate and employees' market-orientated behavior in the Food & Beverage industries in Taiwan, China, and the United States. This is one of few studies that bring together the related market orientation constructs with international context. The result shows that employees' market-oriented behaviors will be influenced positively by market-oriented culture, employee perceived service climate, as well as internal market orientation. This study identified the role of internal market orientation and service climate in forming employees' market-oriented behavior. Drawing on data from a sample of 625 frontline employees working in catering services in Taiwan, China, and the US. The study also examined the moderating effects of power distance on cultural roots. Hofstede's cultural element of power distance was tested and proven to moderate the above-mentioned relationships. Regional differences among the results were also discussed. This study uses second-order confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to test the relationships. The current study also tested measurement invariance to ensure the constructs that were measured were conceptually equivalent among the three cultural groups.

Keywords: Internal market orientation; Service climate; Power distance; Market orientation; Mediated moderation

Introduction

After the COVID-19 pandemic, people may alter their dining behavior by ordering food as takeaway items or are using delivery platforms. However, food purveyors can provide services for customers beyond food preparation in the form of professional and enthusiastic service. Food or gourmet has become one of the most valuable economic assets for Taiwan. Before COVID-19, the number of chained store has grown from 28,880 stores to 32,810, and the proportion of foreign revenue has increased by 25% within 4 years [1]. The chained food industry in Taiwan is expanding its business internationally so as to capitalize the globalization surge. Many Taiwanese companies have established their chained stores particularly in China and the Chinese circles in the United States, where share a cultural root [1].

For catering services, people are the key to success, and an organization cannot rely on technology alone or on its products [2]. The employees interact with the outside world, share knowledge with the customers, and create experiences that generate value. They help drive the consumer loyalty that strengthens the organization's brand and secures future cash flow [3]. Employees who have professional service capabilities are important sources for their organization, and this can create benefits for the organization [2]. Fundamentally, its people are the most valuable assets that a service organization has, and its people are also the most critical source of service variation [4], as maintaining service quality is a challenging task.

A key factor that distinguishes the service industry from the physical product sectors is “its intangibility and the human interface” [5]. The quality of the interactions between providers (and the front-line staff in particular) and customers plays an important role in to quality service delivery. Clow, James [6] believe that “the service industry is characterized by intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability. Intangibility is the fundamental attribute of services, cannot be seen, tasted, felt, smelled before they are bought. Inseparability refers to that services are produced and consumed at the same time, cannot be separated from their providers. Variability means services are variable, they highly depend on who, when, where, and how the services are provided.” It has long been acknowledged that a market-oriented company is more profitable than one that is less market-oriented [7-9]. Although it is widely recognized that developing a market-orientated culture is important for businesses development, many companies have found limited success in developing a market-oriented culture. Developing a market-oriented culture is crucial, not only in terms of academic understanding but also as practical creation. A central approach to creating market-oriented culture is to execute an internal market orientation on employees. “Market orientation traditionally focusing on the external environment may limit the applicability to the service industry in which physical products with services are offered simultaneously” [10]. Service marketing involves the 7P marketing mix, expanding the traditional 4P (product, price, place, promotion) to include an additional 3P, namely, people, process, and physical evidence. Customer contact employees have long been considered internal customers in the service sector. Service quality requires managerial attention to a range of stakeholders, including internal employees, external competition, and customers.

Catering services are among the most valuable economic assets all over the world, particularly so in Taiwan. Enterprises in this area of the economy have expanded internationally and are capitalizing on the surge in globalization. Many have established chained/franchised stores in similar cultural communities in China and the United States. As the service sector has become more and more internationalized, and subsidiaries have been established overseas, cross-cultural and operational issues have emerged to a significant degree. Most studies in this area have focused on the ways that multinational corporations in developed countries control their overseas subsidiaries, but few have discussed these issues in relation to corporations that have head offices in developing countries (such as Taiwan). Multinational operations in the service industry require localized management, so the ways that the policies from headquarters management and human resources impact local country policies and how they can be effectively managed within a cross-cultural context are worth exploring.

Few studies have examined the relationship between internal market orientation, service climate, and customer-oriented behavior within the international context. For managers, the competition in the catering industry is becoming increasingly fierce, and the question of how to improve the service performance of subsidiary staff in a cross-cultural business environment is an important and practical one. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether there exist relationships between internal market orientation and service climate to form employees’ market-oriented behavior. And by investigating samples of Taiwan, China, and the US, whether power distance on cultural roots moderates the relationships. Therefore, the three following research objectives were proposed:

1. To investigate the role of the internal market orientation and service climate and to establish how they shape employees’ market-oriented behaviors, the direct/indirect relationship of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employee customer-oriented behavior.
2. To examine the moderating effects of power distance and to determine how it strengthens the relationships among of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employees’ market-oriented behavior.
3. To assess differences in the relationships among Taiwan, China, and the US.

Literature review and research hypotheses

Market orientation

There is a vast literature discussing market orientation (MO), which is an operationalization of the marketing concept. As a construct, MO originated in the marketing concept when Peter Drucker indicated that marketing was part of the business itself, instead of

being a separate management function. In the 1980s and 1990s, the marketing concept became crucial and an important part of how companies operated. The field of marketing has moved on to MO, which focuses on the implementation of the marketing concept [11, 12].

In pioneering studies of MO, two main approaches are found to conceptualizing the construct, namely, market intelligence and culturally based behavioral perspectives (Hult and Ketchen, 2017; Lafferty and Hult 2001). The first approach to market intelligence perspectives was introduced by Kohli and Jaworski [13] and was empirically confirmed by Jaworski and Kohli [14]. MO was defined as “the organization-wide generation of market intelligence about current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it” [13]. This definition emphasizes employees’ behaviors organization-wide and therefore helps operationalize the MO construct. Kirca, Jayachandran [8] indicated that the effects of MO on business performance are robust at times of market turbulence and competitive intensity, as well as during periods of technological turbulence. However, Varadarajan [15] contends that “organizations differ in terms of the degree to which they generate, disseminate market intelligence, and take actions based on the intelligence from competition situation, therefore, the market orientation should be conceptualized for an organization as one of degree, rather than as an absolute concept” (i.e., an organization is either market-oriented or not market-oriented).

Narver and Slater [9] proposed a different approach to the theory of MO, using a culturally based perspective. MO is defined as “the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior performance for the business.” The theory of MO has three components, namely, customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination [16]. Creating customer value must always be more than a marketing function: it refers to the organization’s ability to create value for its customers to synergistic effect. MO represents the values and beliefs that put customers first [17-19]. In other words, as an organizational culture, MO focuses on satisfying the customer needs by providing superior and differentiated customer value [20-22]. This study finds that promoting MO in a service enterprise transforms employees’ values and beliefs to improve customer service quality because employees possess shared values and beliefs that lead them to provide superior and differentiated consumer value.

Market-oriented culture

Organizational culture is “a set of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand the operation of the organization and are the basis of individual behavior in the organization” [17], organizational culture is a social control system based on shared norms and values. Schein [23] defined organizational culture as representing “a set of shared basic assumptions learned by a group to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid.” Although scholars may have different opinions on the nature of organizations, there is a consensus that an organization’s culture is shared by all groups within it. A strong organizational culture can improve organizational performance [24], guide organizations toward common goals, and create loyalty, identity, and organizational advantages [25].

The idea of a market-oriented culture, referring to market-oriented values and beliefs, is clear and specific to organizational culture. Beliefs and values can be regarded as a kind of social control system. When members’ behavior conforms to values, they receive legitimacy and rewards from the organization, and behaviors that violate these values will be identified and corrected [26]. In market-oriented research, cultural and behavioral views are not entirely mutually exclusive [27]; and there may be a connection to culturally guided behavior, such that the organizational culture can provide guidance for members’ words and deeds, shaping their attitudes and behaviors of organization members.

Market-oriented culture and market-oriented behavior

Market-oriented organizations can deal with the market, market intelligence, have the strategic thinking and possess the capability to enact and implement MO which is associated with a company's value and culture [28]. When organizations formulate and implement their MO, they need to consider the fundamental and operational issues of the market situation and their strategic thinking. Their capabilities and qualifications are linked to the organizational values they demonstrate, i.e., their organizational culture. Exploring the MO of an organization from a cultural perspective can help clarify the organization's practices and basic values (i.e., their behavior patterns or ways of doing things) [12]. Drawing on the above theoretical viewpoints and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: A market-oriented culture has a positive impact on employees' market-oriented behavior.

Internal marketing/ Internal market orientation

Internal marketing is considered to be the application of marketing internally among the employee market. Rafiq and Ahmed [29] defined internal marketing as "a planned effort using a marketing-like approach to change and to motivate employees to implement corporate strategies effectively, and eventually deliver customer satisfaction." Internal marketing utilizes marketing techniques to systematically overcome organizational change resistance; in this way, by coordinating employees' needs, departmental strategies can be effectively executed. Ultimately, internal marketing can motivate and satisfy customer-oriented employees and enable them to satisfy external customers in turn (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). Lings [10] described the definition of internal marketing versus internal market orientation. The concept of internal marketing implies a service process perspective or a service employee perspective. The process approach relates to the service delivery process, which takes *employees* to be internal customers and internal suppliers. This approach follows the rule that quality is a progressive function of the operation in the value chain process. This approach is called "internal customer orientation." The other orientation is the human *resources* approach, which prioritizes creating satisfied and motivated employees to achieve external market success. Bowen and Ostroff [30] suggested that human resource practices communicate the strategic focus of the organization and inform employees of the practices that the company rewards, supports, and expects. In other words, creating satisfied and motivated employees is the focus of internal marketing. This people-oriented aspect of internal marketing emphasizes the relationship between the company and its employees as well as establishing the ways in which the company-employee relationship can facilitate relationships between employees and customers. Lings [10] refers the behaviors associated with creating satisfied and motivated employees as "Internal market orientation" (IMO).

Internal market orientation and market-oriented behavior

IMO relates to studies of both marketing and human resources that aim to propose employee-friendly managerial behaviors. IMO represents, on this telling, "the adaptation of the external MO into the internal aspect of employer-employee exchanges" in the organization [31]. Lings and Greenley [31] operationalize the concept of IMO by identifying three areas relating to IMO, i.e., formal information generation (either written or face-to-face); informal information generation (e.g., employee attitudes and values); information dissemination (e.g., about the service offering, about customer wants and needs); responsiveness (e.g., job designed to meet the needs of employees). IMO is a continuous marketing focus that is directed toward employees. It aligns the company's vision and its strategy, encouraging employees to fulfill company strategies to offer quality service, in this way improving customer satisfaction and retention [32]. IMO reflects a system and process that conveys organizational values and behaviors that guide its employees, in turn, to improve customer value (Lings and Greenley, 2010). Following the above indications, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Internal MO has a positive impact on employee market-oriented behavior.

Service Climate

In the enterprise context, climate is the “shared perceptions of employees concerning the practices, procedures, and kinds of behaviors that get rewarded and supported in a particular setting” [33]. For instance, a climate of service refers to “employees’ perceptions about the workplace’s practice, including its procedures, and the employees’ behaviors that are rewarded by the organization concerning customer service and customer service quality” [34]. That is, organizational climate is the sum of employees’ impressions regarding, as it were, how people do things around here or what people focus on around here [35]. It represents the organization’s psychological identity, wherein employees share and reflect on their work-related behaviors [35]. A service climate is active when employees perceive that the management is expecting and supporting their quality customer service delivery. Positive feedback given by customers in response to high-quality services provided by employees also has the effect of motivating employees, and this encourages those employees to strive to improve service quality; this attitude further promotes the development of the service climate in the organization [34].

Liao and Chuang [36] found that the service climate at the group level positively affects the service performance of individual employees. A strong service climate entails that employees understand that superior customer service is expected from them, is desired by their management, and will be rewarded, which thus makes them more likely to provide excellent service [36]. Studies have found a positive relationship between service climate and customer behaviors, such as satisfaction and willingness to repurchase, and they have received empirical support in different parts of the service industry [36, 37]. In sum, as the service climate becomes enhanced, employees in turn gain in awareness of the criteria that their management is using to assess their work performance. As a result, their customer service performance is likely to improve, thereby enhancing the organization’s MO.

Bowen and Schneider [38] indicated that HRM practice is an antecedents for service climate. Chuang and Liao [39] confirmed that high performance-oriented human resources practices are significantly correlated with a service climate, which, in turn, results in improved employee service performance.

Service climate and market-oriented behavior

To enable employees to deliver quality services effectively, organizations must strengthen the service climate, encourage employees to be more service-conscious, and show customer-oriented behavior at work to meet customer needs. In a service organization, employee behavior is affected by organizational values, attitudes, and service-related policies. In particular, it is strongly influenced by the organization’s service climate [40]. Following the above, this study believes that the service climate will affect the behavior of service personnel in service delivery, as well as customers’ perception of service quality, which in turn affects employee service performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Employees’ perception of the service climate has a positive impact on their market-oriented behavior.

Mediating role of internal market orientation between market-oriented culture and employees’ market-oriented behavior

Internal MO researches emphasize issues of motivating and satisfying employees by taking them as internal customers, creating employees’ customer-oriented consciousness with marketing-like techniques, adjusting management rules to achieve organizational goals [41]. This relies on the creation of related organizational behaviors to implement internal MO in service sectors, which includes these three aspects [10]: collecting internal information to understand internal customer needs; communicating with internal customers; and responding to internal information.

- Collecting internal information to understand internal customer needs, including information on employee values, employees’ external market conditions, internal market segments, and strategies for each segment [10].

- Communicating with internal customers by maintaining efficient internal communication to improve the performance of front-line personnel. Information dissemination involves communication between management and employees, as well as between managers from different department of level and employees. Most importantly, employees' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors are effectively influenced by communication and can be aligned with the values and goals of the organization [42]. Timely feedback allows employees to feel important and supported by management, which can enhance their trust in and sense of identity with the organization [43].
- Responding to internal information: according to equity theory, when employees evaluate their work, they compare the input they receive to their output. Therefore, the internal information response involves designing an individualized reward system, providing performance appraisal, allowing flexible working hours, and giving training opportunities, all of which are issues of job design [31].

Managerial support is one of the most important elements in IMO [44], this support must be considered the manager's responsibility, especially that of top management. Although top management does not come into direct contact with customers, the way they that treat employees indirectly affects the quality of service that the employees provide [45]. To understand the variability of personal service level, internal MO behavior can maximize the effects of the human factor in the organization, promote communication among the departments, and allow employees to identify with the organization's mission and goals [41]. By adopting a range of measures and training programs, employees can be brought to better understand their roles within the organization. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Market-oriented culture impacts employees' market-oriented behavior through the mediation effect of internal market-orientation.

Mediating role of service climate between internal market orientation and employees' market-oriented behavior

Lam, Kraus [46] found that organizational culture can influence employee behaviors, but organizations cannot expect that a market-oriented culture will appear on its own. Market-oriented behavior requires a specific influential process to ensure that the market-oriented behavior happens continuously within its personnel that is aligned with the organization's goals. Employees may be attached to the organization due to certain interests or external rewards rather than due to beliefs shared with the organization or values of the organization. If the members identify with the organization and believe in its values, they should be proud of themselves for being part of the organization and internalize its values [47]. The service climate is what employees collectively perceive about an organization that pursues high-quality service values and operating direction [48], and the organization must create and maintain a service climate to encourage employees to effectively deliver good services [4, 49]. Once frontline employees understand that the organization values service and encourages them to perform quality service in their actions, they will change their behaviors [50]. From this discussion, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: The internal MO impacts the employees' MO behaviors through the mediation of the service climate.

The hypotheses are conceptualized as the research framework given in Fig. 1.

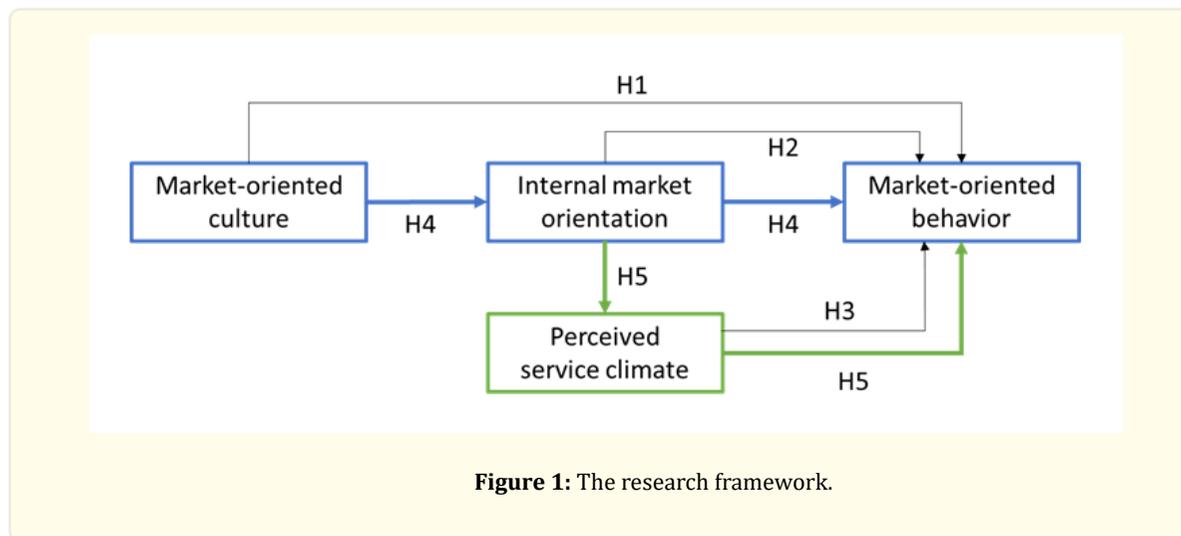


Figure 1: The research framework.

Moderating role of power distance

Hofstede [51] indicated that national culture is composed of values and beliefs that were learned in childhood. In studies of organizations, it is common to take culture as a moderating factor [52]. However, Wang and Chang [53] found that human resource management would do well to consider the values and beliefs of employees, as these are closely related to national culture.

Hofstede established four organizationally critical dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. Hofstede and Bond (1988) added a fifth dimension, long-term orientation. Power distance reflects the degree to which members of society are able to accept the unequal power within the organization or institution. Individualism is seen with relatively loose social structures in which individuals express care about their own interests and those of their immediate family members; versus collectivism, where people are integrated into a strong, cohesive inner group at birth, and the inner group provides lifelong protection in exchange for absolute loyalty. Uncertainty avoidance describes the degree to which members of a society accept uncertainty and ambiguity. Masculinity describes a society that values self-confidence and tenacity, with a focus on material success. Femininity refers to the characteristics of gentleness and incorporates a focus on quality of life. Cultures with a long-term orientation value long-term development, frugality, and high durability; however, cultures with a short-term orientation value the past over the present, respect customs and traditions, and emphasize social obligation fulfillment (Hofstede, 2001).

Using Hofstede's power distance index, Chinese society can be assessed as having an unequal view of personal power and wealth distribution, to a much higher degree than the perspectives of Taiwan, the United States, and much of the rest of the world. This study further investigates differences in power distance in national culture on an individual level, regarding the moderating role of power distance between MO culture and internal MO, internal MO and perceived service attitude, and employees' market-oriented behavior.

Kirkman, Chen [54] report that individual differences in beliefs and values regarding organizational hierarchical level and structure largely depend on the individuals' cultural values. In a high-power-distance culture, employees are accustomed to following the orders and instructions of their supervisors. In other words, depending on their culture, some individuals are prone to expect greater social distance in their role and find it easier to accept the authority of the superior, and have a greater tendency to strictly abide by their duties [55]. Unequal treatment and the institutionalization of the power gap are more acceptable in a high-power-distance society, which demonstrate universal phenomena of authority, such as uneven distribution of power and wealth and class divisions. When employees with the high-power-distance feature pay more attention to the principle of reciprocity and are better able to perform their duties and

roles, they tend to contribute to organizational performance and show altruistic behavior [51, 56, 57]. In a low-power-distance society, by contrast, unequal treatment or differential rights and privileges should be minimized [51, 56, 57]. In such a society, the organizational culture of the parent company is considered to be an external culture, and people tend to be reluctant to incorporate the parent company's cultural values into the organizational system [58]. On the other hand, the degree to which employees participate in the decision-making process is usually greater. Following this discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H6: Power distance moderates the relationship between a perceived market-oriented culture and internal MO; when the power distance is low, the relationship is strengthened.

H7: Power distance moderates the relationship between internal MO and the perceived service climate; when the power distance is low, the relationship is strengthened.

H8: Power distance moderates the relationship between internal MO and employee MO behavior; when power distance is low, the relationship is strengthened.

The moderation framework is as following:

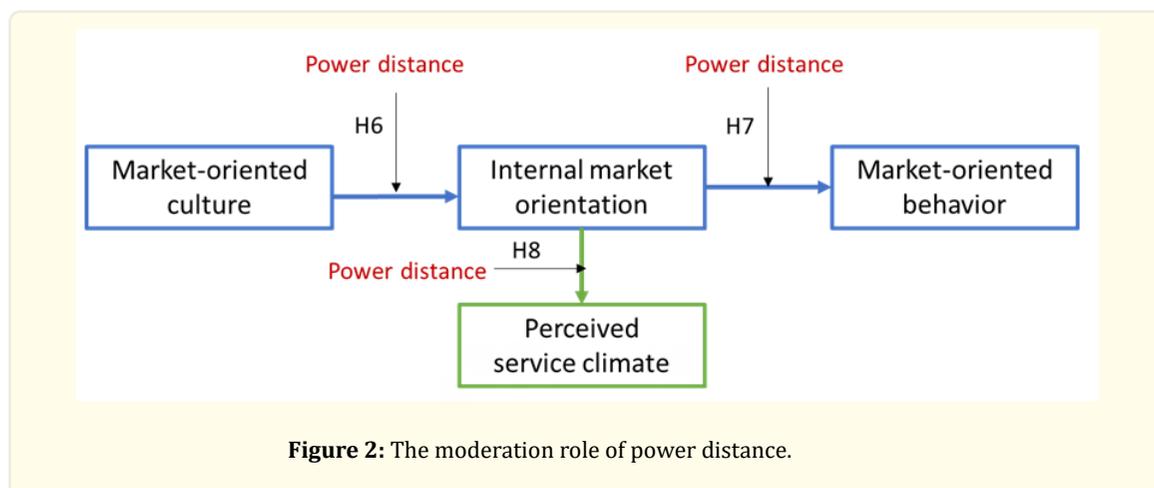


Figure 2: The moderation role of power distance.

Methodology

Data Collection

This study draws on a sample from front-line employees of catering businesses (mostly food and beverage) in Taiwan, China, and the US, respectively. The respondents were recruited by the representatives of local market research houses with referral list. With prior appointment, the representative walked into their workplaces, asking respondents to fill in the online questionnaire (on the iPad) and then the respondents received incentives. In total, around 800 people were contacted in Taiwan, Taipei city; 2000 people were in China, Beijing city; and 2000 people were in the US, California. In the end, 615 valid questionnaires were collected, of which 200 were from Taiwan, 210 were from China, and 215 were from the US. No institutional effect was expected from the sample, as the respondents were recruited from separate companies and responses were based on personal perceptions not organizational statements.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire items are based on well-established scales. They were translated from English and localized to traditional and simplified Chinese for Taiwan and China, respectively. All questions were on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree"; or (1) "not at all" to (5) "to a great extent." See the appendix for the questions. The sources are listed below.

- MO culture: Farrell and Oczkowski [59], Campo, Diaz [60]; Lin (2001).
- Internal MO orientation: Lings and Greenley [31], Rodrigues and Pinho [61]; Chin (2009).
- Employees' MO behavior: Brown, Mowen [62].
- Service Climate: Schneider, White [34], Salanova, Agut [63].
- Culture dimensions: Kirkman, Chen [54], Yoo, Donthu [64].

Descriptive Results

I. Profile of Survey Respondents.

		<i>Percentage of respondents</i>		
		<i>Taiwan (n=200)</i>	<i>China (n=210)</i>	<i>US (n=205)</i>
Gender	Male	52.5	34.3	18.5
	Female	47.5	65.7	81.5
Age	Below 20	.5	.5	0.0
	21-25	19.0	11.0	37.1
	26-30	35.5	40.0	16.6
	31-35	21.0	40.5	12.7
	36-40	14.5	6.7	10.7
	41 and above	9.5	1.4	22.9
Work seniority in their store	Less than 1 year	17.0	3.8	24.4
	2 nd year	33.0	9.0	25.4
	3 rd year	22.5	30.5	15.6
	4 th year and beyond	27.5	56.7	34.6

II. Survey items, Cronbach's Alpha, Item-to-total, and factor loadings.

	<i>Item to total</i>	<i>loading</i>
I. Market-Oriented Culture		
A. Customer orientation (5 questions) (α=0.83)		
1. The objectives of our company are driven by customer satisfaction.	0.64	0.73
2. Our company pays close attention to and evaluates employees' customer service attitude and enthusiasm.	0.63	0.72
3. Our company's strategies are aimed at creating values for our customers.	0.66	0.73
4. Our company periodically measures the degree of satisfaction with the food and services offered by the restaurants	0.68	0.74
5. Our company interviews our customers to find out their opinion of the quality of the services provided in the restaurants.	0.54	0.62

B. Competition oriented (4 questions) ($\alpha=0.81$)		
1. Our company periodically gathers information about our competitors.	0.60	0.65
2. Our company responds to competitive actions quickly.	0.66	0.71
3. The restaurant's management team analyses the strengths and weaknesses of our nearest competitors.	0.64	0.75
4. Our company is quick at spotting any changes to our environment (technological, legal, etc.).	0.59	0.74
C. Interdepartmental communication (4 questions) ($\alpha=0.812$)		
1. The departments of our company liaise to ensure they are all aware of customer needs	0.60	0.74
2. Information about customers is communicated freely throughout the company.	0.59	0.64
3. The departments of our company share the information they have about the market.	0.69	0.75
4. The departments of our company work together to offer value to the customer.	0.64	0.75
II. Internal MO		
A-1. Information generation - formal (3 questions) ($\alpha=0.82$)		
1. In this restaurant, management meets with us at least once a year to find out what expectations we have of our jobs for the future.	0.64	0.68
2. Our company evaluates employees on a regular basis in order to find out what we want.	0.69	0.79
3. In this restaurant, management interacts directly with us to find out how to make us more satisfied.	0.67	0.79
A-2. Information generation - paper (3 questions) ($\alpha=0.8$)		
1. Our company assesses the quality of the staff at least once a year (e.g. employees' capability, techniques).	0.60	0.72
2. Our company conducts employee surveys at least once a year to assess our quality of employment.	0.66	0.66
3. Our company frequently conducts employee surveys and interviews to identify influences on our behavior.	0.69	0.75
A-3. Information generation - non-formal (4 questions) ($\alpha=0.85$)		
1. Our company tries to find out employees' real feelings about their jobs.	0.70	0.80
2. Our managers/supervisors regularly talk to us about our work.	0.69	0.73
3. When at work, if our managers/supervisors notice one of the staff is acting differently to normal, they will try to find out if there is a problem that is causing a behavior change.	0.68	0.72
4. When at work our managers/supervisors try to find out what we want from the company.	0.73	0.81

B. Information dissemination (3 questions) ($\alpha=0.79$)		
1. In this restaurant, our managers/supervisors regularly report back to us about issues that affect our working environment.	0.61	0.76
2. In this restaurant, our managers/supervisors regularly meet with all staff to report issues relating to the whole company.	0.69	0.79
3. In this restaurant, we have regular staff meetings with employees at all levels attending.	0.61	0.7.
C. Response (3 questions) ($\alpha=0.81$)		
1. Our company makes changes to what it does when employee feedback indicates that they are dissatisfied with the status quo.	0.73	0.83
2. When our company finds that employees would like it to modify their conditions of employment, the departments make concerted efforts to do so.	0.72	0.80
3. When our company finds out that employees are unhappy with their supervision or management, the company will take corrective action.	0.73	0.80
III. MO behavior (4 questions) ($\alpha=0.79$)		
1. I find it easy to smile at each of my customers.	0.63	0.74
2. It comes naturally to have empathy for my customers.	0.63	0.71
3. I enjoy responding quickly to my customers' requests.	0.64	0.74
4. I get satisfaction from making my customers happy.	0.50	0.61
IV. Service Climate (3 questions) ($\alpha=0.8$)		
1. Employees in our restaurant receive recognition and rewards for the delivery of superior work and service.	0.63	0.75
2. The overall quality of service provided by our restaurant to customers is excellent.	0.65	0.76
3. Employees in our restaurant are provided with tools, technology, and other resources to support the delivery of quality work and service.	0.65	0.74

Data Analysis and Results

Research object 1 was to investigate the role of the internal market orientation and service climate and to establish how they shape employees' market-oriented behaviors, the direct/indirect relationship of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employee customer-oriented behavior.

First, the study administered a pilot test to determine the robustness of the measures with exploratory factor analysis and reliability tests using SPSS, which resulted in the deletion of eight items for being below the loading threshold (0.4) [65] to their primary factor or displaying significant cross-loading to different factors. The final list had 63 items. The values for Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.79 to .85 (see appendix), exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7 [65] and thus indicating good internal consistency.

Mplus software was used to assess the structural models, including the measurement and full models. The study adopted a two-step approach [66] to validate the model with confirmative factor analysis (CFA) to determine unidimensionality. Further, convergent validity and discriminant validity were tested. Because the samples were drawn from different cultures, the current study also ran a measurement invariance test to ensure that the constructs being measured are interpreted in same manner conceptually. Finally, the

study ran path analyses on the direct and indirect relationships of the proposed theoretical model. Appendix shows the descriptive statistics of the sample profiles.

To validate the conceptual framework, the study proposed a second-order CFA model, adopting the maximum likelihood estimator. The study assessed the CFA model in terms of absolute model fit indices, such as chi-square, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). A non-significant chi-square value indicates a good model fit, but the value of the chi-square is often sensitive to the sample size [65]. RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR are the most commonly used of the available alternative model fit indices. Each model fit index has separate criteria: values below .05 indicate suitability for RMSEA and SRMR, and values above .9 in CFI and TLI indicate a good fit [65, 67].

Measurement model

We tested the measurement model using CFA and found a good fit ($\chi^2_{(566)} = 1467.705$, $p < 0.01$, TLI = 0.922, CFI = 0.930, SRMR = 0.048, RMSEA = 0.051 (0.048, 0.054)) ($\chi^2_{(566)} = 1467.705$, $p < 0.01$, TLI = 0.922, CFI = 0.930, SRMR = 0.048, RMSEA = 0.051 (0.048, 0.054)). All indices were significant. The model included four major multi-item constructs. Internal MO was measured with three facets: information generation, information dissemination, and response (16 items). MO culture was measured with customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interdepartmental coordination (13 items), while employees' MO behavior and service climate were measured on a single tier (four items and three items, respectively) (see Appendix). A subsequent CFA of the second-order factor model provided similar good fit results ($\chi^2_{(583)} = 1686.87$, $p < 0.01$, TLI = 0.908, CFI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.062, RMSEA = 0.055 (0.0523, 0.059)). The model confirmed the proposed two-tier structure.

Scale reliability was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE) [68]. The AVEs for the scales of MOC, IMO, MOB, and SC exceeded the criterion of .5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). For the validity test, convergent validity was assessed, using the guidelines set out by Anderson and Gerbing [66], and all the standardized factor loadings were .5 or higher. Discriminant validity was achieved when the correlation between two constructs was significantly smaller than 1.0 [66]. Thus, convergent and discriminant validity were both established. The second-order construct correlations are provided in Table 1.

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MOC</i>	<i>IMO</i>	<i>MOB</i>	<i>SC</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>
1. Market-oriented Culture	3.39	0.64	1				0.88
2. Internal Market Orientation	3.72	0.80	0.75*	1			0.95
3. Market-oriented Behavior	4.09	0.65	0.75*	0.62*	1		0.70
4. Service climate	4.20	0.68	0.52*	0.30*	0.7*	1	0.75
Average variance extracted			0.78	0.9	0.5	0.57	

*Note: correlations are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

Table 1: Correlation, AVE, and factor loading for second-order constructs.

Measurement invariance

Measurement invariance is used to ensure that the construct being measured can be interpreted by respondents in a conceptually similar manner. For this, the respondents may represent distinct cultures or backgrounds. There are essentially three levels of invariance, and “each of these levels builds upon the previous one by introducing additional equality constraints on model parameters to achieve stronger forms of invariance” [69]. The results showed that the three regions are reporting using the same underlying constructs. The details are described below and shown in Table 2.

- Configural invariance, the first level, is “commonly referred to as pattern invariance and is considered to be the baseline model” [69]. At this level, the study intends to test whether the same items measure our construct across all three groups. Toward that end, the study assesses overall model fit. The result shows that model 1 is acceptable ($\chi^2(1698) = 3005.939$, $p < .01$, TLI= 0.886, CFI= 0.898, SRMR= 0.055, RMSE = 0.061), showing that configural invariance holds (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000).
- Metric invariance builds upon configural invariance by requiring that “in addition to the constructs being measured by the same items, the factor loadings of those items must be equivalent across administrations” [69]. That is, invariance for factor loadings suggests that the construct has the same meaning to participants across administrations. Thus, the current study compares the fit of the metric model with the fit of the configural model, using a chi-square difference test. If no significant difference appears in the model fit, this is evidence that the factor loadings are invariant across administrations. Our result shows the difference between models 1 and 2 ($\chi^2(1754) = 3121.656$, $p < .01$, TLI = 0.885, CFI = 0.893, SRMR = 0.071, RMSEA = 0.062) did not reach significance ($\Delta\chi^2 = 115.171$, $p > .05$), indicating that the factor loadings are similar across groups. Thus, metric invariance is supported.
- Scalar invariance builds upon metric invariance by requiring that “the item intercepts also be equivalent across administrations” [69]. To assess this, the study compares the fit of the scalar model with the fit of the metric model. If there is no significant difference in model fit, this suggests intercept invariance. Our result shows a difference between models 2 and 3 ($\chi^2(1810) = 3467.797$, $p < .01$, TLI = 0.865, CFI = 0.870, SRMR = 0.077, RMSEA = 0.067) did not reach significance ($\Delta\chi^2 = 346.141$, $p > .05$), indicating a similar intercept across groups. Thus, scalar invariance is supported.

	χ^2	<i>d.f.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>SRMR</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>TLI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	(Δdf)
Taiwan CFA	1103.569	566	0						
China CFA	911.115	566	0						
US CFA	991.256	566	0						
Model 1									
Configural invariance	3005.939	1698	0	0.055	0.061	0.886	0.898		
Model 2									
<i>Metric invariance</i>	3121.656	1754	0	0.071	0.062	0.885	0.893	115.717 (p=4.8)	56
Model 3									
<i>Scalar invariance</i>	3467.797	1810	0	0.077	0.067	0.865	0.87	346.141 (p=2.016)	56

Table 2: Measurement invariance test.

Latent mean

To examine whether a significant difference appears in the construct means among the three regions, Mplus 7.4e was employed to measure the difference in latent means. The results indicate a significant difference in the latent means for the second (China) or the third (US) group from the first group (Taiwan), all reaching a significant level ($p < .05$). That is, the mean differences among the three groups exist.

Structural Model

As noted, the model has a good fit ($\chi^2_{(583)} = 1686.87, p < 0.01, TLI = 0.908, CFI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.062, RMSEA = 0.055 (0.0523, 0.059)$). Indirect effects were tested using Mplus bootstrap for 5,000 samples. If the coefficients did not include zero with a pre-designed confidence level for the 5,000 attempts, the outcomes were considered to have significance. The results (Table 3) indicate that all of the direct and indirect effects hypotheses were proven significant. That is, MO culture positively influences employees’ MO behavior ($\alpha = .316, CI = .096, .552$) (H1 is supported); MO culture also positively influences internal MO ($\alpha = .797, 95\% CI = .708, .856$, indicating significance because not including 0); internal MO positively influences employees’ MO behavior ($\alpha = .266, CI = .068, .449$, indicating significance) (H2 is supported); Moreover, employee-perceived service climate leads to employees’ MO behavior ($\alpha = .506, CI = .391, 626$) (H3 is supported). Further mediation analysis was tested using Mplus 7.4e. This confirms that internal MO mediates the relationship between MO culture and employees’ MO behavior ($\alpha = .212, CI = 0.061, 0.361$) (H4 is supported); additionally, the perceived service climate mediates the relation between internal MO and employees’ market-oriented behavior (H5 is supported). All of these results are shown in Table 3.

It is noted that the direct effect of market-oriented culture on employees’ market-oriented behavior (.316) is stronger than the indirect effect through internal MO (.212). However, perceived service climate has a strong effect on employees’ market-oriented behavior (.506), producing a strong association. That is, if organizations’ service climate is well perceived by employees, its employees demonstrate a customer-oriented service attitude.

	Standardized coefficient (α)	p-value	Confidence Interval	
			Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%
Main effects				
H1: MOC→MOB	0.316*	0.007	0.096	0.552
H2: IMO→MOB	0.266*	0.006	0.068	0.449
H3: SC→MOB	0.506*	0.000	0.391	0.626
Indirect (mediation) effects				
H4: MOC→IMO→MOB	0.212*	0.006	0.061	0.361
H5: IMO→SC→MOB	0.225*	0.000	0.159	0.305

Note: The model has good fit: $\chi^2_{(583)} = 1686.87, p < 0.01, TLI = 0.908, CFI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.062, RMSEA = 0.055 (0.0523, 0.059)$. MOC=Market-oriented Culture, IMO=Internal MO, MOB=Market-oriented Behavior, SC= Service Climate.

* all coefficients are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

Table 3: Main effect and mediation effect.

Moderating effects

Research objective 2 was to examine the moderating effects of power distance and to determine how it strengthens the relationships among of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employees’ market-oriented behavior.

Power distance as a moderator is hypothesized to affect the strength of the effect of MO culture on internal MO, internal MO on employees’ MO behavior, and service climate on employees’ MO behavior. SPSS PROCESS Macro 3. was used with bootstrap 5000

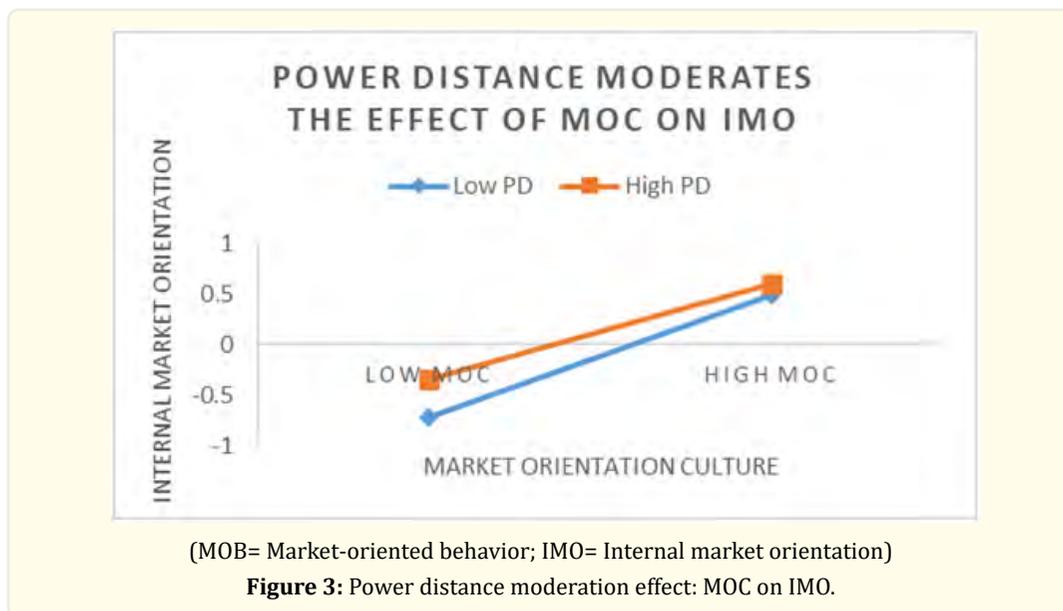
times to calculate the effects. The procedure developed by Hayes [70] was conducted for hierarchical multiple regression moderation analysis. The moderation effects were determined by testing a two-way interaction, in which the dependent variable is regressed on the interaction term and the main effects. Our results suggest that power distance successfully moderates these three relationships. Power distance moderates the effects of market-oriented culture on internal MO ($\beta = -.11$, CI = $-.17$ to $-.05$). It can be seen in Fig. 3 that the relationship between MO culture and internal MO is always positive, but *lower* power distances have a better effect, so H6 is supported. Power distance also moderates the effects of internal MO on employees' MO behavior ($\beta = .08$, CI = $.03$ to $.11$). It can be seen in Fig. 4 that a lower power distance has a greater effect, so H7 is supported. Power distance also moderate the effects of internal MO on perceived service climate ($\beta = -.11$, CI = $-.17$ to $-.05$). However, larger power distance strengthens the relationship between internal MO and perceived service climate (Fig. 5). Thus, H8 is not supported.

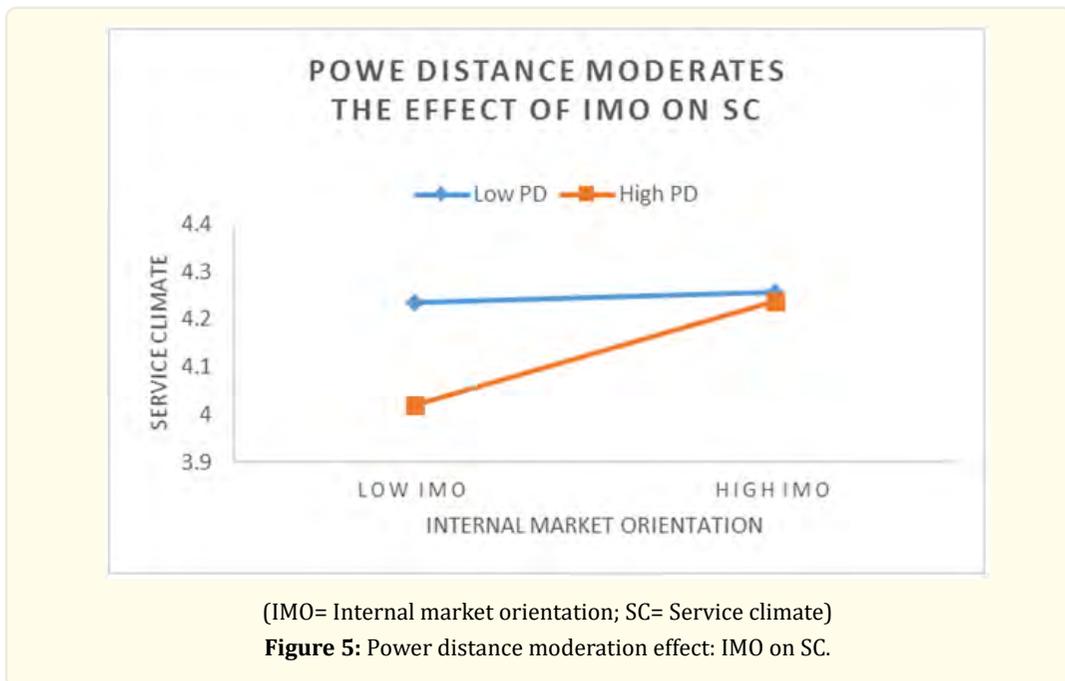
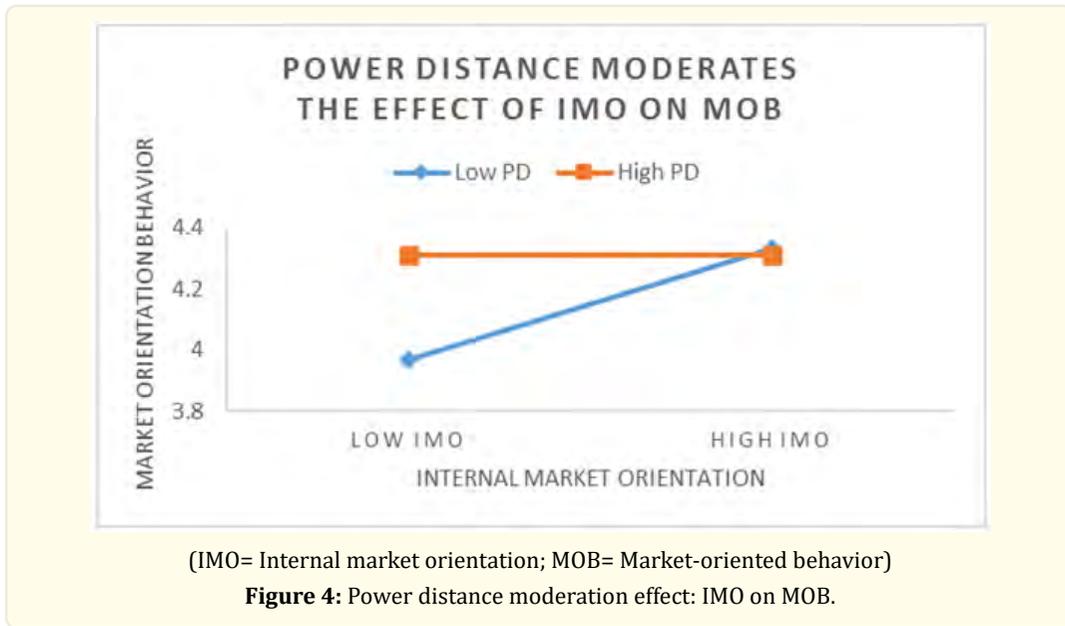
Moderator	X→Y	Interaction			
		Coeff. (β)	LLCI	ULCI	R-sq
Power Distance	H6: MOC→IMO	-0.11*	-0.17	-0.05	0.53
	H7: IMO→MOB	0.08*	0.03	0.11	0.47
	H8: IMO→SC	-0.11*	-0.17	-0.05	0.73

MOC=Market-oriented Culture, IMO=Internal MO, MOB=Market-oriented Behavior, SC= Service Climate

Table 4: Moderation Effect.

To determine the direction of the influence visually, the study uses one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below (fig.3, 4, 5). The results demonstrate that organizations with a small power distance between superiors and subordinates enhance the effects of MO culture on internal MO activities, and internal MO activities have a similar effect on employees' MO behaviors. In other words, when individuals in an organization feel an equality between superiors and subordinates, MO culture can help facilitate internal MO programs to implement easily, and these activities in turn can efficiently cultivate employees' MO behaviors. However, the effects of internal MO on service climate can be enhanced when power distance is larger. It is likely for establishing a service climate, a high-power-distance culture will be more effective, as in this case, employees should focus on rules or principles of authority to better perform their duties and roles.





Summary of findings

Table 5 summarizes the results for all hypotheses: all are supported with the exception of H8.

	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Findings</i>
H1:	Market-oriented culture influences employees' market-oriented behavior positively	Supported
H2:	Internal MO influences employees' market-oriented behavior positively	Supported
H3:	Employees' perceived service climate influences employees' market-oriented behavior positively	Supported
H4:	Internal MO mediates the relationship of market-oriented culture and employees' market-oriented behavior	Supported
H5:	Service climate mediates the relationship of internal MO and employees' MO behavior	Supported
H6:	Power distance moderates the relationship of the perceived market-oriented culture and internal MO. When power distance is <u>low</u> , the relationship is strengthened.	Supported
H7:	Power distance moderates the relationship of the internal MO and employees' MO behavior. When power distance is <u>low</u> , the relationship is strengthened.	Supported
H8:	Power distance moderates the relationship of internal MO and the perceived service climate. When power distance is <u>low</u> , the relationship is strengthened.	Not Supported

Table 5: Summary of all findings.

Comparison among Taiwan, China, and the US

Research objective 3 was to assess differences in the aforementioned relationships among Taiwan, China, and the US by establishing how mediation and moderation effects differ among the three countries. The study examined the individual details shown in Table 6. The model was tested with regression using SPSS and PROCESS macro 3.0.

Mediation effect

For Taiwan, all of the main and mediation effect hypotheses are supported, i.e., MO culture generates employees' MO behavior through internal MO programs or perceived service climate. For China, both MO culture and perceived service climate but not internal MO generate employees' MO behavior. However, internal MO programs generate employees' MO behavior only through a service climate. For the US, MO culture alone may not be sufficient to generate employees' MO behavior, but when this is done through internal MO programs that facilitate service climate, employees' MO behavior can be created. The results are shown in Table 6.

	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>US</i>
Main effect			
H1: MOC→MOB	.21*	.50*	0.12
H2: IMO→MOB	.53*	0.02	.41*
H3: SC→MOB	.21*	.23*	.38*
Indirect (mediation) effects			
H4: MOC→IMO→MOB	.31*	0.04	.24*
H5: IMO→SC→MOB	.21*	.23*	.09*

Note: MOC=Market-oriented Culture, IMO=Internal MO, MOB=Market-oriented Behavior, SC= Service Climate. All CI=95%,

* p value <.01;

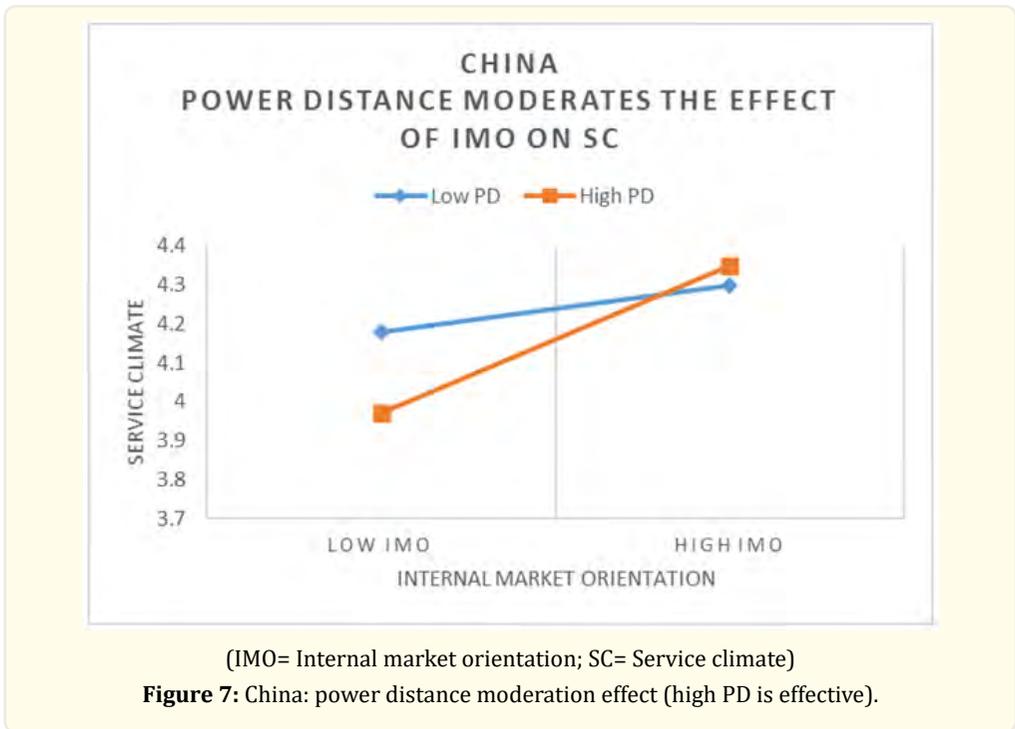
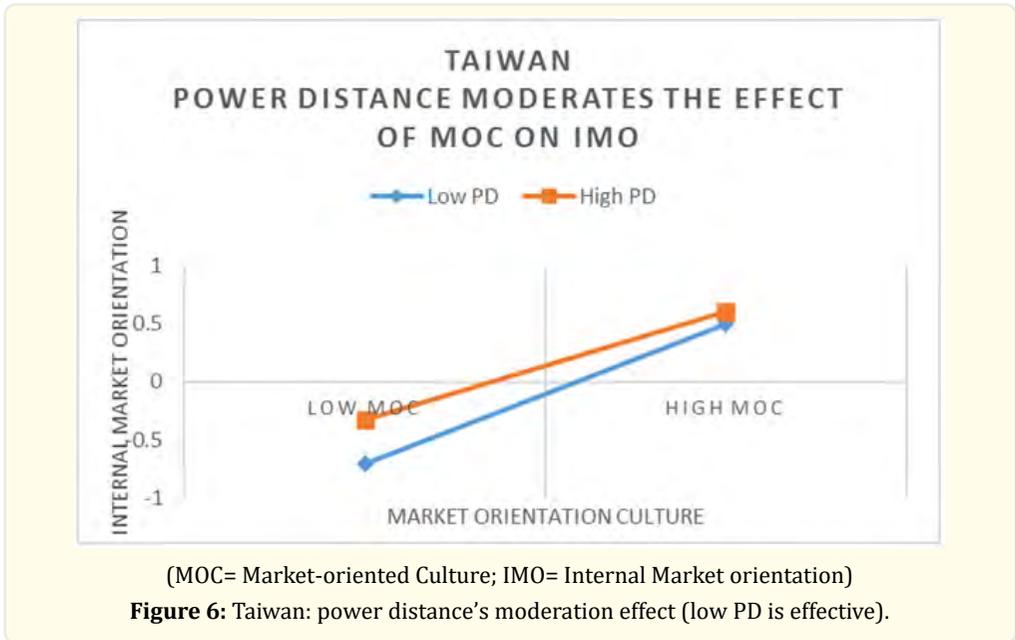
Table 6: Main effect and indirect (mediation) effect by countries.

Moderating effects

For Taiwan, the results show that lower power distance affects the strength of the MO culture on internal MO. For China, high power distance affects the strength of internal MO on service climate. In the US, by contrast, power distance has no moderating effects. The results are shown in Table 7 and Figs. 6 and 7.

	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>US</i>
MOC --> IMO	Yes (Low PD)	No	No
IMO --> MOB	No	No	No
IMO --> SC	No	Yes (High PD)	No

Table 7: Power Distance Moderator on the mediation effect by countries.



Discussion & Conclusion

The research objective was, first, to investigate the role of the internal market orientation and service climate and to establish how they shape employees' market-oriented behaviors, the direct/indirect relationship of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employee customer-oriented behavior. The results showed that a market-oriented culture in an organization strongly helps establish employees' MO behavior. The service climate perceived by frontline service staff could help support developing their market-oriented behavior in a positive direction. Furthermore, developing IMO also enhances employees' market-oriented behavior.

The study has established that the relationship between market-oriented culture and employees' market-oriented behavior is mediated by IMO practice; in turn, IMO practice and employees' MO behavior are mediated by service climate. That is, as Ling (2004) suggested, an MO culture satisfying employees' needs can help employees contribute to fulfilling the external customers' needs through effective IMO programs. These IMO practices help foster a service climate and help improve employees' MO behavior, e.g., the organization's service quality. The relationship between internal MO and employees' market-oriented behavior is mediated by perceived service climate; that is, organizations can create a salient service atmosphere to allow employees to adopt tactics to help them serve customers, and the IMO efforts made to create an MO culture can positively impact employees' MO behavior positively.

This study showed robust results, indicating that internal MO theories [31] derived from the external MO viewpoints suggested by Kohi and Jaworski (1990) link well with the service climate to predict employees' MO behavior. The two complement to provide a solid foundation for organizations seeking to develop into an MO organization.

The traditional approach to developing employees' MO behavior focuses on the importance of internal marketing, i.e., taking employees as the internal customer [10]. This orientation made sense in the past when corporate messaging was controlled by the organization [3]. In the digital age, when customers use social media, corporate images are becoming increasingly influenced by external customers, Merz, He [71] indicated that "the logic of brand is evolving and has shifted from the conceptualization of brand as a firm-provided property to brand as a collaborative, value co-creation activity of firms with their stakeholders." This is saying IMO, about "identifying and satisfying the wants and needs of employees as prerequisite to satisfying the wants and needs of customers" [10], has become more and more important. The study implies for the interplay of internal marketing (IMO) and service climate, which leads to a clear benefit in profitability.

The second research objective was to examine the moderating effects of power distance and to determine how it strengthens the relationships among of market-oriented culture, internal market orientation, service climate, and employees' market-oriented behavior. Among Hofstede's culture dimensions, the influence of power distance was examined to determine its effects on mediation relationships. The results demonstrated that low power distance can effectively enhance the effects of market-oriented culture on internal market-oriented programs and of the internal MO programs on employees' MO behaviors. In other words, organizational culture, featuring power equality between superiors and subordinates, can enhance MO culture to prevail in the organization to enforce internal MO programs. Once an internal MO program is rolled out either small power distance or power equity between superior and subordinate must prevail if staff's customer-centric mindset and behaviors are to be established. However, high power distance, instead of low power distance, can help enhance the effects of internal MO on perceived service climate, probably a good service climate requires strict leadership with a strong mind to implement a service-oriented workplace. Once frontline employees understand that the organization values service and encourages them to perform quality service in their actions, they will change their behaviors [50].

The third research objective was to assess differences in the aforementioned relationships among Taiwan, China, and the US. The respective results of Taiwan, China, and the US are quite interesting. In Taiwan, MO culture impacts internal MO when people perceive lower power distance. In China, the effects of internal MO on service climate appear when high power distance is perceived. In the US,

power distance has no moderating effect. These findings have concrete implications for the service industry as it builds an MO culture and develops MO behaviors, especially in relation to the service sector with distinct cultural characteristics in different countries.

Implications

Theoretical implication

This study explored the relationship of external market orientation, internal market orientation, service climate and employees' market-orientated behavior in the Food & Beverage industries in Taiwan, China and the United States. This is one of few studies that bring together the related market orientation constructs within international culture dimensions. We suggested several factors as important determinants of employees' market orientation behavior. The service climate perceived by service frontline staff helps to build their market-oriented behavior positively. A market-oriented culture in organization strongly helps to establish employees' market orientation behavior. Furthermore, the process of internal marketing (internal market orientation) also facilitates employees' market-oriented behavior.

It is also suggested that the relationship of market-oriented culture and employees' market-oriented behavior be mediated or reinforced by internal marketing practice. In other words, with an internal marketing programs that treat employees as internal customers can help transform such culture to be their service practice, in turn, it helps to improve organization's service quality. Also, the relationship of an internal market orientation and employees' market-oriented behavior is mediated by the perceived service climate. Hence an organization can create a salient service atmosphere which allows employees to exert any tactics to serve customers, the internal marketing efforts made to create market orientation culture can impact employees' market orientation behavior positively.

The study contributed to identify the process/mechanism for a market-oriented culture to build employees' customer-oriented behavior. That is, with an internal marketing programs or the service climate perceived will help to form the behavior.

Practical implication

Consider the example of Din Tai Fung, the most successful international catering brand in Taiwan, it was established since 1958, has set up 136 branch restaurants in 11 countries for the past 63 years, with NTD10 Billion (USD333 million) worldwide. The annual income for 10 restaurants in Taiwan is NTD 3Billion (USD100 million), revenue per restaurant is NTD300M (USD10M). Personnel costs take up 56%, compared industry norm is 25%, while employee turnover rate is only 2%. The chairman Mr. Yang Ji-hua, who is the most important driving force behind Ding Tai Fung's ability to gain a foothold in the world, once said, "There are no satisfied customers without happy employees." During the 2003 SARS outbreak, business fell by more than half in little time. But no employee's salary was cut. During the 2008 financial crisis, business performance was strongly impacted, yet Yang still characterized the situation as an opportunity to build trust. Mr. Yang has managed to meet the employees' expectations.

As a catering business goes overseas, it not only exports products but also culture and customer experience, must take the cultural differences into account when effectively leading local employees toward an MO organization. The example of Din Tai Fung vividly illustrates how an international restaurant strives to make its employees happy as a part of creating outstanding business results worldwide.

Service quality has been a part of the brand equity of the organization [72], it is important for a service brand to become an organization-wide role, to do so, it requires to create a culture of unifying ideas that cross business planning, HR, operations, and marketing [71].

Limitation and future study

This study was conducted in Taiwan, China, and the US, later work should investigate other cultures. The study only explored one cultural factor, i.e., power distance, and it is recommended that future studies include additional cultural factors that can moderate the results. Further, paper questionnaires can be employed at the same time for the front employees in future study, as the target population was visited at workplace, who may not have sufficient time to respond on the mobile device.

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