

# **The Use of Customised Market Intelligence by Small Food and Drink Producers: The Role of Strategic Orientations and Commitment**

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## ABSTRACT

The business problem this study seeks to address is the lack of evidence-based decision-making in small firms, which leaves them increasingly vulnerable in dynamic market environments. The Who Buys My Food? research project of which this study is part, involves with the United Kingdom's (UK) largest supermarket (Tesco) and a sub-set of small food and drink businesses that supply them with local food and drink products and who have access to customised market intelligence (CMI) derived from Tesco's loyalty card data. Despite the evidence that the effective use of market intelligence has a positive impact on firms' performance, the use of CMI by firms involved in Who Buys My Food? varies considerably, suggesting that barriers exist and/or enablers are missing. The focus of this study is on two potential barriers/enablers to the effective use of CMI in small firms – Strategic Orientations and commitment – and the consequences for performance.

A conceptual framework is proposed and associated hypotheses are developed, with reference to the extant literature. The hypotheses are tested using data generated by a survey of account manager employed by the firms engaged in the Who Buys My Food? research project. Structural Equation Modelling was used to analyse the data using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). As hypothesised, the results highlight the importance of how small firms and the key individual (account manager) therein, make use of CMI, with performance enhanced only when CMI is used conceptually and/or instrumentally, to inform marketing planning and decision-making, but not when it used symbolically, to support pre-conceptions or justify decisions already taken. Despite the consensus within the management literature that Market Orientation (MO) is the most important of the Strategic Orientations, this study provides no evidence that a strong MO is necessary for the effective use of CMI. However, the study did reveal that firms with a strong Learning Orientation (LO) were more likely to make effective use of CMI whilst account manager reporting a low level of organisational commitment were more likely to use CMI symbolically.

This study makes a novel contribution in that it explores the use of CMI from two different perspectives. The first is from the firm's perspective via its Strategic Orientations and the

impact on firm performance. The second is from the perspective of the individual (account manager) through their level of commitment and the impact on their functional performance. The insights will be of interest to scholars with an interest in small firms and support the view that small firms cannot be treated as small versions of large firms, such are the idiosyncrasies of decision-making structures and processes in small firms. They will also be of interest to practitioners and government agencies in charge of improving the performance and growth of small firms - a critical source of employment, economic development and innovation – in which the effective use of market information is a critical success factor.

Keywords

Customised Market Intelligence, information use, Strategic Orientations, commitment, small firms' performance

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

UEA	University of East Anglia
NBS	Norwich Business School
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SFDP	Small Food and Drink Producer
MI	Market Intelligence
CMI	Customised Market Intelligence
BEIS	The Department for Business, Energy and Industry
ONS	Office for National Statistics
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
FB	Family Business Ownership
MO	Market Orientation
EO	Entrepreneurial Orientation
LO	Learning Orientation
PO	Production Orientation
SO	Sales Orientation
OCB	Organisation Citizenship Behaviour
B/S	Buyer-Supplier
OFT	Office of Fair Trade
GSCOP	Grocery Supply Code of Practice
GCA	Grocery Code Adjudicator
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling
Commit	Commitment
ConcInstr	Conceptual/Instrumental Use
Symbolic	Symbolic Use
IndivPerf	Individual Performance
OrgPerf	Firm Performance

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are vital to the economic development as they contribute to the economic growth (Szekeres, 2010; Francsovcics and Kadocsa, 2012), wealth creation, innovation and employment (Reijonen and Komppula, 2007; Doern, 2009; Lazányi, 2014; Asikhia and Van Rensburg, 2015; Woźniak et al., 2019), otherwise known as ‘the engine of growth’ (Fan, 2003; Gherghina et al., 2020) and which is considered to be ‘the agent of change’ (Tan et al., 2009). The latest report from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) reported that in 2022, SMEs accounted for approximately 5.5 million businesses (99.9%) of all private businesses within the UK, generating 16.3 million jobs (61% of the total) and contributing over £2.18 trillion turnover to the economy (BEIS, 2022). SMEs are known for their creativity, innovation, flexibility and quick responses to market changes (Rogers, 1990; O’Shea, 1998; Evans and Moutinho, 1999; McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003; Szostak and Gay, 2019) with highly personalised management style (Stokes and Fitchew, 1997) that tends to be more informal and non-bureaucratic with fewer rules (Durst and Edvardsson, 2012). Often, the owner-manager takes the central position as the controller (Daft, 2007; Bridge and O’Neill, 2018), hence it is not uncommon that the planning and decision-making process are limited to only one person, the owner-manager (Culkin and Smith, 2000). SMEs are constrained by certain limitations, mainly related to resources and expert constraints, including limited human resources (Rogers, 1990; Holmlund and Kock, 1998) and materials, marketing skills, time and market knowledge (Henchion and McIntyre, 2000), notwithstanding a lack of financing and technology (OECD, 2000; Bridge and O’Neill, 2018).

Over the years, competition has become fiercer, as SMEs are also under additional pressure to resemble larger firms in terms of their formal management and strategic planning (Gilmore et al., 2001; Simmons et al., 2008; 2011). One of these facets is achieved by shifting their Strategic Orientations from a short-term to a longer-term and one that is more market oriented. Strategic Orientations lays the foundations and enables the firms to identify their purpose to ensure viability and performance (Zhou et al., 2005; Hakala, 2011; Dutot and Bergeron, 2016). Larger firms with formal and structured management pay attention to long-term development in their market, especially to their customers and competitors (Kumar, et al., 2012; Peña et al., 2011; Eggers et al., 2017; Lämsiluoto et al., 2019). For SMEs, however, the attention is directed

toward the day-to-day activities to generate essential cash flow that will ensure their (short-term) survival (Storey, 2000; Parry et al., 2012; Ates et al., 2013; Lämsiluoto et al., 2019). Being more market oriented, however, has proven challenging for many SMEs, not only because it is resource and labour-intensive (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2007; Gölgeci et al., 2019; Didonet et al., 2020) but also due to the lack of formalised decision-making structures and processes and, in the case of small firms, the presence of a dominant owner-manager (Jennings and Beaver, 1995; Matthew and Scott, 1995; Carney, 2005).

Studies concerning the use of market information have thus far mainly concentrated on larger firms, specifically those which have the financial resources to access this type of market information and the capacity to analyse and interpret the data to support their decision-making processes and strategic planning (Byrom, 2001, Simmons et al., 2008; Cacciolatti et al., 2009). On the other hand, studies regarding the use of market information in small firms are still relatively limited. In recent times, however, the notions regarding the use of market information amongst SMEs, especially local small and food producers (SFDPs), have increased, as it becomes rather crucial to their success (Fielding et al., 2011). Evidence from prior studies has indicated that the use of market information enhances the ability of firms to make better-informed marketing decisions and to innovate, thereby creating values for the customers, enhancing satisfaction, increasing consumer responsiveness, and helping to introduce new products into the market in a timely fashion (Duffy, 2005; Florin et al., 2007). However, there is also evidence that the effective use of market information in SFDPs is the exception rather than the rule (Donnelly et al., 2012; 2015; Cacciolatti and Fearne, 2013; Duffy et al., 2013; Didonet et al., 2020; Petrovici et al., 2020; Gölgeci et al., 2021).

Market information has been identified as a significant source of data that adds competitive advantages to firms; whereas market information gives awareness of their market position and competition (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012), thereby reducing the risks and uncertainties in the decision-making process (Frishammar, 2003; Citroen, 2011) that eventually is reflected in superior firm performance (Burke and Jarratt, 2004; Parry and Song, 2010). However, having a customised market information (that is exclusive or specific to a particular customer or distribution channel) can be particularly beneficial to mature markets which is necessarily slow-growing and extremely competitive, including the UK supermarket sector. This sector is an important distribution channel for those SFDPs seeking to grow in a market in which opportunities for differentiation are difficult to exploit (Cacciolatti and Fearne, 2013). With

different varieties of supermarkets available in the UK, Tesco is an excellent example of a firm that has successfully exploited customised market intelligence (CMI) to improve their performance and that of their suppliers (Lybaert, 1998; Dunn, 2006; Watts, 2006; Cacciolatti et al., 2009). Tesco provides a vast range of services and supports local agri-food communities, especially small producers. Tesco was the first UK supermarket to introduce a loyalty card scheme in 1994 (Humby et al., 2007). The data generated by the system has afforded both them and their suppliers' insight into the behaviour of their shoppers which has, in turn, contributed to their sustained growth over the last twenty years (Humby et al., 2007).

Evidence from the literature suggests that the buyer-supplier relationship is often characterised by a power imbalance and power dependency, in which large supermarket retailers exercise a considerable amount of control and influence over their suppliers (Hingley, 2005; Hingley et al., 2006). In such circumstances, Tesco is considered one of the key buyers and therefore, developing/maintaining this relationship is vital, as the consequences of losing a contract are graver for those SFDPs in which such a contract can contribute to a significant loss on their income (Hingley, 2005). Therefore, the quality of the relationship between Tesco and SFDPs will influence the willingness to allocate their resources to sustain the relationship (Duffy et al., 2013; Malagueño et al., 2019), in this context, through the effective use of CMI. Tesco suppliers who invest in the CMI can benefit in a variety of ways – ensuring that their businesses do not move into fruitless territory (Dunn, 2006), especially with the current market dynamics (e.g. from the global supply chain problems from the Ukraine-Russia war, the rise in cost/inflation rate and labour shortage, and the after-impact of the COVID-19 pandemic), gathering information about their shoppers' behaviour (Allaway et al., 2006) as the majority of people are looking for cheaper products due to high inflation rate, bridging the knowledge gap (Humby et al., 2007). However, the use of CMI amongst SFDPs supplying Tesco is reportedly limited for a variety of practical reasons, including the costs associated with accessing CMI, the lack of skills/capacity within the SFDPs to make use of CMI in their business planning and marketing decision-making processes, and the lack of Market Orientation (Stokes, 2000; Simmons et al., 2008).

## **1.2. Research Problems/Aim, Research Objectives and Research Questions**

*Aim of Study:* To explore the use of CMI and its impact on the performance of local SFDPs that supply Tesco, one of the UK's largest supermarket retailers.



*Rationale:* Through an extensive review of the literature, it appears that smaller firms struggle to engage with market information in general and CMI in particular, owing to the informal and unstructured nature of their decision-making processes (Donnelly et al., 2012), short-term Strategic Orientations (Didonet et al, 2020), a lack of commitment arising due to the challenging intra-personal relationship within the firm (between the account manager and owner-manager) and interpersonal relationship (between the account manager and the retail buyer) (Duffy et al., 2013). Hence, this study addresses how CMI affects small firms' performance conceptually, instrumentally and/or symbolically, based on the use of this technology by key individual. Specifically, the study is both unique and original as it explores the use of CMI from two different perspectives, namely:

1. The firm's perspective – through the exploration of its Strategic Orientations. Specifically, the study explores the extent to which the use and impact of CMI are influenced by the firm's Strategic Orientations.
2. The individual's perspective – through the key individual – the account manager who is responsible for the relationship between the SFDPs and the supermarket buyer (to whom the CMI is relevant). The propensity for an account to use CMI effectively is likely to be influenced by the strength of their relationships with their employer (the owner-manager) and the supermarket buyer. The stronger the relationship the more committed the account manager will be and the more likely they are to 'go the extra mile', which in the context of this study means investing time and effort in the effective use of CMI.

The aim will be addressed through the following objectives, specifically to answer the following research questions:

*Objective One:* To explore the different uses (Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use) of market information to the effective use of CMI and the consequences on performance.

Objective One is addressed through this research question:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: What is the impact of different uses of CMI on performance?

*Objective Two:* To explore the potential barriers/enablers to the effective use of CMI on local SFDP from the firm's and individual's perspective. From firm's perspective, the potential barriers/enablers are assessed through the firm's different Strategic Orientations, whilst, from

the individual's perspective, the potential barriers/enablers are assessed through the individual's level of commitment.

Objective Two is addressed through these research questions:

RQ<sub>2</sub>: What are the potential barriers/enablers to the effective use of CMI on local SFDP from firm's performance?

RQ<sub>3</sub>: What are the potential barriers/enablers to the effective use of CMI on local SFDP from individual's performance?

### **1.3. Who Buys My Food? Research Project**

This section gives a brief introduction to the Who Buys My Food? research project, of which this study is a part. For further information about the research project, please visit the project's official website <https://www.uea.ac.uk/groups-and-centres/whobuysmyfood>.

Who Buys My Food? is a collaborative action research project involving researchers from UEA, Tesco and Dunnhumby and receives funding from Invest Northern Ireland. The project aims to help SFDPs to grow their businesses by increasing their understanding of shopper behaviour, and, more generally, their use of evidence-based marketing decision-making. Through the research project, qualified Tesco suppliers with a total turnover below £6m (and less than £1m with Tesco) gain access, free of charge, to a customised shopper insight which the study called market intelligence or CMI, which is derived from the data accrued by Tesco Clubcard (loyalty card). The project has been running for over twenty years and has assisted over 700 SMEs from all over the UK.

The shopper insight reports were used to be delivered in a PowerPoint presentation form. However, from September 2019, a web-based app was developed to provide an open access with a weekly basis update for the suppliers. The participating firms that enrol with the project could gain an access to the CMI by simply putting their credentials and logging-in to their accounts. In addition, the participating firms are also invited to quarterly webinars and are offered one-to-one consultations with the project team. The CMI mainly covers three key elements: a) suppliers' key performance indicators (KPIs), b) their comparison against their competitors and c) shopper segmentation data. Thus, information is provided about the performance of a supplier, their competitors and their customers. The CMI provides

information that can be used for variety of marketing decisions, such as preparation for buyer review meetings, promotional planning, new product development or packaging re-design.

The project seeks to reduce the barriers to the use of market information for evidence-based marketing decision-making by providing accessible data with no associated costs. Accordingly, data is always accessible without any financial burden. The participating companies are regularly educated about the importance of using the data and one-to-one support is also offered. Yet, the project's report shows that the CMI is not used to its full extent. The usage data for 2019-2022 shows a variation of usage where 82% of the enrolled firms accessed the report once a month, on average, in the first six months since the web based app was launched, while 33% of these firms accessed the CMI only once or twice and 10% of the firms accessed their CMI ten times per month in average. It is worth noting that each firm must face at least two quarterly buyer review meetings (with Tesco) throughout those periods. This brief overview of the usage rates provides further evidence that is closely related to the SMEs' characteristics, especially regarding their approach and acceptance of the use of market information.

#### **1.4. Structure of the Thesis**

This introductory chapter offers a brief but compact overview of the whole study by stating the industry's current condition, the challenges and problems that SFDPs are currently facing, and introducing the Who Buys My Food? research project as well as giving the directory on what to expect in the ensuing chapters.

Accordingly, the study is structured as follows:

*Chapter One* introduces the study by presenting a brief summary of all the important parts of the study, including the current industry's updates, research problems, aim, objectives and questions. Additionally, the chapter also introduces the Who Buys My Food? research project and outlines the structure of the thesis.

*Chapter Two* lays the foundation of the contextual background of the agri-food and supermarket sector, updates current industrial trends and introduces some important terms (e.g. CMI, supermarket loyalty card data); the key individuals (owner-manager and account

manager) and main entities (SFDPs and Tesco) within their contextual backgrounds, backstories and specific roles in the study.

*Chapter Three* presents a literature review addressing the main constructs of the study, including information use, Strategic Orientations, commitment and family ownership. The discussion is summarised and presented in terms of the study's conceptual framework and hypotheses.

*Chapter Four* presents the research method and all the initial analyses for all the constructs. The chapter begins with all the chosen research methods, including research design and methodology, research technique and procedure and all the measurement models.

*Chapter Five* presents and discusses all the findings from the data analyses. The first part of the chapter discusses the initial findings from the hypothesised relationships. The second part of the chapter consists of the discussions for findings from additional data analyses in the form of correlation and semi-structured interviews that were added to justify and glean more clarity from the initial findings.

*Chapter Six* presents a discussion of the overall findings from all data analyses. The study concludes by presenting its contributions to both the literature and practitioners, stating some of the limitations that occurred throughout the study and giving some suggestions for future research.

# **CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: SMALL FOOD AND DRINK PRODUCERS AND THE UK GROCERY INDUSTRY**

## **2.1. Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the contextual background of the study. The chapter begins with the overview and current trends of the UK agri-food industry, which highlights the proliferation of small firms in food manufacturing, the dominance of supermarkets in the grocery retail market and recent changes in consumers' preferences and shopping behaviours with respect to food and drink (Section 2.2). This is followed by an overview of small businesses, one which highlights the challenges of resource poverty and the idiosyncratic management structures and decision-making structures which leave them vulnerable to competition from larger businesses (Section 2.3). The chapter concludes (Section 2.4) with an introduction to the key stakeholders involved in the study.

## **2.2. The Overview of the Agri-Food Industry**

### UK Agri-Food Industry

The agri-food industry (including agriculture, manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing and catering) is one of the largest industries in the UK, with a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £127.3 billion (6.2% of national GVA) in 2022 (Table 2.1), an increase of 13% since 2020 (DEFRA, 2023).

Table 2.1 – Gross Value Added of the UK Agri-Food Industry for 2021

	GVA (£ billion)	Shares of Total (%)
Agriculture	11.5	9
Food and Drink Manufacturing	28.8	24
Food and Drink Wholesaling	13.2	10
Food and Drink Retailing	36.2	29
Non-Residential Catering	26.5	28
Total Agri-Food Sector	116.2	100

Source: DEFRA, 2023

Note:

- Gross Value Added (GVA) = the difference between output and intermediate consumption for any given sector/industry. It is the difference between the value of goods and services produced that are generated by any unit engaged and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production (ONS, 2022; DEFRA, 2023).

The agri-food industry employed 4.1 million people (13% of all UK employees in the UK) in 2022 (Table 2.2) and grew by 3.3% in 2022 (DEFRA, 2023).

Table 2.2 – Employment in the UK Agri-Food Industry in 2022

	Employment (million employees)	Shares of Total (%)
Agriculture	0.4	10
Food and Drink Manufacturing	0.4	10
Food and Drink Wholesaling	0.2	5
Food and Drink Retailing	1.1	27
Non-Residential Catering	2.0	48
Total Agri-Food Sector	4.1	100

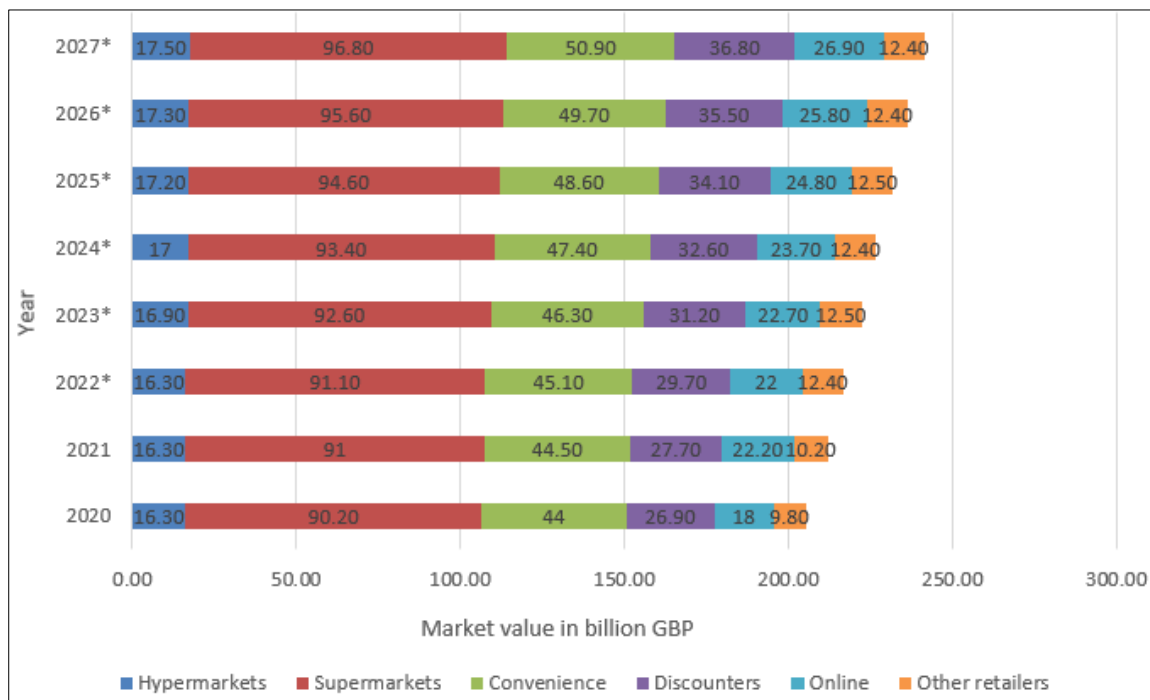
Source: DEFRA, 2023

Grocery Retail Market

The grocery retail market comprises five main formats – hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, discounters and e-commerce. The total value of the UK grocery retail

market in 2022 was estimated to be approximately £216.8 billion (IGD, 2022). Supermarkets accounted for the largest market share (42%), followed by convenience stores (21%), discounters (14%), e-commerce (14%), hypermarkets (7%) and other retailers (5%).

Figure 2.1 – Market Value of Grocery Retail in the UK by Channel\*



Source: IGD, 2022

\*data shows for the year 2020-2027; data from 2023 – 2027 are forecasted

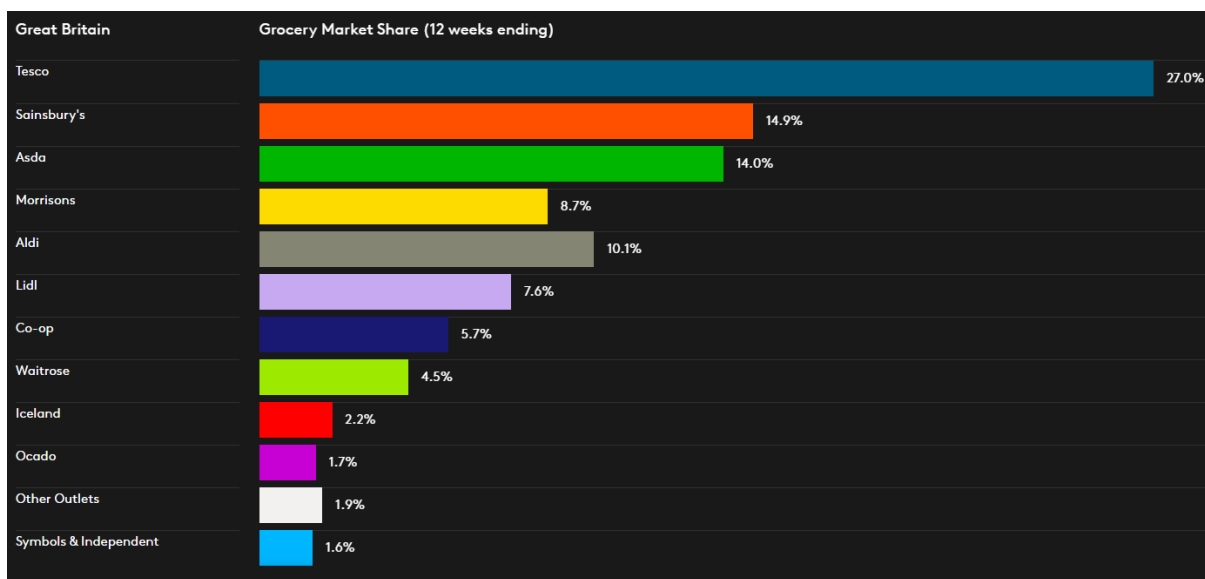
Note:

Channel Definition:

- Hypermarket = is a retail self-service establishment (store format) offering a broad range of food and non-food products (is substantial), online purchasing service with car parking facilities and with a floor space over 5574 m<sup>2</sup> (IGD, 2022).
- Supermarket = a large shop (food focused retail format) between 278 to 5574 m<sup>2</sup> which sells most types of food (including frozen food specialist) and other goods needed in the home. This channel does not offer online purchases from stores (Cambridge Dictionary; IGD, 2022).
- Convenience store = a store format under 278 m<sup>2</sup> that sells at least seven core convenience categories usually open until late (Cambridge Dictionary; IGD, 2022).
- Discounter = limited assortment retailer that focuses on everyday low prices items, for instance Aldi and Lidl (for grocery focus discounters) and Poundland, Home Bargains, B&M and Wilko (for variety items discounters) (Cambridge Dictionary; IGD, 2022).
- Online = including online grocery sales of multiples and sales of online-only food and drink specialists, supplier direct-to-consumer and sales through takeaway aggregators (IGD, 2022).
- Other = including sales through food retailers that are not covered above such as food specialists (e.g. butchers, bakers), street markets and food sold through mainly non-food retailers (IGD, 2022).

The grocery retail market has an oligopolistic structure, with the four largest supermarkets accounting for almost two thirds of retail sales (Figure 2.2). According to Kantar (2023), in April 2023, Tesco, Sainsbury’s and Asda accounted for 27%, 15% and 14% respectively, with the two discounters chains, Aldi (10%) and Lidl (8%) together accounted for 18%. The rise of discounters is significant as it increases the importance of price in the strategies adopted by grocery retailers, making it more difficult for small, niche, food and drink producers to compete and justify their space on supermarket shelves.

Figure 2.2 – UK Grocery Market Share (w/c 16 April 2023)



Source: Kantar, 2023

\*Kantar data over the twelve weeks to 16 April 2023

Note:

- Market share = is a measure of the relative size of a firm in an industry or market in terms of the proportion of total output or sales or capacity it accounts for (OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms, 2005)
- For interactive figure, visit <https://www.kantar.com/campaigns/grocery-market-share>

The Changing of Consumers’ Preference and Purchasing Behaviour: The Competitive Environment

After decades of modest but sustained growth in demand for local, regional and artisanal food and drink, which has supported the growth of small food and drink businesses in the UK, a series of (unprecedented) systematic shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia and the UK’s departure from the European Union (‘Brexit’) – have fundamentally changed the competitive environment (Food Manufacture, 2002; Savills, 2022;



ONS, 2023). These events resulted in disruptions to the supply chain, a significant increase in inflation and labour shortages, all of which have made it more difficult than it already was for SFDPs to survive in an increasingly competitive environment.

The changes in consumer sentiment and shopper behaviour have shifted the picture of mainstream retailing (Kantar, 2020). Despite the daunting inflation rate figure (5.7% in March 2023) that impacted the supply chain and the food prices, the UK grocery market is predicted to keep growing by 11.3% between 2022 and 2027 (IGD, 2022), although the growth rate would be more moderate moving onwards. The inflation hit all sectors leaving the customers far from immune to the high spike in the cost of living, including a bigger budget to spend on food costs. Consequently, some would naturally tighten their budget and shift their shopping behaviours to be more planned and calculated. Ultimately, discounters rose to the occasion as they can offer cheaper ranges of products with more varieties of pack sizes, offering private brands with cheaper prizes instead of big brand items as well as offering more promotions (IGD, 2022). With this shifting in shopping behaviour, it was predicted that the discounters would grow by 23.9% between 2022-2027 (IGD, 2022). The rise of discounters caused some of the major supermarkets to lose market share (IGD, 2022). Another channel that also benefited from the customers changing shopping behaviour, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, was the online channel. Having experienced the convenience of choosing online, click&collect features and delivery throughout the pandemic period, this channel is predicted to grow yet further 22.6% between 2022 and 2027 (Mintel, 2022; IGD, 2022).

This shifting in shopper behaviour also forced grocery retailers and suppliers to reduce product lines to boost efficiency and ensure continuity of supply. According to Grocer (2020), based on the figure reported by Assosia (w/c 15 June 2020 vs w/c 2 March 2020), 13,794 grocery products were delisted from the UK's top six supermarkets, representing a 9% decline (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 – De-listing by Retailer and Category (w/c 15 June 2020 vs w/c 2 March 2020)

<b>DELISTINGS BY RETAILER AND CATEGORY</b>																				
	BABY		BAKERY		DRINKS		CUPBOARD		FRESH		FROZEN		HEALTH & BEAUTY		HOUSEHOLD		PETCARE		TOTAL	
	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)	SKUS	(%)
<b>Asda</b>	<b>158</b>	13	<b>169</b>	22	<b>337</b>	11	<b>1,131</b>	16	<b>595</b>	17	<b>130</b>	11	<b>862</b>	16	<b>198</b>	13	<b>267</b>	30	<b>3,847</b>	16
<b>Morrisons</b>	<b>140</b>	14	<b>33</b>	7	<b>254</b>	9	<b>789</b>	13	<b>352</b>	10	<b>153</b>	14	<b>478</b>	14	<b>267</b>	22	<b>440</b>	33	<b>2,906</b>	14
<b>Ocado</b>	<b>186</b>	8	<b>63</b>	9	<b>146</b>	2	<b>469</b>	4	<b>107</b>	2	<b>5</b>	0	<b>228</b>	4	<b>116</b>	5	<b>1,394</b>	41	<b>2,714</b>	7
<b>Sainsbury's</b>	<b>46</b>	5	<b>94</b>	12	<b>134</b>	4	<b>645</b>	10	<b>314</b>	7	<b>29</b>	3	<b>325</b>	5	<b>150</b>	12	<b>74</b>	9	<b>1,811</b>	7
<b>Tesco</b>	(+) <b>114</b>	(+) 13	<b>60</b>	8	<b>8</b>	0	<b>798</b>	12	<b>788</b>	16	<b>9</b>	1	<b>117</b>	3	<b>35</b>	3	<b>11</b>	1	<b>1,712</b>	7
<b>Waitrose</b>	(+) <b>6</b>	(+) 1	<b>58</b>	10	<b>18</b>	1	<b>241</b>	5	<b>569</b>	14	<b>39</b>	6	<b>109</b>	6	(+) <b>2</b>	0	(+) <b>74</b>	(+) 16	<b>734</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,725</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,901</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13,724</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Assosia, 2020

Note:

- Rationalisation = the process of reducing the number of products that you sell in order to invest more in the products that make the most profit; the goal is to reach the maximum number of customers with a minimum number of products in order to maximise revenue for each product (Cambridge Dictionary).
- De-listing = an action by the retailer to remove the product from sale but not from the market by the supplier and which continues to be sold by other retailers (Davies, 1994).

Supermarket retailers often face the threat of backlash from their customers when they reduce their product range (Argouslidis et al., 2018). Therefore, the decision to remove/de-list a particular product is not always applicable to the worst-selling products. Supermarket retailers needed balance in their range of products, including some niche items. Consequently, supermarket retailers considered operational efficiency, commercial impact and consumer preferences before deciding on which products to remove. Grocer (2020) suggested that supermarket retailers with the best loyalty card data could hold some advantages. The data from the loyalty card should make the decisions much more accurate and consumer-focused (Grocer, 2020).

### 2.3. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

#### Definition of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Conventionally, businesses are classified as either large (over 250 employees) or small and medium sized enterprise (SME), employing less than 250 employees (DEFRA, 2023). The SME category can be broken down further, including: sole-proprietors (0 employees), micro (1-10 employees), small (fewer than 50 employees) and medium businesses (50-250 employees) (DEFRA, 2023).

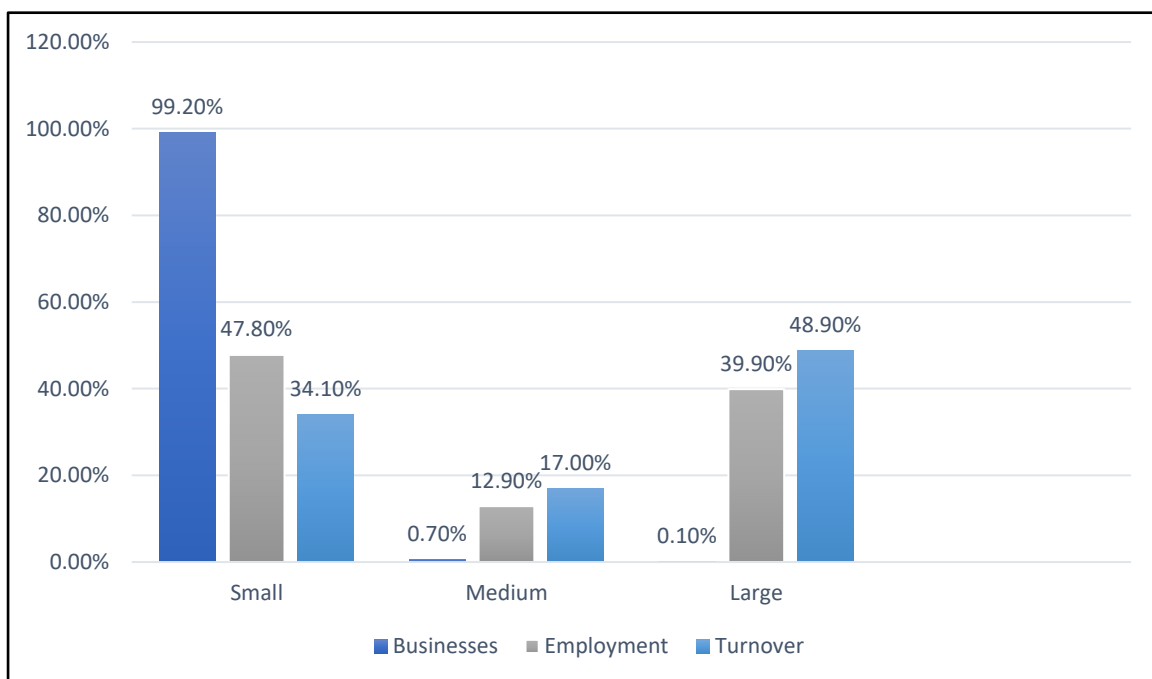
This study focuses on small businesses (11-49 employees) and more specifically, small food and drink businesses that have grown sufficiently to enter the highly competitive grocery

retail sector, selling to mainstream supermarkets, under a local or regional food banner or simply as a niche brand within their respective market category.

The Composition, Importance and Characteristics of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

According to the Department for Business, Energy and Industry (BEIS) there were 5.5 million private businesses in 2022, of which 5.5 million (99.2%) were classified as small businesses, 35,900 (0.7%) were classified as medium-sized businesses and 7,700 (0.1%) were classified as large businesses (Table 2.4). Moreover, sole traders (businesses with no employees) accounted for 74% of all the businesses (BEIS, 2022).

Figure 2.4 – Composition of Business Population in the UK at the beginning of 2022 by Total Population, Employment and Turnover



Source: BEIS, 2022

Note:

Turnover = the amount derived from provisions of goods or services within the company’s ordinary activities after deduction of trade discounts, VAT and other relevant taxes (HM Revenue and Customs, 2023).

It is widely acknowledged that SMEs share several inherent characteristics that make them considerably different from larger businesses and impact how they operate (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003). One of the main differences is that SMEs face so-called ‘resource poverty’

(Welsh and White, 1981; Kotey and Slade, 2005; Harney and Dundon, 2006; Kroon et al., 2013; Guerrero, Cayrat and Cossette, 2022), such as limited financial, human, material and informational resources (Shrader et al., 1989; Blankson and Omar, 2002; Didonet et al., 2020) and the lack of managerial capacity to organise these resources (Harney and Dundon, 2006; Kroon et al., 2013). What is more, they often have inferior skills and lack the necessary expertise, e.g. in digital or managerial domains (Ates et al., 2013; Roper and Hart, 2018; Wang and Wang, 2020). This often results in a negative approach to long-term planning and a reliance on informal organisational structures. As a result, they face continuous uncertainty and focus their scarce resources on surviving (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003) and reactive tactics to achieve short-term gains (Lämsiluoto et al., 2019; Didonet et al., 2020). However, limited resources force them to be ingenious with what is available resulting in greater flexibility (Motwani et al., 1998; Alpkan et al., 2007; Van Burg et al., 2012; Adomako and Ahsan, 2022) and more rapid responsiveness and adaptation (Aragón-sánchez and Sánchez-marín, 2005; Borch and Madsen, 2007; Pierre and Fernandez, 2018). This often leads to the delivery of creative and innovative solutions (O'Dwyer et al., 2009; Didonet et al., 2016; Tabesh et al., 2019).

In the words of Blankson and Stokes (2002, p.49), “the small business deliberation involves informal, unplanned activity that relies on the intuition and energy of an individual (i.e. the owner-manager) to make things happen.”. Furthermore, the literature reveals a personalised approach to management in small businesses, where the owner-manager knows and relates with all employees personally and makes all the key decisions alone (McCartan-Quinn and Carson 2003; Reijonen and Komppula 2007). It has been argued that this dominant influence or omnipresence of the entrepreneur or SME’s owner-manager often results in the lack of formal strategic planning (Carter and Jones-Evans 2006); typifies operational orientation (Cromie 1994); and is also responsible for the characteristic intuitive and reactive nature of small firms, who tend to only consider the short-term, due to their survival mentality (Blackburn and Hankinson 1989; Hankinson et al., 1997). In the same vein, there is evidence that the personalisation of management by the owner-manager tends to expose small firms to greater uncertainty and higher fixed costs associated with management, because the owner-manager may lack the requisite ‘skill set’ to manage the business (Carter and Jones-Evans 2006).

Researchers have also argued that the lack of marketing expertise tends to make small firms reliant on the marketing competencies of their owner-managers (Carson and Gilmore 2000; Rocks et al., 2005); thereby explaining the variance often associated with small firm performance. Nonetheless, despite these characteristics and performance-related issues facing small firms, there is a consensus amongst scholars that a positive relationship exists between the use of market information and SME's performance (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Becherer et al., 2001, Lybaert, 1998). In their study of eighteen small businesses, Hogarth-Scott et al., (1996) found that small businesses practice some degree of marketing, even where the owner-managers have very little marketing education and experience. However, they found considerable differences in the level of sophistication associated with marketing; from businesses with no marketing strategies and no knowledge of the market at all to businesses with quite sophisticated marketing strategies. In another exploratory study investigating the factors underpinning marketing practices in 30 UK-based small companies, Blankson and Stokes (2002) found three main factors supporting marketing practices *vis-à-vis*: management and staff relationship, survival and financial strength of the business, and the changing market conditions (Blankson and Stokes, 2002). Similarly, a more recent work by Jocumsen (2004) identified 'information gathering and research' as one of the key steps in his model of strategic marketing decisions in small businesses (Jocumsen, 2004). In this regard, despite the academic settings and research contexts of the various studies that have attempted to understand marketing practices in small businesses, one feature connecting all the studies is the role of adequate marketing information in marketing planning and decision-making.

## **2.4. Key Stakeholders in the Study**

This study focuses on how different uses of market information impact performance at the level of the individual (sales/marketing/account manager) and the organisation (SFDPs) and the role of Strategic Orientations and employee engagement in the specific context of a trading relationship with Tesco, the UK's largest grocery retailer, and access to Tesco Clubcard data via an established research project, Who Buys My Food?.

### **2.4.1. Tesco: The Leading Supermarket Retailer and Its Loyalty Scheme**

Tesco is the UK's largest supermarket, with £53.4 billion in sales, 367,321 employees, 4,673 shops worldwide and over 5,000 suppliers (Tesco, 2021). One of the keys to Tesco's success is the market insight that they acquire from one of their assets, their loyalty scheme, widely

known as Tesco Clubcard. Tesco was the first UK supermarket to launch a loyalty card in 1993 (Humby et al., 2007) when Tesco's marketing team identified it as a strategic weapon. Initially, Clubcard was used just as a promotional tool to reward people for spending money in the store. However, it very quickly became the source of invaluable behavioural data, exclusive to Tesco about their shoppers and their suppliers that became the engine of Tesco's growth over the last three decades. Of additional relevance to this study is Tesco's interaction with SFDPs through its 'local' range of food and drink products, the majority of which are produced by small producers taking their first steps into supermarket distribution. At its peak, in 2010, the Tesco Local Range was the second largest, behind the Tesco Value range, and of considerable strategic importance. In recent years the sales value of local lines has fallen as a result of the on-going rationalisation of product ranges, which was accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kantar, 2020; Grocer, 2020), but Tesco retains a small team of regional buyers, covering the four home nations (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), who liaises with suppliers and supports their cause through the conversations and quarterly meetings they have with category buyers, who are in-charged with reviewing category performance and ensuring that all the products listed are making a contribution. This is where the suppliers' access to the Dunhumby data is critical, providing the local sourcing team and the category managers with objective evidence for retaining or expanding their distribution within Tesco.

#### **2.4.2. Small and Food Drink Producers (SFDPs) – Owner-manager**

A manager is someone who performs the tasks of management with or without power over others by setting objectives, organising, motivating, communicating, measuring and developing people (Drucker, 2013). In a small firm setting, however, the role of manager is often posed by the owner of the business, hence this individual is often being called owner-manager. The majority of SFDPs are run by only a few or just one individual (the owner-manager). Hence, the presence of the owner-manager is vital in day-to-day management activities (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Matlay, 1999) and makes them omnipresent (Stasch and Ward, 1987; Stokes, 1995; Crick and Chaudhry, 1997; Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela, 1998; Burns and Dewhurst, 2016). Ideally, the owner-manager should have sufficient skills to demonstrate their ability to run the business by clarifying the objectives, planning, organising, directing and controlling the business (Mullins, 2008); in a simple way, the owner-manager needs to decide what should be done and gets the right people to do so

(Stewart et al., 1999). However, in most cases, the owner-manager still finds the managerial roles to be challenging as it is hindered by some constraints, including skill and competence in technical, social, human skills and conceptual ability (Smalibone, 1990), time and finance (Hudson et al., 2001; Lu and Beamish, 2001) and marketing ability (Stokes, 2000; Simmons et al., 2008, Ihua, 2011).

The presence of the owner-manager is paramount, as the firms' success mirrors their own (Jennings and Beaver, 1995). It also indicates that the owner-manager's personal goals, motivations and characteristics/traits may influence the success of the firms, which means that the small firms are viewed as a highly personalised business entities from the specific personalised stamp of the owner-manager (Reynolds, 1992; Down, 2006; Watson, 2009; Lobonțiu and Lobonțiu, 2014). Gray and Stanworth (1991) identify five main characteristics/traits of owner-manager: 1) need for achievement (McClelland, 1961), 2) locus of control (Brockhaus, 1982; Caird, 1990; Chell, 2008), 3) risk-taking propensity (Quinn, 1989; Carland et al., 1984; Chell, 2008), 4) need for independence (Collins and Moore, 1970; Bolton, 1971; DeVries, 1977) and 5) innovative and creative behaviour (Kanter, 1983; 1989; West and Farr, 1990). These main characteristics/traits may be the point of difference in their actions and decisions. In addition, it also differentiates the owner-manager from the entrepreneur, because some treat and acknowledge them as alike (Welsh and Young, 1982; Carland et al., 1984; Kemelgor, 1985; Rauch and Frese, 2007; Stewart and Roth, 2001; Zhao et al., 2010). It is an on-going topic of discussion; however, the literature clearly points out the difference in their respective motivations. An owner-manager starts and manages the business for the 'lifestyle' that is set to provide an adequate level of income as well as to pursue their personal goals. An entrepreneur does the same but seeks to grow by making a profit and continuously expanding the business (Burns, 2016).

### **2.4.3. Small and Food Drink Producers (SFDPs) – Account-manager**

Managing relationships is not an easy task, it is rather a critical task (Madill et al., 2007). This task is usually the responsibility of one of the key individuals in the company – the account manager/key account manager (KAM)/sales representative/client manager (depending on the context and/or given title) (e.g. Diller, 1992; McDonald et al., 1997; Madill et al., 2007). In a broader context, the concept of 'key account manager' (KAM) is often featured/adopted as it is deemed to be potentially featured for any kind of business relationships (e.g. Grönroos,

1990; Pardo et al., 1995; Millman, 1996, McDonald et al., 1997). KAM is defined as an approach that is adopted by a firm to build a portfolio for the key buyer by offering them a continuation product/service package that is tailored to suit their needs (Diller, 1992; McDonald et al., 1997). Hence, in a more general context, an account manager can be defined as the individual in the selling company who represents the selling company's capabilities to the buyer by bringing the two together to meet the buyer's needs (McDonald et al., 1997). As for this study, the individual responsible for bringing the buyer and seller's needs together and maintaining this relationship will be addressed as the account manager.

The literature suggests that the account manager's role in managing relationships is the key (Crosby et al., 1990; Tyler and Stanley, 1999; Madill et al., 2007) that is perceived from four different factors: 1) the role of integrity (including competence, empathy, courteousness, understanding); 2) the level of communication in the relationship; 3) the level of flexibility (including adaptability of the contract, responsiveness to changes and the possibility of resolving conflict) and 4) the level of solidarity (including the degree of trust, commitment and benefits in the relationship (Berry, 1995; Grönroos, 1996; Paulin et al., 1998; Tyler and Stanley, 1999). The firms' capability to select the proper individual for the job is crucial. The account manager's roles and responsibilities could be varied and complex and often require a few different skills and qualifications as consideration for the job itself (McDonald et al., 1996; Gruner et al., 1997). Hence, the role of the account manager is more often to be featured in larger firms. On the contrary, it is less often found within a small firm context, considering an individual often carries multiple roles instead of just one (Burns, 2016) and often without the proper title given. Prior studies (e.g. Madill et al., 2007) discovered that the flexibility and reliability traits of the account manager are valuable, especially within a small firm setting. Both of these traits, especially flexibility, may not be built into the job description but the buyer often values them when the account manager is able to exhibit them.

#### **2.4.4. Buyer-Supplier Relationships: The Challenge**

Many SFDPs start as either farmers or through inheriting a family business. As time goes by, some of these SFDPs transform from independent local sellers into local producers (Ridler, 2016; Allan, 2018; Butler, 2021; Meneely, 2022) who supply their products to some major supermarket retailers throughout the country. Having such a relationship with a major supermarket retailer may drive their business into an unknown world where operations and



processes are new (Scattergood, 2012). On one hand, the buyer-supplier (B/S) relationship may take the business to a higher level because of these experiences, these local SFDPs will gain more knowledge and skills, widen their network channels, get more brand recognition as people start to see more of their products and also getting more chances to have a long-term B/S relationship with the supermarket retailer (Wagner et al., 2005; IGD, 2022). On the downside, entering a new phase of the business is not easy. Firstly, the negative image of major supermarket retailers, as many local suppliers claimed to be ‘abused’ by their power and superiority (Farrelly and Morgan, 2000; Wood and Mathiason, 2007; House of Commons Library, 2012; Nicholson, 2012) may have added the pressure. However, in February 2010, legislation in the form of Grocery Supply Code of Practice (GSCOP) came into force to protect food and drink suppliers from unfair treatment by the major supermarket retailers. GSCOP regulates the behaviour of the top fourteen grocery retailers or collectively known as ‘Designated Retailers’ that consisting of Aldi, Lidl, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Asda, Mark & Spencer, Ocado, Home Bargain, B&M, Co-Op, Waitrose, Iceland, Amazon and their subsidiaries. In June 2013, the Grocery Code Adjudicator (GCA) was established by the Grocery Code Adjudicator Act 2013 and is responsible for enforcing the GSCOP (the code). GCA is an independent regulator to ensure that designated retailers treat their direct suppliers lawfully and fairly. GCA was also responsible for monitoring, encouraging and enforcing compliance with the code (Competition Commission, 2008; Department for Business and Trade, 2023).

Secondly, the SFDPs may not be ready with all these fundamental resources, including capital, staff, machinery and so on. Moreover, they also need to pay closer attention to how they can cope with a huge demand that the supermarket retailer may ask them to provide and deliver on time. The SFDPs may start as a home-based producer that produces 1000 products monthly with limited additional resources. When they decide to step up and form a collaborative relationship with the supermarket retailer, they need to be ready to adjust their business to cope with what they demand. They may need a bigger production plan and better inventory management as they may be faced with larger orders than they have ever had before. Failure to cope with the exacting demands of grocery retailers may threaten the relationship with the buyer and ultimately lead to the de-listing of their products (Waller et al., 2010; National Food Strategy, 2021). The potential de-listing can be daunting for SFDPs, as they face the threat of losing their financial lifelines, as some large supermarket retailers constitute the

major share of their sales and, in some cases, the only channel to reach their final customers (Malagueño et al., 2019).

Each supermarket retailer offers a different method to demonstrate their support to their suppliers, especially the local SFDPs. Often, they provide free training to keep the suppliers updated with specific knowledge and skills and hold gathering events for networking. Tesco shows extra effort to engage with their suppliers. They launched a new portal online for their suppliers in 2012 so that the suppliers can identify product trends and prepare for upcoming promotions, respond quickly to changes in customer demand and become connected with other suppliers. In addition, the Who Buys My Food? research project at the University of East Anglia, now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, provides free access to targeted market insight derived from Tesco Clubcard data, which members of the research project, all of which are small food and drink suppliers to Tesco, can access online via a web-portal designed specifically for small businesses. The project also offers webinars on the various ways in which the CMI can be used to support evidence-based decision-making and a more targeted of scare resources.

Accepting and utilising such relatively unknown market information, considering the little skill and knowledge that the local SFDPs possess, poses a tall mountain to climb, despite all the efforts involved. Thus, deciding to build and engage in a collaborative relationship with a large supermarket retailer has proven to be challenging. Despite all the exciting benefits that the relationship may offer, they still have doubts and possible guilt that they may betray their business heritage/philosophy (Sharp, 1991; Stanton and Herbst, 2005). However, considering the rapid changes in the market as well as the fierce competition, it somehow feels necessary for the SFDPs to put in the effort to understand and utilise the CMI. The CMI is expected to help the SFDPs, mostly through the key individual(s) (owner-manager and/or account manager) that help them understand their product's current performance. As a result, they should have a better understanding of their customers' shopping behaviours which should, in turn, enable them to devise the appropriate strategy (e.g. product placement, product flavour, packaging and size). Despite all the benefits, for some owner-managers, however, investing their resources in the CMI is often seen as a risky investment (Tormay, 2015). Although, it can be observed (through the research project) more SFDPs seem to get the urgency of utilising market information (Wamba et al., 2015), one of the indications is through the growth in the number of SFDPs that reach out for the CMI, some even coming back for a follow-up and attending online trainings and webinars.

Eventually, despite the dubious challenges, the SFDPs appear to show their best efforts for the collaborative relationship with the buyer by utilising the CMI. From the current evidence (see previous section), it appears that some have already utilised the CMI, showing a significant improvement in their performance. This improvement is rather satisfactory, as the SFDPs start to understand their consumer behaviour better, hence they are able to build the strategy depending on this trend. However, some questions arise from this situation. Yes, some of the SFDPs are already utilising the CMI, but do they utilise it properly, or do they simply use it for the sake of maintaining the relationship with the buyer? Moreover, what are the factor(s) that may cause them to use the CMI differently?

## **2.5. Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the contextual background of the agri-food industry in the UK and introduced the key stakeholders that are vital in the study. In the study context, the SFDPs are proven to be crucial part of the UK's economy, as they contribute to the country's GDP and open more job opportunities. Throughout the chapter, besides informing the current industry trends, the study also introduced the key individuals and entities involved in the study. The first one is the local SFDPs as the suppliers. The second is Tesco, as the key buyer as well as the provider of the market insight. The third one is the CMI, the specific form of market information and lastly, the key individuals – the owner-manager as the employer/decision-maker and the account manager as the person who is responsible for utilising the CMI as well as maintaining the intra-organisation relationship with the employer and the inter-organisation relationship with the key buyer. Lastly, the chapter is concluded by the potential challenges for the B/S relationship – from the changing in the shopper's behaviour, the alleged buyer 'abusive' power, SFDPs struggle to accept and utilise market information as well as potential de-listing from the supermarket retailers. The study continues to explore the theory underpinning the B/S relationship and those factors that potentially act as barriers/enablers to the effective use of CMI thereto in Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3 – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **3.1. Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature, which informed the development of the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. The chapter is structured as followed: Section 3.2 presents the review of literature relating to the dimensions of information use and the specific context of the use of market information within SFDPs. This is followed by a discussion of the barriers and enablers for the effective use of market information, from the perspective of the firm through the firm's Strategic Orientations thereof (Section 3.2.2) and the perspective of the key individual (account manager) responsible for marketing decisions and their commitment to the use of market information therein (Section 3.2.3). The focus on Strategic Orientations at the firm level and commitment at the individual level builds on previous research undertaken within the Who Buys My Food? research project. The chapter continues with the discussion around family ownership (Section 3.2.4) which potentially has another impact on performance, both on the organisation and at an individual level. The review of the literature on these constructs and the relationships between them leads to the development of the conceptual framework (Section 3.3) and hypotheses (Section 3.4).

### **3.2. Literature Review**

This upcoming section presents the literature review for each of the key constructs – information use, Strategic Orientations and commitment.

#### **3.2.1. Information Use**

Information is ubiquitous and is used, albeit to varying degrees, across all functional areas in most organisations. In the information and knowledge management literature, the concept of information use refers to the extent to which information is used directly to guide behaviour and make decisions (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980; John and Martin, 1984; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Moorman et al., 1993) which leads to the reduction of uncertainty (Patton, 2008) in three psychological areas – behavioural, cognitive and affective (Anderson et al., 1981). For the purpose of this study, the term 'information use' refers to the engagement of an individual (account manager) in the utilisation of customised market intelligence (CMI) – information derived from a specific source (supermarket loyalty card) in relation to the

purchasing behaviour of shoppers in a specific (supermarket) distribution channel and a specific supermarket retailer (Tesco). The objective of 'information use' in this context is performance improvement at two levels: individual/functional performance of the account manager responsible for managing the relationship with the retail buyer; and the financial performance of the firm (SFDP) supplying Tesco.

### **3.2.1.1. The Era of Market Information**

#### The Development of Market Information

Big data has recently been recognised as a widespread phenomenon and presents a great investment potential (International Data Corporation, 2015). Literature defines big data by three 'Vs' – volume, velocity and variety; volume refers to the magnitude of data generated, velocity is linked to the speed of data creation and collection while variety is related to the data sources in a data set (Gandomi and Haider, 2015). Zhang et al., (2017) claim that the way in which big data is defined is versatile and depends on the study context. However, while the majority of these studies only look into big data in general, none of them capture the value of big data comprehensively. Some studies (e.g. Tambe, 2014; Portela et al., 2016) define big data as technologies that enable the collection, storage, management, processing and analysis of data that is too big for a conventional tool. Others associate big data with skills, expertise and management capabilities that are necessary for understanding and using technology and analyse effectively (Shim et al., 2015; Coleman et al., 2016).

Investing in big data can help large firms to great benefits, including increasing efficiency (Columbus, 2016), gaining a better understanding of their internal and external business environment that will generate insight for more opportunities (Sharma et al., 2014), reducing costs while improving products, service and decision-making process (Huang et al., 2016; Abbasi et al., 2016; Kabir and Carayannis, 2013). The emergence of big data contributes to the availability of new knowledge that is extracted from new valuable insight and innovation (Côte-Real et al., 2017) that leads firms to gain competitive advantages (Zhang, 2017). This investment in big data is considered to have potential economic value for the firms where knowledge is perceived as a crucial asset, one of which is to aid the decision-makers to make more informed decisions that later may improve firm performance (Erickson and Rothberg, 2014).

Big data represents a potential for firms to gain competitive advantages by uncovering their hidden trends and providing insights so that firms are not only able to deliver the best products/services but also anticipate the future behaviour of their customers, employers, suppliers and partners (Baboo et al., 2013; Arora and Rahman, 2016). With this intelligence, firms can make advanced moves to exceed the expectations of those with whom they are doing business (Baboo et al., 2013; World Economic Forum, 2012). In the small firm context, this type of intelligence is expected to help owner-manager gain adequate knowledge about their market in order to make better decisions, despite all the current limitations. Despite all the benefits of acquiring and utilising big data, investing in such intelligence may not be posed as a priority for the majority of small firms. When the small firms – business owner and/or owner-manager – are unable to see some clear objectives from the big data investment, they may assume that the investment will not lead to future benefits for the firms or even may bring a negative effect for the firms since investing in big data can be categorised as a risky investment (Tormay, 2015).

Nevertheless, still, there are hesitations on the actual return value of big data investment as the investor (business owner) seeks to understand what it actually is and how to gain value from it (Wamba et al., 2015). There are still some inconsistencies in the literature regarding the result of investing in big data; a study by McAfee et al., (2012) mentions that big data investment does not bring any significant value to the industry, especially in the European market. Another similar result is shown by Coleman et al., (2016) who suggested that firms in the UK and Germany are still unsure whether they are going to gain benefits from investing in big data. Min and Bae (2015) offer a different perspective, their finding shows that there is a positive impact brought by big data investment. This inconsistency in the literature may result from the uncertainty, that is often reflected when the firms choose to retain and just stick to the *status quo* until the benefits from big data investment are explicitly observed and proven, they need to see the actual evidence of what big data investment can bring to the firms (Zhang et al., 2017).

#### The Acceptance and/or Adoption of Market Information

Acquiring big data as a current prominent intelligence source is not enough confer competitive advantages unless the firms concerned are actually using the in their day-to-day activities. Market Information/Intelligence (MI) is considered to be and perceived as an organisational competence and strategic asset of an organisation (Calantone and Di Benedetto,

1988; Glazer, 1991; Li and Calantone, 1998; Li, Nicholls and Roslow, 1999; Moorman, 1995). This study adopts the definition of MI as proposed by Droge, Calantone and Harmancioglu (2008, pp.274), who collectively define MI as a “competence or capability to generate and integrate knowledge about the market”. According to Caudron (1994), MI presents four primary purposes: 1) as a competitors’ assessment and tracking; 2) as an early warning of opportunity and threat; 3) as a support for strategic planning and implementation; and 4) as the support of strategic decision-making. The term of market information and/or market intelligence is often used interchangeably (e.g. Ihua, 2011; Donnelly et al., 2012; 2015; Duffy et al., 2013; Didonet et al., 2020; Maliszewski, 2021) and thus, accordingly, these terms are used interchangeably throughout the document.

Only recently have businesses begun to become aware of the importance of MI. Stokes (2000) adds MI into the marketing mix as the fifth element alongside product, place, price and promotion. MI delivers the essential foundation for the crucial output of strategic management; MI provides input and vigour for the evolution of mechanisms involved in the formulation and execution of effective strategy within a strategic business to increase both long-term well-being and strength of an enterprise against its competitors (Tsu Wee Tan and Ahmed, 1999; Hooley et al., 2000; Didonet et al., 2020). Maltz and Kohli (1996) associate the term ‘Market Intelligence’ with novel information about the market. They suggest that the use of MI may be improved by creating an appropriate dissemination process. Dissemination is the last phase of the intelligence cycle and, during this phase, MI is thoroughly processed and analysed. Then the MI will be passed to the decision-maker to help them formulate plans and make decisions. In large firms, this process usually involves dissemination across functional and hierarchical boundaries (Anderson and Weitz, 1989; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). MI enables firms to collect information from the internal and external environment that may later be used to improve their marketing strategy planning (Kirca et al., 2005; Parry and Song, 2010) and cultivate a better decision-making process (Spender and Kelsler, 1995; Citroen, 2011).

In contrast, in those small firms where MI exists, it will often be captured by one person and rarely shared with others due to the lack of time and/or a lack of Strategic Orientations (MO, LO or EO). However, it depends on the firms as to whether they choose to engage or not with MI and it is determined by its initial MO (Shapiro, 1988; Parnell, 2013; Lewis et al., 2001). More market-oriented firms tend to show greater interest in using MI, while non-market-

oriented firms tend not to bother with it (Kirca et al., 2005). Small firms often gather information about their customers and competitors, but they do not feel the necessity to develop the information into a real competency. On one hand, it may be related to either problems with dissemination (Reijonen and Komppula, 2008) or the uncertainty of the outcome of investing in MI (Coleman et al., 2016; McGuire et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2007). On the other hand, the concept of MI may be ‘intimidating’ (Donnelly et al., 2012) and may not be fitted with the small firms’ condition – given their current resource constraints, especially as regards financial resources and ICT expertise, and it may even present a big challenge for them in being able to exploit any available MI (Cacciolatti et al., 2009).

Accepting, investing and adopting MI can be challenging for small firms. On the one hand, the process provides them with some valuable insights that could lead to better strategic planning and decision-making processes. However, on the other hand, the process could lead them into the unknown by investing in unfamiliar territory. This notion is supported by the literature; the evidence from recent studies indicates that there is a positive relationship that exists between the use of MI and small firms’ performance (e.g. Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Parry and Song, 2010; Citroen, 2011; Neubaum et al., 2017; Grimmer et al., 2018; Didonet et al., 2020; Alves, Gama and Augustom, 2021; Ghalke, Haldar and Kumar, 2023). However, the majority of the studies only focus on the organisational level (e.g. Despache and Zaltman, 1982; Hutt et al., 1988; Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Mohr and Nevin, 1990; Moorman and et al., 1992; 1993; Dyer, 2006; Westhead and Howorth, 2006; Cacciolatti and Wan, 2012), although a few seek to focus on the individual level (e.g. Lybaert, 1998; Bormann, Backs and Hoon, 2021), however, to date, none have attempted to focus at both organisation and individual levels. In response to this extant gap, this study aims to explore the use and impact of MI on performance at both organisation and individual levels.

### **3.2.1.2. The Dimensions of Information Use**

Literature suggests that there are three dimensions of information use – Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use (e.g. Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Williams and Chaston, 2004; Ihua, 2011; Jraisat, Gotsi and Bourlakis, 2013; Didonet and Fearne, 2023). Loosely, Instrumental Use involves the direct application of information, Conceptual Use refers to



more indirect use of information in longer term and Symbolic Use refers to the distortion of information to suit the decision-maker.

*Conceptual Use.* The concept of conceptual information use can be summarised as the indirect use of information, where the information is not directly applied to solve a specific problem in a given situation or a period in time, but the information is used to generate more ‘general’ enlightenment in generating, broadening and developing the firms’ managerial knowledge without being specified to any particular problem or decision by influencing the thinking process or orientation (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999). Conceptual Use is a delicate type of information that may not provide the immediate results desired, making it quite a challenge for the manager to track specific effects and observe the influences (Rich, 1997).

*Instrumental Use.* Instrumental information use refers to the direct application of a conclusion or research finding to solve a specific problem and to make a specific decision (Moorman, 1995) of which the result tends to be more immediate and directly observable (Rich, 1997). The influence of Instrumental Use can be directly observed when the manager makes a decision based on what the market information has suggested (Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996).

*Symbolic Use.* Symbolic information use takes place when information is deliberately distorted based on the decision-maker’s instinct (Feldman and March, 1981) to support their preconceived opinion in the eyes of their subordinate or superior (Piercy, 1983; Goodman, 1993; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999), to justify the decision that they have already made (Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003) or when the information is used to carry on the good working relationship with the information provider (Brown, 1994).

Whilst the motivations for exploring the concept may vary across disciplines, they all recognise the dimensionality of information use. Several authors propose different models and typologies of information use, e.g. Consumer Business (CB) Manager’s Model (Deshpande and Zaltman, 1982), Industrial Managers’ Model (Deshpande and Zaltman, 1987), Marketing Knowledge-Use Model (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992), Export Information Model (Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999); SME Information Use Model (1998) and Competitive Intelligence Use Model (Arnett,

Menon and Wilcox, 2000) (further discussion on these models can be found on Ihua, 2011). The first two studies investigated information use only with a single dimension (Instrumental Use), however, they developed the study further as well as tested some scales on the use of market information within the firm context. The Marketing Knowledge-Use Model by Menon and Varadarajan (1992) conceptualised three dimensions of action-oriented, knowledge enhancing and affective use; however, this model was only conceptualised but not tested. The Competitive Intelligence Use Model by Arnett, Menon and Wilcox (2000) used a different term to refer to market information; the model used a competitive intelligence term. The model also conceptualised the use of competitive intelligence into congruous use, product use and process use. The SME Information Use Model by Lybaert (1998) was developed to test the relationship between information use and SME success, however, the model only investigated in unidimensional perspective and did not specify the type of information that was being investigated. Lastly, the Export Information Use Model by Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999). The model was conceptualised by Souchon and Diamantopoulos in 1996 but it was fully developed and tested in Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999). Unlike the previous models mentioned, this model uses a multi-dimensional approach along the lines of conceptual, instrumental and symbolic use. This model contributed by developing, validating the scales and pioneering the development of multi-item scales of export information use.

Dimensionality is proven to be a fundamental aspect of the investigation of information use; some studies opt to use a single dimension which later attracts some criticisms as the major limitation of the study, e.g. those that focus strictly on Instrumental Use (Deshpande and Zaltman, 1982, 1987; Piercy, 1983; Low and Mohr, 2001), Conceptual Use (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980) and Symbolic Use (Vyas and Souchon, 2003). Consequently, with the complex nature of information use, the use of multiple dimensional measurements is suggested, e.g. Instrumental and Conceptual Use (Moorman, 1995), Instrumental, Conceptual and Symbolic Use (Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999). Recent studies from different disciplines feature different models to analyse the information depending on the model that is judged as the best fit for the study setting, for example: The Marketing Knowledge-Use Model – action-oriented, knowledge enhancing and affective use (e.g. Yawson, 2020); The Export Information Model – Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use (e.g. Williams and Chaston, 2004; Jraisat, Gotsi and Bourlakis, 2013; Didonet and Fearne, 2023).

This study adopted the three dimensions of information use – Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use, from the Export Information Use Model as proposed by Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999). This model and the three dimensions were chosen because: 1) the model used a multi-dimensional approach by utilising the three dimensions; 2) The model was developed and empirically tested; 3) the three dimensions provided the conceptual underpinning from which this study seeks to explore the use of CMI by the SFDPs and how it affects the firm’s performance.

### **3.2.1.3. Information Use in the Study’s Context**

There is a consensus that the competitive nature of the business environment requires firms to allocate resources to establish/maintain competitive advantages over their competitors (Hunt and Morgan, 1995; Miles and Darroch, 2006). This invariably requires information, from various sources, which enables firms to better understand their customers, explore new market opportunities, expand their customers base and, consequently, have a better chance of survival (Baker and Sinkula, 2009; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Kotler et al., 2019). Over the years, the association between knowledge-seeking and competitive advantage has led business academics and practitioners to affirm that better information should always lead to better decision-making. Studies on information use commonly describe information as one of the critical success factors in firms’ performance (Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011), business growth and survival (Maltz and Kohli, 1996; Li and Calantone, 1998; Yeoh, 2000). Others highlight that the key source of competitive advantages lies not in the possession of information or the breadth/depth of information collected by firms but in the strategies adopted by the firms to organise market information (Sinkula and Hampton, 1988; Zaltman and Moorman, 1988; Diamantopoulos et al., 2003; Toften and Olsen, 2003; Williams, 2003) and mechanisms adopted by the key individual to ensure that it informs decision-making (Fletcher and Wheeler, 1989; Davenport et al., 2010; Davenport and Haris, 2017).

In large firms, considerable attention is paid to long-term planning, which often involves extensive use of market information (Faulkner and Johnson, 1992; Johnson et al., 1999; Beaver, 2002). The use of market information in the decision-making processes in large firms is also both systematic and linear, from acquisition, transmission, conceptual utilisation to instrumental utilisation (Moorman, 1995). Acquisition includes the collection of primary and/or secondary data from a variety of sources (e.g. market research companies, customer

satisfaction studies, direct interaction with customers and industry knowledge exchange events). The transmission process involves the dissemination of information among the relevant users within the firm, through both formal and informal mechanisms (Beyer and Trice, 1982; Day, 2001). Conceptual utilisation refers to the indirect use of information in strategy-related actions (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992), helping the firm with interpretation and sensemaking of the external (market) environment (Thomas et al., 1993). Market information is then used instrumentally to shape the marketing strategy and related actions (Zaltman and Moorman, 1989; Barabba and Zaltman, 1991; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). This is a challenging process for the largest of firms, not only because of the resources involved (technical and financial) but also the skills, knowledge and commitment that are required of their employees (Beyer and Trice, 1982; Huber, 1991).

Evidence of the use of market information in small firms is limited but suggests the notion of information use within small firms is often baffling and brings a sense of unfamiliarity (Deshpande et al., 1993; Stoica and Schindehutte, 1999) which can lead to rejection and ignorance (Sharp, 1991; Stanton and Herbst, 2005) toward utilising the market information. This tendency is often exacerbated by the influence of owner-manager who holds firms' beliefs, attitudes and intuitions with respect to the market and the position of the business therein (Jennings and Beaver, 1995; Matthew and Scott, 1995) and have a preference for short-term and informal planning to fulfil immediate objectives and priorities, such as securing cash flow and business survival (Brockhaus, 1983; Storey, 2016; Beaver and Harris, 1995; Storey and Sykes, 1996; Beaver 2003). In addition, small firms lack the know-how and financial resources to invest in market information, leaving them vulnerable to changes in the external (market) environment and exposed to higher levels of uncertainty which inhibits long-term planning (Brown, 1995; Storey and Sykes, 1996; Casson, 2003; Storey, 2011).

With the substantial growth in the availability of market information, from a diversity of sources, it is becoming increasingly important to tailor the source/type of information to the specificity of the decision-making context (Humby et al., 2007; Plimmer, 2010; Donnelly et al., 2012; Malagueño et al., 2019). In the context of this study, this means that the key individual (account manager) in SFDPs supplying a major supermarket customer (Tesco), is encouraged to exploit the unique behavioural insights derived from the loyalty card that is unique to Tesco, to develop, execute and evaluate marketing plans that designed specifically to grow their business with Tesco. It is for this reason that the focus of this study is on the use

of CMI that is relevant for a specific distribution channel (supermarkets) and a specific customer therein (Tesco). The CMI is made available to SFDPs involved in the Who Buys My Food? research project and this study is concerned with the way in which this information is used, its impact on performance and the barriers/enablers in the process.

It is to two of these barriers/enablers - Strategic Orientations and commitment - that the study now turns.

### **3.2.2. Strategic Orientations**

Strategic Orientations is one of the most discussed topics in different fields of literature, including marketing (Hakala, 2011; Didonet et al., 2016; Didonet and Fearne, 2023), management (Hakala, 2011; Deutscher et al., 2016; Presutti, Savioli and Odorici, 2019), strategy (Kumar et al., 2011; Urde et al., 2013; Cacciolatti and Lee, 2016; Penco, Torre and Scarsi, 2019) and entrepreneurship (Poutziouris, 2003; Boohene, 2018; Calabrò et al., 2021; Kalali, 2022; Markin et al., 2022) to name a few. Strategic Orientations is identified as the ‘core principle’ by which to guide a business through a deeply rooted set of values and beliefs (Zhou et al., 2005; Dutot and Bergeron, 2016), to identify their purpose among the competitors and to influence and generate behaviour to ensure the viability and performance (Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Braunscheidel and Suresh, 2009; Hakala, 2011). Prior studies suggest that Strategic Orientations contribute to superior performance (Baker and Sinkula, 1999; Wiklund, 1999; Gnizy et al., 2014) and the effect of Strategic Orientations on firm performance takes a long-term process rather than a short one (Wiklund, 1999).

The strategic management literature identifies different Strategic Orientations from their ability to affect business functions and resource allocation (Narver and Slater, 1990; Jawroski and Kohli, 1993). In regard to this study, five Strategic Orientations were identified as particularly relevant, as enablers for the effective use of market information – Market Orientation (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990), Entrepreneurial Orientation (Covin and Slevin, 1989), Learning Orientation (Sinkula et al., 1997) and potential barriers to the effective use of market information – Production Orientation (Sharp, 1991) and Sales Orientation (Sharp, 1991).

The following sections present and discuss different Strategic Orientations, their potential complementary and/or conflicting relationships and their relevance to the study's context (small firms).

### **3.2.2.1. Market Orientation**

Market Orientation (MO) is a long-term Strategic Orientations that focuses on targeting and meeting the market needs (Frösén et al., 2016) that eventually is positively associated with superior firm performance (Miller et al., 2008). Scholars view MO from two perspectives – cultural (Narver and Slater, 1990) and behavioural (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

Narver and Slater (1990) define MO as an organisational culture that facilitates the needed behaviours for the production of greater value for customers and better performance for the organisation. This cultural approach involves a customer orientation to understand target customers, a competitor orientation to understand competitors' characteristics and cross-functional coordination to generate superior value for customers. Alternatively, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) refer to MO as the organisation-wide generation of, dissemination of and responsiveness to market intelligence. Regardless of the differences in its conceptualisation, a consensus exists that the essence of MO relies on the premise that MO stimulates necessary behaviours for developing a superior value for buyers (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990; Iyer et al., 2019).

Adopting MO in their business activity enables firms to create and maintain a competitive advantage under any market situation (Slater and Narver, 1994) by learning about their target market and better anticipating future events (Armario et al., 2008) which lead to superior firm performance (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Slater and Narver, 1994; Kara et al., 2005; Panigyrakis and Theodoridis, 2007). The market-oriented firms acknowledge the relevance of market information while actively collecting, interpreting and utilising market information about their customers, competitors and suppliers when designing their strategies and making decisions (Armario et al., 2008; Didonet et al., 2012). Some prior studies have verified the positive relationship between market-oriented firms and performance (Speed and Smith, 1993; Ghosh et al., 1994; Greenley, 1995; Matsuno et al., 2002; Cano et al., 2004; Kirca et al., 2005).

This study primarily follows the perspective developed by Narver and Slater (1990), given their particular emphasis on encapsulating both cultural and behavioural aspects of MO. Narver and Slater's conceptualisation of MO has three components – customer orientation, competitor orientation and interfunctional coordination.

*Customer Orientation* is defined as a responsive construct that is reactive to business nature (Slater and Narver, 1998; Narver et al., 2004), focuses on identifying customers' expressed needs in their served markets and developing products and services that can satisfy those needs (Deshpande et al., 1993; Slater and Narver, 1998; Narver et al., 2004). Firms with a strong customer orientation put their customers at the centre of all their efforts (Eggers et al., 2013).

*Competitor Orientation* affords the ability and the will to identify, analyse and respond to competitors' actions (Narver and Slater, 1990). Firms that adopt competitor orientation will continuously monitor their progress against their rivals and create opportunities for growth by creating products and services that are different from those competitors (Im and Workman, 2004) or by adopting an effective 'second-but-better' approach (Frambach et al., 2003). A minimum level of competitor orientation can help firms to improve innovativeness as a result of following and monitoring their competitors (Im and Workman, 2004; Grinstein, 2008).

*Interfunctional Coordination* reflects the level of interactions and communications in the organisation (Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Im and Workman, 2004). This co-ordinated integration creates superior value for customers and results in synergistic effects that tie the firms' processes and functions together (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990; Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997).

MO is a resource-intensive endeavour and may, thus, become a challenge for SMEs (Slater and Narver, 1994). Simultaneous development and maintenance of customer orientation, competitor orientation and interfunctional coordination entail significant resource allocation to gather and utilise intelligence on customers and competitors while ensuring people with different priorities and mindsets work toward an overarching goal (Gölgeci et al., 2019). Likewise, developing MO involves uncovering and transforming long-held assumptions in firms and requires the adoption of challenging change processes (Beverland and Lindgreen,

2007). Accordingly, while MO may be widely adopted by larger firms, it is often deficient in resource-constrained SMEs (Didonet et al., 2020).

The small business literature emphasises that the owner-manager has a focal role in conducting the business (Hult et al., 2003; Wilson and Stokes, 2004; Zontanos and Anderson, 2004), in that he/she runs the business and has the responsibility to the failure/success of it in the same way of achieving his/her personal goals (Mazzarol et al., 2009). Owner-manager prefers an informal, non-sequential and unstructured style while running the business (O'Dwyer et al., 2009). It is also noticeable that the owner-manager tends to be more intuitive and impulsive (Moriarty et al., 2008), also focuses on the short-term goals as opposed to longer-term objectives (Brouthers et al., 1998; Allison et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2003).

For small firms to follow the recommendation for formal and structured decision-making (Pelham and Wilson, 1996) is at odds with the unstructured and informal approach preferred by the owner-manager. Moreover, small firms learn how to run their businesses from accumulated knowledge and experience (Clarke et al., 2006). Hence, they prefer practical actions with immediate pay-back and rely on their speed and agility to respond to changes in customers' needs (Li et al., 2008; Moriarty et al., 2008) rather than planning for longer-term market developments (Kirchhoff, 1994; Doern, 2009). In addition, the lack of resources is a significant barrier to the adoption of MO (Verhees and Meulenber, 2004; Blankson et al., 2006; Li et al., 2008). Other studies have highlighted ignorance, contentment with the *status quo*, short-termism, perceived inappropriateness, and a lack of competitive differentiation (Pelham, and Wilson, 1996; Harris and Watkins, 1998; Blankson and Stokes, 2002; Blankson et al., 2006) and the assumption that small firms can be successful in achieving sales without any (strategic) planning of their marketing activities (Stokes, 2000) as major barriers to the adoption of MO by small firms.

Despite the barriers to the adoption of MO by small firms, MO is claimed to positively affect small firms' performance by helping them to adapt to the needs of consumers and the actions of competitors whilst improving the quality of their market knowledge (Pelham, 1997; 2000; Martin et al., 2009; Didonet et al., 2012). MO is also an essential facilitator of flexible planning (Pelham and Wilson, 1996; Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998, Alpan et al., 2007; Didonet et al., 2012) by creating a 'shorter distance' between individuals in key functional



roles, which improves the communication, collaboration and coordination across the business to provide superior customer value (Hernández-Linares et al., 2018).

### **3.2.2.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation**

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is defined as a dimension of strategic posture represented by a firm's risk-taking propensity, tendency to act in competitively aggressive, proactive manners and reliance on frequent and extensive product innovation (Covin and Slevin, 1989). EO captures the entrepreneurial aspects of the firms' strategies (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Wiklund, 1999; Hult et al., 2004; Bhuian et al., 2005; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005) that shows through the policies and practices that deliver a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Hart, 1992; Covin et al., 2006; Rauch et al., 2009). Often, there is confusion between entrepreneurship and EO. Entrepreneurship plays the role of firm behaviour (Covin and Slevin, 1991; Ruokonen and Saarenketo, 2009) while EO fits more into the process, practice and decision-making activities that lead to new ideas (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Ruokonen and Saarenketo, 2009). Entrepreneurship, at firm level, shows that firms are actively identifying market opportunities that competitors have not yet recognised or are still under-exploited and creating a unique solution on how to exploit them (Hill et al., 2002; Davidsson et al., 2006). While an entrepreneurially-oriented firm has a strategic management style that puts an 'entrepreneurial' tendency on their business activity (Becherer and Maurer, 1997; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; 2001).

Firms with a high level of EO tend to scan and monitor the operating environment regularly to find new opportunities and strengthen their position (Covin and Miles, 1999). They are actively looking for additional information which can help them to understand their customers better, to manage their risk, together with any challenges from their competitors. This process is not a one-time event; it is a continuous process of actively looking for additional information to help them understand their customers better, to help manage risks and to be aware of their competitors so they can keep on consistently creating high-quality products and services (Slater and Narver, 1998). Prior studies discovered positive results on the relationship between EO and firm performance (Jantunen et al., 2005; Rauch et al., 2009). Moreover, EO is also seen as the driver of firms' growth that is associated with success in long-term settings (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Becherer and Maurer, 1997; Shepherd and Wiklund, 2005).

Most of the recent studies on EO (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Wiklund, 1999; Zahra and Garvis, 2000; Kemelgor, 2002; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005) argue that there are three core dimensions of EO, initially proposed by Miller (1983) – risk-taking, proactiveness and innovativeness.

*Risk-taking* propensity implies the willingness to commit resources to exploit new opportunities or engage in business strategies in which the outcome is highly uncertain (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Ricketts, 2006; Keh et al., 2007).

*Proactiveness* refers to a firm's tendency to actively seek new market opportunities (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005). It shows the firms' likeliness to engage in the creative process and experiment with new ideas by initiative, participating and enacting new opportunities (Entrialgo et al., 2000). A proactive firm is often the initiator of an action or event that provokes a competitive response, taking the initiative by anticipating and responding to up-and-coming market problems, needs and changes and being the first in the market with a new product or service (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Eggers et al., 2013).

*Innovativeness* refers to the tendency of firms to anticipate future needs in the market environment and to pioneer new methods and techniques (Lee et al., 2001). It demonstrates an entrepreneurial willingness to dominate the competition through an aggressive focus on innovation to meet customers' expectations and proactive moves that act as a stimulus for the identification of new market opportunities and activities to exploit those opportunities (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990) which may result in new products, services or technological process (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996).

Firms with strong EO have the ability to better adjust their operations in dynamic and competitive environments and exhibit a willingness to commit some of their resources to exploit uncertain opportunities. As a result, they proactively pre-empt the competition in adapting and anticipating to future demands (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005). These entrepreneurial acts have a positive effect on a firm performance (e.g. Wiklund, 1999; Hult et al., 2004; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Keh et al., 2007; Moreno and Casillas, 2008; Rauch et al., 2009; Alegre and Chiva, 2013).

Whilst firms with strong EO are willing to take risks and are not deterred by uncertainty they recognise that market intelligence can reduce both risk and uncertainty, which is likely to result in improved business performance in the longer-term. However, as previously noted with respect to EO, small firms lack the resources to invest in market information and often have a shorter planning horizon. This tension is in contrast to one of the most important strategic assets that small firms use in their quest for survival – speed and agility – which is also a characteristic of firms with a strong EO. Thus, small firms with strong EO are likely to find themselves torn between the desire to move swiftly and the uncertainty that results from a lack of market intelligence. In such circumstances, the timely and targeted use of market information could be the difference between success and failure (Brush, 1992; Cooper et al., 1995; Butler et al., 2000).

### **3.2.2.3. Learning Orientation**

Learning by itself is perceived as the development or acquisition of new knowledge that potentially influences behaviour (Huber, 1991) that eventually could result in new behaviours or value creation (Argyris and Schön, 1997). Learning Orientation (LO) is defined as the generation and the use of information by displaying a strong commitment to learning, open-mindedness and shared vision (Sinkula et al., 1997). LO is identified as a cultural aspect that emphasises the process of improving insights, knowledge and understanding to enhance firm performance and customer value (Sinkula et al., 1997; Calantone et al., 2002; Nasution et al., 2011). Firms with strong LO develop or acquire new knowledge to respond to internal and external stimuli that lead to a change in behaviour which later will enhance organisational effectiveness (Sadler-Smith et al., 2001). LO also constitutes a unique combination of resources that are valuable, rare and hard to imitate and generates synergies that enable firms to achieve an advantageous position in the market (Deutscher et al., 2016). Furthermore, Sinkula et al., (1997) argue that the adoption of a strong LO should result in an increase in market information generation and dissemination which in turn has a positive impact on performance (Wang, 2008).

Small firms are often perceived in terms of LO to be more adaptive rather than exhibiting innovative behaviour (Badger et al., 2001). Small firms' LO tends to be less formal, less structured and less sequential than that of larger firms (Gibb, 1997; Anderson and Boocock, 2002). As a result, these self-directed, work-based and informal learning strategies are more

dominant as they allow greater flexibility and adaptability (Anderson and Boocock, 2002). These tendencies are reflected in the small firms' tendency to focus on the quality and cost of their production/product to achieve higher sales when faced with increased competition rather than acquiring a greater understanding of customer needs and expectations (Deshpande et al., 1993; Stoica and Schindehutte, 1999). Thus, an increased LO can help translate marketing attitudes into effective behaviour to facilitate innovation (Keskin, 2006), especially when small firms are hesitant to conduct market research and develop long-term market planning strategies (Meziou, 1991; Blankson and Stokes, 2002).

#### **3.2.2.4. Production Orientation**

Product Orientation (PO) is associated with an emphasis on the manufacturing of products or the delivery of services. Firms with strong PO focus on increasing capacity (scale) and efficiency (cost), which often results in the standardisation of products/services to facilitate an aggressive market penetration strategy and business growth based on high levels of efficiency. The underlying logic behind strong PO is the belief that customers will purchase products/services provided they are of reasonable quality and competitively priced.

PO was most popular during the Industrial Revolution in Western countries (Sharp, 1991), when the focus was on the achievement of high levels of efficiency and product quality, with little attention being paid to the heterogeneity of consumer demand (Zineldin, 1996). For product-oriented firms, designing and engineering the 'best' products was all that mattered and 'sensible' customers were expected to buy those products that had the best engineering (Lancaster and Massingham, 2017). The dominance of PO became a problem when supply exceeded demand as a result of changes in customer tastes. Drucker (1973) argues that this situation is often the catalyst for a change in Strategic Orientations, from production to consumption.

The transition from a strategic focus on production and efficiency to consumption and differentiation is challenging for firms, particularly small firms, with limited resources and often little appetite for change, particularly when their strategic direction has been set by a dominant owner-manager. However, the evidence is overwhelming that the transition is necessary (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009; Brassington and Pettitt, 2013), particularly in

dynamic markets open to global competition, of which grocery (food and drink) is an excellent example.

The tendency for small firms to adopt a strong PO is intriguing, as most of them have neither the capacity for large-scale production/service delivery nor the capability to invest therein. However, what most small firms have in common is a passion for (production) excellence and a preference for rapid growth today over modest growth in the longer-term. This is particularly true of small (artisanal) food and drink producers, who take pride in the quality of their products but are increasingly vulnerable to commoditisation and price-led competition. This, in turn, results in a focus on survival, a ‘race to the bottom’ with a strong PO closely aligned with a strong Sales Orientation – creating cash flow to fuel the production line.

### **3.2.2.5. Sales Orientation**

Sales Orientation (SO) is closely aligned with PO and results from the need to create mass markets for mass production and avoid the consequences of over-supply (Dibb et al., 2005). A strong SO is usually associated with a shift in emphasis from how much firms should produce to how much they need to sell. Firms with strong SO often have extreme self-confidence – they know what to produce (Sharp, 1991) - and ‘sell hard’ without identifying customers’ needs (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Jobber and Lancaster, 2009; Brassington and Pettitt, 2013). When their ability to grow sales at the pace or scale necessary to keep up with production declines they typically resort to heavy promotional strategies, further fuelling the ‘race to the bottom’ (Sharp, 1991, Lees-Marshment, 2001; Brassington and Pettitt, 2013).

Small firms are attracted to SO due to their primary focus on production (excellence) and their failure to adapt to the changing market environment, to which they remain oblivious for as long as they prioritise investment in production efficiency over-investment in market intelligence and product innovation. The shift from PO to MO requires a significant shift in business culture philosophy and investment in systems, processes and know-how, which many small firms find a ‘leap too far’. SO has the potential to facilitate the transition, by shifting the focus from inward-looking to outward-looking, whilst maintaining cash flow and ensuring survival. However, as described above, it can also perpetuate the ‘race to the bottom’ in which small firms are ill-equipped to survive (Zineldin, 1996; Ferrell and Hartline, 2012).

In the context of this study, SFDPs face the significant challenge of serving the hyper-competitive grocery market with innovate products for which the demand is unknown, as part of a growth strategy which leads them to supermarket distribution. The presence of a strong SO at the moment of entry into these markets often leads to the pursuit of increased distribution without the creation of demand. Sales fail to grow as expected by the supplier or required by the supermarket buyer and the response is the adoption of promotional tactics upon which all stakeholders (suppliers, retailers and consumers) become reliant. In these circumstances investment in market information and the systems, processes and culture required for the adoption of MO is invariably too little and/or too late. It is for this reason that a strong SO is perceived as a barrier to the effective use of marketing intelligence, particularly in small firms.

### **3.2.2.6. The Relationships between Strategic Orientations**

Strategic Orientations are neither static nor exclusive but dynamic and related (Atuahene-Gima and Ko, 2011). MO is the Strategic Orientation that has received the most attention and is widely acknowledged as one of the most important contributors to a successful business (Hunt and Lambe, 2000; Cano et al., 2004; Kirca et al., 2005; Shoham et al., 2005; Grinstein, 2008). However, it also acknowledged that whilst MO is an important antecedent for business growth, a strong MO alone is unlikely to be enough for a firm to gain competitive advantages in dynamic markets (Noble et al., 2002). Researchers argue that some Strategic Orientations are complementary and that firms that engage with multiple Strategic Orientations gain increased competitive advantages (Noble et al., 2002; Hakala, 2011; Gnizy et al., 2014; Deutscher et al., 2016; Anees-ur-Rehman and Johnston, 2018). Specifically, EO and LO have been shown to have a positive impact on firm performance, particularly when combined with a strong MO (e.g. Covin and Slevin, 1989; Baker and Sinkula, 1999a, b; Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Sinkula et al., 1997; Hult et al., 2004; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005). Moreover, both EO and LO are associated with more/better use of information which, when combined with market-oriented behaviours, results in improved performance (Keh et al., 2007; Wang, 2008; Zahra, 2008).

Hakala (2011) proposes a framework for analysing the relationships between multiple Strategic Orientations, in which he proposes three configurations: sequential, alternative and complementary.

The *sequential approach* proposes that different Strategic Orientations interact and evolve over time. For example, market-oriented firms may develop into learning-oriented firms (Farrell, 2000; Mavondo et al., 2005), entrepreneurial exploration of market opportunities may lead to stronger MO (Miles and Arnold, 1991; Morris et al., 2007) and the experimentation and risk-taking associated with EO may lead firms to adopt a stronger LO over time (Liu et al., 2002; 2003). Importantly, the sequential approach assumes that no single Strategic Orientation is superior to the others.

The *alternative approach* is appropriate when firms consider that one Strategic Orientation is better than another (in a given circumstance) or when one Strategic Orientation is seen as a potential alternative to another (in a given circumstance), depending on the goal or the (side) effects associated with different Strategic Orientations. For example, even if it is believed that a strong MO is most likely to deliver the best outcome it may not be desirable or possible to adopt a strong MO, for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of resources, know-how or investment, which may result in a preference for an EO, in which a higher level of risk is inherently assumed (Cano et al., 2004; Kirca et al., 2005).

The *complementary approach* suggests that different Strategic Orientations correlate with, complement and support one another as an organisation potentially has multiple Strategic Orientations that work simultaneously. For example, MO is complementary with EO (e.g. Miles and Arnold, 1991; Slater and Narver, 2000; Hult and Ketchen, 2001; Tzokas et al., 2001; Frishammar and Hörte, 2007; Li et al., 2008) and LO (e.g. Slater and Narver, 1999; 2000; Baker and Sinkula, 1999a, b; Farrell, 2000; Hult et al., 2004; Barrett et al., 2005, Wang, 2008). Other studies suggest that MO promotes LO (e.g. Slater and Narver, 1995; Farrell, 2000) as LO strengthens the quality of MO (Baker and Sinkula, 1999a, b) by delivering market-oriented actions that create and sustain competitive advantages. In the small firm context, evidence shows that the combination of MO and EO is particularly beneficial in different environments (Tzokas et al., 2001; Baker and Sinkula, 2009; Tajeddini, 2010). LO is also suggested to enhance the effect of MO on performance (Baker and Sinkula, 1999a) and mediate the relationship between EO and performance (Wang, 2008).

Several studies highlight the complementarity between MO, EO and LO and their combined impact on performance (e.g. Liu et al., 2003; Hult et al., 2004; Barret et al., 2005; Zehir and Eren, 2007; Gutiérrez et al., 2014; Lonial and Carter, 2015; Deutscher et al., 2016). Slater and Narver (1995) suggest that an entrepreneurial culture promotes LO which will lead staff to learn and adopt entrepreneurial characteristics at the individual level which are manifested at the organisational level by their actions and their impact on performance. Farrell (2000) argues that firms become more market-oriented once they begin to adopt and implement LO. As a result, MO is seen as the major cultural foundation of LO, so the establishment of MO indicates the co-existence of LO. Baker and Sinkula (1999a, b) and Liu et al., (2002) also conclude that a strong LO should result in a strong MO and vice versa (Matsuno et al., 2002). Eventually, firms with a high level of EO are more likely to succeed if EO is combined with LO and MO, resulting in proactive (risk-taking) behaviour that is, nevertheless, driven by a focus on understanding consumers' needs and the strengths/weaknesses of their competitors (Baker and Sinkula, 1999a, b).

In contrast to the complementarity between some Strategic Orientations and their collective impact on firm performance, development and growth, there is some evidence to suggest other Strategic Orientations may not be complementary but conflicting with regard to the strategic goals and objectives of the firms, the consequential allocation of resources and resulting impact on performance. For example, the inward-looking PO is clearly at odds with the outward-looking MO. Moreover, the adoption of strong PO is often associated with strong SO, to drive revenue from the investment in manufacturing technology/capacity. This may impede the adoption of EO, which embraces risk in pursuit of above-average returns and LO, which encourages stakeholders to question, learn and adapt to changing circumstances.

These conflicting tensions between Strategic Orientations often arise during different stages of business development, when a change in Strategic Orientations is necessary but may be perceived as threatening to employees and owner-manager with entrenched attitudes, perceptions and learned behaviours that may prove difficult to change. In small firms, this conflict is all the more likely given the resource constraints, such as skills, time, market knowledge (Henchion and McIntyre, 2000), a lack of investment and outdated technology (OECD, 2000; Do et al., 2018). Moreover, small firms are often compelled to focus on production (PO) and sales (SO) to generate essential cash flow that will ensure their (short-



term) survival (Storey, 2000; Shepherd and Wiklund, 2005; Parry et al., 2012; Ates et al., 2013; Lämsiluoto et al., 2019).

The relationship between SO and MO is particularly important in the context of small firms, in which, it has been argued, a tension exists between the two (Didonet et al., 2020). MO is understood as the most important Strategic Orientation for both large and small firms in terms of its impact on performance (Grinstein, 2008). However, it has already been noted that the adoption of strong MO is often challenging for small firms (Kumar et al., 2011). In fact, MO may not be the first choice for small firms, as the pressure to generate short-term revenue is the total opposite of what MO has to offer (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003). Pragmatically, the majority of small firms may prefer to focus on the generation of revenue in the short-term to investment in the development of their brand, consumer demand and customer loyalty in the longer-term (Boles et al., 2001; Noble et al., 2002; Morgan, 2012; Pitkänen et al., 2014; Pratono, 2018).

The literature is divided on the relationship between MO and SO, between those who perceived the relationship as complementary (e.g. Noble et al., 2002) and those who see it as conflicting (e.g. Didonet et al., 2020). This is an important question in the context of this study, given the distinctly different roles that information plays in MO and SO. For example, SFDPs with strong SO are likely to focus their limited resources on the identification of routes to market – wholesale distributors, independent retailers, supermarkets, and food service – and the criteria for securing orders and growing volumes in a diversity of distribution channels with a range of customers. This, in itself, is a resource-intensive exercise that requires investment in new technologies, systems and processes, to maximise sale revenue and utilisation of production capacity. However, an overriding focus on production and sales, driven by strong PO and SO, is likely to leave little room for an understanding of what it is that consumers demand or how well competitors are meeting their needs. This leaves the firms blind to the ever-changing opportunities and threats in what is an increasingly dynamic market for food and drink. It also leaves them disinclined to invest time and effort in the use of market information to inform decision-making (Stokes and Wilson, 2010; Pitkänen et al., 2014; Didonet et al., 2020).

There is a consensus in the literature that Strategic Orientations can have a significant impact on firm performance (Deutscher et al., 2016; Anees-ur-Rehman and Johnston, 2018; Didonet

et al., 2020). Researchers also agree that MO is the most important Strategic Orientations and the impact of MO on firm performance may be enhanced when combined with other Strategic Orientations, particularly EO and LO. However, most of the empirical studies are focused on large firms, with little attention given to the idiosyncratic nature of decision-making within small firms. Large firms tend to use executive management to develop and execute their strategies. They have well-qualified employees that are exceptionally skilled and assigned to specific roles that combine through formal processes to deliver planned outcomes (Gilmore et al., 2001; Morris et al., 2002; Jocumsen, 2004). In contrast, small firms have fewer employees and limited resources to adapt and/or modify to the environment in which they operate (Carson and Gilmore, 2000; Fligstein, 2000; Henschion and McIntyre, 2000; OECD, 2000; McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003; Ates et al., 2013; Do et al., 2018; Lämsiluoto et al., 2019) and are less inclined to have formalised structures and processes for their business activities (Pelham and Wilson, 1996; Spillan and Ziemnowicz, 2003; Donnelly et al., 2015). Consequently, small firms may struggle to develop and apply formal Strategic Orientations to their daily business activities. Moreover, the adoption of formal Strategic Orientations may be further constrained in small family firms by the presence of a dominant owner-manager (e.g. Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Jennings and Beaver, 1997; Cardon and Stevens, 2004; Marlow, 2005; Jack et al., 2006; Nadin and Cassel, 2007; Reijonen, 2010).

Small firms often develop closer and more intimate relationships with their customers, they operate the business with more flexibility than large firms (Hernández-Linares et al., 2018) and often on a smaller margin (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003). Thus, smaller firms are often more agile and responsive to change (Arnett and Badrinarayanan, 2005; Moriarty et al., 2008). This is a potential source of competitive advantages and permits a more informal and entrepreneurial business approach, one that is driven by the owner-manager that is more opportunist and proactive by nature (Day, 1998). However, this informality is often associated with the lack of formal strategic planning (Pelham and Wilson, 1996; Donnelly et al., 2015), which, in small family firms, leaves the owner-manager with considerable authority over the allocation of resources and decision-making processes. This often results in more informal and intuitive planning and decision-making (Harris and Watkins, 1998; Richbell et al., 2006; Pérez and Duréndez, 2007; Donnelly et al., 2015; Malshe et al., 2017) in which evidence-based decision-making is, at best, limited and, at worst, positively discouraged, leaving functional managers (e.g. account manager) disinclined to invest time and effort in sourcing, analysing and using market intelligence to inform their marketing decisions.

In the next section the focus shifts from the firm (and its Strategic Orientations) to the key individual (account manager) and their propensity for evidence-based decision-making and the use of market information – an essential component of MO, EO and LO. Specifically, the study explores the role of commitment as an antecedent for the effective use of CMI.

### **3.2.3. Commitment**

This study explores the impact of information use on performance, at the levels of the firm (SFDP) and the individual (account manager). The previous section explored the role of Strategic Orientations as a potential barriers/enabler to effective information use and the challenges that many small firms face in adopting Strategic Orientations that promote the use of market information. Now, the study focuses on the key individual (account manager) whose propensity to use information may vary for a variety of reasons, one of which is the strength of their relationships with their employer and the supermarket buyer with whom they interact. Strong relationships are associated with higher levels of commitment (Scheer et al., 2003) which, in the context of this study, may result in the committed individual (account manager) being prepared to ‘go the extra mile’ and invest the (extra) time and effort necessary to make effective use of CMI into their dealings with the supermarket buyer and their management of the supermarket account.

Previous studies have identified that tensions often exist in these relationships, both within firms and between the firms, for a variety of reasons, including the abuse of power (Anderson and Weitz, 1989; Kumar, 1996; Nyaga et al., 2013), a lack of trust (Tsanos and Zografos, 2016; Brito and Miguel, 2017), asymmetric dependency (Kumar et al., 1995; Gulati and Sytch, 2007; Brinkhoff et al., 2015), limited cooperation (Ellram and Edis, 1996; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000; Puranam and Vanneste, 2009; Shipilov and Li, 2012) and a lack of perceived organisational justice (Bensaou, 1997; Duffy et al., 2003; Axelrod, 2006; Ramsay and Wagner, 2009). These tensions may be exacerbated in SFDPs, in which the lack of resources often results in a key individual being given responsibility for multiple functions but denied decision-making authority by an autocratic owner-manager and/or a dominant supermarket buyer (Malagueño et al, 2019). This increases the likelihood of (perceived) injustice which in turn leads to lower levels of trust and commitment (Lusch, 1976; Ross et al., 1997; Kumar,

2005; Luo, 2007). In such circumstances, an account manager may feel the investment of time and effort in the use of market information is unwarranted and unlikely to be rewarded.

### **3.2.3.1. The Conceptualisation of Commitment**

Commitment, in general, is highly regarded as a fundamental requirement for desirable outcomes, including high job satisfaction, productive behaviour and low absenteeism (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Organisational commitment refers to a force of mindset that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) or simply as an individual's psychological attachment to the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Early studies of commitment identify two dimensions – attitudinal and behavioural. *Attitudinal commitment* refers to the process in which individuals feel and consider that they share the same set of values and goals that are congruent with those of the firms. Studies on attitudinal commitment mainly focus on the identification of the antecedents that contribute to the development of attitudinal commitment and the behavioural consequences thereof. These behavioural consequences tend to influence the conditions that would contribute to the stability or change in commitment (e.g. Buchanan, 1974; Steers, 1977). *Behavioural commitment* refers to the process in which the individual becomes locked into a situation or a firm and how they deal with this circumstance. Studies on behavioural commitment mainly focus on identifying those conditions under which behaviour, once exhibited, tends to be repeated as well as the effects of that behaviour on changes in attitude. The attitudes which result from behaviour can be expected to affect the possibility of the same behaviour occurring again in the future (Pfeffer and Lawler, 1980; O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1981).

Meyer and Allen (1991) introduce a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of commitment, named the three-component model of commitment which consists of affective, continuance and normative commitment. This model presents organisational commitment as a complementary relationship between attitudinal and behavioural definitions of commitment. The model proposes that affective commitment (the desire to remain in the organisation), continuance commitment (the need to remain in the organisation) and normative commitment (the mindset of an obligation to remain in the organisation) are interrelated and may be experienced and demonstrated by an individual simultaneously (Meyer and Allen, 1991;

Mercurio, 2015). Together, the three-component model is often referred to as an employee's commitment profile (Meyer and Allen, 1991). It is worth noting that attitudinal and behavioural commitment are not mutually exclusive (Meyer and Allen, 1991), although an individual could experience all these three forms of commitment to varying degrees.

*Affective commitment* refers to the individual's desire to remain in the organisation as they share a congruence in values with the organisation, emotionally care for the organisation, share the pride and willingness to put extra effort/'go the extra mile' for the organisation (Mowday et al., 1979; Meyer and Allen, 1984, 1991; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Affective commitment emphasises the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. An employee with a strong affective commitment continues their employment with the organisation because they want to. An employee with affective commitment is willing to exert effort on behalf of the organisation because of the benefits that derive from the relationship as they share the same values (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

*Continuance commitment* refers to the awareness of the costs which are associated with leaving the organisation. An employee with this type of commitment chooses to remain in the organisation because they need to; some even refer to it as 'commitment by default' (Becker, 1960). Potential costs develop as the direct result of economic decisions, an individual's investment in resources (e.g. time, effort, money) and/or actions taken by the employee with full recognition that it will make leaving the organisation more difficult (e.g. accepting job assignments that require special skills training) (Becker, 1960; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972; Meyer and Allen, 1984). It is noticed that several studies refer to the concept of continuance commitment with different terms, e.g. instrumental, compliance, calculative (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) or exchange commitment (Balfour and Wechsler, 1996).

*Normative commitment* refers to an individual's predisposition or mindset which arises from specific norms that are internalised by the individual and developed by the need or perceived expectation to reciprocate *quid pro quo* for some specific benefits to the organisation (Wiener, 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1984; 1991). Individuals with normative commitment show a strong feeling of obligation to continue their employment as a consequence of normative pressures. In simple words, an employee with normative commitment chooses to stay in the organisation

because they ought to. An individual with a specific reciprocity mechanism may lead to the development of normative commitment to the extent that the individual internalises the reciprocity norm as an ‘exchange ideology’ (Eisenberger et al., 1986), for instance, to repay special favours or investments from the organisation, those which make the employee feels obliged to remain, even if they receive more attractive offers or other alternatives. Normative commitment alone is expected to increase the probability of an employee engaging in discretionary behaviour.

### **3.2.3.2. Commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

Commitment is argued to be one of the most important antecedents of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) – actions resulting from an employee’s willingness to ‘go the extra mile’ (Organ, 1990a). Prior studies have identified seven categories of OCB: helping behaviour, sportsmanship, organisational loyalty, organisational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue and self-development.

*Helping behaviour* involves an individual who voluntarily helps others with, or else prevents the occurrence of, work-related problems (Organ 1988; 1990a; 1990b; George and Brief, 1992; Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; 1997; George and Jones, 1997). *Sportsmanship* refers to the willingness to tolerate inevitable inconvenience at work without complaining (Organ, 1990b; Podsakoff et al., 1997). *Organisational loyalty* refers to the individual willingness to promote the firms to the outsides, to protect and defend it against external threats and to remain committed even under adverse conditions (George and Brief, 1992; Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; 1997; George and Jones, 1997). *Organisational compliance* captures an individual’s acceptance of the firms’ rules, regulations and procedures even when nobody monitors their compliance (Smith, 1983; Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996). *Individual initiative* results in an individual engaging in task-related behaviours at a level beyond what is minimally required or that goes above and beyond the ‘call of duty’ (Organ, 1988; Moorman and Blakely, 1995). *Civic virtue* refers to the individual’s willingness to actively participate in the firms as a whole, to monitor the environment for threats and opportunities, and to look out for the best interest even at great personal cost (Organ, 1988; 1990b; George and Brief, 1992). *Self-development* identifies oneself as the key dimension of citizenship behaviour, including voluntary behaviours to engage in and to improve one’s knowledge, skills and abilities (Katz, 1964; George and Brief,

1992; Podsakoff et al., 2000). In the context of this study, three of these OCB categories are particularly relevant – organisational loyalty, individual initiative and self-development.

For example, the growth of grocery e-commerce and omnichannel retailing has transformed the competitive landscape in the UK grocery industry (Verhoef et al., 2015) and fuelled a significant shift in supermarket strategies toward convenience and value, resulting in the rationalisation of product ranges. This fundamental shift in retail strategy has left small suppliers with the growing threat of losing their financial lifelines, as large retailers may constitute a significant share of their sales and, in some cases, the only channel to reach their final customers (Malagueño et al., 2019). In such circumstances, an account manager with organisational loyalty exhibiting individual initiative is more likely to ‘go the extra mile’ to prevent the de-listing of products from key customers – developing a detailed plan and making a persuasive case for retention that is informed by a rigorous analysis of CMI. Conversely, a less committed account manager might choose easier options, such as offering unsustainable price discounts or simply accepting the proposed de-listing as a *fait accompli*. In the process, the process of engaging with the CMI, building a plan and making a case for business retention – something that many (if not most) account managers in SFDPs will have had little prior experience of – will result in significant self-development, regardless of whether or not the additional efforts are successful. However, recent research suggests SFDPs are able to defend the proposed de-listing of products from key customers but only when they invest in brand diffusion – increasing customer penetration and repeat purchases by carefully targeted market interventions identified by the analysis of CMI (Gölgeci et al, 2021).

### **3.2.3.3. Antecedents of Commitment**

As has already been highlighted, there is evidence that small firms are less likely to adopt a strong MO (and therefore less likely to allocate resources for the effective use of market information). There is also evidence that the motivation for the use of market information in small family firms could be suppressed by the attitudes, perceptions and behaviour of a dominant owner-manager. In addition, as highlighted in Chapter 2, the grocery industry is dominated by a small number of supermarkets who have been guilty of exploiting their market power. Thus, there is good reason to suspect that relationships within SFDPs and between SFDPs and supermarket buyers may not always be conducive to collaborative, evidence-based decision-making, in which the effective use of CMI plays a critical role. In the next

sections, the study explores the antecedents of commitment within the firms (intra-organisational commitment) and between firms (inter-organisational commitment).

### **3.2.3.3.1. Intra-organisational Commitment**

The majority of prior studies focus on affective commitment, for which the primary antecedents relate to experience in the workplace (e.g. Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005; Riketta, 2005). Specifically, affective commitment has been identified as being highly correlated with job satisfaction, management receptiveness, leader-member relations and the opportunity to voice one's opinion (Withey, 1988), decentralisation of decision-making (Morris and Steers, 1980; Brooke et al., 1988), formalisation of policies and procedures (Morris and Steers, 1980; Podsakoff et al., 1986; O'Driscoll, 1987), equity in reward distribution (Rhodes and Steers, 1981; Ogilvie, 1986), organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; 1990), role clarity and freedom of conflict (Podsakoff et al., 1986; Blau, 1988; Glisson and Durick, 1988), fairness of performance based reward (Curry et al., 1986; Brooke et al., 1988), opportunity for advancement (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1980), opportunity for self-expression (Meyer and Allen, 1987; 1988), participation in decision-making (Rhodes and Steers, 1981; DeCotiis and Summers, 1987) and personal importance in the organisation (Buchanan, 1974; Steers, 1977).

The relationship between an employee and his/her employer is an overarching concept that affects most, if not all, of these antecedents to (affective) organisational commitment, making employee engagement of paramount importance as the employee's work attitudes and behaviours substantially impact the firms' success (De Clercq and Rius, 2007). In small firms, employee engagement is regarded as a continuum from 'small is beautiful' to 'bleak house' (Wilkinson, 1999). 'Small is beautiful' portrays a harmonious and co-operative relationship between employee and employer (Bolton Committee Report, 1971) with good remuneration, extensive communication and a variety of tasks and opportunities. On the other hand, the 'bleak house' view is indicative of an autocratic culture, poor working conditions, limited involvement and low pay (Rainnie, 1989).

Leadership behaviours are positively related to organisational commitment (e.g. Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Pillai et al., 1999; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Mesu et al., 2015). A directive leader motivates their employees to perform beyond expectation by giving clearly defined roles that



enabling employees to be more flexible and willing to engage across a multitude of tasks (Bass, 1985; Koch and Van Straten, 1997; Heneman et al., 2000). An ethical leader demonstrates care and concern towards their employees and considers their interests when making decisions (Kalshoven et al., 2011), avoiding unethical behaviours and encouraging open communication (Brown et al., 2005; Neubert et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2016). Employees who feel appreciated, are treated fairly, are well-informed and are given opportunities to voice their ideas (Truss et al., 2006), are likely to be satisfied with their job (Gaertner, 1999; Rayton, 2006) and be more committed to the organisation (Wright and Cropanzano, 2004; Xu et al., 2016).

In small family firms, the owner-manager has the power and influence to motivate or demotivate the employee – to increase or reduce their level of commitment (Eddleston, 2008; Pearson and Marler, 2010). For example, an autocratic owner-manager is likely to act in an authoritarian manner, exerting pressure while maintaining discipline (Mullins, 2010). In contrast, a conscientious owner-manager is likely to foster a supportive and inclusive working environment (Misa and Stein, 1983; Watson and Clark, 1992; Mayer et al., 2007; Ntalianis et al., 2015; Huong et al., 2016). When the firms have succeeded in establishing a strong level of employee engagement, the employee's commitment gets stronger and they are more likely to support the firms' goals (Edwards et al., 2007; McClean and Collins, 2011).

In the context of this study, the lack of formalised structures and processes in small family firms, coupled with the lack of input to strategic planning and decision-making in the presence of a dominant owner-manager are significant factors that could inhibit employee commitment.

### **3.2.3.3.2. Inter-organisational Commitment**

As it has been discussed in Chapter 2, the study's interest in inter-organisational commitment stems from the chequered history of buyer-supplier (B/S) relationship in UK supermarket supply chains, resulting in an enquiry by the Office of Fair Trade (OFT) in 1998 (OFT, 1998) and the establishment of a Grocery Supply Code of Practice (GSCOP) and a Grocery Code Adjudicator (GCA) in 2010, designed to prevent supermarkets from abusing their market power. A subsequent enquiry (Competition Commission, 2009) resulted in the strengthening of the authority of the GCA, which has the power to issue financial penalties to supermarkets that fail to comply with GSCOP. Sporadic contraventions of GSCOP have been widely reported (for further example, see Investigation into Tesco PLC (GCA, 2016), Investigation

into Co-operative Group Ltd (GCA, 2019)) but the annual reports by the GCA reveal a significant decline in contraventions over the past decade (for more details go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-provisions-and-related-gca-action/code-provisions-and-related-gca-action>). Moreover, recent studies have shown that supermarkets who treat suppliers fairly are more likely to benefit from higher levels of collaboration, commitment and OCBs, including the use of CMI (Duffy et al., 2013; Malagueño et al., 2019; Matopoulos et al., 2019).

Inter-organisational commitment, in the context of B/S relationship, has received considerable attention in the industrial marketing and supply chain management literature. The typology of B/S relationship ranges from traditional, arms-length and adversarial relationships to complex networks of collaborating organisations (Cousins, 2002; McIvor and Humphrey, 2004; Cousins and Lawson, 2007; Goffin et al., 2006). Traditional, arms-length relationships focus on short-term and transactional activities (e.g. price negotiations, deliver schedules and compliance issues), exhibiting low levels of engagement between trading partners. In contrast, collaborative relationship is, generally, strategic in nature and focus on more complex activities (e.g. new product development, business process integration, shared capital investments and increased knowledge) that offer the potential for mutual benefits in the longer-term (Cousins and Lawson, 2007). Despite the potential benefits of collaborative relationships, small-scale suppliers find it difficult to ‘invest’ in the development of relationships with selected customers, even with a large buyer that offers the potential for significant growth (Donnelly et al., 2015; Bocconcelli et al., 2017). As previously highlighted, this may be due to a lack of resources, a weak MO and a preference for informal over formal systems and processes, but also a fear of increased dependency on fewer, larger customers with distinct requirements and business processes (Ojasalo, 2001; Zupancic, 2008) and a reputation for opportunistic buyer behaviour (Dobson, 2003; 2004; Dobson and Chakraborty, 2008).

Asymmetric dependency is often found in B/S relationships and is commonplace in the context of supermarket supply chains. In such circumstances, the dominant partner, which is usually the buyer in the case of supermarkets, may choose a control mechanism not only to dictate the rules and procedures but also to protect their own interests at the expense of the supplier and avoid dependency, reduce risk and promote more competition in supply (Brito and Miguel, 2017). Consequently, dependence asymmetry is also associated with low levels

of cooperation and trust (Kumar et al., 1995) and a higher incidence of conflict (Lusch, 1976; Ross et al., 1997).

Brito and Miguel (2017) present two distinct perspectives on dependence asymmetry – exploitation of power (by the buyers) and tolerance of power (by the suppliers). They argue that the buyers, as generally the stronger party, will always be looking to extract short-term benefits from relationships with (smaller) suppliers and in their absence, looking for alternative sources of supply. In contrast, suppliers will tolerate a degree of exploitation, in their quest for survival, but favour more stable, longer-term relationships that are based on trust and commitment (McCarter and Northcraft, 2007; Tsanos and Zografos, 2016; Brito and Miguel, 2017). In so doing, suppliers often feel compelled to comply with buyers' requests, thereby signalling their loyalty, in the hope of reducing uncertainty and opportunistic buyer behaviour (Crook and Combs, 2007; Brito and Miguel, 2017). As noted above, there is evidence that in the UK grocery market, some supermarkets have abused their market power, using the threat of de-listing to secure lower prices and better terms of trade (Competition Commission, 2000). These actions leave small suppliers with little, or no choice given the extent to which their growth is dependent on supermarket distribution (Kumar et al., 1995; Bocconcelli et al., 2017).

Engaging in collaborative relationships is, therefore, not without risk, as it is likely to result in higher levels of dependency with some customers and a reduction of business with others, whose attention is lost as limited resources are diverted to a sub-set of 'key customers'. In these circumstances, suppliers need to invest in relationships with 'key customers' to maintain, if not reduce, the level of dependency asymmetry. The key is not to minimise the dependence (on the buyer) but to maintain the balance of dependency. This would include prioritising the development of new products, in collaboration with 'key customers', allocating promotional budgets exclusive to 'key customers' and developing shopper marketing plans tailored to the needs of 'key customers' – OCBs all of which require the use of market information and, ideally market information that is of exclusive relevance to the 'key customer', which is the definition of CMI.

The benefits of collaborative B/S relationships have been widely researched, which include: more effective use of suppliers' capabilities and expertise (Ramsay and Wagner, 2009; Duffy et al., 2013); a higher return on (relationship-specific) investment, not only in terms of

financial returns but also non-financial returns, such as increased knowledge, know-how and enhanced reputation (Schiele et al., 2011; Smals and Smits, 2012); and collaborative innovation, to reduce costs, improve processes and develop new products (Hughes, 2010). The challenge for the supplier is the decision to focus (limited) resources on a sub-set of customers to build relationships that will endure rather than spreading (limited) resources thinly across an unmanageably large customer base.

### **3.2.4. Family Businesses**

This section presents a review of the literature on family business. It begins with a summary of the characteristics of family businesses (Section 3.2.4.1), followed by a discussion of the idiosyncratic nature of decision-making within family businesses (Section 3.2.4.2) and the impact of owner-manager on the performance of family businesses (Section 3.2.4.3). Please note that the terms family businesses and family firms are used interchangeably throughout.

#### **3.2.4.1. Characteristics of Family Businesses**

The majority of businesses in the world are classified as family businesses (Dunn, 1996; Nordqvist and Melin, 2010). In the UK, it is estimated that there are 4.8 million family businesses, comprising 85.9% of all private sector businesses. In 2020, family businesses employed 13.9 million workers and contributed £575 billion to the UK Economy (Oxford Economics, 2022). In the UK, the majority (74.7%) of family businesses are micro firms that have no employees (only the owner/owner-manager) and micro firms with 1-9 employees (20.8%). Small, medium and large firms account for 3.8%, 0.6% and 0.1% of family businesses, respectively (Oxford Economics, 2022). However, there is no formal definition of what constitutes as family business. However, the common elements are the existence of ownership control, strategic influence, concern for family relationships and the possibility of continuity across future generations. In addition, the majority of votes are owned by the family members who established the firm, and one or more family members (or their spouses) are involved in the management of the business (Institute of Family Business, 2009; Keanon, 2018).

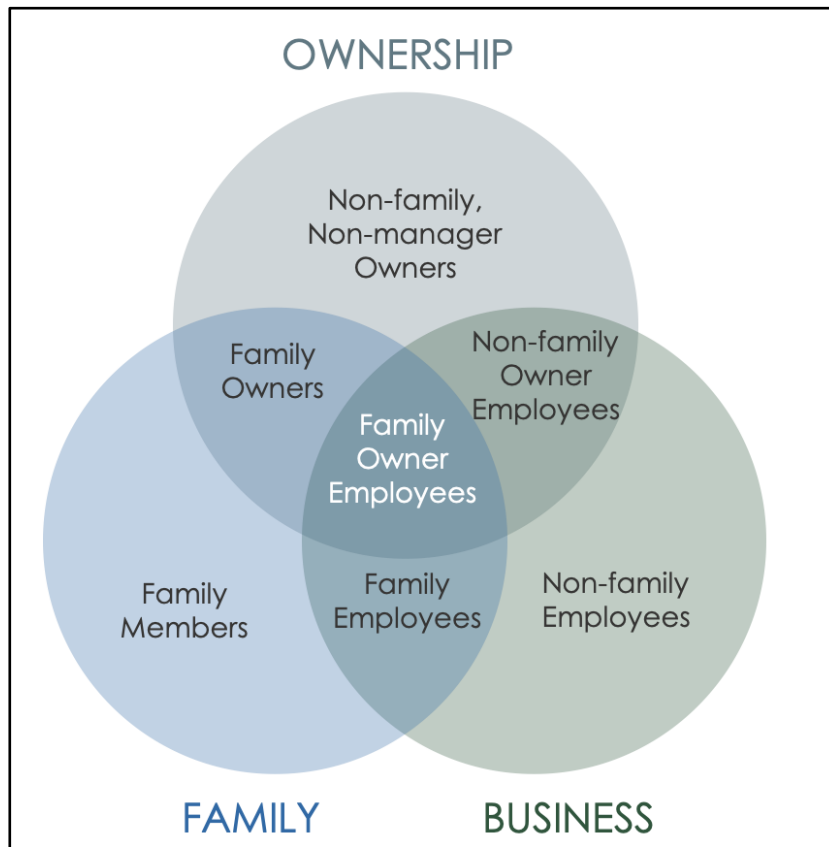
Primarily, what distinguishes family firms from their non-family counterparts is the addition of the family unit and their enmeshment with the business, which overlap, coexist and mutually influence each other (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996; Ghalke, Haldar and Kumar, 2023). Additional

characteristics, unique to family firms, are highlighted in the literature including non-economic and socio-emotional wealth (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007; Chua et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2019), value (García-Álvarez and López-Sintas, 2001; Seaman et al., 2019), management configuration (Hoopes and Miller, 2006; Schmid et al., 2015), the inter-personal relationship and exchanges between family members (Bammens et al., 2008; Kellermanns et al., 2008; Long and Mathews, 2011; Nordqvist et al., 2014). On the one hand, these unique characteristics or ‘bivalent attributes’ are potential sources of competitive advantages (Zahra et al., 2008), but on the other hand, they can cause serious dysfunctions and complications (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996; Keanon, 2018).

#### **3.2.4.2. Decision-making in Family Firms**

There are four stages in the life cycle of a business – birth, growth, maturity and decline. In family firms these stages also apply at the level of the individual and the family (Keanon, 2018). Tagiuri and Davis (1996) propose a model of a family business that explores the complexity of family firms through the lens of three overlapping sub-systems of ownership, family and business (Figure 3.1). The model highlights the complexities in the roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes within family firms. For example, a family member may be the owner but not necessarily works as an employee (i.e. resides in two circles). The founder may still be involved in day-to-day activities, have full control and ownership (resides in three circles) but have different viewpoints, concerns and goals to other family members that reside only in one circle (only as the part of family without ownership and/or management role) or two circles (has the ownership but not necessarily involves in the management role). These intersections can be a source of competitive advantages and adaptive capacity. They can also inhibit the nature and pace of innovation as a result of complex decision-making processes and the influences therein (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996; Keanon, 2018).

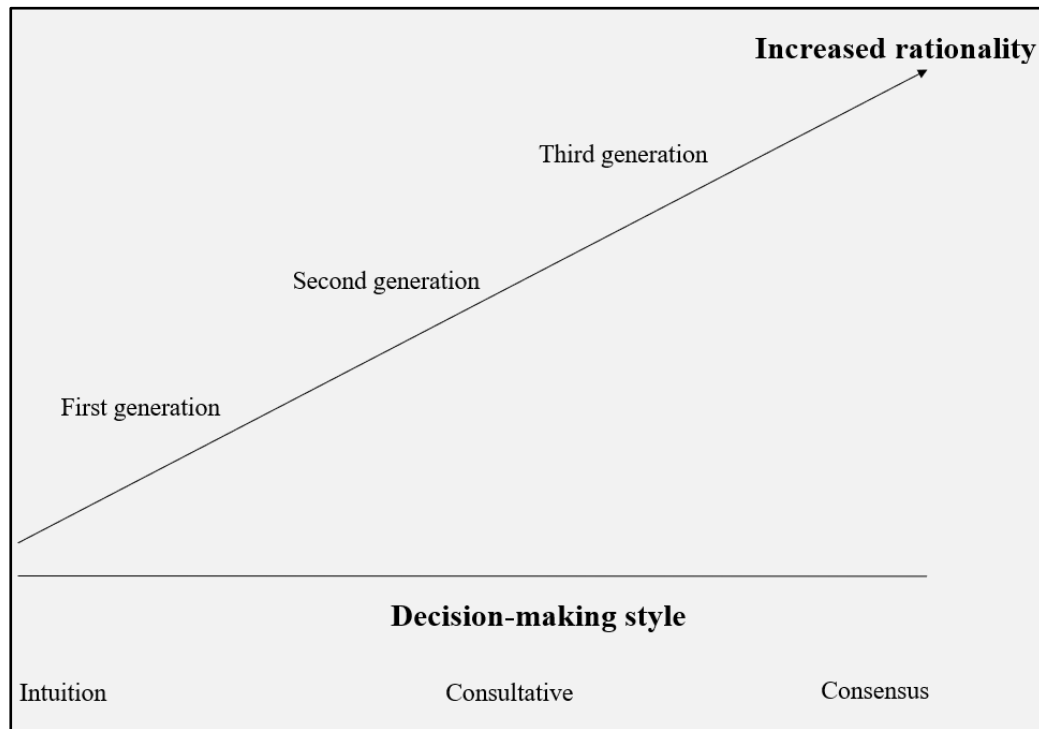
Figure 3.1 – The Three-circle Model of Family Business



Source: Tagiuri and Davis, 1996

Decision-making in family firms is widely influenced by the differences arising between generations (Alderson, 2009; Keanon, 2018). The Family Business Rationality Continuum Model (Figure 3.2) accentuates the increase in rationality from the first through the third generations (Alderson, 2009).

Figure 3.2 - The Family Business Rationality Continuum Model



Source: Alderson, 2009

*Generation 1: Founder and Entrepreneur.* The first generation, or founder-entrepreneur is often perceived as someone who builds up the business with a dominant personality and who has the sole decision-making ability. The founder-entrepreneur is often a self-made risk-taker who showcases their personality through their business. Hence, the business itself is often perceived as their ‘baby’. The founder-entrepreneur tends to rely on intuition and uses heuristics to make decisions (Kakkonen, 2005; Harris and Ogbonna, 2007). This tendency is reflected through the distinguished ‘my way’ leadership/management style, as they have a strong need for control, are more private, less likely to share working spaces, tend to have paternalistic style of management and avoid risk at any cost. The common issue among this generation is the continuing presence/influence of the founder-entrepreneur who towers above the entire organisation, which is often referred to as ‘founder centrality’ (Kelly, Athanassiou and Crittenden, 2000) or the ‘generational shadow’ (Davis and Harveston, 1998). This influence from the founder-entrepreneur can be both positive and negative. Through the strong influence of the founder-entrepreneur, moving forward family firms have a solid foundation through the ‘family values’ (e.g. missions, visions, purposes, thinking processes, values) that are carried and passed through the generations, such as stressing the importance

of caring for long-term employees, suppliers, community and customers and treating them like family members. On the other hand, the influence can become negative when the founder-entrepreneur second fails to delegate responsibility and does not allow the management team to make decisions on their own.

*Generation 2: Sibling Partnership.* The second generation consists of the founder's sons and/or daughters and their spouses. This generation is often referred to as the 'crucial generation' for the succession of family firms (Aronoff et al., 1997), especially in their decision-making capacity (Gersick et al., 1997). In second generations, it is common for the founder-entrepreneur from the first generation to still be actively involved in the business (unless they have retired or deceased). This composition creates an interesting dynamic as the parental influence from the previous generation is really permeated and shown throughout the decisions and business activities. Compared to their predecessors' 'intuitive' ways, the second generation seems to be more open to using rational, consultative and evidence-based rationales in their decision-making process (Alderson, 2009). However, there may be times when a decision needs to be made based on intuition or without complete information to enhance the founder-entrepreneur's legacy, to make them proud and/or avoid embarrassing them. This type of decision-making often mirrors what their parents would have done in similar situations, as the second generation is still carrying the family legacy with. Alderson (2009) introduces the term 'umbrella of respect' which describes the high level of respect and reverence for the accomplishment of the first generation. All the decisions are immediately filtered through the founder's stated priorities and values. Therefore, the decision-maker will always make sure that every decision is not in conflict with the family's values. There are two types of main decisions during this stage – programmed decisions (e.g. small decisions or those that have been made numerous times before) and non-programmed decisions (e.g. larger decisions that are made infrequently).

*Generation 3: The Cousin Consortium.* The size of the third generation is often bigger than the second generation. It involves various family members – the core members with the additions of an extended family of cousins and their spouses; some of them are involved in the management, others as equal partners, while some play no part in the management but still have a stake in the ownership of the business (see Figure 3.1). As more and more family members are involved, the management structures and processes become more complex and invariably, less effective. Consequently, when it comes to the decision-making process, the



third generation implements a different approach by leaning towards more professional consensus by using majority voting (Aronoff and Astrachan, 1996). There is limited evidence of the impacts of the fourth generation and future generations on the decision-making process. However, as family firms grow, they are more likely to adopt more rational decision-making processes and non-family professional management.

Overall, the evidence suggests that multi-generational family firms are more likely to adopt rational, logical and evidence-based decision-making. In first-generation family firms, the founder-entrepreneur plays the dominant role with sole discretion and authority, which enables them to make quick decisions in more intuitively. In second and third-generation family firms, multiple family members are more likely to be involved and non-family members are brought in to ‘professionalise’ decision-making systems and processes (Keanon, 2018).

### **3.2.4.3. Family Ownership and Performance**

#### The Role of Stewardship Behaviour and Its Impact on Performance

Family firms are characterised by complex arrays of systematic factors that influence their strategy, processes and performance outcomes (Habbershon et al., 2003; Lussier and Sonfield, 2006). Family involvement in terms of ownership (percentage of family shares), management (family members on management team) and control (family members on the board of directors) is the basic condition through which to exercise family influence (Chrisman et al., 2005; Muñoz-Bullon et al., 2018). Family involvement by itself cannot establish a competitive advantage (or disadvantage) (Le Breton-Miller and Miller, 2013) and it is only through the interactions with the firms and stakeholders that it affects value (Chrisman et al., 2005). In this sense, it is suspected that stewardship behaviour exhibited by the family firms might be posed as the vantage point in understanding the family dynamics and explaining the difference in performance (e.g. Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Eddleston et al., 2012) as well as creating the competitive advantages through collective behaviours and motives that prioritise the firms’ goals and/or objectives as their own (Corbetta and Salvato, 2004).

Agency and stewardship theories are often used to explore the associations arising between ownership, management and performance of family firms (e.g. Miller and Le Breton-Miller 2006; De Massis et al. 2015; Mazur and Wu 2016). Agency theory is often applied to investigate the links between ownership, management structure and firm’s financial

performance. Where there is a separation between ownership and control, agency control mechanisms are put in place to align the goals of managers and owners (Morwck et al., 1988). Agency theory focuses on the organisation level of ownership and management issues (Westhead and Howorth, 2006). Stewardship theory is suggested to be more appropriate when examining a firm when the owners', managers' and employees' goals/motives are aligned with the firm's (Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson, 1997; Schulze et al., 2003). Stewardship theory emphasises the goal congruence between the owner and managers (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Davis et al., 1997). According to stewardship theory, managers have interest that transcend individualistic and economic goals, extending to intrinsic satisfaction from achieving the firms' mission and providing significant contributions as stewards (Davis et al., 1997; Zahra et al., 2008).

In terms of management structure, stewardship theory helps in shaping the family agenda. Generally, family firms are rather reluctant to employ 'outside' employees due to the perception that the 'outsider' may be focused on individual financial gains that clash with 'family agendas' (Daily and Dalton, 1992). Family owners tend to make it difficult for the non-family employees to gain ownership, control stakes and/or key managerial status (Nyman and Silbertson, 1978; Westhead and Howorth, 2006). Some family owners prefer to hire non-family professionals to secure firm development and provide the firms with the necessary advice, specialist skills and resources the firms require (Kenser and Dalton, 1994; Westhead and Howorth, 2006). In this regard, stewardship theory helps to justify the management within the firms, as the family owner-manager serves and is highly committed to the firms' missions, treasures their employees and stakeholders and is motivated to do what is best for the family and firms rather than pursuing self-serving or opportunistic ends (Donnelley, 1964; Bubolz, 2001; Ward, 2004; Miller and Breton-Miller, 2005). Accordingly, a good steward is a decision-maker who also is the caretaker of the firms' asset and has the intention to pass a more blossomed and stronger business on to future generations (Davis, Allen and Reyes, 2010).

Prior studies imply that stewardship behaviour is an important component of the competitive advantages of family firms (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Miller, Le Breton-Miller and Scholnick, 2008; Zahra et al., 2008). Stewardship behaviour helps family members to focus on the well-being and success of the firms (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007) and contributes to strategic flexibility (Eddleston, 2008; Zahra et al., 2008) which results in higher level

performance (Davis, Allen and Hayes, 2010). Stewardship behaviour is often analysed in relation to the performance of the firms (Neubaum et al., 2017). However, it is also argued that stewardship behaviour can impact the performance of individuals within the firms (Bormann, Bacs and Hoon, 2021). Individual stewardship behaviour stems from personal motivation and behavioural philosophies that govern an organisation (Neubaum et al., 2017). Individual stewardship behaviour is both co-operative and pro-organisational nature (Davis et al., 1997). Prior studies suggest that stewardship behaviour influences the levels of motivation and commitment within the family firms (Corbetta and Salvato, 2004; Hernandez, 2012). Previous studies have shown that stewardship behaviour within family firms can result in co-operative, altruistic and spontaneous unrewarded citizenship behaviour from employees and other family members (Azizi et al., 2022), even when there is a conflict of interest between the firms and the individual (Chen et al., 2016). Bormann, Bacs and Hoon (2021) suggest that there is a natural reciprocity between stewardship culture and individual stewardship behaviour. An owner-manager who exhibits stewardship behaviour in the work environment values the well-being and self-actualisation of the organisation's members (Zahra et al., 2008; Neubaum et al., 2017).

In summary, by possessing and applying stewardship behaviour, owner-manager increases the strength of intra-personal relationships (Howorth and Robinson, 2020) with both family and non-family members by being selfless, treating them with respect (Schulze et al., 2001; Zahra, 2003; Eddleston et al., 2012), trusting and sharing the same values, knowledge and behaviours (Discua Cruz et al., 2013; Hadjielias and Poutziouris, 2015). These actions will encourage the individual's interdependence and motivate them to share the firms' goals above their own (Zahra, 2003). Consequently, the individual (account manager) feels respected and treated as part of the family, thereby boosting their commitment, loyalty and interdependence (Eddleston and Kidwell, 2012; Azizi et al., 2022). This, in turn, makes them willing to share the firms' values and dedicate greater effort to reach the firms' goals (Le Breton-Miller and Miller, 2018).

Within the context of this study, the potential impact of stewardship behaviour is of particular relevance to the performance of both the firms, both in relation to their sales within the supermarket sector (and Tesco in particular) and the individual (sales, marketing/account manager) responsible for (sales/marketing) decision-making and the use of CMI therein. At the organisation level, the expectation is that first-generational and founding family members are likely to have an important, if not dominant, role in decision-making. This is most likely to be

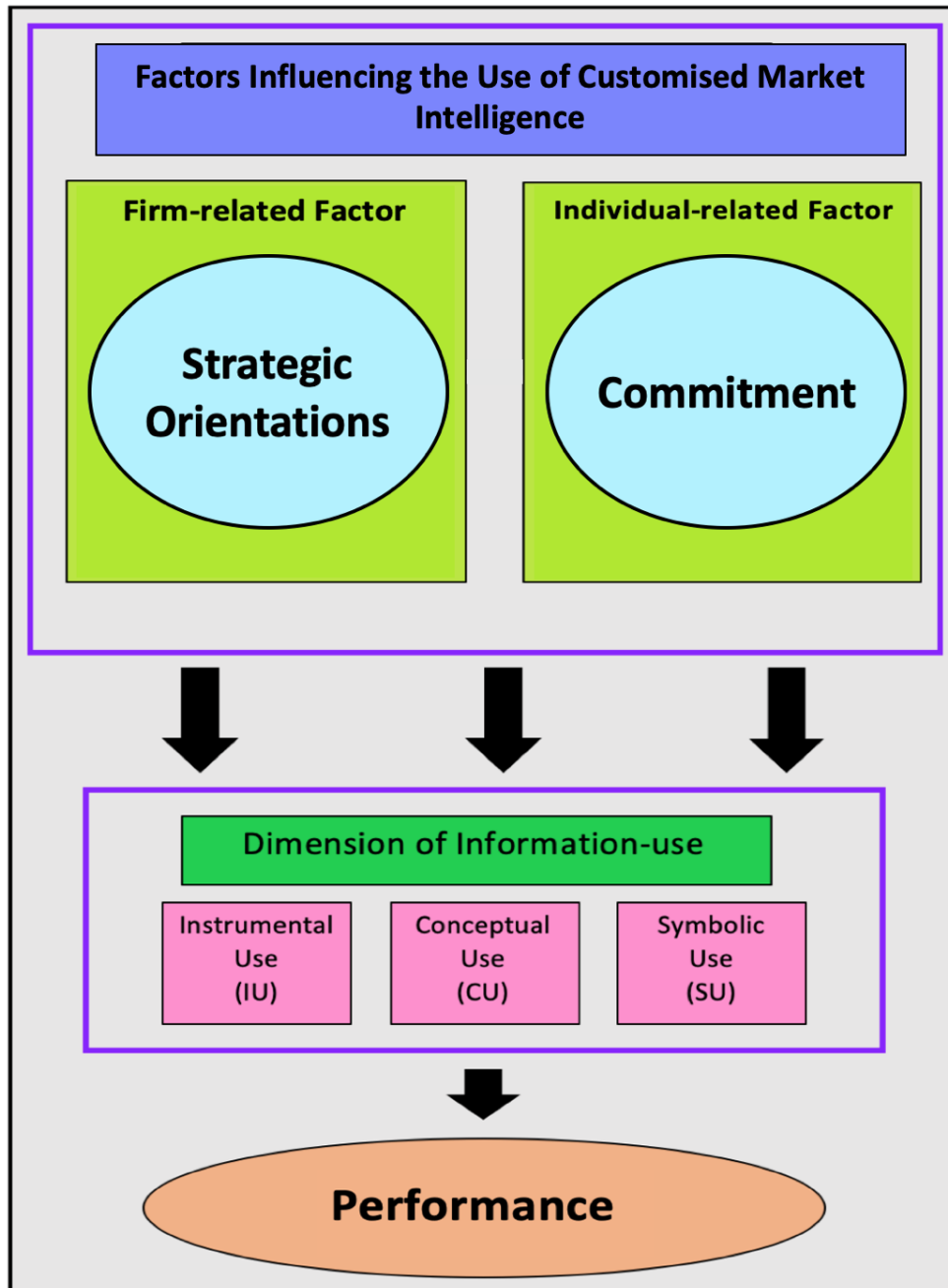
concerning strategic decision but could extend to the day-to-day management of the business. On one hand, this is likely to have a direct impact on the propensity for evidence-based decision-making, as owner-manager with a dominant, autocratic style of leadership is less likely to seek evidence to inform decision-making and more likely to seek evidence to support their own views. On the other hand, the owner-manager who displays strong stewardship behaviour is more likely to delegate responsibility, invite others, both family and non-family members, to contribute to decision-making and be open to the use of objective evidence (CMI) to inform decision-making in certain areas, such as sales and marketing. In these circumstances, it is the role of the individual responsible for specific functional areas of the business (e.g. sales and marketing) that is most important in terms of firm performance (e.g. sales growth). Correspondingly, non-family members employed in the key functional areas (such as sales and marketing) may be more highly motivated to succeed and committed to 'go the extra mile' to achieve success. The use of MI, in the context of growing the firms' sales with Tesco, could be seen as a critical success factor, yet, requires additional effort. An individual who feels valued and is given responsibility by an owner-manager or (multi-generational) family management that adopt strong stewardship behaviour may be more likely to make the effort, resulting in improved performance for the firms (i.e. increased sales with Tesco) and/or improved (functional) performance at an individual level, being better able to identify opportunities for sales growth through the use of CMI.

### **3.3. Conceptual Framework**

The business problem this study seeks to address is the lack of evidence-based decision-making in small firms, which leaves them increasingly vulnerable in dynamic market environments such as the UK grocery market. The Who Buys My Food? research project, of which this study is part, involves the UK's largest supermarket (Tesco) and a sub-set of SFDPs who supply them with local food and drink products and who have access (free of charge) to CMI derived from loyalty card data that is exclusive to Tesco (Clubcard). Over the course of the project, which is now in its twentieth year, numerous changes have been made to the structure and content of the CMI and how it is made available to the SFDPs involved in the research project. However, the evidence of the use of CMI continues to vary considerably between firms, suggesting that barriers remain and/or enablers are missing. Thus, the focus of this study is on two potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI

– Strategic Orientations and commitment – and their impact on performance. The conceptual framework that emerges from the literature review is presented in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.3 – Conceptual Framework



The literature review identified that the effective use of CMI is characterised as being either Conceptual or Instrumental, but that Symbolic Use of information is likely to occur in small family firms under the influence of a dominant owner-manager. The literature review also highlighted the impact of Strategic Orientations, and MO in particular, on firm performance,

the complementary and conflicting relationships between different Strategic Orientations and the challenges that small firms face in developing a strong MO. The development of a strong MO is important in this study due to the significant role that the effective (conceptual and/or instrumental) use of market information plays therein. Finally, the literature review explored the concept of organisational commitment, positioning the effective use of CMI as an OCB for which commitment is required from the key individual (account manager) responsible for managing the relationship with the relevant key customer (supermarket buyer). Given the idiosyncratic decision-making structures and processes that are widely associated with SFDPs, it is proposed that the effective use of CMI requires an account manager to 'go the extra mile'. Given the evidence from the literature of the benefits derived from the effective use of market information, it is proposed that SFDPs who make effective use of CMI will perform better than those who do not.

### **3.4. Development of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses derived from this conceptual framework cover the three core constructs – information use, Strategic Orientations and commitment.

#### **3.4.1. The Use of Customised Market Intelligence and Performance**

Market information use is defined as the extent to which information influences users' decision-making (Moorman et al., 1992). It has been identified as an important ingredient for sales growth and business development (Keh et al., 2007; Carson et al., 2020) and draws attention to the role of the individual(s) responsible for marketing decision-making and the use of market information therein (Moorman et al., 1992; Keszey, 2018). This study is concerned with the use of CMI - market information that is of exclusive relevance to a specific market, customer or distribution channel.

Menon and Varadarajan (1992) propose a framework for delineating the concept of marketing knowledge utilisation within firms, comprising three main dimensions: conceptual, instrumental and symbolic. Conceptual market information use refers to the indirect application of market information to develop a broader managerial knowledge base rather than serving the specific information needs for a specific decision (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999). Instrumental market information use refers to the direct application of market information to help solve a specific problem or exploit an

opportunity (Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Keszey and Biemans, 2017). Symbolic market information use refers to the use of market information in a distorted way (Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999) or the partisan use of research findings to legitimise and sustain previously held executives' dispositions (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992).

Despite some debates regarding the independence of these dimensions (Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999), recent empirical studies have argued for the merging of the instrumental and conceptual dimensions (Korhonen-Sande and Sande, 2014; Keszey, 2018), a recommendation adopted in this study, along with the assumption that the instrumental/conceptual use of market information is an independent construct, based on previous research evidence in the specific context of small firms (Williams, 2003).

Previous studies have explored the use of market information across different settings, including export market development (Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Bradshaw and Burridge, 2001; Williams, 2003) and innovation (Dubiel et al., 2018; Maltz et al., 2001; Cillo et al., 2010; Parry and Song, 2010). Their findings are largely consistent and identify a positive relationship between Instrumental/Conceptual Use of market information and performance (e.g. sales growth, return on investment) at the functional level (e.g. market, sales, R&D) as well as the overall performance of the firms. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>1a</sub>:** Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on firm performance.

**H<sub>1b</sub>:** Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on firm performance.

The small business literature recognises the importance of exploring different performance measures and antecedents thereof (Carson, 1990; Macpherson and Holt, 2007; Sholihin et al., 2010; Cravo and Pisa, 2019). It also acknowledges the important role that human resources play and, in particular, the characteristics of senior managers (Goodhew et al., 2005; Way et al., 2018; Gansen-Ammann et al., 2019; Alves et al., 2020).

Prior research has identified the plurality of roles performed by senior managers in small firms (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003) and their preference for instinctive decision-making (Massiera et al., 2018) as inherent characteristics of small firms which can inhibit their long-term growth and development (Bocconcelli et al., 2018). The Instrumental/Conceptual Use of market information should improve the quality of managerial

decisions which is “the most determining factor for the success of marketing management” (Wierenga, 2011, p.89). In addition, formal processes for acquiring and using market information can “encourage managers to expand the kinds of information used in decision-making processes and to consider the various implications of that information” (Parry and Song, 2010, p.1116).

However, while it is acknowledged that organisational commitment and job satisfaction can have a positive impact on firm performance (Lai et al., 2017), the specific contribution of key individual (e.g. account manager) in their functional role, to the overall performance of the firms has been ignored. Market information is used within firms at the individual/managerial level (Korhonen-Sande, 2010; Keszey and Biemans, 2017; Keszey, 2018) and, in the context of this study the role of the account manager is believed to be particularly important. As a consequence, there is a potential duality regarding its impact on performance, at the level of the individual as well as the organisation. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>1c</sub>:** Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on the performance of individual account manager.

**H<sub>1d</sub>:** Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on the performance of individual account manager.

### **3.4.2. Strategic Orientations**

With its increasingly ubiquitous adoption, especially among larger firms, MO is often seen as a *conditio sine qua non* in many competitive industries (Kumar et al., 2011). When MO is widely accepted and adopted, it may make a significant difference in the pursuit of superior performance, while its absence may be fatal, especially amid fluctuating market forces (Frösén et al., 2016). Thus, while MO is repeatedly shown to be critical for competitive advantage and performance outcomes of larger firms (Kirca et al., 2005), its widespread adoption means its potential as a differentiator diminishes over time.

The picture is different for SMEs, who are characterised by their pursuit of sales, from whoever and wherever to provide the essential cash flow that fuels their growth (Didonet et al., 2020). MO is often missing in the portfolio of Strategic Orientations of SMEs, leaving them exposed in the longer as they struggle to focus and target their scarce resources on fewer



market segments, in order to build brand loyalty (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2007). Thus, MO can be a differentiating factor for SMEs supplying supermarkets over longer periods. In particular, MO may condition how suppliers utilise their relationship with buyers against product de-listing and toward greater brand diffusion, and suppliers with high MO are in a better position to leverage relationship duration as a positive factor rather than a relic (Taylor et al., 2008; Frösén et al., 2016).

The essence of MO is acquiring information about the buyers and competitors in the target market and disseminating it throughout the business(es) in a way that the firms read and reflect upon the market (including that of partners) signals effectively (Narver and Slater, 1990). As such, suppliers who are better at understanding their retail channel partners and responding to their needs are likely to perform better than those who do not. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>2a</sub>:** The higher the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI

**H<sub>2b</sub>:** The lower the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI

MO's influence on firms' outcomes is neither universal nor unidimensional, but rather situational (Wu et al., 2019). In the context of this study, it is expected that small firms that adopt a strong MO are also likely to benefit from the influence of other, complementary orientations, such as EO and LO, both of which have been shown to facilitate more and/or better use of market information to inform marketing decisions and improve firm performance.

Firms with high level of EO tend to scan and monitor the operating environment regularly to find new opportunities and strengthen their positions (Covin and Miles, 1999). They are actively looking for additional information that can help them to understand their customers better, to manage their risk, together with any challenges from their competitors. Consequently, firms with strong EO can better adjust their operations in dynamic and competitive environments and exhibit a willingness to commit some of their resources to exploit uncertain opportunities. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>2c</sub>:** The higher the level of EO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI

**H<sub>2a</sub>:** The lower the level of EO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI

Firms that have a strong LO develop or acquire new knowledge to respond to internal and external stimuli that lead to a change in behaviour which later will subsequently enhance organisational effectiveness (Sadler-Smith et al., 2001). Furthermore, Sinkula et al., (1997) argue that the adoption of a strong LO should result in an increase in market information generation and dissemination which in turn has a positive impact on performance (Wang, 2008). Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>2e</sub>:** The higher the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI

**H<sub>2f</sub>:** The lower the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI

### **3.4.3. Commitment**

Commitment, in general, is highly regarded as a fundamental requirement for desirable outcomes, including high job satisfaction, productive behaviour and low absenteeism (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Organisational commitment refers to a force of mindset that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) or simply an individual's psychological attachment to the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The lack of formalised structures and processes in small family firms, coupled with the lack of input to strategic planning and decision-making in the presence of a dominant owner-manager are significant factors that could inhibit employee commitment.

Commitment is also one of the most important antecedents of OCB – actions resulting from an employee's willingness to 'go the extra mile' (Organ, 1990a). Given the challenges facing an account manager in the SFDPs supplying a major supermarket customer, prioritising the development of new products, in collaboration with a 'key customer', allocating promotional budgets exclusive to a 'key customer' and developing shopper marketing plans tailored to the needs of a 'key customer' are all regarded as OCBs; in which require the use of market

information and, ideally, market information that is of exclusive relevance to the ‘key customer’, defined here as CMI.

Strong relationships are associated with higher levels of commitment (Scheer et al., 2003) which, in the context of this study, may result in the committed individual (account manager) being prepared to ‘go the extra mile’ and invest the (extra) time and effort necessary to make effective use of CMI in their dealings with the supermarket buyer and their management of the supermarket account. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

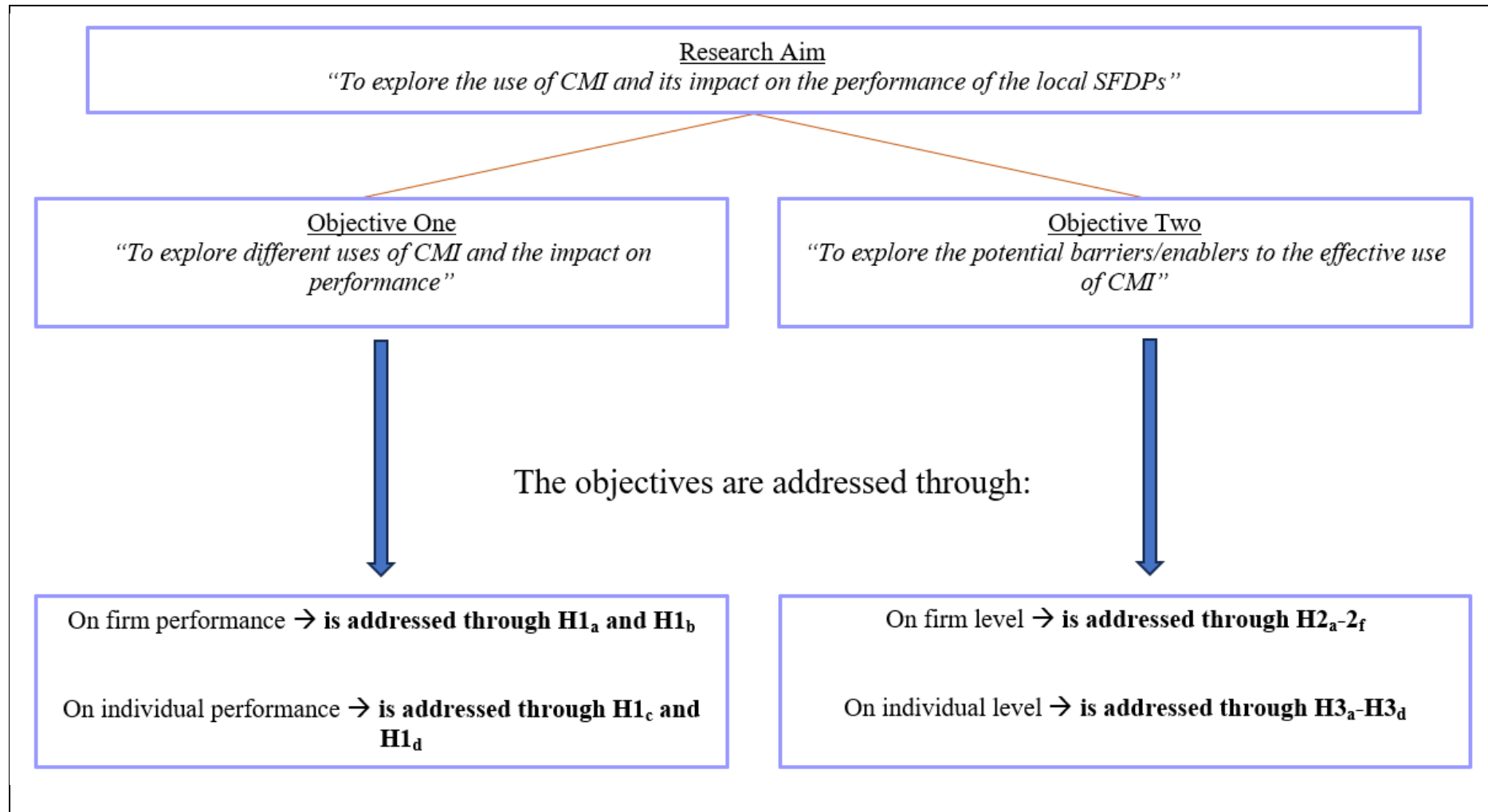
**H<sub>3a</sub>:** The higher the level of commitment of the account manager the more likely they are to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI

**H<sub>3b</sub>:** The lower the level of commitment of the account manager the more likely to make Symbolic Use of CMI

### **3.5. Chapter Conclusion**

This study seeks to explore the different uses of CMI, the potential barriers/enablers and its impact on performance. This chapter in particular has presented a review of the literature in relation to the use of information, Strategic Orientations and commitment. It has also sought to explain the relevance of key constructs in the specific context of SFDPs in supermarket supply chains, the boundary-spanning role of the account manager and their propensity to engage with CMI to inform their marketing planning and decision-making. The conceptual framework and associated hypotheses were developed as the response to the initial research questions. In conclusion, the research progress is summarised in Figure 3.3. Chapter 4 continues the discussion with the empirical part of the study, beginning with a description of the research methodology employed to test the hypotheses.

Figure 3.3 - The Summary of the Research Progress



## **CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHOD**

### **4.1. Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents a description and justification for the chosen research methodology. The chapter starts with the chosen research philosophy (Section 4.2), followed by the methods used for data collection (Section 4.3.2). The chapter then checks the sample for initial assessment, running some validity and reliability tests (Section 4.3.3) and presenting the selected variable measurements for each key construct (Section 4.5) before conducting the full analysis for all the hypotheses that will be presented in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

### **4.2. Research Philosophy**

Research paradigm is described as a researcher's 'worldview' (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006), in which the perspective or ways of thinking constitute an abstraction of the researcher's beliefs and principles that shape how it is translated. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), a research paradigm comprises four elements – ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. Ontology is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of beings. It looks into what makes up reality, the condition of their existence and the way they are related (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Ontology provides a philosophical background to decide what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate (Gray, 2014). There are three philosophical perspectives on realism – constructivism, pragmatism and objectivism. Constructivism is a philosophy that emphasises how ideas are constructed by human interactions and decisions. Constructivism believes that reality is either dependent on or else is constructed by the social actor. Pragmatism links theory and practices and asserts that concepts are only relevant if they support actions (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). Objectivism is a philosophy that is derived from the idea that human knowledge and values are objective and are determined by the nature of reality. An objectivist believes that reality is neither created nor dependent on one's thoughts (e.g. social actor), rather it influences them.

Epistemology explains how knowledge is created, how to transmit it to others and what can be presumed to be valid, acceptable and meaningful (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Burrell and Morgan, 2017). Three philosophical stances often link to epistemology – realism, interpretivism and positivism. Realism is "a sophisticated philosophical position that aims to

develop a middle way between empiricism, which defines science very narrowly in terms of empirically observable and measurable events, and the many forms of conventionalism or interpretivism which highlight the limitations on our knowledge of the world and tend thereby to diminish the reality of the world itself” (Mingers, 2006, p.203). Critical realists question the reliability of scientific knowledge and argue that theory should evolve in light of new research within an ever-changing (natural and social) environment and the application of new methods (Benton and Craib, 2023). Interpretivism analyses the meaning and interpretation of human behaviour (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Neuman, 2014). Interpretivism takes explicit account of the context in which certain behaviours are observed, in order to better understand causal variables and their inter-relationships. Positivism is referred to as the scientific observations of investigation and involves a scientific method of experimentation that is used to explore observations and answer questions. Positivist views that science discovers through empirical enquiries to analyse causal relationships and interpret measurable entities, as it relies on deductive logic, the formulation of hypotheses, calculation and the exploration to derive conclusion (Fadhel, 2002). In simpler words, the positivist view provides explanations and makes predictions based on measurable outcomes (Crotty, 1998).

It is difficult to assess ontological claims without also considering epistemological claims consideration (Crotty, 1998) as what constitutes as social phenomena has implications for how it is possible to gain knowledge from the phenomena. Studies following a critical realistic or interpretivist perspective are typically inductive, involving small samples and in-depth data analysis in pursuit of a detailed understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The analytical methods employed are primarily qualitative and rely heavily on the subjective interpretation of the researcher. In contrast, positivism is based on the idea that scientific knowledge is true and acceptable knowledge that is characterised by the testing of hypotheses or research questions, which are themselves derived from existing theories to predict and build probabilistic causal mechanisms (Benton and Craib, 2023). In contrast, positivism assumes the existence of absolute truths and relies primarily on the use of quantitative methods, resulting in the generation of data that may be analysed and interpreted with minimal subjective influence. This makes it possible for studies of social phenomena to be replicated and refined over time, permitting theory to evolve as a result of objective, data-driven, empirical evidence.

The case could be made to support a range of philosophical perspectives on the research question being considered in this study, such as the idiosyncratic nature of decision-making within SMEs and the limited empirical research that focuses on those factors that influence the use of (market) information amongst and its impact on performance within the specific context of SMEs. However, this study adopts a deductive approach based on a positivist perspective, the justification of which is two-fold. First, the theoretical components of the study (information use, Strategic Orientations and employee commitment) have received considerable attention in previous studies. Thus, the novelty of this study lies not in the study of the individual constructs but rather in the hypothesised relationships that exist between them. Second, it is believed that the specificity of the sampling frame – SFDPs supplying a specific supermarket retailer (Tesco), engaged in a specific research project (Who Buys My Food?) providing free access to a unique source of CMI (Tesco Clubcard data) – significantly reduces the heterogeneity amongst firms that comprise the sampling frame for the data collection.

### **4.3. Research Design and Methodology**

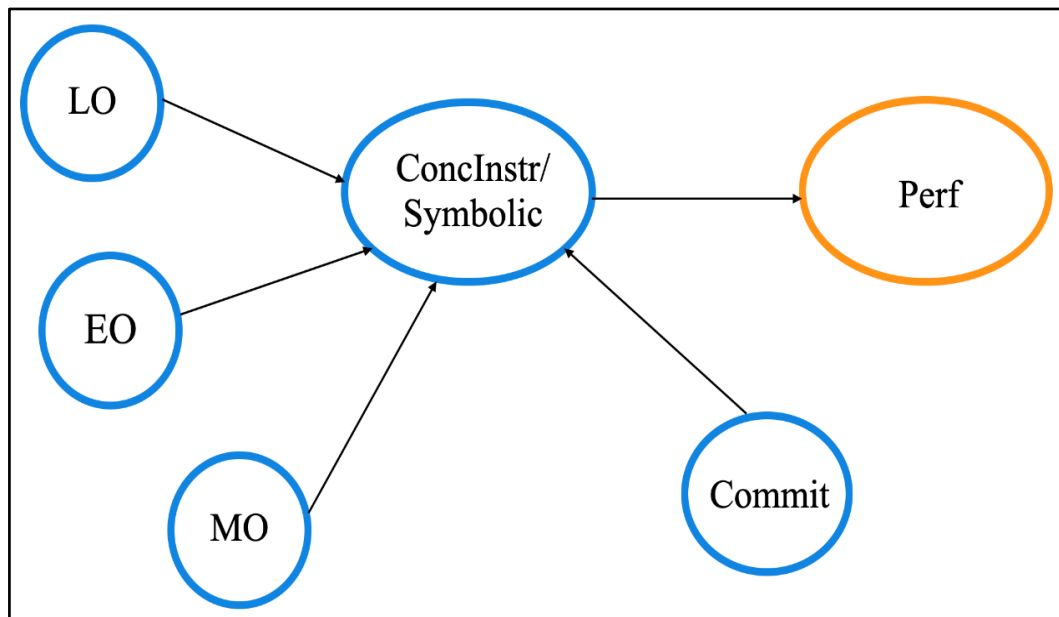
#### **4.3.1. Multivariate Data Analysis**

Multivariate analysis involves the relational analysis of more than two variables. There are a variety of statistical methods that can be used to assess the relationship among multiple variables, including multiple regression, cluster analysis and structural equation modelling. Multivariate analysis has more powerful analytical and predictive capabilities than univariate and bivariate analysis due to the ability to accommodate multiple variables and relationships that align with the complex ‘reality’ that multivariate analysis seeks to identify. With such complexity, multivariate analysis must be only applied when the appropriate conceptual foundation to support the selected technique has been developed (Hair et al., 2014a; McQuitty, 2018).

Multivariate analysis starts with formulating research questions and objectives before specifying them into variables. There are several considerations before choosing the appropriate multivariate analysis technique: 1) if the variables can be divided into dependent and independent variables; 2) the number of dependant variables in a single analysis; and 3) the measurements of both dependent and independent variables. Figure 4.1 presents the visualisation of all the variables involved in this study. There are four independent variables

– Market Orientation (MO), Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Learning Orientation (LO), and Commitment (Commit). There are two independent variables – firm performance (OrgPerf) and individual performance (IndivPerf). The variable ConcInstr/Symbolic is a mediating variable that links the independent and dependent variables, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 4.1 – Dependent and Independent Variables



The summary of different types of multivariate techniques is presented in Figure 4.2, the interdependence techniques are on the right side and the dependence techniques are on the left side.

Interdependence techniques are used when no single variable or group of variables is defined as being dependent or independent (Hair et al., 2014a). In these types of analyses, all the variables are analysed simultaneously to find the fundamental structure of the relationship arising among variables, cases/respondents and/or objects. Examples of more established and/or emerging interdependence techniques include factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, cluster analysis, multidimensional scaling and correspondence analysis. *Factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis* are statistical approaches that can be used to analyse inter-relationships arising among a large number of variables and seek to explain these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors). These techniques are



used to group the original variables into smaller sets of variates (factors) with minimal loss of information. *Cluster analysis* is an analytical technique that classifies a sample of entities (individuals or objects) into a small number of mutually exclusive groups based on the similarities among the entities. Cluster analysis usually consists of three steps – 1) measuring the similarity or association among the entities to determine how many groups exist in the sample; 2) a clustering process, in which the entities are separated into the groups (clusters) and 3) profiling of the variable to determine its composition. *Multidimensional scaling* (also known as perceptual mapping) is an analytical technique of visualising and transforming the level of similarity or preference of individual cases of data set/set of objects. The result of multidimensional scaling shows the relative positioning of all the objects; however, further analyses are required to assess the position of each object (Hair et al., 2014a). *Correspondence analysis* is an interdependence technique that facilitates the multidimensional scaling of objects on a set of non-metric attributes. Correspondence analysis presents a multivariate representation of interdependence for non-metric data that is not possible to analyse with other methods (Hair et al., 2014a).

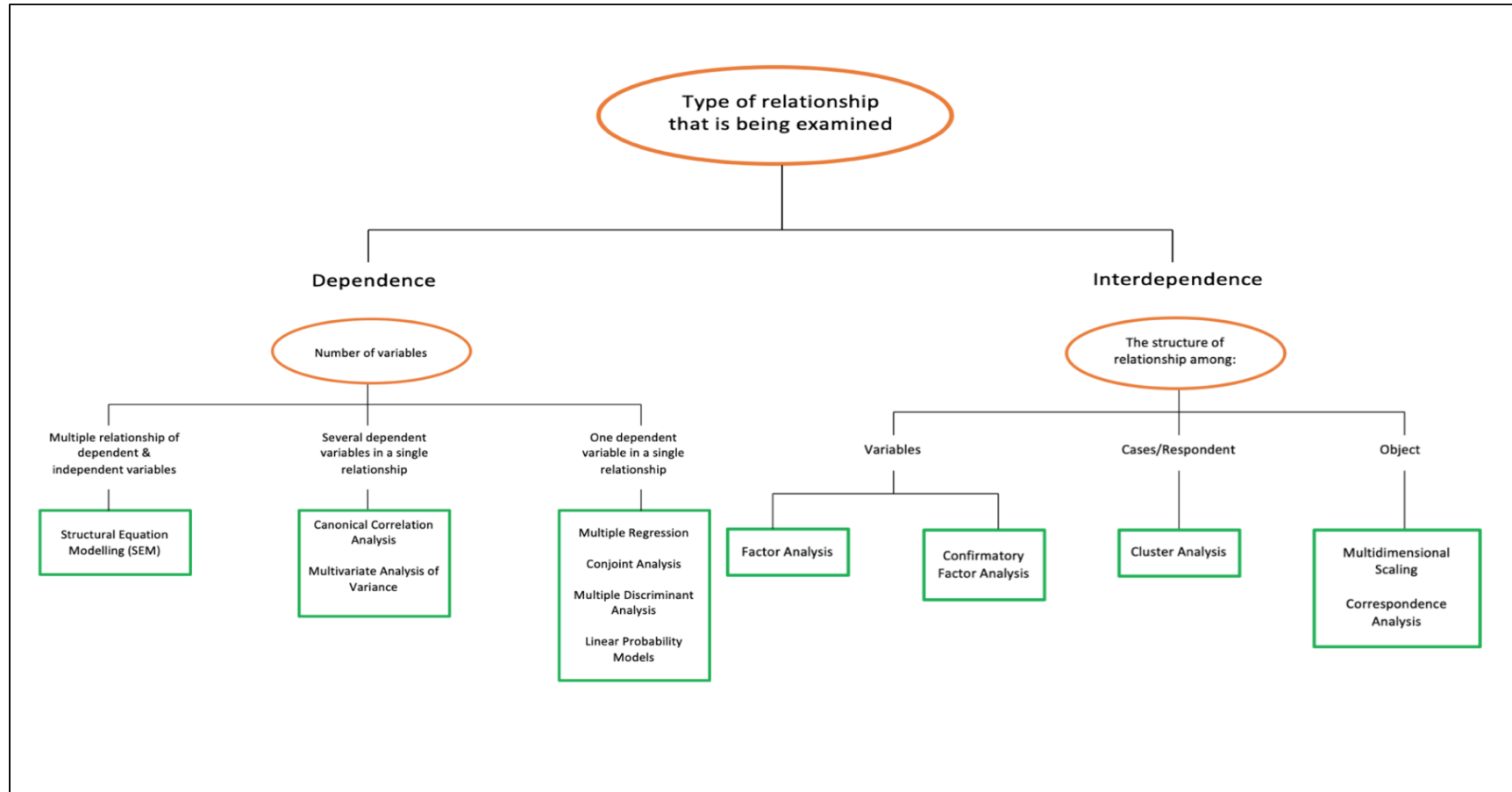
Dependence techniques can be categorised based on two characteristics – 1) based on the number of dependent variables and 2) the type of measurement scale employed by the variables. Based on the number of variables, dependence techniques can be classified into those relationships with a single dependent variable, several dependent variables or several dependent/independent relationships. Furthermore, the dependence technique is classified based on metric (quantitative/numerical) or non-metric (qualitative/categorical) dependent variables. When the analysis involves a single dependent variable that is metric, the appropriate technique to use is either multiple regression or conjoint analysis. Multiple regression is the appropriate technique to analyse a single metric-dependent variable that is presumed to be related to two or more metric-independent variables. *Multiple regression* is useful to predict the changes (e.g. the amount or the size) in the dependent variables. *Conjoint analysis* is an emerging dependence technique that is used in market research to understand how customers value different components and/or features of different products/services. The technique allows the market research to assess the importance of attributes and the level of those attributes which allow the firm to understand the value of each product/service (Stobierski, 2020; Hair et al., 2014a).

When the analysis involves a single dependent variable that is non-metric, the appropriate technique to use is either multiple discriminant analysis and/or linear probability models. *Multiple Discriminant Analysis (MDA)* is a multivariate technique used to analyse a single dependent variable that is dichotomous (e.g. male-female) or multichotomous (e.g. high-medium-low) and non-metric. MDA is used to understand group differences and to predict the likelihood that an entity (individual or object) will belong to a particular class or group based on several metric-independent variables (Hair et al., 2014a).

When the analysis involves several dependent variables, there are four appropriate techniques: *Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)* when the analysis involves independent variables that are non-metric. MANOVA is a statistical technique that is used to simultaneously explore the relationship between several categorical independence variables and two or more metric-dependent variables. MANOVA is useful when analysing an experimental situation (manipulation of several non-metric treatment variables) to test hypotheses on the variance in the group of responses on two or more metric-dependent variables. *Canonical correlation* arises when the analysis involves independent variables that are metric and/or when some of the dependent variables are non-metric and have been transformed into dummy variables (with 0-1 coding). Canonical correlation is often regarded as a natural extension of multiple regression analysis. Canonical correlation is set to develop a linear combination of each set of variables (both independent and dependent) in a manner that maximises the correlation between the two sets. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) when the set of dependent/independent variable relationships is postulated. SEM is a multivariate technique that allows separate relationships for each set of dependent and/or independent variables. SEM is characterised by two components, namely structural and measurement models. The structural model distinguishes the dependent and independent variables while the measurement model distinguishes the variables (indicators) for a single independent or dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014a).

As shown in Figure 4.2, all the multivariate techniques were considered to be a form of statistical analysis. However, the majority of the techniques were eliminated as the options as the conceptual framework model (as shown in Figure 4.3) comprises of multiple relationships involving both dependent and independent variables. Therefore, SEM is chosen as the most appropriate technique for this study. Further discussion on SEM, the complexity of the models, and the justification for the selection of PLS-SEM are presented next on Section 4.3.2.

Figure 4.2 – Multivariate Analysis Techniques



Source: Hair et al., 2014a

### **4.3.2. Statistical Analysis**

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a technique that allows separate relationships for each set of dependent variables and provides the appropriate and most efficient estimation for a series of multiple regression equations that are estimated simultaneously; it also enables a cause-effect relationship model testing with latent variables (Hair et al., 2014b). There are two approaches to estimating relationships in SEM – Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) which is primarily used to confirm or reject theories and Partial Least Square SEM (PLS-SEM) which is primarily used to develop theories in exploratory research (Hair et al., 2011b; Hair et al., 2012a; Hair et al., 2014b). PLS-SEM is a SEM method based on an iterative approach that maximises the explained variance of endogenous constructs (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982); it operates much like a multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2011b). PLS-SEM treats each indicator separately, which allows them to differ in the amount of influence on the construct estimate (Chin et al., 2003). In simple words, PLS-SEM is designed to maximise the variance explained and minimise the error by assessing measures (measurement model) and theory (structural model) simultaneously (Hair et al., 2014b).

Recently, PLS-SEM gained more attention in a variety of disciplines, including marketing (Hair et al., 2012b), strategic management (Hair et al., 2012a), operation management (Peng and Lai, 2012), marketing research (Grimm and Wagner, 2020) and management information system (Ringle et al., 2012). The increased usage of PLS-SEM can be credited to the method's ability to handle problematic modelling issues that often occur in social science (Hair et al., 2014a; Kock, 2015; Kock, 2018) as well as offering an alternative to the CB-SEM (Sarstedt et al., 2014; Duarte and Amaro, 2017). PLS-SEM is often chosen for testing and validating the explorative models as it offers more flexibility in terms of data requirements - such as dealing with unusual data characteristics – e.g. minimum sample size, non-normal data and the use of different types of scale measurement (Henseler, 2010; Hair et al., 2012b), estimating the complex model using only a few observations and relationship specification (Hair et al., 2014a) and can easily handle both reflective and formative measurement models simultaneously. Moreover, PLS-SEM also makes it plausible to work with a small sample size which might be a challenge for CB-SEM (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009; Hair et al., 2014b). However, PLS-SEM also has some limitations. Specifically, the technique cannot be applied when the structural model contains causal loops or circular relationships between the latent variables (Hair et al., 2014b).

Sample size can affect several aspects of SEM, such as parameter estimates, model fit and statistical power (Shah and Goldstein, 2006). Unlike CB-SEM which requires a large sample size to run the analysis, PLS-SEM makes it plausible to run the analysis with a much smaller sample size, even with a highly complex model. It often results in a higher level of statistical power and better coverage behaviour than CB-SEM (Reinartz et al., 2009; Henseler, 2010). In deciding the minimum sample size for PLS-SEM, it often refers to the often-cited ten times rule (Barclay et al., 1995; Chin et al., 2003) which requires that the sample size should be equal to, or larger than the following:

- Ten times the largest number of formative indicators used to measure one construct.  
or
- Ten times the largest number of inner model paths directed at a particular construct in the inner model.

Depending on the empirical context and objectives of the study, both CB-SEM and PLS-SEM approaches can be valuable. Neither is superior to the other, the selection of the proper method will depend on the objectives of the study (Rigdon, 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2014). Accordingly, PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 3) was chosen as the most suitable technique to analyse the data as it offers certain benefits that suit the current form and setting of this study, especially:

- a. PLS-SEM is regarded as the most appropriate technique for a study with multiple constructs as it explains the relationships arising between these variables through measurement and structural model (as suggested in Figure 4.2).
- b. PLS-SEM offers flexibility in dealing with small sample sizes, unlike CBS-SEM which requires large sample sizes (Hair et al., 2014b). Based on the ten times rule (Barclay et al., 1995; Chin et al., 2003), the minimum number of observations required for this study is 50 (5x10), which is obtained from the five independent variables – MO, EO, LO, Commit and ConcInstr/Symbolic.
- c. PLS-SEM is suitable to analyse a complex structural model that involves multiple constructs and indicators (Reinartz et al., 2009; Henseler, 2010; Duarte and Amaro, 2017). The path models display a higher-order model that consists of two layers – first-order constructs with five independent latent variables (MO, EO, LO, Commit, ConcInstr/Symbolic), one dependent variable (Perf) and second-order constructs (as shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

- d. PLS-SEM is more accommodating when dealing with non-normal data distribution (e.g. skewness and/or kurtosis) and scale measurement (e.g. the use of different types of scales) and the ability to deal with missing data by replacing them with a mean (Reinartz et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2012a, b; Hair et al., 2014b).

### **4.3.3. Method Validity**

The use of multiple variables and their combination in running multivariate techniques make it vulnerable to measurement error. Measurement error is the difference shown when the observed values do not represent the ‘true’ value (value without the measurement error) (Hair et al., 2014b). It can be caused by several sources of error in data entry, errors in running the measurement, and the inability of the respondent to provide accurate information (Hair et al., 2014a). Accordingly, it is widely accepted that constructs or variables used in multivariate techniques have some degree of measurement error. The impact of measurement error cannot directly be observed and eliminated as it is embedded in the observed variables, especially in social science, thus the goal is to reduce the measurement error as much as possible. The concern regarding its presence can be reduced by running validity and reliability tests that provide some assurance of the quality of the measured variables. Validity is the degree to which a measure accurately represents what it is supposed to and reliability is the degree to which the observed variable measures the ‘true’ value and is ‘error free’. High reliability is associated with lower measurement error; however, it is not guaranteed that all the constructs are measured accurately. That is why reliability is necessary but not sufficient without validity checks (Hair et al., 2014a). Further details on the validity and reliability test will be presented in Section 4.5.3.2.

Before running the analysis, it is recommended to examine cases of missing data/value and common method bias (CMB) to assure method validity and reliability. In social science research, especially for a study that is collecting data using a survey and/or employing PLS-SEM, missing data is a common problem – the main source of bias (Newman, 2014; Kock, 2018). It occurs when the respondent either inadvertently or intentionally fails to answer one or more question(s) (Koslowsky, 2002), which is more likely to occur for some sensitive or complex topic/question. When the amount of missing data exceeds 15%, it is suggested to remove the construct completely (Hair et al., 2014b).

The issue of missing data should be addressed at the earliest, ideally after collecting the data. In PLS-SEM, there are two suggested ways to deal with missing data. The first is through the mean value replacement – replacing the missing data of a certain variable with the mean of valid values of that variable. Mean replacement is easy to implement; however, it could decrease the variability of the samples. Mean replacement should be applied when the missing data is less than 5% (Hair et al., 2014b). The other alternative is to remove the entire variable with the missing data problem that is used in the model (case-wise deletion), however, the deletion method reduces the sample size available for analysis as well as the statistical power that is applied to the data (Enders, 2010). Furthermore, a more recent study by Kock (2018) offers a few more alternatives to deal with missing data besides the mean replacement and the deletion method, which are multiple regression imputation (MREGR), hierarchical regression imputation (HREGR) and stochastic multiple regression imputation (MSREG). This study suggests that the MREGR provides the least biased result, followed by the mean replacement (see Allison, 2003; Little and Rubin, 2019 for more details on modern alternative ways to deal with missing value). In the end, all methods come with strengths and weaknesses, so it depends on the context and conditions for each study and sample to choose the most appropriate method for handling the missing data problem.

Another frequent concern in survey-based research, especially self-reported ones, is CMB. CMB or common method variance (CMV) can be described as “variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs they measure represent” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p.1). CMB is a concern because it is one of the main sources of measurement error. CMB can bias the estimates of constructs validity and reliability (e.g. Baumgartner and Steenkamp, 2001; Williams et al., 2010) and bias the estimates of the relationship between two different constructs by inflating, deflating or having no effect on this relationship (e.g. Baumgartner and Steenkamp, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Siemsen et al., 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2012). CMB is a serious problem as it can: a) affect hypothesis tests and lead to type I and II errors; b) lead to incorrect perception about how much variance is accounted for in a criterion construct; and c) enhance or diminish the nomological or discriminant validity of a scale.

There are several potential causes of CMB (see Podsakoff et al., 2003; MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012 for a full summary of potential sources of CMB). Some prominent causes of CMB are consistency motif – when the respondent tries to maintain consistency in their

responses to the questions, acquiescence (yea-saying or nay-saying) – when the respondent tends to agree (or disagree) with the questions regardless of the content that potentially heightens the correlation among the items that are worded similarly even they are not conceptually related (Winkler et al., 1982) and transient mood state – when the respondent's recent mood influence the responses to the questions.

The effect of CMB can be controlled through procedural and statistical remedies (see MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2012 for more details on procedural and statistical remedies). Procedural remedies control the CMB by identifying and eliminating/minimising the predictor and criterion variable through the design of the study. Procedural remedies obtain the measures of predictor and criterion variables from different sources, for example, obtain the predictor measure from one person and the criterion measure from another or secondary data (e.g. annual reports, company records). This separation should reduce the respondent's consistency motifs and dispositional mood states (Feldman and Lynch, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2003). The other suggested remedy is to enter a temporal, proximal, or psychological separation between predictor and criterion. This separation could reduce the respondent's tendency to use the previous answers to fill in the gaps for forgotten information, infer missing details, or for subsequent questions (Feldman and Lynch, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Another suggested remedy is to reduce the ambiguity by keeping the question simple, specific and concise (Krosnick 1991; Tourangeau et al., 2000; Podsakoff et al., 2003; MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012).

In certain cases, when it is difficult to find suitable procedural remedies, statistical remedies, such as Harman's single factor test, partial correlations procedure, multiple method factors and the use of marker variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003) may offer some solutions. Harman's single factor test is one of the highly acknowledged and widely used techniques to address the CMB issue. This technique requires loading all the variables in the study into an exploratory factor analysis (e.g. Greene and Organ, 1973; Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Andersson and Bateman, 1997; Aulakh and Gencturk, 2000) and examines the unrotated factor solution to determine the number of factors that are necessary to account for the variance in the variables. The benchmark for Harman's single factor test is 50%; it suggests that the single factor should not account for 50% or more of the variance present. If the benchmark is exceeded, there is an indication of a problem (Babin, Griffin and Hair, 2016). For this study,



Harman's single factor test was performed. The results suggest that there is no indication for CMB and the data is ready to use (sums of squared % of variance = 25.94%).

#### **4.4. Research Design and Methodology**

Referring to the conceptual framework (see Figure 3.2) in Chapter 3, it is apparent that multiple constructs are involved in the study and therefore, it requires a multivariate analytical approach.

Data was collected over a period of three months, from the beginning of January to the end of March 2020 via an online survey. Three specific criteria were applied for selecting the sample: 1) all the firms are classified as small businesses; 2) they have an annual turnover of less than £6.5 million, of which less than £1 million is with Tesco; and 3) they have been exposed to CMI as the part of Who Buys My Food? research project. The length of the firms' involvement in the project varies, from less than twelve months to more than ten years but on average, these firms have been participating for four years. All participating firms have access, free of charge, to CMI derived from the analysis of loyalty card data via a web-based application.

An email invitation (with a direct link to the online questionnaire) was sent to all registered users ( $\pm 700$  firms) of the web portal, but especially for the 156 firms that are currently active in engaging with the Who Buys My Food? research project. An online survey method was chosen as it is relatively inexpensive, enabled access to a large number of respondents in a relatively short period and allowed the respondents to provide answers in their own time, in privacy. The average time taken to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes. Two reminders were sent during the three months period in which the survey was administered. As an incentive, all the respondents were offered a free-market insight report for a product category of their choice, on completion of the questionnaire. Their participation in the survey required the participating firms to provide contact details of at least one person (account manager) who was responsible for the firms' relationship with Tesco. Prior to the data collection, the survey has passed the ethical approval by the ethic committee at the University of East Anglia (see Appendix E). All the participants were provided with information packs containing an information sheet about the research and a consent form according to the ethical requirements of the university. In some cases, multiple users were registered to use the web

application. Their informed consent was obtained; accordingly, their anonymity was guaranteed. A total of 79 questionnaires were completed, which gave a response rate of 51%. Of the 95 questionnaires completed, sixteen were discarded as they were unfinished (17%).

The study run some initial assessments (data purification). The initial assessment dealt with both missing data and source bias issues. After the initial assessment, it was found that missing data was not a major issue and, instead of discarding either the questions or the responses, a mean replacement procedure was adopted to amend the problem. The sample showed a different variety of characteristics (see Table 4.1), however, the issue of source bias cannot be avoided completely, but it was minimised. Some of the potential bias might come from 1) the specific criteria that were set for the study that could limit participation (even by conducting random sampling); 2) the use of only one instrument (survey) to collect the data and the influence of single source of respondent from an individual, group and/or organisation (the owner and/or account manager for each SFDP); 3) the influence of the source from where the data was collected (e.g. the respondent own belief, judgment and perspective can influence their response) and 4) personal association between the organiser and the respondent which could encourage the respondent to give responses that would suit the organiser's perspective. Consequently, the study should consider some remedies for source bias, including random sampling, having a bigger and more varied sample frame and adding supplementary data alongside the survey data from administrative and/or archival data (Favero and Bullock, 2015; Kim and Daniel, 2020). After all the data purification processes, the study comprised with 79 SFDPs that were involved in the Who Buys My Food? research project at the University of East Anglia, all of whom supply the UK's largest supermarket (Tesco) with local food and drink products.

#### **4.5. Variable Measurements**

The survey in the form of a questionnaire included 61 questions in total (see Appendix A). The survey included closed and open-ended questions, consisting of questions about themselves and the firm. Aside from the questions that referred to the respondent's profile and the firm's profile, the questionnaire covered four key constructs from the conceptual framework (see Figure 3.2) – the use of CMI, Strategic Orientation, commitment and performance. All the questions were adopted based on the existing scales from previous empirical studies with some minor modifications to the wording of some of the measurement

scales to fit the context of the study and the characteristics of the sampling frame. These minor modifications were designed primarily to maximise the response rate (by adjusting the language) and minimise respondent fatigue (by adjusting the number of items for each construct). According to Hair et al., (2014b; 2019; 2021) to ensure the validity and reliability, all of the scales have been validated (Table 4.1), have repeated applications (Sections 4.5.1 – 4.5.8) and has no single item.

All the constructs were measured using a Likert scale – a bipolar scaling method that collects ratings for items to a common subject (Surveyking, 2017); it measures either positive or negative responses to a statement (Allen and Seaman, 2007). The Likert scale is suitable for measuring attitudes, opinions and/or importance. Moreover, the Likert scale is considered an ordinal scale, although, it can be modified to accommodate a metric result (interval data) or can be adopted into a behavioural intention scale to assess the likeliness of a certain type of behaviour arising. A Likert scale often uses a five-point or a seven-point scale to assess the strength of agreement or disagreement about a statement (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020). This odd number of options gives the respondent the option to choose the ‘neutral’ middle number.

In this study, all the constructs were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ to 7 = ‘strongly agree’ with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer, except for performance (both *IndivPerf* and *OrgPerf*) that used a self-reported measure. The questionnaire was subject to pre-testing by subject experts associated with the research project and a small sub-set of suppliers and refinement before the launch of the survey.

The following section describes the measurement scales used for each of the constructs, starting with MO, EO, LO, Commit, ConcInstr, Symbolic, *IndivPerf* and *OrgPerf*.

#### **4.5.1. Market Orientation (MO)**

The measure for MO was adapted from Narver and Slater (1990). This scale is still widely featured in many studies, even the recent ones (e.g. Didonet et al., 2016; Didonet et al., 2020; Martín-Santana, Cabrera-Suárez and Déniz-Déniz, 2020) as it measures all three components of MO. The measure has ten items in total that consist of three components – customer

orientation (four items), competitor orientation (three items) and interfunctional coordination (three items). Customer orientation was designed to identify customers' needs and develop products and services to satisfy those needs. Competitor orientation was designed to capture the firms' desire and ability to identify, analyse and respond to the competitors' actions by continuously monitoring their activities and seeking opportunities. Interfunctional coordination was designed to reflect the level of interaction and communication within the firms. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for MO is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)**

The measure for EO was adopted from Covin and Wales (2012). This scale was featured in some recent studies (e.g. Deutscher et al., 2016; Bauweraerts et al., 2021; Ferrari, Mucci and Beck, 2022; Upadhyay et al., 2022). This scale was built based on the development of two different studies (Miller (1983) and Covin and Slevin (1989)) of which Covin and Wales (2012) assessed, compared and updated hence it provided a measure that covers three dimensions of EO that was deemed to suit for this study. The measure has nine items in total that consist of three components – innovativeness (three items), proactiveness (three items) and risk-taking (three items). Innovativeness was set to capture the firms' likeliness to be involved in the creative process and experiment with new ideas. Proactiveness was designed to demonstrate the firms' entrepreneurial willingness to dominate the competition through more aggressive moves. Risk-taking reflected the firms' willingness to commit to a certain number of resources to exploit and engage in new opportunities in which uncertain outcome is highly expected. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for EO is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.3. Learning Orientation (LO)**

The measure for LO was adopted from Nasution et al., (2011). The scale was developed and refined from Sinkula et al., (1997). Similar with Nasution et al., (2011), recent studies also adopt and adjust the scale to fit with their study context (e.g. Deutscher et al., 2016; Obeso et al., 2020; Shaher and Ali, 2020) The measure has fifteen items in total that consist of three components – commitment to learning (five items), shared vision (six items) and open-

mindfulness (four items). Commitment to learning was designed to demonstrate the fundamental values that influence the firms in promoting a learning culture. The shared vision was measured to understand the firms' expectations on how they measure outcomes and what theories to use in operation. Open-mindedness was related to firms' values that may be necessary for unlearning efforts to transpire. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree' with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for LO is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.4. Commitment (Commit)**

Commit was measured using a scale that is adopted from Colquitt (2001) and adapted to suit with the study context as Colquitt (2001) also developed different scales to measure organisational justice. The scale provided two different perspectives of commitment (from individual and group) that was in line with the study. The measure has four items in total that consist of two components – group commitment (two items) and helping behaviour (two items). Group commitment reflected the extent to which the member accepted the shared goals and identified with the team. Helping behaviour showed the proactive behaviour that emphasises the acts of consideration that typically involves extra-role behaviour in social exchange theory. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a particular reference to a local supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for Commit is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.5. Conceptual/Instrumental Use (ConcInstr)**

The measure for ConcInstr is adopted from Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999). Some studies have explored the Conceptual and Instrumental Use of information, although those that are specifically related to the study's setting are limited (e.g. William, 2003; Didonet and Fearn, 2023). The measure has twelve items in total that were designed to capture the way firms use market information. Conceptual and Instrumental Use were treated as single variable following Diamantopoulos and Souchon's (1999) study result. They run some tests and assessments to ensure validity and reliability before deciding that Conceptual and Instrumental Use should be treated as one variable – ConcInstr (see Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999) for more details). All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a particular reference to a local

supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for ConcInstr is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.6. Symbolic Use (Symbolic)**

The measure for Symbolic is also adopted from Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999). Similar to Conceptual and Instrumental Use, the studies on Symbolic Use of information that are specifically related to the study's setting are also rather limited (e.g. Vyas and Souchon 2003; Didonet and Fearne, 2023). The measure has eleven items in total that were designed to capture the way firms use market information. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer. The descriptive statistic for Symbolic is presented in Table 4.1.

#### **4.5.7. Individual Performance (IndivPerf)**

IndivPerf was measured using a self-reported measure in four different areas – sales, account management, marketing and use of market intelligence (one item each) which required the respondent to reflect on their individual performance for the past three years. Literature suggests that firm performance can be measured in multiple ways (Arshad et al., 2014), therefore, both objective (from the loyalty card data) and subjective measures through self-appraised by the owner and/or account manager were adopted for this study. The self-reported measure will be adopted for IndivPerf, whilst the subjective measure will be adopted for OrgPerf (Section 4.5.8.). These measures were found to be consistent with earlier studies that adopted and supported self-examination measures (e.g. Wolff and Pett, 2000; Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004; Igwe et al., 2019; Ibrahim and Abu, 2020) on small business performance. The scale has four items in total. All the items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'a great deal' with a particular reference to the focal supermarket (Tesco) as the key customer.

#### **4.5.8. Organisation Performance (OrgPerf)**

OrgPerf was measured objectively from the loyalty card data to which the researchers involved in the Who Buys My Food? research project has access to. Sales growth was identified as the most important performance measure for both the suppliers and the supermarket buyer.

Accordingly, the average sales growth over the preceding three years was calculated for each of the participating firms and this was used as the measure of firm performance.

Table 4.1 – Variable Measurements

Variable	Item	Description	Reference
Market Orientation (MO)	MO_01	Our business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction	Narver and Slater (1990)
	MO_02	We monitor and evaluate the attitude of staff towards delivering customer	
	MO_03	We measure customer satisfaction frequently	
	MO_04	We are aware of customer needs and wants	
	MO_05	We respond rapidly respond to competitive actions	
	MO_06	Our business pays close attention to industry and market trends	
	MO_07	We target opportunities for competitive advantage	
	MO_08	All of our business functions are integrated in serving the needs of our	
	MO_09	Market information is shared with all the functions of the business	
	MO_10	There is a culture of mutual cooperation between the different functions in our business	
Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	EO_01	In general, the senior manager on my company favour a strong emphasis on R&D, technological and innovation	Covin and Wales (2012)
	EO_02	During the past 5 years, my company has launched very many new products	
	EO_03	Changes in products have usually been quite dramatic	
	EO_04	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically initiate actions to which competitors then respond	
	EO_05	In comparison with its competitors, my company very often the first business to introduce new products, processes or technology	
	EO_06	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically adopts a very competitive ‘undo-the-competitors’ posture	
	EO_07	In general, the senior managers in my company have a strong preference for high-risk projects (with chances of very high returns)	



	EO_08	In general, the senior managers in my company believe that, owing to the nature of the environment bold, wide-ranging acts are necessary to achieve the firm's objectives	
	EO_09	When confronted with decision-making situations involving uncertainty, my company typically adopts a bold, aggressive posture to maximise the probability of exploiting potential opportunities	
Learning Orientation (LO)	LO_01	My company's ability to learn is considered as a key competitive advantage	Nasution et al., (2011)
	LO_02	My company values learning as a key to improvement	
	LO_03	My company believes that employee learning is an investment, not an expense	
	LO_04	Learning in my company is seen as a key to guarantee survival	
	LO_05	The collective wisdom in our company is that once we stop learning, we endanger our future	
	LO_06	In my company, all employees are aware of what we want to achieve	
	LO_07	In my company, all employees are committed to the organisation goals	
	LO_08	There is a total agreement on our company vision across all functions	
	LO_09	Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the company	
	LO_10	The senior management believes in sharing its vision for the company with all employees	
	LO_11	The senior management has a well-defined vision for the organisation	
	LO_12	We reflect critically on the shared assumptions we have about the way we do business	
	LO_13	My company places a high value on open-mindedness	
	LO_14	Employees are encouraged to contribute original ideas that may increase the company's success	
	LO_15	Original ideas are highly value in my company	
	Commit_01	My company has a strong sense of loyalty to Tesco	Colquitt (2001)

Commitment (Commit)	Commit_02	My company is willing to 'go the extra mile' for Tesco	
	Commit_03	I have a strong sense of loyalty to our Tesco buyer	
	Commit_04	I am willing to 'go the extra mile' for our Tesco buyer	
Conceptual/ Instrumental Use (ConcInstr)	ConcInstr_01	Market information is actively sought out in response to specific marketing	Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999)
	ConcInstr_02	Market information is often used specifically to make a particular marketing	
	ConcInstr_03	Marketing decisions based on market information are more accurate than wholly intuitive ones	
	ConcInstr_04	Our confidence in making marketing decisions is increased as a result of using market information	
	ConcInstr_05	Without market information our marketing decisions would be very different	
	ConcInstr_06	Market information is translated into significant practical action	
	ConcInstr_07	Marketing information is preserved so that it can be used by individuals other than the person who collected it	
	ConcInstr_08	The majority of market information we have is not used	
	ConcInstr_09	Market information often has little decision relevance	
	ConcInstr_10	Our uncertainty associated with marketing activity is greatly reduced by the use of marketing information	
	ConcInstr_11	The same piece of marketing information is often used for more than one marketing decision	
	ConcInstr_12	No marketing decisions are made without the use of market information	
Symbolic Use (Symbolic)	Symbolic_01	Market information is often collected to justify a marketing decision that has already been made	Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999)

Symbolic_02	Market information is often used to reinforce expectations	
Symbolic_03	Instinct/intuition is often not considered in the making of decisions for which it was initially requested	
Symbolic_04	Market information is often not considered in the making of decisions for which it was initially requested	
Symbolic_05	Market information is sometimes manipulated in order to justify marketing decisions that are really made on the basis instinct	
Symbolic_06	Senior managers often distort market information when passing it on	
Symbolic_07	Market information is sometimes taken into account to justify the cost of having acquired it	
Symbolic_08	Market information is often used to back up hunches, prior to the implementation of a particular marketing decision	
Symbolic_09	Marketing information frequently supports marketing decisions made on other grounds	
Symbolic_10	If market information is difficult to obtain, guesses are made instead	
Symbolic_11	Market information frequently supports decisions made on other grounds	

## **4.6. Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has presented all the research methods that constitute a part of the study and the measurement model from the PLS-SEM analysis. The study focused on those SFDPs that are actively involved in the Who Buys My Food? research project at the University of East Anglia, which supplied the UK's largest supermarket (Tesco) with local food and drink products. After the data purification, the study left with 79 samples with various characteristics that will be used to examine the hypotheses. All the chosen procedures in the data collection process were presented and justified throughout the chapter. The next chapter continues the discussion by presenting the data analysis for these samples.

## **CHAPTER 5 – DATA ANALYSIS**

### **5.1. Chapter Overview**

Chapter 4 has presented and justified the chosen methodology, the sample selection and some initial tests to check the validity and reliability of the samples. This chapter is divided into two main parts – the first part of the chapter delivers the analysis and discussion of the initial findings, from the survey data (Section 5.4.1). The second half of the chapter presents the analysis and discussion for the additional analyses (Section 5.4.2) – consisting of correlation and semi-structured interviews. These additional analyses were designed and later added to the study for triangulation purposes, but mainly to explore the potential influence of family ownership on the decision-making process, which was not possible to be formally tested in the survey, given the sample characteristics. The analysis and discussion for these additional analyses are presented in Section 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.2.2 for correlation and semi-structured interviews respectively.

### **5.2. Path Modelling**

Path model is the visual form of hypotheses based on the relationship between variables from theory and logic that are examined in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2011a; 2011b). Specifying and building a path model is one of the first steps in PLS-SEM data analysis. Figure 5.1 presents a path model illustration and its elements.

Figure 5.1 – Path Model Illustration

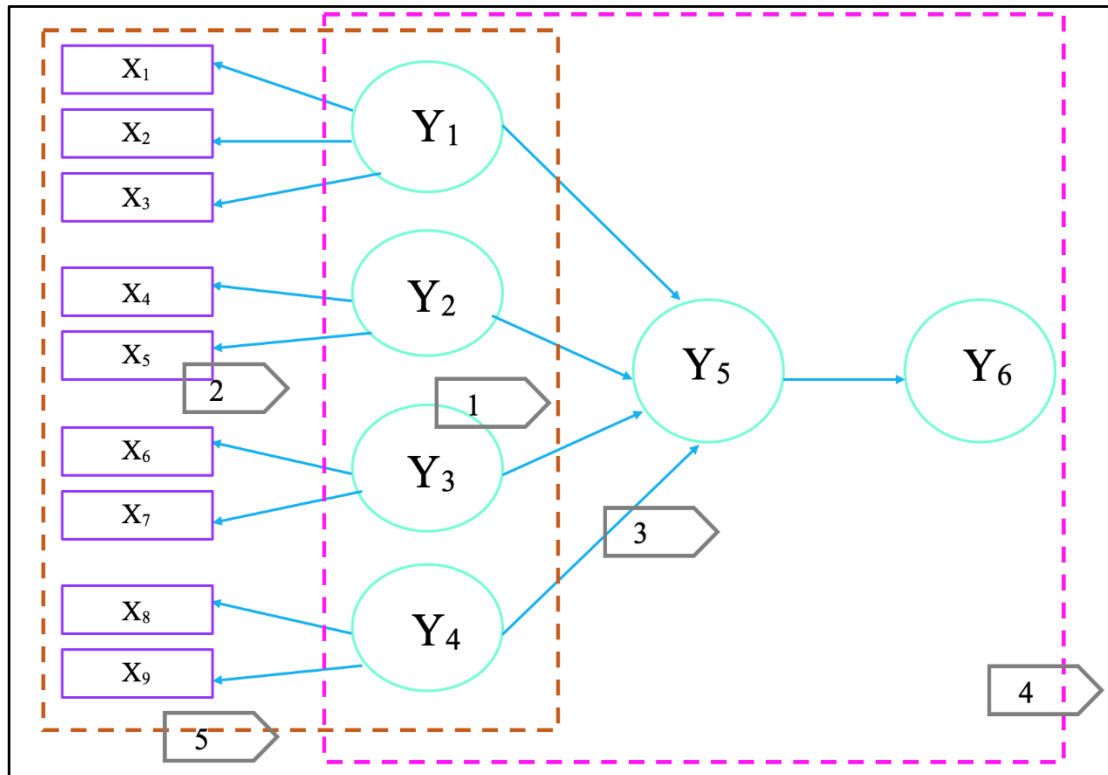


Figure description:

- Number 1: Construct → displayed as a circle or oval (cyan), named as Y<sub>1</sub> to Y<sub>6</sub>
- Number 2: Indicator → displayed as a rectangle (purple), named X<sub>1</sub> to X<sub>9</sub>
- Number 3: Relationships between construct → displayed as arrows (light blue)
- Number 4: Measurement model → displayed as a rectangle with a dash (bright pink)
- Number 5: Structural model → displayed as a rectangle with dash (dark brown)

A PLS-SEM path model consists of different elements. Construct (or latent variable) represents the variable that is not directly measured. The indicator represents the proxy variable that is directly measured. The relationship between these constructs and the assigned indicators is displayed with a single-headed arrow. Furthermore, there are two measurement model elements – measurement/outer model and structural/inner model. The measurement model displays the relationship between the constructs and the indicators and how it is measured. There are two approaches on how to do it – formative (when the arrows point from the indicators to the constructs) and reflective measurement (when the arrows point from the constructs to the indicators). The structural model displays the relationship between the

constructs and how they relate to each other. The structural model sequence is usually from left to right, on the left side are independent (predictor) variables and on the right side are dependent (outcome) variables.

Figures 5.2 and Figure 5.3 present the path models for this study. From those figures, it can be observed that both models are reflective (as all the indicators point to the constructs) which are built upon five independent constructs – Market Orientation (MO), Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Learning Orientation (LO), Commitment (Commit) and Information Use – Conceptual/Instrumental Use (ConcInstr) and Symbolic Use (Symbolic) and one dependent variable - Performance (Perf). Both models will be used to measure performance (as it puts in general on the figure but will be treated differently in the specific part of the analysis). In addition, from both models, it can be observed that some of the constructs assessed can be categorised as first and second-order constructs.

Figure 5.2 – PLS Model Illustration for Conceptual/Instrumental Use on Performance

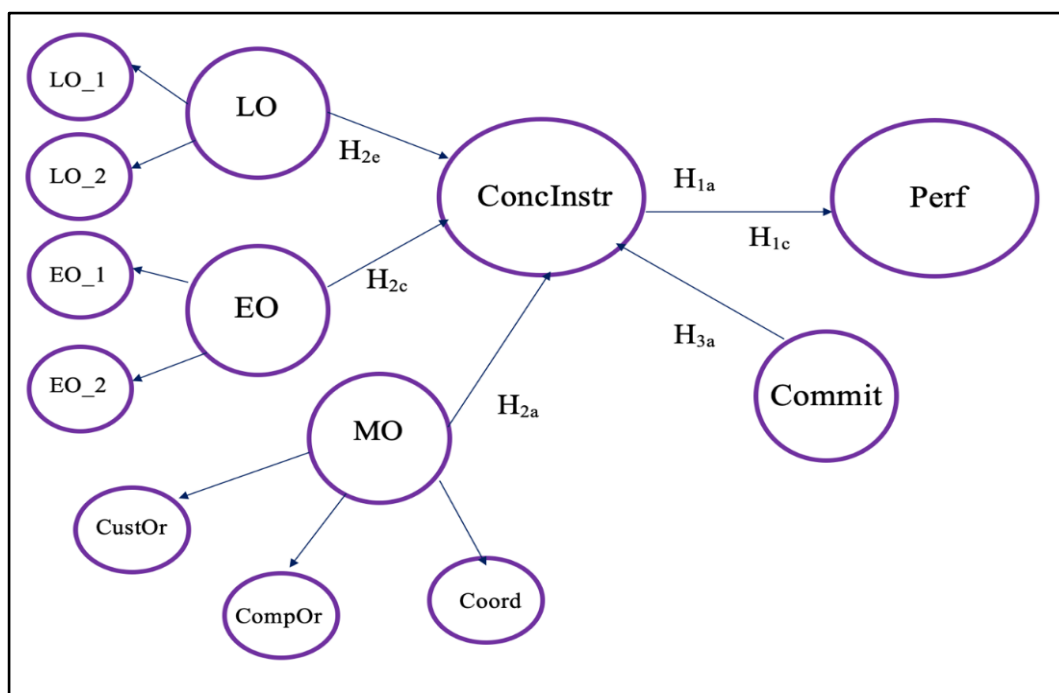


Figure 5.2 presents the path model for ConcInstr on performance. The model displays higher-order model that consists of two layers – first-order constructs with five independent latent variables (MO, EO, LO, Commit and ConcInstr), one dependent variable (Perf) and second-order constructs (LO\_1, LO\_2, EO\_1, EO\_2, CompOr, Coord and CustOr). The model also

shows all the hypotheses involving Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI on performance ( $H_{1a}$  and  $H_{1c}$ ), different Strategic Orientations ( $H_{2a}$ ,  $H_{2b}$ ,  $H_{2c}$ ) and the level of commitment ( $H_{3a}$ ).

Figure 5.3 – PLS Model Illustration for Symbolic Use on Performance

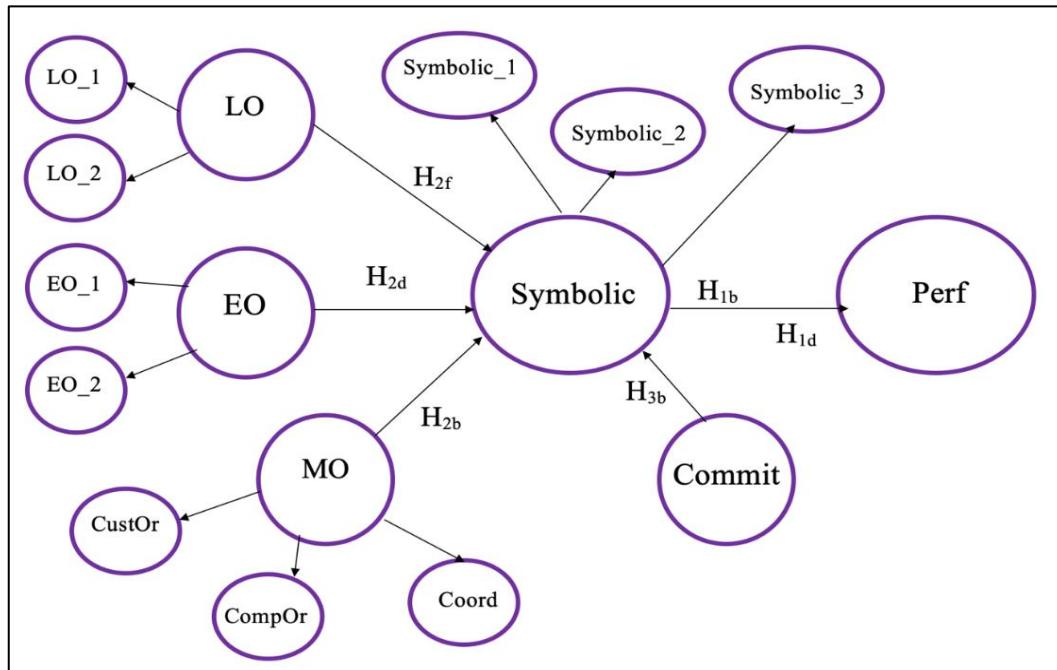


Figure 5.3 presents the path model for Symbolic on performance. The model displays a higher-order model that consists of two layers – first-order constructs with five independent latent variables (MO, EO, LO, Commit and Symbolic), one dependent variable (Perf) and second-order constructs (LO\_1, LO\_2, EO\_1, EO\_2, CompOr, Coord, CustOr, Symbolic\_1, Symbolic\_2 and Symbolic\_3). The model also shows all the hypotheses involving symbolic use of CMI on performance ( $H_{1b}$  and  $H_{1d}$ ), different Strategic Orientations ( $H_{2b}$ ,  $H_{2d}$ ,  $H_{2f}$ ) and the level of commitment ( $H_{3b}$ ).

The discussion and analysis of the elements and path model measurements continue in the next sections.

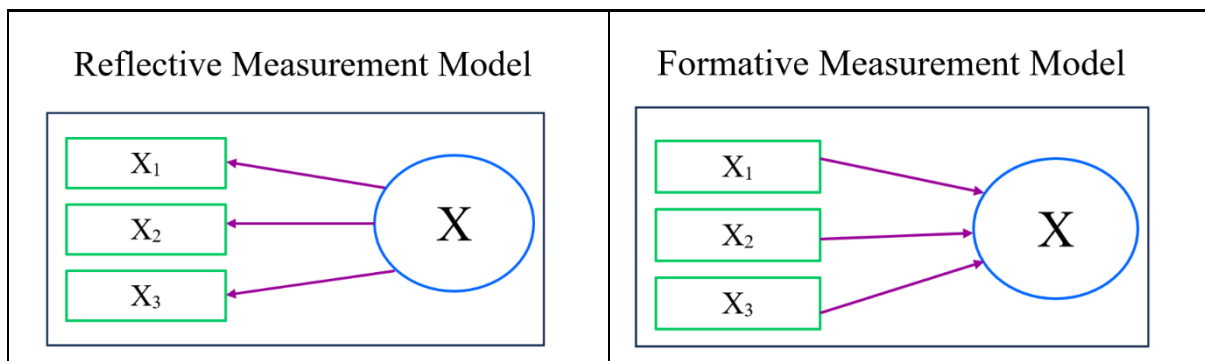
### 5.3. Measurement Model

PLS-SEM evaluates the result through two elements, measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2014b). The measurement model or outer models show the measurement of the relationship between constructs and their corresponding indicators. The measurement model



focuses on assessing and explaining the validity and reliability of the constructs that are measured. The measurement model has two approaches – the reflective and formative measurement model (Figure 5.4). Reflective measure has arrows (relationships) pointing from the construct to the indicators in the measurement model, whereas formative measure has arrows (relationships) pointing from the indicators to the construct.

Figure 5.4 – Reflective and Formative Measurement Models



*The reflective measurement model* (also referred to as Mode A measurement in PLS-SEM) is based on the measurement model specification in which it is assumed that the indicators are caused by the underlying construct. The reflective measure indicates that all indicator items are caused by the same construct, indicators associated with a particular construct should be highly correlated with each other (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2014b). The reflective measurement model evaluates the internal consistency reliability and validity by assessing the internal consistency (composite reliability), indicator reliability, convergent validity (average variance extracted) and discriminant validity.

*The formative measurement model* (also referred to as Mode B measurement in PLS-SEM) is based on the measurement model specification in which it is assumed that the construct is caused by the assigned indicators. In formative measure, the indicators are not interchangeable and do not necessarily need to be correlated, unlike the reflective indicators. Therefore, each indicator for a formative construct captures a specific aspect of the construct's domain. It also implies that omitting an indicator potentially alters the nature of the constructs (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2014b). The statistical evaluation criteria for the reflective measure cannot be directly transferred and be used as a formative measure *per se*. Instead, if a formative measurement model is chosen,

convergent validity, collinearity among indicators, significance and relevance of outer weights are used to evaluate the validity and reliability.

There are no exact rules to decide in using a reflective or formative measurement. Instead, it depends on several criteria (see Table 5.1) but mainly it depends on the conceptualisation of the constructs and the objective of the study (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001; Petter et al., 2007; Bagozzi, 2011). The selection of measurement models and indicators must be based on theoretical/conceptual reasoning before data collection (Hair et al., 2014b) as it emphasises the theory/concept that is explained, measured and tested (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012).

Table 5.1 – The Guidelines for Choosing Measurement Model Mode

Criterion	Decision	Reference
Causal priority between the indicator and the construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ From the construct to the indicators: use reflective</li> <li>➤ From the indicators to the construct: use formative</li> </ul>	Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001)
If the construct explains the trait of indicators or rather a combination of the indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If it explains the trait: use reflective</li> <li>➤ If it explains the combination: use formative</li> </ul>	Fornell and Bookstein (1982)
Whether the indicator represents the consequences or causes of the construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If it represents consequences: use reflective</li> <li>➤ If it represents causes: use formative</li> </ul>	Rossiter (2002)
If it is necessarily true that if the assessment of the trait changes, all items will change similarly (assuming they are equally coded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes: use reflective</li> <li>➤ If no: use formative</li> </ul>	Chin (1998)
If the items are mutually interchangeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes: use reflective</li> <li>➤ If no: use formative</li> </ul>	Jarvis, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2003)

First and foremost, this study is only using reflective measure because it borrows the constructs from other researchers who have developed the constructs that are reflective in nature (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2014b). Moreover, based on the guideline in Table 5.1 and as it is reflected in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, these characteristics below put more emphasis on why this study only employs reflective measure:

- a. the arrows pointing from the construct to the indicators.
- b. the construct explains the trait of the indicators.
- c. the indicators represent consequences (of the construct).
- d. the indicators are correlated to each other.
- e. the indicators are mutually interchangeable.

### **5.3.1. Initial Assessment Procedure for the Samples (Data Purification)**

Table 5.2 exhibits all the variables and items that are being used for the analysis, namely MO, EO, LO, Commitment (Commit), Information Use - Conceptual/Instrumental (ConcInstr) and Symbolic (Symbolic), and Performance (Perf) – Individual (IndivPerf) and Firm (OrgPerf). There are five independent variables (MO (items = 10), EO (items = 9), LO (items = 15), Commit (items = 4), ConcInstr (items = 7), Symbolic (items = 11)) and two dependent variables (IndivPerf (items = 4), OrgPerf (items = 1)) which makes it 61 items in total. Each item for all the variables is assigned a special code (e.g. MO\_01, Symbolic\_05) to help distinguish them. The last column displays the description for each item.

Table 5.2 – Variables and Items

Variable	Item	Description
MO	MO_01	Our business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction
	MO_02	We monitor and evaluate the attitude of staff towards delivering customer
	MO_03	We measure customer satisfaction frequently
	MO_04	We are aware of customer needs and wants
	MO_05	We respond rapidly respond to competitive actions
	MO_06	Our business pays close attention to industry and market trends
	MO_07	We target opportunities for competitive advantage
	MO_08	All of our business functions are integrated in serving the needs of our
	MO_09	Market information is shared with all the functions of the business
	MO_10	There is a culture of mutual cooperation between the different functions in our business
EO	EO_01	In general, the senior manager on my company favour a strong emphasis on R&D, technological and innovation
	EO_02	During the past 5 years, my company has launched very many new products
	EO_03	Changes in products have usually been quite dramatic
	EO_04	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically initiate actions to which competitors then respond
	EO_05	In comparison with its competitors, my company very often the first business to introduce new products, processes or technology

	EO_06	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically adopts a very competitive ‘undo-the-competitors’ posture
	EO_07	In general, the senior managers in my company have a strong preference for high-risk projects (with chances of very high returns)
	EO_08	In general, the senior managers in my company believe that, owing to the nature of the environment bold, wide-ranging acts are necessary to achieve the firm’s objectives
	EO_09	When confronted with decision-making situations involving uncertainty, my company typically adopts a bold, aggressive posture to maximise the probability of exploiting potential opportunities
LO	LO_01	My company’s ability to learn is considered as a key competitive advantage
	LO_02	My company values learning as a key to improvement
	LO_03	My company believes that employee learning is an investment, not an expense
	LO_04	Learning in my company is seen as a key to guarantee survival
	LO_05	The collective wisdom in our company is that once we stop learning, we endanger our future
	LO_06	In my company, all employees are aware of what we want to achieve
	LO_07	In my company, all employees are committed to the organisation goals
	LO_08	There is a total agreement on our company vision across all functions
	LO_09	Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the company
	LO_10	The senior management believes in sharing its vision for the company with all employees
	LO_11	The senior management has a well-defined vision for the organisation
	LO_12	We reflect critically on the shared assumptions we have about the way we do business
	LO_13	My company places a high value on open-mindedness

	LO_14	Employees are encouraged to contribute original ideas that may increase the company's success
	LO_15	Original ideas are highly value in my company
Commit	Commit_01	My company has a strong sense of loyalty to Tesco
	Commit_02	My company is willing to 'go the extra mile' for Tesco
	Commit_03	I have a strong sense of loyalty to our Tesco buyer
	Commit_04	I am willing to 'go the extra mile' for our Tesco buyer
ConcInstr	ConcInstr_01	Market information is actively sought out in response to specific marketing
	ConcInstr_02	Market information is often used specifically to make a particular marketing
	ConcInstr_03	Marketing decisions based on market information are more accurate than wholly intuitive ones
	ConcInstr_04	Our confidence in making marketing decisions is increased as a result of using market information
	ConcInstr_05	Without market information our marketing decisions would be very different
	ConcInstr_06	Market information is translated into significant practical action
	ConcInstr_07	Marketing information is preserved so that it can be used by individuals other than the person who collected it
	<i>ConcInstr_08<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>The majority of market information we have is not used</i>
	<i>ConcInstr_09<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Market information often has little decision relevance</i>
	<i>ConcInstr_10<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Our uncertainty associated with marketing activity is greatly reduced by the use of marketing information</i>
	<i>ConcInstr_11<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>The same piece of market information is often used for more than one marketing decision</i>
	<i>ConcInstr_12<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>No marketing decisions are made without the use of market information</i>

Symbolic	Symbolic_01	Market information is often collected to justify a marketing decision that has already been made
	Symbolic_02	Market information is often used to reinforce expectations
	Symbolic_03	Instinct/intuition is often not considered in the making of decisions for which it was initially requested
	Symbolic_04	Market information is often not considered in the making of decisions for which it was initially requested
	Symbolic_05	Market information is sometimes manipulated in order to justify marketing decisions that are really made on the basis instinct
	Symbolic_06	Senior managers often distort market information when passing it on
	Symbolic_07	Market information is sometimes taken into account to justify the cost of having acquired it
	Symbolic_08	Market information is often used to back up hunches, prior to the implementation of a particular marketing decision
	Symbolic_09	Marketing information frequently supports marketing decisions made on other grounds
	Symbolic_10	If market information is difficult to obtain, guesses are made instead
	Symbolic_11	Market information frequently supports decisions made on other grounds
IndivPerf	IndivPerf_01	In the last three years, my performance has improved in sales area
	IndivPerf_02	In the last three years, my performance has improved in account management area
	IndivPerf_03	In the last three years, my performance has improved in marketing area
	IndivPerf_04	In the last three years, my performance has improved in use of market intelligence area
OrgPerf <sup>a</sup>	-	-

Notes:

- MO = Market Orientation; EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation; LO = Learning Orientation; Commit = Commitment; ConcInstr = Conceptual/Instrumental Use; Symbolic = Symbolic Use; IndivPef = Individual Performance; OrgPerf = Organisational Performance
- <sup>a</sup> is an output construct (reported from an objective measured), so there is no description available.
- All the items (in italics) that are marked with <sup>d</sup> were deleted in the further analysis (see Section 5.3.3.1 for details).



Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed as the initial check for data reduction through the exploration of response patterns. EFA helps to determine if a single factor is adequate to explain variance and covariance among numbers of items or whether certain items need to be removed as they do not represent the proposed factor (Brown, 2014; Kline, 2014; 2015; Hair et al., 2020). As a result, EFA determines a set of constructs and their potential indicator that will be used in the analysis.

Some items were found to be potentially redundant as they exhibited high correlations with other items from the same construct and/or some items appeared to be loaded into a wrong construct. High correlations were not expected between these items, which suggested that they might end up not significantly contributing to the construct at all and could be problematic from both methodological and interpretational points of view. Hence, to avoid potential multicollinearity amongst these indicators, redundant items were eliminated (Hair et al., 2014b).

After running the necessary tests (described above), some adjustments were made:

- First, the variable Symbolic\_3 no longer appears in the model because only one item (Symbolic\_10) loads into it, so the variable Symbolic\_3 is removed.
- Second, item LO\_08c initially loaded into variable LO\_1 appears to load high into another construct.

Table 5.3 provides all the details for the variables and items after the adjustments. Figures 5.5 to 5.8 provide the PLS path modelling for Models 1 to 4 respectively.

Table 5.3 – Variables and Items after Adjustments

Variable	Item	Description
MO		
<i>CompOr</i>	MO_05	We respond rapidly respond to competitive actions
	MO_06	Our business pays close attention to industry and market trends
	MO_07	We target opportunities for competitive advantage
<i>Coord</i>	MO_08	All of our business functions are integrated in serving the needs of our
	MO_09	Market information is shared with all the functions of the business
	MO_10	There is a culture of mutual cooperation between the different functions in our business
<i>CustOr</i>	MO_01	Our business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction
	MO_03	We monitor and evaluate the attitude of staff towards delivering customer
	MO_04	We are aware of customer needs and wants
EO		
<i>EO_1</i>	LO_08 <sup>c</sup>	There is a total agreement on our company vision across all functions
	EO_01	In general, the senior manager on my company favour a strong emphasis on R&D, technological and innovation
	EO_04	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically initiate actions to which competitors then respond

	EO_05	In comparison with its competitors, my company very often the first business to introduce new products, processes or technology
	EO_07	In general, the senior managers in my company have a strong preference for high-risk projects (with chances of very high returns)
	EO_08	In general, the senior managers in my company believe that, owing to the nature of the environment bold, wide-ranging acts are necessary to achieve the firm's objectives
	EO_09	When confronted with decision-making situations involving uncertainty, my company typically adopts a bold, aggressive posture to maximise the probability of exploiting potential opportunities
<i>EO_2</i>	EO_02	During the past 5 years, my company has launched very many new products
	EO_03	Changes in products have usually been quite dramatic
	EO_06	In comparison with its competitors, my company typically adopts a very competitive 'undo-the-competitors' posture
<b>LO</b>		
<i>LO_1</i>	LO_01	My company's ability to learn is considered as a key competitive advantage
	LO_02	My company values learning as a key to improvement
	LO_03	My company believes that employee learning is an investment, not an expense
	LO_05	The collective wisdom in our company is that once we stop learning, we endanger our future
	LO_11	The senior management has a well-defined vision for the organisation

	LO_12	We reflect critically on the shared assumptions we have about the way we do business
<i>LO_2</i>	LO_13	My company places a high value on open-mindedness
	LO_14	Employees are encouraged to contribute original ideas that may increase the company's success
	LO_09	Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the company
Commit		
	Commit_01	My company has a strong sense of loyalty to Tesco
	Commit_02	My company is willing to 'go the extra mile' for Tesco
	Commit_03	I have a strong sense of loyalty to our Tesco buyer
ConcInstr		
	ConcInstr_01	Market information is actively sought out in response to specific marketing
	ConcInstr_02	Market information is often used specifically to make a particular marketing
	ConcInstr_03	Marketing decisions based on market information are more accurate than wholly intuitive ones
	ConcInstr_04	Our confidence in making marketing decisions is increased as a result of using market information
	ConcInstr_05	Without market information our marketing decisions would be very different
	ConcInstr_06	Market information is translated into significant practical action
	ConcInstr_07	Marketing information is preserved so that it can be used by individuals other than the person who collected it
Symbolic		

<i>Symbolic_1</i>	Symbolic_08	Market information is often used to back up hunches, prior to the implementation of a particular marketing decision
	Symbolic_09	Marketing information frequently supports marketing decisions made on other grounds
	Symbolic_11	Market information frequently supports decisions made on other grounds
<i>Symbolic_2</i>	Symbolic_05	Market information is sometimes manipulated in order to justify marketing decisions that are really made on the basis instinct
	Symbolic_06	Senior managers often distort market information when passing it on
	Symbolic_07	Market information is sometimes taken into account to justify the cost of having acquired it
IndivPerf	IndivPerf_01	In the last three years, my performance has improved in sales area
	IndivPerf_02	In the last three years, my performance has improved in account management area
	IndivPerf_03	In the last three years, my performance has improved in marketing area
	IndivPerf_04	In the last three years, my performance has improved in use of market intelligence area
OrgPerf <sup>a</sup>	-	-

Notes:

- MO = Market Orientation; CompOr = Competitor Orientation; Coord = Interfunctional Coordination; CustOr = Customer Orientation; EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation; LO = Learning Orientation; Commit = Commitment; ConcInstr = Conceptual/Instrumental Use; Symbolic = Symbolic Use; IndivPef = Individual Performance; OrgPerf = Organisational Performance
- <sup>a</sup> is an output construct (reported from an objective measured), so there is no description.
- <sup>c</sup> is a special remark for one item from one construct that loads into another construct (item LO\_8 into variable EO\_1) which apply for all the PLS Models.

After the adjustments, there is no change regarding the number of variables, however, there are some changes in the number of items that load into these variables (see notes in Table 5.3). As a result, out of the initial 61 items, the adjusted version has 48 items in total; thirteen items were excluded.

### PLS Path Modelling

Figures 5.5 to 5.8 present the PLS path modelling for all the PLS model results, Model 1 to Model 4 respectively after the adjustments.

Figure 5.5 – Model 1\_ConcInstr\_IndivPerf

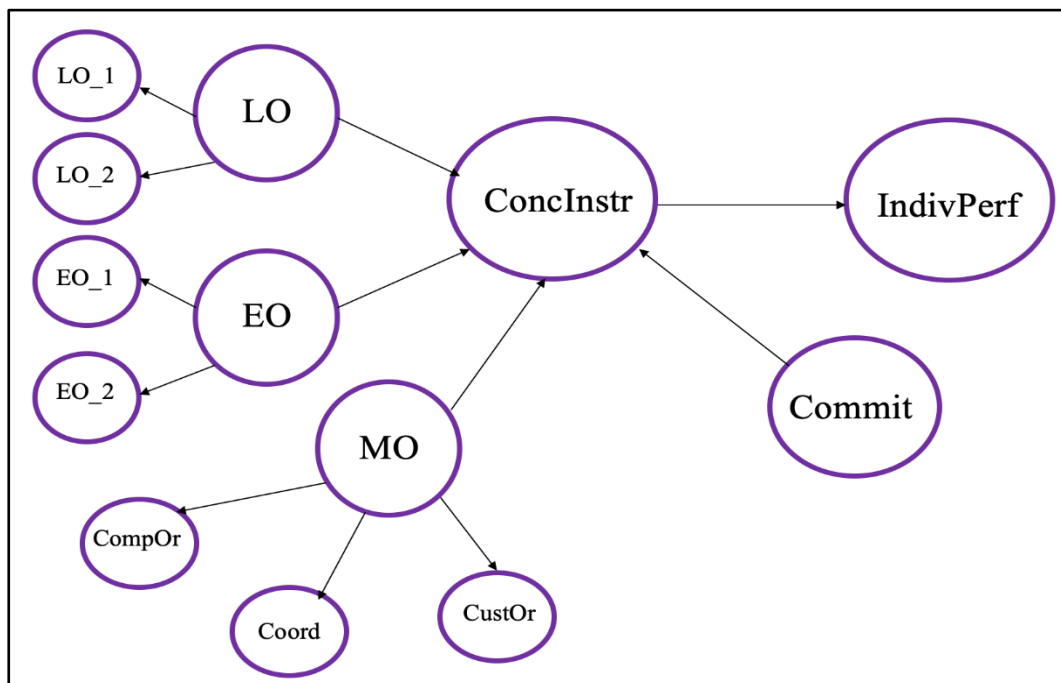


Figure 5.6 – Model 2\_ConcInstr\_OrgPerf

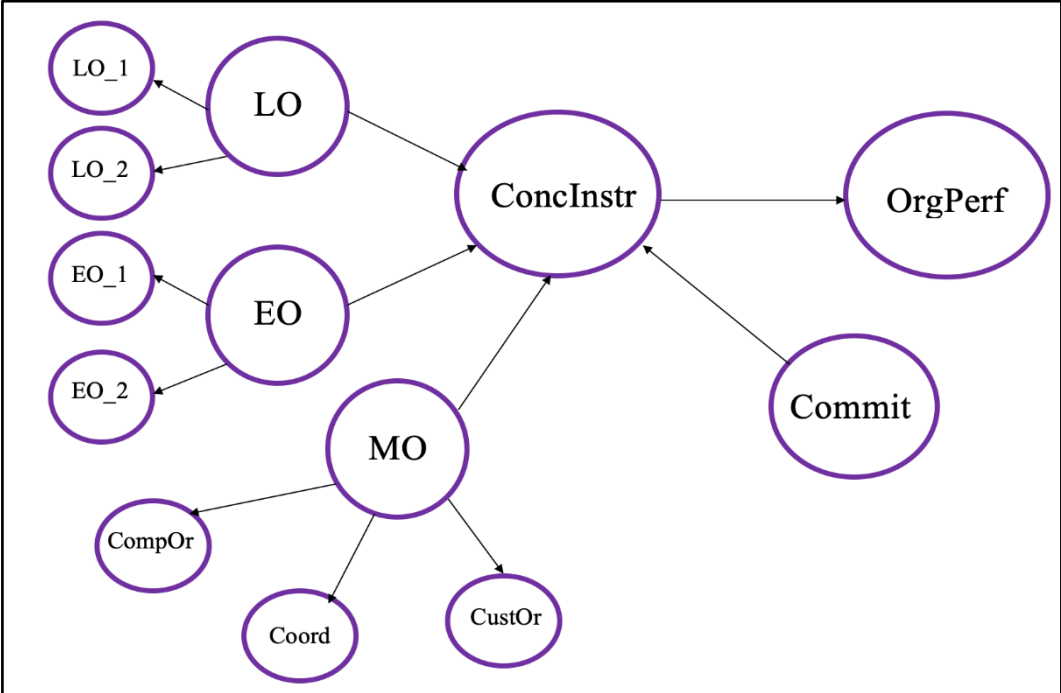


Figure 5.7 – Model 3\_Symbolic\_IndivPerf

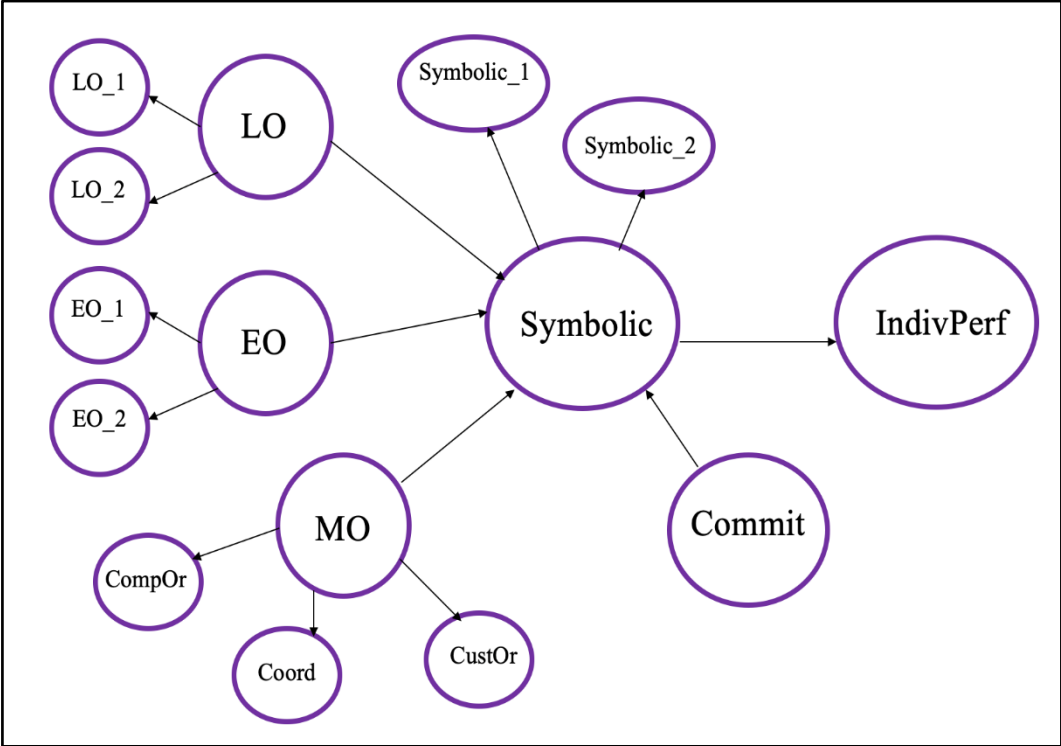
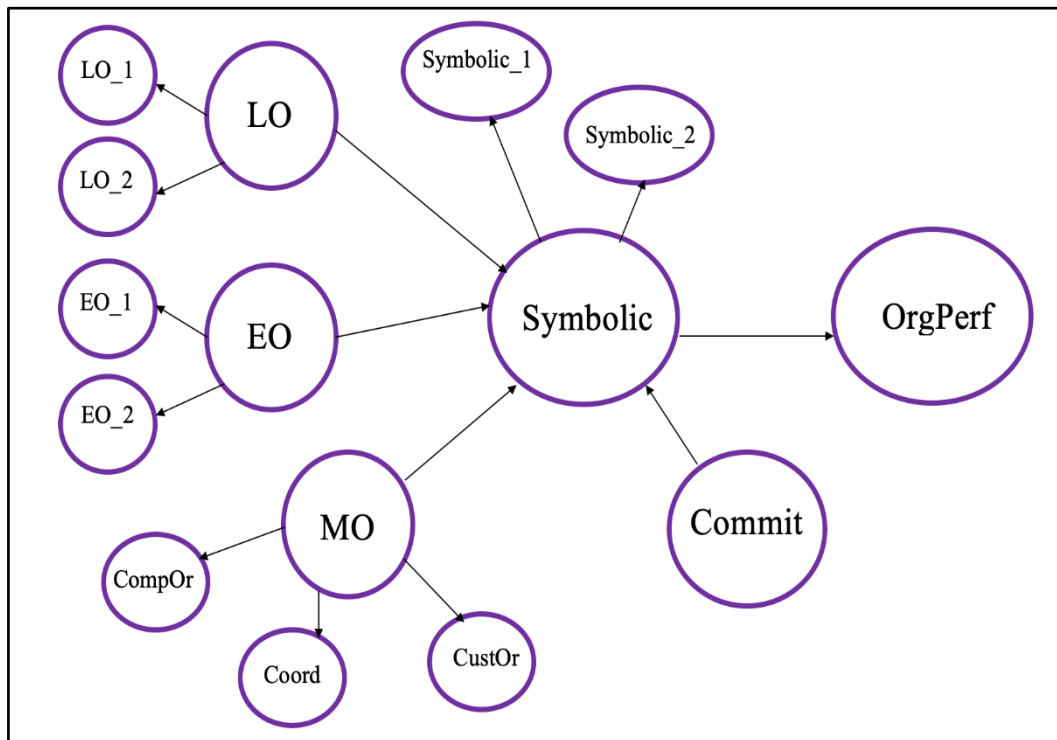


Figure 5.8 – Model 4\_Symbolic\_OrgPerf



### 5.3.2. Descriptive Result and Sample Characteristics

From the individual level, the demographic findings indicated that out of the 79 samples, the majority were male (58.23%) and the rest were female (41.77%), in their late forties (22.78%). The majority of the sample had a title as director (43.04%), followed by manager (34.18%) and other titles – e.g. analyst, representative (22.78%), with an average of 4.5 years of experience in their specific roles. At the organisation level, the majority of the sample (72.15%) was accounted as family firms. The sample spread out all around the UK, from Northern Island, Scotland, Northern, East Midlands, Eastern, Greater London, South East, South West and Wales; with the majority located in Northern Island (29.11%). On average, the firm has been trading for 17.5 years, has 25 employees, 3 of which are involved in sales and marketing and had £2 million in turnovers, which came from 25 retail customers, of which 6 of them were considered as ‘key customers’. The descriptive statistics and sample characteristics are presented in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.9.



Table 5.4 – Descriptive Statistics and Sample Characteristics

Individual Level						
		Quantity	%	Min	Max	Average
Gender	Male	46	58.23%			
	Female	33	41.77%			
Age (year old)				18	>65	39
Experience (year)				1	>5	4
Title/position	Manager	27	34.18%			
	Director	34	43.04%			
	Others (analyst, representative)	18	22.78%			
Organisation Level						
		Quantity	%	Min	Max	Average
Total turnover (£ million)				<0.5	>6.5	2
Years of trading (year)				<5	>20	17.5
Total number of employees (person)				<10	>40	25
Sizes of sales and marketing team (person)				1	>4	3
Total current retail customers				1	>10	6
Total current retail 'key customers'						
Family firms		57	72.15%			
Non-family firms		22	27.85%			
Location	Northern Island (NI)	23	29.11%			

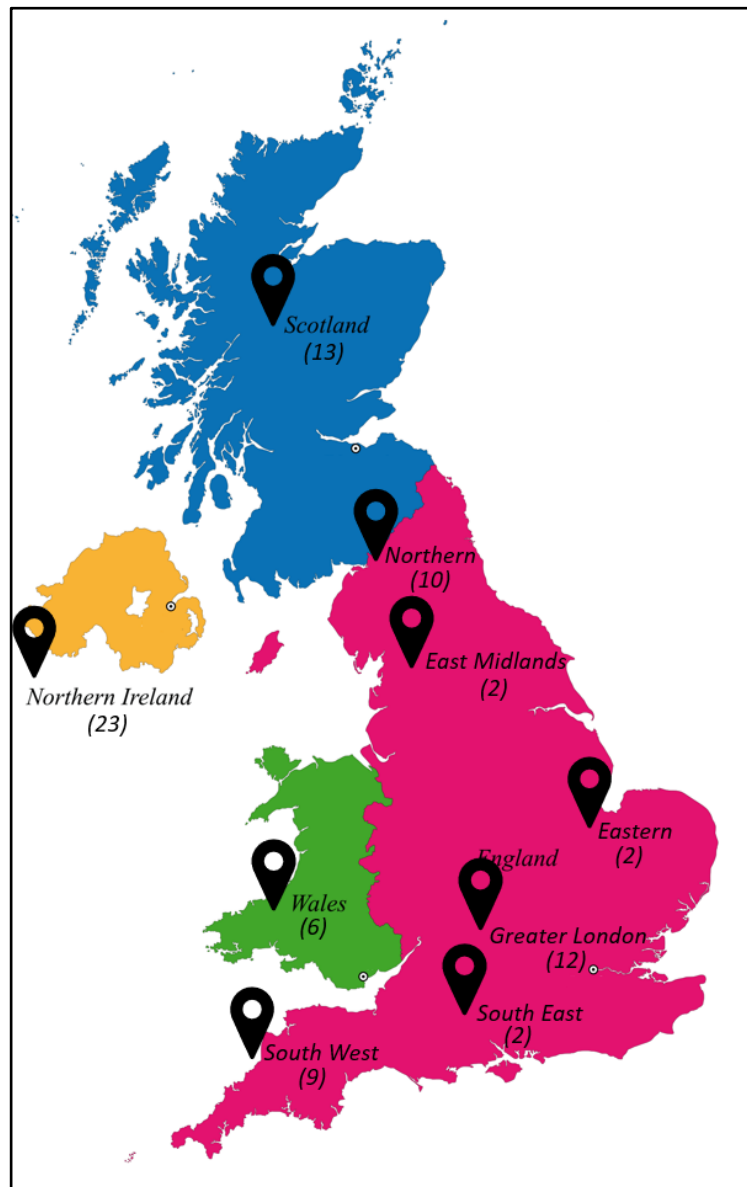
Scotland	13	16.46%
Northern	10	12.66%
East Midlands	2	2.53%
Eastern	2	2.53%
Greater London	12	15.19%
South East	2	2.53%
South West	9	11.39%
Wales	6	7.59%

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Note: Min = minimum; Max = maximum

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Figure 5.9 – The Geographical Location of the Sample



Note: the image was retrieved online (<https://www.pngall.com/united-kingdom-uk-map-png/>). Further modification was added by the writer.

Table 5.5 presents the statistics and psychometrics properties for all the variables and items that are displayed through min, max, mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness (Skew), kurtosis (Kurt), loadings (Ldng), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), CR and average variance extracted (AVE) respectively for each column. The first four columns (min, max, mean and SD) present the results for the descriptive statistics. All items show a great variety of responses that range from the lowest/first option to the highest/last option in the questionnaire (range from 1-7) which are shown in the min and max columns. The third and fourth columns exhibit the

average and SD respectively. All items display a great distribution as the SD stays within the accepted range ( $\pm 2SD$ ).

Table 5.5 – Statistics and Psychometrics Properties

Variable	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurt	Ldng	CA	CR	AVE
MO									0.879	0.904	0.517
<i>CompOr</i>	MO_05	1	7	4.734	1.474	-0.980	0.207	0.855			
	MO_06	2	7	5.291	1.232	-0.833	0.553	0.867			
	MO_07	1	7	5.203	1.255	-0.914	1.190	0.785			
<i>Coord</i>	MO_08	2	7	5.025	1.219	-0.398	0.046	0.500			
	MO_09	1	7	4.684	1.557	-0.582	-0.256	0.834			
	MO_10	1	7	5.165	1.400	-0.876	0.639	0.736			
<i>CustOr</i>	MO_01	2	7	5.620	1.264	-1.470	1.871	0.769			
	MO_03	1	7	4.253	1.436	-0.246	-0.491	0.783			
	MO_04	1	7	5.089	1.134	-0.935	1.605	0.655			
EO											
<i>EO_1</i>	LO_08 <sup>c</sup>	1	7	4.734	1.465	-0.627	0.025	0.785			
	EO_01	1	7	4.152	1.634	-0.215	-0.444	0.486			
	EO_04	1	7	3.886	1.552	0.131	-0.517	0.640			
	EO_05	1	7	3.861	1.677	-0.009	-0.849	0.764			
	EO_07	1	7	3.620	1.371	-0.167	-0.611	0.850			
	EO_08										
	EO_09	1	7	3.886	1.467	-0.098	-0.607	0.800			

<i>EO_2</i>	EO_02	2	7	4.848	1.460	-0.211	-0.610	0.883			
	EO_03	1	7	4.139	1.439	-0.065	-0.184	0.838			
	EO_06	1	7	4.038	1.295	0.001	-0.356	0.597			
LO									0.939	0.948	0.645
<i>LO_1</i>	LO_01	1	7	4.899	1.411	-0.604	0.149	0.706			
	LO_02	1	7	5.152	1.331	-0.654	0.429	0.832			
	LO_03	1	7	5.114	1.485	-0.707	-0.009	0.779			
	LO_05	1	7	5.000	1.577	-0.905	0.458	0.740			
	LO_11	1	7	5.139	1.448	-0.770	0.074	0.723			
	LO_12	1	7	4.911	1.332	-0.836	0.714	0.537			
<i>LO_2</i>	LO_09	1	7	4.304	1.530	-0.179	-0.506	0.789			
	LO_13	1	7	5.228	1.510	-1.224	1.189	0.790			
	LO_14	1	7	5.608	1.344	-1.358	1.671	0.769			
Commit									0.907	0.939	0.836
	Commit_01	2	7	6.114	1.098	-1.902	4.272	0.916			
	Commit_02	4	7	6.291	0.879	-1.308	1.201	0.889			
	Commit_03	1	7	5.797	1.514	-1.580	2.080	0.927			
ConcInstr									0.918	0.935	0.674
	ConcInstr_01	1	7	4.962	1.497	-0.803	0.215	0.802			
	ConcInstr_02	1	7	4.797	1.445	-0.657	-0.092	0.797			

	ConcInstr_03	1	7	5.139	1.217	-0.624	0.869	0.723			
	ConcInstr_04	1	7	5.177	1.238	-0.763	0.758	0.878			
	ConcInstr_05	1	7	4.684	1.428	-0.368	-0.072	0.783			
	ConcInstr_06	1	7	4.785	1.278	-0.681	0.946	0.859			
	ConcInstr_07	1	7	4.911	1.425	-0.658	0.522	0.653			
Symbolic									0.799	0.857	0.500
<i>Symbolic_1</i>	Symbolic_08	1	7	3.924	1.421	-0.385	-0.122	0.698			
	Symbolic_09	1	7	4.190	1.311	-0.186	0.140	0.789			
	Symbolic_11	1	7	4.291	1.211	-0.006	0.306	0.744			
<i>Symbolic_2</i>	Symbolic_05	1	7	3.228	1.601	0.251	-0.922	0.825			
	Symbolic_06	1	7	2.620	1.522	0.851	0.095	0.855			
	Symbolic_07	1	7	3.152	1.626	0.373	-0.627	0.640			
Performance											
IndivPerf	IndivPerf_01	0	7	4.873	2.065	-0.991	0.087	0.847			
	IndivPerf_02	0	7	5.038	1.971	-1.096	0.408	0.871			
	IndivPerf_03	0	7	4.506	1.934	-0.774	0.064	0.808			
	IndivPerf_04	0	7	4.772	1.867	-0.702	0.020	0.739			
OrgPerf <sup>a</sup>	-										

Notes:

- 
- Min = Minimum; Max = Maximum; SD = Standard Deviation; Skew = Skewness; Kurt = Kurtosis; Ldng = Loadings; CA = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted
  - MO = Market Orientation; CompOr = Competitor Orientation; Coord = Interfunctional Coordination; CustOr = Customer Orientation; EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation; LO = Learning Orientation; Commit = Commitment; ConcInstr = Conceptual/Instrumental Use; Symbolic = Symbolic Use; IndivPef = Individual Performance; OrgPerf = Organisational Performance
  - <sup>a</sup> is an output construct (reported from an objective measured), so there is no description.



Skewness and kurtosis are used to assess the normality of distributions. Skewness examines the extent to which a variable's distribution is symmetrical. Kurtosis measures the peak of the distribution. A normal distribution is achieved when both skewness and kurtosis values are closed to zero, which is rather unlikely. Accordingly, the general guideline for skewness is that if the value is greater than +1 or lower than -1, it indicates a skewed distribution (Hair et al., 2014b). For kurtosis, if the value is greater than +1, the distribution is too peaked, whilst the value less than -1 indicates that the distribution is too flat (Hair et al., 2014b). When the value of skewness and/or kurtosis exceeds the general guideline which it considers non-normal. The result (Table 5.4) shows that the majority of the items stay within the general guideline for both skewness and kurtosis. However, some items are categorised as skewed (all to the left) as the value exceeds -1 – one item for MO, two items for LO, all items for Commit and one item for IndivPerf. It is similar to kurtosis, some items exceed the general guideline which may cause the distribution to be too flat/peak – three items for MO, two items for LO and all the items for Commit. Even if some of the results for both skewness and kurtosis exceed the general guideline, it is argued the overall result is still acceptable as firstly, the results for both skewness and kurtosis do not exceed the threshold by too far. Second, the result is supported with a good value of SD and lastly, only a minority of these items for each construct have exceeded the general guideline to cause a significant problem.

The last four columns in Table 5.5 show the result of validity and reliability tests - loadings (Ldng), CA, CR and AVE. The discussion and explanation for the results will be discussed thoroughly in the next section.

### **5.3.3. Validity and Reliability Tests**

Validity and reliability tests aim to get a consistent set of variables to the degree of which free from any systematic or measurement errors (Hair et al., 2014a). Thus, reliability is a necessary condition for validity and vice versa. Hair et al., (2021) suggest that there are four steps to measure validity and reliability in the reflective measurement model. First, reliability is evaluated on the indicator level (indicator reliability) and construct reliability (internal consistency). Validity is evaluated through the measure of convergent validity using AVE. Lastly, is the evaluation of discriminant validity.

Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 present and summarise all the validity and reliability tests that need to be applied when assessing reflective measurement models as discussed respectively below.

### **5.3.3.1. Indicator Reliability**

The first measure to examine the reflective measurement model is by measuring the indicator reliability. Indicator reliability/indicator loading indicates the communality of an indicator, in other words, how much each indicator's variance is explained by its construct (Hair et al., 2021). The general acceptance value for loading is 0.708 or higher; this value indicates that the construct explains more than 50% of the indicator's variance, thus the loading's value is acceptable. Literature notices that weaker loading is often found in social science studies, especially when newly developed scales are implemented (Hulland, 1999). Instead of going for automatic removal, loading with a weaker value ( $<0.708$ ) should go for further examination. For the value between 0.400 – 0.708, it should be considered for removal only when removing the indicator will lead to an increase in internal consistency reliability or convergent validity above the suggested threshold. However, if the value is very low (below 0.400), the loading should always be removed (Hair et al., 2011b; Hair et al., 2014b; Hair et al., 2021).

The result for indicator reliability is presented in Table 5.5. The result shows that the majority of loading values for the constructs are considered significant ( $l > 0.70$ ). Twelve items show a slightly lower loading value below 0.708 which ranges between 0.486 – 0.698; however, their individual value is not too low to be considered for removal. Besides, these items show a strong CR ( $CR > 0.80$ ); therefore, the overall value of loadings is concluded as satisfactory.

### **5.3.3.2. Internal Consistency Reliability**

Internal consistency reliability indicates the extent to which indicators measuring the same construct are associated with each other. One of the primary measures of internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) provides the estimates of reliability from the inter-correlation of the observed indicator variables (Hair et al., 2014b). One major limitation to consider from CA is the tendency to assume that all the loadings are the same in the population; therefore, it tends to underestimate the internal consistency reliability. Due to these possible limitations of CA (see Schmitt, 1996 for more), it is commonly advised to use

another different measure of internal consistency reliability – CR. CR is calculated from different outer loadings. Both CA and CR have a similar interpretation of acceptance value, which varies from 0 and 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of reliability. In exploratory research, the acceptable value is between 0.60 – 0.70. A value between 0.70 – 0.90 is regarded as satisfactory, whereas a value below 0.60 indicates a lack of internal consistency of reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 2014b).

The result for internal consistency reliability (CA and CR) is presented in Table 5.5. The initial results for CA and CR tests are deemed satisfactory for all the constructs, except for ConcInstr. Therefore, out of the twelve items listed on the questionnaires, five items (Q38.8, Q38.9, Q38.10, Q38.11 and Q38.12, which are items ConcInstr\_8, ConcInstr\_9, ConcInstr\_10, ConcInstr\_11 and ConcInstr\_12) were dropped completely for two reasons. First, it is to improve the overall CA and CR result (see Table 5.3, marked with italics and d for the deleted items). Accordingly, the final result (see Table 5.5) of internal consistency reliability (CA and CR) is regarded as satisfactory (CA = 0.918; CR = 0.935) as all the values are above the acceptance level. Second, these five items have a low contribution to the construct (low loading, range from -0.007 – 0.226) that will not pass the general acceptance for the convergent validity test, so the five items were removed.

### **5.3.3.3. Convergent Validity**

Convergent validity is the extent to which the construct converges to explain the indicators (Hair et al., 2014b; Hair et al., 2021). Convergent validity is measured through AVE. AVE represents the grand mean value of the squared loadings of the indicators associated with the constructs (Hair et al., 2014b). The general acceptance for AVE is 0.50 or higher, which means the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. AVE should be considered for rejection for the value below 0.50, which explains that more errors remain in the items than the variance explained by the construct.

The result for convergent validity (AVE) is presented in Table 5.6. The result shows that the value of AVE is above the general acceptance (0.50) for all the constructs, although it appears that a few of them are quite low. This condition with rather low but still acceptable AVE would not be considered a problem, arguably for two reasons. First, from the exploratory perspective of the study and second, the literature notes that for lower AVE results, the results

are still acceptable if the construct has a strong convergent validity ( $CR > 0.60$ ) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Moreover, some other studies in the marketing literature (e.g. Green et al., 1995; Ngo and O’Cass, 2012) also keep low-level AVE if three aspects are achieved: loadings (all above 0.5), reliability (0.6 or higher) and satisfactory discriminant validity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the AVE of the constructs in this study is at acceptable levels.

Table 5.6 – Correlation Matrix and Square-root of AVE

	Commit	EO	LO	MO	ConcInstr	Symbolic	IndivPerf	OrgPerf
Commit	<b>0.914</b>							
EO	0.042	<b>0.749</b>						
LO	0.230	0.456	<b>0.803</b>					
MO	0.213	0.411	0.605	<b>0.719</b>				
ConcInstr	0.105	0.259	0.514	0.491	<b>0.821</b>			
Symbolic	-0.227	0.044	-0.089	0.052	0.170 <sup>b</sup>	<b>0.707</b>		
IndivPerf	0.028	0.257	0.094	0.207	0.428	0.327	<b>0.798</b>	
OrgPerf	0.096	0.037	0.168	0.017	0.197	-0.150	0.150 <sup>b</sup>	<b>1,000</b>

Notes:

- Square root of the AVE on the diagonal in bold.
- Commit = Commitment; EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation; LO = Learning Orientation; MO = Market Orientation; ConcInstr = Conceptual/Instrumental Use; Symbolic = Symbolic Use; IndivPerf = Individual Performance; OrgPerf = Organisational Performance
- All the correlation values were extracted from PLS except for one that is marked with <sup>b</sup> – the value was retrieved through the correlation function in Excel.

#### **5.3.3.4. Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity illustrates the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards (Hair et al., 2014b; Voorhees et al., 2016). This implies that the construct is unique and captures the phenomena that are not represented by the other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2014b). Discriminant validity could be examined through the cross-loadings of the indicator, square root of the AVE and correlation coefficients (Henseler et al., 2015). The first method for assessing discriminant validity is by examining the cross-loadings of the indicator. The indicator's loadings on the associated construct should be greater than all of its loadings on the other constructs. If any cross-loadings exceed the indicator's loadings, it indicates a discriminant validity problem (Hair et al., 2011b). The most common and widely accepted method (Voorhees et al., 2016; Hamid, Sami and Sidek, 2017) to assess discriminant validity is by using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which is examined through the square root of AVE. The square root of AVE for each construct should be higher than the correlation with other latent constructs. Some recent studies (e.g. Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016; Hamid, Sami and Sidek, 2017; Tahseen et al., 2017; Ahmed et al., 2021) argue that the Fornell-Larcker criterion is no longer suitable for discriminant validity assessment, as it often fails to reliably identify discriminant validity problems (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002; Wang and Netemeyer, 2002; Radomir and Moisescu, 2019). As an alternative, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlation is recommended to assess discriminant validity (Henseler, 2015). The HTMT ratio indicates the mean value of indicator correlations across constructs relative to the mean of the average correlations for the indicator measuring the same construct (Hair et al., 2021). HTMT ratio is suggested to have a more comprehensive and less constrained test of discriminant validity, especially for a study that uses variance-based SEM (Voorhees et al, 2016). The acceptance level for the HTMT ratio is between 0.85-0.90 (Henseler, 2015). HTMT ratio value close to 1.0 (or exceeds 1.0) is interpreted as a discriminant validity violation.

The result for discriminant validity is presented in Table 5.6 for the Fornell-Larcker criterion and in Table 5.7 for the HTMT ratio. For the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 5.5), the result shows adequate discriminant validity for the correlation matrix and the square root of AVE for all the constructs. Moreover, for the HTMT ratio (Table 5.7), the result shows that all the values for all the constructs are above the acceptance threshold.

Table 5.7 – Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Commit	EO	LO	MO	ConcInstr	Symbolic	IndivPerf
Commit							
EO	0.033						
LO	0.240	0.481					
MO	0.200	0.451	0.677				
ConcInstr	0.907	0.280	0.514	0.535			
Symbolic	-0.134	0.018	-0.129	0.078	0.214		
IndivPerf	0.091	0.278	0.113	0.201	0.331	0.282	

Notes:

- Commit = Commitment; EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation; LO = Learning Orientation; MO = Market Orientation; ConcInstr = Conceptual/Instrumental Use; Symbolic = Symbolic Use; IndivPerf = Individual Performance.

## **5.4. Structural Model**

A path model is the visual form of hypotheses based on the relationship between variables from theory and logic that are examined in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2011a; 2011b). A PLS-SEM path model consists of different elements – constructs and indicators and different measurement models – measurement/outer model and structural/inner model. The measurement model displays the relationships between constructs and the indicators and how it is measured. The discussion and full analysis of the measurement model have been presented in Section 5.3. This section continues the discussion with the other measurement model – the structural model. The structural model is used to examine the relationships between the constructs and how they relate to each other, usually through hypothesis testing. To interpret the result of a path model, the significance of the path coefficient for all the structural model relationships needs to be tested. The path coefficient has a standardised value between -1 and +1. It means that when the path coefficient closes to +1, it presents a strong positive relationship which is almost regarded as always statistically significant. Conversely, the path coefficient that is close to -1 presents a negative relationship. The closer the estimated path coefficient to 0, the weaker the relationship and it is usually non-significant. Accordingly, the results report the statistical significance through t-values and p-values (that have been examined).

This upcoming section presents the findings and the discussion of all the hypothesised relationships. Whilst conducting PLS-SEM analysis, besides the results for the hypothesised relationships, the findings also suggest that there are some indirect relationships and/or a potential mediating effect from some of the key constructs. The findings and discussion of these indirect relationships are presented thereafter. Table 5.8 presents the PLS structural model for Conceptual/Instrumental Use, Table 5.9 presents the PLS structural model for Symbolic Use and Table 5.10 presents the PLS structural model for non-hypothesised relationships.

### **5.4.1. Initial Findings**

#### **5.4.1.1. Information Use**

##### Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI

The study hypothesises in  $H_{1a}$  and  $H_{1c}$  that Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on performance, at both organisation and individual level. Model 1 and Model 2 in



Table 5.8 show that the findings support both of the hypotheses (H<sub>1a</sub> and H<sub>1c</sub>). H<sub>1a</sub> predicted a positive relationship between Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI and firm performance. The results show that Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive relationship with firm performance and is statistically significant (ConcInstr → OrgPerf, b = 0.197, p < 0.05). H<sub>1c</sub> also predicted a positive relationship between Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI and individual performance. The results show that Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive significant impact on an individual level of performance (ConcInstr → IndivPerf, b = 0.452, p < 0.01).

The results confirm that Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a significant positive impact on performance at both organisation and individual levels of performance. The findings are important as it is firstly, consistent with the existing arguments on the importance of Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI in the decision-making process (e.g. Hart, Webb and Jones, 1994; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Birgelen et al., 2001; Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Verhees and Meulenberg, 2004; Toften, 2005; Citrin et al., 2007). Secondly and most importantly, the findings let the study to take a step forward by confirming and providing the necessary evidence that this positive relationship between Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI and performance exists at both organisation and individual levels. Furthermore, the study also provides evidence that strengthens the importance of the individual – the account manager, as the key individual with the access, who is not only responsible but actually uses the CMI that leads to a deeper understanding of the firms' capabilities (Maltz and Kohli, 1996; Van Birgelen et al., 2001) and building rapport with the customers (Jolson, 1997; McMurrian et al., 2002) that is useful in the decision-making process.

### Symbolic Use of CMI

The study hypothesises in H<sub>1b</sub> and H<sub>1d</sub> that Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on performance, at both organisation and individual level of performance. Model 3 and Model 4 in Table 5.9 show that the findings support only H<sub>1b</sub> and H<sub>1d</sub> is not supported. H<sub>1b</sub> predicted that Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on firm performance. The results show that Symbolic Use of CMI has a negative impact on the organisation level of performance with no statistical significance (Symbolic → OrgPerf; b = -0.150). H<sub>1d</sub> predicted that Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on individual performance. The results show that Symbolic Use of CMI has a positive significant impact on the individual level of performance (Symbolic → IndivPerf; b = 0.327, p < 0.01).

The study somewhat finds interesting mixed results for the relationship arising between Symbolic Use of CMI and performance. To date, existing studies (e.g. Diamantopoulos et al., 2003; Toften, 2003; Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Citrin et al., 2007) in the literature have suggested several different interpretations of Symbolic Use, which the majority of them insist that the excessive use of Symbolic Use could be detrimental on performance. On the account of these interpretations, Symbolic Use is often associated with a ‘negative’ interpretation of such manipulation, causing it to be used incorrectly and purposively distorted (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992). The results show some interesting findings regarding the literature’s interpretation of Symbolic Use. Through the findings for this group of samples, it appears that Symbolic Use exists, is used and is rather significant on the individual level of performance ( $H_{1d}$ ). However, interestingly, Symbolic Use does not appear to be significant on the organisation level of performance ( $H_{1b}$ ). Consistently with the previous point, the results also point toward the importance of the individual – the account manager. These mixed results suggest that the account manager is using the CMI symbolically (as shown by a significant positive relationship) to some extent in their decision-making process. However, these decisions by the account manager are not significantly reflected on the organisation level of performance (as it is found to be negative and not significant). At this point, the study is unable to explain these results further. However, the study suspects that there are two possible reasons for these mixed results. First, even though the account manager uses CMI symbolically, mostly for day-to-day business operational activities, when it comes to big decisions (e.g. investment, NPD) the owner-manager or board of directors will be the one who is responsible for making the decisions. Thus, these are more likely to be collective decisions, in which the results are reflected as firm performance. Secondly, the allegedly multi-dimensional construct of Symbolic Use (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992) is still ambiguous. The inconsistency of Symbolic Use will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

#### **5.4.1.2. Strategic Orientations**

##### Market Orientation (MO)

The study argues in  $H_{2a}$  that the higher the level of MO, the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI, whereas, in  $H_{2b}$  the lower the level of MO, the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. Model 2 in Table 5.8 and Model 4 in Table 5.9 show that the findings do not support both  $H_{2a}$  and  $H_{2b}$ .  $H_{2a}$  predicted that the higher the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. The results

show that there is a positive relationship between MO and Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI with no statistical significance ( $MO \rightarrow ConcInstr$ ;  $b = 0.295$ ).  $H_{2b}$  predicted that the lower the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. The results show that is a positive relationship between MO and Symbolic Use of CMI with no statistical significance ( $MO \rightarrow Symbolic$ ;  $b = 0.179$ ).

MO has been thoroughly discussed in the literature and earns a reputation for positively encouraging the acquiring, disseminating, interpretation and utilising process of market information (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1993; Day, 2001; Beaver 2002). The results provide additional evidence that supports the importance of MO on firm performance and, specifically, the results strengthen the argument that Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI positively influences firm performance (Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011; Davenport and Haris, 2017; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Kotler et al., 2019). With respect to  $H_{2a}$  and  $H_{2b}$ , statistically for MO, the values for loadings, CA, CR and AVE (CA = 0.879; CR = 0.904; AVE = 0.517) are all above the threshold. The small sample size (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2019) might be one of the plausible reasons for the non-significant results. However, these results confirm the initial argument that there is existing tension between different Strategic Orientations (Didonet et al., 2020) within these SFDPs, and a contention which is also based on the results suggests that MO is not the most important orientation for them, unlike larger firms (Grinstein, 2008). Further, the results also show that the adoption of MO for the SFDPs is still proving to be challenging (Kumar et al., 2011), as these SFDPs prioritise their survival and cash flows before shifting their priority to the customers and competitors (Storey, 2000; Shepherd and Wiklund, 2005; Parry et al., 2012; Ates et al., 2013; Lämsiluoto et al., 2019).

#### Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)

The study argues in  $H_{2c}$  that the higher the level of EO, the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI, whereas, in  $H_{2d}$  the lower the level of EO, the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI Model 2 in Table 5.8 and Model 4 in Table 5.9 show that the findings do not support both  $H_{2c}$  and  $H_{2d}$ .  $H_{2c}$  predicted that the higher the level of EO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. The results show that there is a negative relationship between EO and Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI with no statistical significance ( $EO \rightarrow ConcInstr$ ;  $b = -0.024$ ).  $H_{2d}$  predicted that the lower the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. The results show that is a positive

relationship between EO and Symbolic Use of CMI with no statistical significance (EO → Symbolic;  $b = 0.062$ ).

In line with MO, previous studies acknowledged EO for its ability to boost firm performance (e.g. Moreno and Casillas, 2008; Rauch et al., 2009; Alegre and Chiva, 2013). With respect to H<sub>2c</sub> and H<sub>2d</sub>, the results indicate that EO is less likely to influence the SFDPs in using CMI. In this regard, the results suggest that these SFDPs are still struggling to adopt and portray some of the attributes of EO – risk-taking, proactiveness and innovativeness (Zahra and Garvis, 2000; Kemelgor, 2002; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005) in exploiting new market opportunities (Sinkula and Baker, 2009). The results suggest that these SFDPs prefer to keep their current buyers (Franco et al., 2014); they are potentially more risk-averse by not actively seeking for innovation or growth but rather focusing more on their survival (O'Donnell, 2011; Kubberød et al., 2019; Sadiku-Dushi and Ramadani, 2020; Sarwoko and Nurfarida, 2021) by making sure that their products perform well and by maintaining their relationship with the key supermarket buyer (Tesco) to ensure their spot on supermarket shelf (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Butler et al., 2000).

#### Learning Orientation (LO)

The study argues in H<sub>2e</sub> that the higher the level of LO, the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI, whereas, in H<sub>2f</sub> the lower the level of LO, the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. Model 2 in Table 5.8 and Model 4 in Table 5.9 show that the findings support only H<sub>2e</sub> and H<sub>2f</sub> is not supported. H<sub>2e</sub> predicted that the higher the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. The results show that there is a positive significant relationship between LO and Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI (LO → ConcInstr,  $b = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). H<sub>2f</sub> predicted that the lower the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. The results show that there is a negative relationship between LO and Symbolic Use of CMI with no statistical significance (LO → Symbolic;  $b = -0.176$ ).

LO provides the basis of the learning process (Sinkula, Baker and Noordewier, 1997) that leads to the creation and development of new insights (Sheng and Chien, 2016) that shape and drive the learning culture (Huber, 1991) within the firms that adds competitive advantages (Levinthal and March, 1993). With respect to H<sub>2e</sub> and H<sub>2f</sub>, the findings provide the evidence that emphasises the importance of LO on firm performance and especially on LO, as it is the only

Strategic Orientation that is found to have the most significant positive impact on firm performance through Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. On one hand, these findings are to be expected, considering that this group of SFDPs has been exposed to and utilised the CMI for a some time. The findings also accentuate the hypothesis (H<sub>2c</sub>) that a firm with high LO is more likely to use CMI conceptually/instrumentally, which resulted in a positive impact on performance (Sinkula et al., 1997; Wang, 2008). The significant positive relationship between LO and Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI is clearly reflected through the disseminating, interpreting and utilising market information activities (Sinkula et al., 1997; Wang, 2008) that are really happening within the SFDPs. Despite the different period of exposure of each SFDP, the findings suggest that these SFDPs are familiar with, understand and are comfortable with CMI; by translating and utilising the CMI (Blankson and Stokes, 2002; Keskin, 2006) affords them insights and improves both their knowledge and understanding (Sinkula et al., 1997; Calantone et al., 2002; Nasution et al., 2011) on their products that are useful in their decision-making process. The accumulation of learning process, conceptually/instrumentally using the CMI, wisely made decisions are evidently reflected through the positive improvement on the firm performance (Argyris and Schön, 1997).

#### **5.4.1.3. Commitment**

The study hypothesises in H<sub>3a</sub> that the higher the level of commitment of the account manager, the more likely they are to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI, whereas, in H<sub>3b</sub> the lower the level of commitment of the account manager, the more likely they are to make Symbolic Use of CMI. Model 1 in Table 5.8 and Model 3 in Table 5.9 show that the findings support only H<sub>3b</sub> and H<sub>3a</sub> is not supported. H<sub>3a</sub> predicted that the higher the level of commitment the more likely the account manager is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. The results show that there is a negative relationship with no statistical significance between commitment and Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI (Commit → ConcInstr,  $b = -0.038$ ). H<sub>3b</sub> predicted that the lower the level of commitment the more likely the account manager is to make Symbolic Use of CMI. The results show that there is a negative significant relationship between commitment and Symbolic Use of CMI (Commit → Symbolic,  $b = -0.228$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The findings once more emphasis the crucial role of the individual – the account manager. The main responsibility of the account manager is to manage relationships (Crosby et al., 1990; Tyler and Stanley, 1999; Madill et al., 2007). Larger firms have the privilege to hire a certain

individual with specific skills and qualifications for a certain job as an account manager (McDonald et al., 1996; Gruner et al., 1997), whilst, in the small firms, the account manager is sometimes just the title, but in the reality, this individual that is given the ‘account manager’ title also needs to carry multiple roles (Burns, 2016). Consequently, this individual is left with huge responsibilities, even though their main responsibility is maintaining and developing relationships externally with buyers and internally with employers (McDonald et al., 1997). In such circumstances, the willingness of the account manager to show initiative by investing more effort and time in understanding, analysing and utilising the CMI is associated with their high level of commitment (Organ, 1990a; Scheer et al., 2003). Commitment is thus a fundamental requirement (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), one that sets an individual to a course of action of relevance to a certain target (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) or else define their attachment to their employer and/or the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). With respect to H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub>, the findings suggest that for these SFDPs, the account manager shows different levels of commitment that are reflected in their ways of using the CMI.

#### **5.4.1.4. Indirect Relationships (Potential Mediating Effects)**

The findings from PLS-SEM analysis not only come up with the results for the hypothesised relationships but also indicate that there are some indirect relationships, potentially through a mediating effect from one or more mediating construct(s). A mediating effect occurs when a third variable or construct intervenes between the two other related constructs (Hair et al., 2014b). The mediating effect may help to explain why a certain relationship arises between two constructs. In this situation, the results might explain that there could be an intervening variable that helps to clarify the relationship between two original constructs. During the development of hypotheses, the study did not consider any of these indirect relationships, therefore, none of these relationships were hypothesised nor featured in the conceptual framework. The results show that out of all key constructs, only LO and commitment that appear to have indirect relationships, with both appearing only on the individual level of performance.

The results in Table 5.10 show that LO is found to potentially have a positive mediating effect between Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI and individual performance (LO → ConcInstr → IndivPerf;  $b = 0.160$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding together with H<sub>2e</sub> emphasise the importance of LO on the relationship between the Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI and performance.

One interesting point from this finding is that, for H<sub>2e</sub>, LO is found to have a positive significant relationship on both individual and firm performance, whilst the indirect relationship of LO on Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI is found only on individual performance. Another construct with a potential mediating effect is commitment. The results in Table 5.9 show that commitment has a negative significant mediating effect between Symbolic Use of CMI and individual performance (Commit → Symbolic → IndivPerf;  $b = -0.075$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ). This finding together with H<sub>3b</sub> strengthens the argument that the account manager with a high level of commitment is less likely to make a Symbolic Use of CMI. Interestingly, for H<sub>3b</sub>, the negative significant relationship between commitment appears at both organisation and individual levels of performance, whilst the indirect relationship of commitment on Symbolic Use of CMI is found only on the individual level of performance.

The study has presented all the findings for the hypothesised relationships with the addition of potential mediating effects from the indirect relationships as the results from of PLS-SEM analysis. Out of twelve hypotheses, five are supported (H<sub>1a</sub>, H<sub>1b</sub>, H<sub>1c</sub>, H<sub>2e</sub>, H<sub>3b</sub>), whilst the other seven are not supported (H<sub>1d</sub>, H<sub>2a</sub>, H<sub>2b</sub>, H<sub>2c</sub>, H<sub>2d</sub>, H<sub>2f</sub>, H<sub>3a</sub>). The summary of the initial findings is presented in Table 5.11. Currently, from these initial findings, the study can confirm and provides the evidence that:

- a. SFDPs acknowledged the importance of information use, which is reflected as they use CMI both conceptually/instrumentally and symbolically at the organisation level as well as at the individual level by the account manager.
- b. At the individual level, the account manager appears to equally use the CMI both conceptually/instrumentally and symbolically.
- c. Symbolic Use is significant at the individual level; however, it is not reflected on firm performance.
- d. There is tension between different Strategic Orientations – MO and EO do not give the desirable impact, as predicted, but LO comes as the one with significant Strategic Orientation.
- e. These SFDPs have a high level of LO, which is reflected by their likeliness of using the CMI conceptually/instrumentally.
- f. Account manager presence, commitment and role are important facets and are reflected through their willingness to invest their time and effort to use the CMI.

One common finding that appears not only for the indirect relationships, but also appears constantly in the hypothesised relationship is the vital role of the individual – the account manager. Previous studies (e.g. Dyer, 2006; Westhead and Howorth, 2006; Neubaum et al., 2017; Alves, Gama and Augustom, 2021; Ghalke, Haldar and Kumar, 2023) tend to associate performance on organisation level as a whole, whilst neglecting the individual level of performance. These findings accentuate the importance of examining performance from the individual level as well. To date, there are only a few studies (Bormann, Backs and Hoon, 2021) that solely focus on the individual level of performance. Therefore, these findings emphasise one of the novelties of this study by choosing not only to analyse performance from the organisational level but also from the individual level. With respect to the context of the study, for these SFDPs, the account manager's presence is vital. This individual often needs to take on multiple roles and responsibilities (Burns, 2016) besides their main role in managing and developing relationships (Tyler and Stanley, 1999; Madill et al., 2007). Consequently, engaging with CMI, building appropriate plans and making decisions for most of the account managers become their priority. With all the novelties that come with it, CMI is designed to decrease the barriers to information use and, therefore, by the account manager utilising the CMI, the impact is expected to be reflected also on the firm performance which eases the pressures of potential de-listing (Malagueño et al., 2019; Gölgeci et al, 2021) by the key supermarket buyer (Tesco) and expands their opportunities in the competitive grocery industry (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Up until this point, the overall findings from the PLS-SEM analysis have confirmed, provided the evidence and answered some of the research questions. Some of these findings are rather intriguing; they are ambiguous and give some mixed results which are contrary to some prior findings within the existing literature. Due to the limitations of quantitative analysis, these findings alone are unable to provide further justification, especially for the why and how questions. Consequently, the study decides to add some additional analyses to provide the necessary explanation. The next section presents and provides the research method, analysis of the data and the discussion for these additional analyses.



Table 5.8 – PLS Structural Model Result for Conceptual/Instrumental Use

Dependent →	Model 1		Model 2	
	Individual Performance (IndivPerf)	Conceptual/Instrumental Use (ConcInstr)	Organisational Performance (OrgPerf)	Conceptual/Instrumental Use (ConcInstr)
Commitment (Commit)	-	-0.038 (0.354)	-	-0.039 (0.363)
Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	-	-0.024 (0.213)	-	-0.024 (0.202)
Learning Orientation (LO)	-	<b>0.355 (2,111)**</b>	-	<b>0.358 (2,069)**</b>
Market Orientation (MO)	-	0.295 (1,467)	-	0.290 (1,048)
Conceptual/Instrumental Use (ConcInstr)	<b>0.452 (5,181)***</b>	-	<b>0.197 (1,949)**</b>	-

Notes: Each cell reports the path coefficient (t-value). \*\*\* Significant level 1%, \*\* Significant level 5%, \* Significant level 10% (one-tailed for hypothesised relationships, two-tailed otherwise)

Table 5.9 – PLS Structural Model Result for Symbolic Use

Dependent →	Model 3		Model 4	
	Individual Performance (IndivPerf)	Symbolic use (Symbolic)	Organisational Performance (OrgPerf)	Symbolic use (Symbolic)
Commitment (Commit)	-	<b>-0.228 (2,001)**</b>	-	<b>-0.227 (2,016)**</b>
Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	-	0.059 (0.488)	-	0.062 (0.518)
Learning Orientation (LO)	-	-0.170 (0.999)	-	-0.176 (1,043)
Market Orientation (MO)	-	0.180 (1,024)	-	0.179 (1,021)
Symbolic Use (Symbolic)	<b>0.327 (3,357)***</b>	-	-0.150 (1,086)	-

Notes: Each cell reports the path coefficient (t-value). \*\*\* Significant level 1%, \*\* Significant level 5%, \* Significant level 10% (one-tailed for hypothesised relationships, two-tailed otherwise)

Table 5.10 - PLS Structural Model Result for non-hypothesised Relationships

Indirect Relationships →	Individual Performance (IndivPerf)	Organisational Performance (OrgPerf)
<b>Conceptual/Instrumental Use</b>		
Commit → ConcInstr → IndivPerf	-0.017 (0.327)	-0.008 (0.329)
EO → ConcInstr → IndivPerf	-0.011 (0.200)	-0.005 (0.177)
<b>LO → ConcInstr → IndivPerf</b>	<b>0.160 (1,954)**</b>	0.070 (1,278)
MO → ConcInstr → IndivPerf	0.133 (1,268)	0.057 (1,109)
<b>Symbolic Use</b>		
<b>Commit → Symbolic → IndivPerf</b>	<b>-0.075 (1,517)*</b>	0.034 (0.891)
EO → Symbolic → IndivPerf	0.019 (0.414)	-0.009 (0.678)
LO → Symbolic → IndivPerf	-0.056 (0.866)	0.026 (0.697)
MO → Symbolic → IndivPerf	0.059 (0.855)	-0.027 (0.646)

Notes: Each cell reports the path coefficient (t-value). \*\*\* Significant level 1%, \*\* Significant level 5%, \* Significant level 10%

Table 5.11 – The Summary for Initial Findings

<b>Hypothesised Relationships (Direct Relationships)</b>		
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Information Use	H <sub>1a</sub> : Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on firm performance	<i>Supported</i>
	H <sub>1b</sub> : Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on firm performance	<i>Supported</i>
	H <sub>1c</sub> : Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on the performance of individual account manager	<i>Supported</i>
	H <sub>1d</sub> : Symbolic Use of CMI has no impact on the performance of individual account manager	Not Supported
Firm-related Factor - Strategic Orientations		
Market Orientation	H <sub>2a</sub> : The higher the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI	Not supported
	H <sub>2b</sub> : The lower the level of MO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI	Not supported
Entrepreneurial Orientation	H <sub>2c</sub> : The higher the level of EO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI	Not supported
	H <sub>2d</sub> : The lower the level of EO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI	Not supported

Learning Orientation	H <sub>2e</sub> : The higher the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI	<i>Supported</i>
	H <sub>2f</sub> : The lower the level of LO the more likely a firm is to make Symbolic Use of CMI	Not supported
Individual-related Factor		
Commitment	H <sub>3a</sub> : The higher the level of commitment of the account manager the more likely they are to make Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI	Not supported
	H <sub>3b</sub> : The lower the level of commitment of the account manager the more likely to make Symbolic Use of CMI	<i>Supported</i>
<b>Non-hypothesised Relationships (Indirect Relationships)</b>		
Learning Orientation has <i>a positive significant indirect relationship</i> on individual level performance through Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI		<i>LO → ConcInstr → IndivPerf</i>
Commitment has <i>a negative significant indirect relationship</i> on individual level performance through Symbolic Use of CMI		<i>Commit → Symbolic → IndivPerf</i>

## **5.4.2. Findings and Discussions for Additional Analyses**

### Rationale for the Additional Analyses

These additional analyses build upon the mixed outcomes of the initial findings (Section 5.3.1) and some inconsistent evidence, some of which is contrary to the existing literature. These additional analyses aim to first gain some clarity with the respect to the interpretation of the survey results. Second, they explore, which, if any, other factors that might influence the use of market information and its impact on performance.

During the development of the conceptual framework, it was anticipated that family business ownership (FB) would be used as a moderator or control variable, given the dominant role of owner-manager as highlighted by prior research (e.g. Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Jennings and Beaver, 1997; Cardon and Stevens, 2004; Marlow, 2005; Jack et al., 2006; Nadin and Cassel, 2007; Reijonen, 2010). However, it transpired that this was not possible, as family-owned businesses dominated the survey sample, of which 72% (57 respondents) were from family-owned businesses and only 28% (22 responses) were from non-family businesses. Thus, FB was not included in the conceptual framework or the hypotheses. Several studies (e.g. Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Le Breton-Miller and Miller, 2008; Zahra et al., 2008; Davis et al., 2010) from the family firm literature suggest that the addition of family ownership might change the dynamic in the relationships between family and non-family employees within the firm. However, family influence alone is not sufficient to explain the impact of family ownership on performance (Sharma and Nordqvist, 2008; Monreal-Pérez and Sánchez-Marín, 2017; Alves, Gama and Augusto, 2021). Family firms possess unique characteristics that differentiate them from their non-family counterparts, especially through ownership perspective (Nordqvist et al., 2014), their emotional attachment to the business (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996; Bubolz, 2001; Basco et al., 2021; Lin and Wang, 2021) and stewardship behaviour (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Davis et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2016) that is reflected in high levels of trust (Beck and Prüggl, 2018; Elo and Dana, 2019) and commitment (Davis et al., 2010), which add to their competitive advantages (Le Breton-Miller and Miller, 2008; Davis et al., 2010; Eddleston et al., 2012; Madison, Kellermanns and Munyon, 2017). However, some studies point to the relationship between the (family) owner-manager and their employees (family and non-family members) as the most significant factor, one that distinguishes the processes and performance of family firms from those of non-family

firms (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Zahra et al., 2008; Löhde, Campopiano and Calabro, 2021).

#### The Aims for the Additional Analyses

Given the potential impact of family ownership and, in particular, the owner-manager, as well as the inability to include FB within the conceptual framework, it was decided to conduct some additional analyses. Broadly, these additional analyses are still in line with the main purposes of the study which are to explore the potential barriers and enablers for the effective use of CMI and its impact on performance from both organisation and individual perspective. More specifically, these additional analyses set the attention into the potential impact of family ownership. In doing so, these additional analyses are set to:

- i. Conduct some additional (correlation) analysis of the survey data – to analyse (potential) relationship between family ownership and the key constructs of the study.
- ii. Conduct some follow-up interviews – to gain qualitative insights (for the why and how questions) and further evidence that helps explain the respondents' mindsets (from the initial survey) and the potential impact of family ownership.

Prior studies (e.g. Edmondson and McManus, 2007; Jack and Raturi 2006; Van der Valk and Wynstra, 2012; Myers, 2013) suggest that combining quantitative (survey) with (post-survey) qualitative data can assist with the interpretation of survey results and generate additional insights in relation to the research questions. The qualitative findings allow the researcher to get a better understanding of the barriers, enablers and benefits of using CMI to inform marketing decision-making. Therefore, the decision to add these analyses is justified.

It is important to note that these additional analyses (correlation and follow-up interviews) were conducted and added after the primary data collection and put in for triangulation purposes. Therefore, none of the details of these analyses were mentioned nor presented in the earlier chapters. Consequently, to avoid some potential confusion, these upcoming sections will present the simplified methodology, data analysis and discussion for both additional analyses – correlation and semi-structured interviews, respectively.

#### **5.4.2.1. Correlation**

Correlation is used to describe the association between variables, either strong or weak, positive or negative. A correlation coefficient is a single number that represents the degree of

association arising between two sets of measurements. It ranges from +1 (indicates a perfect positive correlation) through 0 (indicates no correlation at all) to -1 (indicates a perfect negative correlation). The rule of thumb (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2019) is usually used to define the correlation coefficient size:

Coefficient Range	Strength of Association
$\pm (0.91 - 1.00)$	Very strong
$\pm (0.71 - 0.90)$	High
$\pm (0.41 - 0.70)$	Moderate
$\pm (0.21 - 0.40)$	Small but definite association
$\pm (0.10 - 0.20)$	Slight but may be meaningful
$\pm (0.00 - 0.10)$	Unlikely to be a meaningful association

The interpretation of correlation analysis can be challenging, as the association between variables can be affected by a wide range of factors (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2019). If the coefficient correlation is strong and statistically significant it can be concluded that there is an association between the variables. However, if the correlation coefficient is small, there are two possibilities – first, that an association exists but it is weak, and second, that a significant association may exist, but it is not linear, which is a fundamental assumption that underpins the estimation of the correlation coefficient (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2019). The size of the sample size is another factor that can affect the results, as the larger the sample size, the more stable (reliable) the results will be. However, a strong correlation between variables from a small sample may be indicative of a genuine association between two given variables.

#### **5.4.2.1.1. Research Design and Methodology**

The aim for running a correlation analysis is to analyse potential associations arising between family ownership (FB) with the key constructs from the conceptual framework. The correlation analysis is run through the same group of samples using IBM SPSS Statistic 29.0. There are different types of correlation coefficients that are used to measure the degree of correlation, depending on the level of variable measurement (Whittaker and Schumacker, 2022). The most common of these are the The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and the Spearman Rank Order Coefficient. The Pearson correlation is suitable for



interval or ratio-scaled measures. It measures the linear association between two metric variables and is suitable for normally distributed data. The Spearman correlation is more robust than Pearson's, and thus suitable for nominal or ordinal measures (i.e. non-metric variables). The Spearman correlation is chosen because FB is a nominal variable. Prior to running the analysis, a specific code (0 and 1) is given for  $FB = 0$  and  $non-FB = 1$  to differentiate the samples. Table 5.12 presents the results for this Spearman correlation analysis.

#### **5.4.2.1.2. Findings**

Table 5.12 summarises the results for the correlation analysis between FB and all the key constructs from the conceptual framework. None of the relationships are statistically significant, apart from employee commitment, which yields a low but statistically significant correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.325$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results are indicative of a modest association between the variables.

Evidence of an association between family ownership and employee commitment is consistent with the results of previous studies. Stewardship behaviour is one of the characteristics that is believed to be unique to family firms (e.g. Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Miller, Le Breton-Miller and Scholnick, 2008; Zahra et al., 2008; Davis et al., 2010). Stewardship behaviour is reflected through the family members but primarily through the family owner-manager's deep and personal emotional investment (Bubolz, 2001), high level of personal sacrifice, sensitivity and loyalty (Donnelley, 1964; Ward, 2004) that put the firms above their own personal interest (Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson, 1997; Schulze et al., 2003). This behaviour helps to narrow the gap between family and non-family employees which results in greater flexibility (Brander and Zhang, 2017) and the perception amongst employees that they are being treated fairly, indeed as family member would be treated. The individual who feels appreciated, treated fairly, well-informed and given the opportunities to voice their ideas (Truss et al., 2006) are more likely to be satisfied with their job (Gaertner, 1999; Rayton, 2006) and show more commitment toward the firms (Wright and Cropanzano, 2004; Xu et al., 2016).

The results from the correlation analysis suggest that commitment alone is unable to explain the variation in the use of market information, and/or its impact on performance, between family firms and non-family firms.

Table 5.12 – Spearman Correlation Analysis Results

FB →	Strategic Orientations			Information Use		Performance		E/E and B/S Relationships
	MO	EO	LO	ConcInstr	Symbolic	IndivPerf	OrgPerf	Commit
Spearman's rho	-0.048	0.271	0.208	0.121	-0.159	0.116	-0.031	<b>0.325**</b>
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.672	0.055	0.065	0.287	0.162	0.308	0.788	0.004
r <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.073	0.043	0.015	0.025	0.013	0.001	0.106

Notes: \*\*\* Significant level 1%, \*\* Significant level 5%, \* Significant level 10%

#### **5.4.2.2. Semi-structured Interviews**

In qualitative research, there are several methods that are commonly used for data collection, such as observation (ethnography and content analysis) and interview (in-depth interview and focus group) (Myers, 2013; Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020). The choice in utilising a particular data collection technique depends on the research method, research topic and the availability of the data (Myers, 2013; Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020). If the objective of the research is mainly to examine people's behaviour or event, then observation is the appropriate method. This type of data collection has the best chance to avoid bias as there is no instructions and/or questions given during the process. However, it also means that there is no opportunity for the researcher to explore any unseen thoughts and/or attitudes of the respondents (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020). Ethnographic research and content analysis are two special forms of observational approach. Ethnography looks into behaviour interpretation through the observation of actual life experiences. When conducting an ethnographic study, researcher typically spends a long period of time with participants, usually through a fieldwork and then summarises the findings in a detailed narrative form. On the other hand, content analysis studies pre-existing text, image, video and different other types of data sources. Content analysis is usually used to interpret text-based interviews.

If the objective of the research is mainly to get the answer of why something happens, interview is the appropriate option. Interview is regarded as one of the most important data gathering techniques for qualitative study in business and management (Myers, 2013). By conducting an interview, it enables the documentation of the respondents' reflective temporal journeys and how they were organised, linked and evolved (Morgan, 1996; Schatzki, 2012; Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020). Moreover, interviews allow the researcher to explore and understand specific topics in more details (Myers, 2013) and it provides space for the respondents to share their thoughts, motivations, actions and challenge assumptions (Galletta, 2013; Myers, 2013), especially when discussing complex or sensitive topics. The structure of an interview varies from unstructured, semi-structured to highly structured. Generally, unstructured interviews are conducted using a flexible approach without any pre-set sequence. This approach allows more free and open discussion on the specific topic. In a structured interview, a pre-determined set of questions and/or sequences have been established for each interview and must be followed in exactly in the same way to avoid bias and inconsistency throughout the interviews. Semi-structured interviews follow a pre-existing set of questions,

structures and directions, but gives the researcher some spaces to introduce initiatives to allow follow-up questions to arise out of the pre-existing set of questions. As a result, unexpected and/or insightful findings may arise during the interviews which could enhance the overall findings. Interviews are usually conducted in the form of individual one-to-one interviews or in the form of a focus group which is often conducted in an informal setting, involving eight to twelve respondents who share something in common. A moderator is commonly present in the focus group and he/she will lead the discussion and encourage participations from the respondents in response to a specific list of questions.

Another important aspect of qualitative research is coding. Coding is a complex process and is not a precise science, but rather an interpretive act. Coding is a method used to organise/group similarly coded data into certain categories because they share some characteristics (Saldaña, 2013). Coding process can be done manually, by hand or in more sophisticated ways, by using data analysis software. Manual coding uses print outs, pencil and papers, post-it notes, highlighters and/or basic software like Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. Manual coding is often preferable because it is free and does not require certain skills or understanding that is needed to run different coding software programs. The process, however, takes longer time and is more likely to lead to errors (e.g. misplaced notes, misread handwriting). On the other hand, software coding uses specific software programmes, such as NVivo, QDA Miner, Leximancer, Atlas.ti and MAXQDA, allows the user to classify, sort, identify and organise data quicker, easier and faster and more easily than using pen and paper in manual coding. Moreover, software coding also has a lower risk of human error. Although, on the downside, utilising software coding requires extra cost and knowledge. Generally, the user is required to subscribe and/or purchase the software. Additionally, the user also requires having the necessary knowledge and skills to run the programme. The decision of whether to use manual or electronic ‘software’ coding is usually dependent on the size of the project, the funds and time available as well as the expertise of the researcher (Basit, 2003; Saldaña, 2013).

#### **5.4.2.2.1. Research Design and Methodology**

The follow-up interview is structured to analyse three broad topics: 1) the degree to which the respondent felt encouraged to make evidence-based decisions, as opposed to following their ‘gut-instinct’ (the importance of CMI); 2) those factors which the respondent felt enabled

them to make more/better use of CMI (enablers); and 3) factors which the respondent felt prevented or hindered them from making more/better use of CMI (barriers). Consequently, an in-depth semi-structured interview is chosen as the data collection method for these specific reasons. Firstly, by conducting an in-depth semi-structured interview, the respondents were given the freedom to expand their opinions on these topics. Secondly, it also gives the researcher some opportunities for improvisation to probe for new evidence and/or example substantiate the views expressed, particularly with respect to the importance of family ownership and the role of the owner-manager in relation to the appetite for evidence-based decision-making and, in particular, the use of CMI. Moreover, a one-to-one interview gives the respondents more reassurance when discussing a potentially sensitive topic than conducting a focus group (Hair, Page and Brunsveld, 2020).

An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted online, using Microsoft Teams (version 1.6.00.18681), during a period of four weeks in July 2023<sup>f</sup>. Each interview lasted for  $\pm$  30 minutes. Fourteen respondents were selected from the same sample group on the original survey, which included family and non-family firms, plus male and female respondents from different age groups with different levels of experience. Ethical approval had been acquired from the ethics committee at the University of East Anglia before data collection (see Appendix F). Accordingly, all the participants were provided with information packs containing an information sheet about the research and a consent form according to the ethical requirements of the university. All consent forms were signed and returned prior to the data collection (see Appendices C and D for the information packs). Table 5.13 presents the characteristics of the respondents. To preserve the anonymity, each respondent was given a code (e.g. R\_01, R\_02). Despite the different titles featured, all of the respondents were the individuals who were responsible for sales and/or marketing and the use of CMI to which they have access via the Who Buys My Food? research project.

An Email invitation to participate in the follow-up interview was sent in the first week of July 2023 and a reminder Email was sent in the third week of July 2023. Of the fourteen people invited, seven responded within the specified period. The interviews took place on the second and fourth weeks of July 2023. Each interview started with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and a confirmation of the respondents' informed consent to proceed with the interview. The interviews were recorded and manually transcribed to facilitate the subsequent data analysis. Specific codes from specific words or 'line-by-line, sentence-by-sentence'

(based on the conceptual framework) were manually applied to the transcripts for each interview (Glaser, Strauss and Strutzel, 1968). For example, a statement such as “my company focuses on customers’ demand, so knowing their preference, helps us in designing the perfect product for a specific market segment”, would be coded as exemplifying a ‘high level of Market Orientation’. Subsequently, all of the items that were extracted from the interviews were re-categorised into groups that were consistent with the key constructs from the conceptual framework. Any additional items that did fit readily into any of the key constructs were grouped together and discussed separately. The use of different software programs, such as NVivo, QDA Miner, Leximancer, Atlas.ti and MAXQDA were taken into consideration. However, looking back to the aim of this semi-structured interviews which is mainly for triangulation purposes, the benefits of using software programmes were hindered by the additional cost to purchasing/subscribing to the software and the additional time, skill and knowledge required to learn about the software. In that regard, manual coding was chosen and utilised.

Table 5.12 – The Characteristics of Respondents

	Position/Title	Products	Gender	Age group (y.o.)	Ownership (and generation)	Years of Trading	Total Number of Employees
R_01	Managing Director <sup>e</sup>	Selections of ready and packed meals	Female	45-54	Family Business 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	More than 20 years	More than 40
R_02	Commercial Director	Pork snacks, beer and cider	Male	45-54	Non-Family Business	5-10 years	10-20
R_03	Director & Founder <sup>e</sup>	Free range eggs	Female	45-54	Family Business 1 <sup>st</sup> generation	10-15 years	10-20
R_04	Category & Account Manager	Low calories and vegan fizzy drinks	Female	35-44	Non-Family Business	5-10 years	Less than 10
R_05	Sales Director	Plant-based and vegan snacks	Male	25-34	Family Business 1 <sup>st</sup> generation	5-10 years	20-30
R_06	Sales Director	Bottled sauces and marinates	Male	25-34	Family Business 3 <sup>rd</sup> generation	5-10 years	10-20
R_07	Category Manager & Commercial Controller	Selections of dairy products	Male	25-34	Family Business 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	More than 20 years	20-30

Notes:

- <sup>e</sup> indicates sample that is also the owner of the company
- <sup>f</sup> the semi-structured interviews were conducted several months after the survey. Notwithstanding the unprecedented events that occurred in between, it is important to note that none of the questions were linked to these events and none of the respondents mentioned any of them in the course of the interviews.

#### 5.4.2.2.2. Findings

This section presents the key findings from the semi-structured interview that highlight the importance of CMI, the barriers and/or enablers and the importance of family ownership to the effective use of CMI.

#### The Importance of CMI

During the interviews, all the respondents acknowledged the importance of CMI on their firms' performance at both the organisation and individual levels and this applies to several different factors. The literature identifies three distinct ways in which market information is used to support decision-making, including Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003). Conceptual, Instrumental and Symbolic Use have been shown to affect performance at the organisation and individual level, albeit to varying degrees (Humby et al., 2007; Plimmer, 2010; Donnelly et al., 2012; Malagueño et al., 2019). The summary of those factors highlighted by the respondents as being important in relation to the use of CMI are presented in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14 – The Summary of Factors that Influence to the Use of CMI

Factor	R_01	R_02	R_03	R_04	R_05	R_06	R_07
Product segmentation			X				
Promotion				X	X		
New product development					X		
Expanding into new market					X		
Innovation					X		
Strategy planning	X		X		X	X	
Develop learning culture					X		
Maintain relationship with buyer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Preserve relationship with buyer				X	X		
<i>Ad hoc</i> tool		X					



The findings support the main argument that the Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI has a positive impact on performance, at both the organisation and individual levels. These findings are in line with the evidence from the literature which suggest that better use of information leads toward better decision-making and adds competitive advantages that are critical to firm performance (Yeoh, 2000; Keh et al., 2007; Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011; Carson et al., 2020). For example, on an individual level, the respondents identified Instrumental Use of CMI as the most common use – clearly targeted for specific marketing decisions. Respondent 5 (R\_05) utilised the CMI mainly for strategy planning; the data allowed them to grow and prepare to enter for a new market, as quoted:

*“... What we do with the data you've kind hit the nail on the head with it. We've got the day-to-day stuff, which is what we use the data to look at - your point promotions, performance, what we would generally be going in everyday and understanding, okay, how can we grow the business? But also long-term – what we use the data for is understanding that if we want to get into a new market or a new area and we've got the data there, we'll always use that to look at - is it a growing segment, is there an opportunity for new products to come in, is there an opportunity for innovation? So, when we're looking at our innovation pipeline and we do it on a monthly basis for the next two to three years. We like to use the data to say, actually is this the right category to go into or not? Is it a category that's worth going into? What's the size of the prize of the category? Is it a £15 million category or £100 million category, which has got an option to have innovation in it or is it something that actually there's no innovation, it's declining and it's probably not where you want to put your innovation for the future, so we use the data for both angles.” (R\_05)*

Another respondent, Respondent 6 (R\_06) perceived and utilised the CMI as a tactical tool, one that was able to provide information in day-to-day setting, as quoted:

*“... for us, it will be both. The longer-term piece is probably for informing the type of products that we develop and the type of categories we want to operate in. The product development probably takes six months or on yearly basis. The short-term base is more tactical, it's more day-to-day or each meeting/occasion; like we've got a specific problem with this range in Tesco, how do we use data to tell the story.” (R\_06)*

Both the Conceptual/Instrumental Use and Symbolic Use of CMI encourage firms to utilise market information and this is reflected in the firms' ability to make specific decisions (e.g. Maltz et al., 2006; Cillo et al., 2010; Parry and Song, 2010; Jayawarna et al., 2014; Yawson, 2020), such as preparing for buyer review meetings, managing relationships with buyers, promotional planning, new product development and redesigning packaging. All the respondents emphasised that CMI has given them the crucial information that was useful in maintaining their relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). Respondent 1 (R\_01) and Respondent 4 (R\_04) highlighted that the data gave them a stance to be able to present, defend

and justify their position to the supermarket buyer (Tesco), adjusting between what they actually need with what the supermarket buyer (Tesco) actually wants, as quoted:

*“... yeah, it’s about strategy. I don’t think that we can jump from one thing to the other and you can’t just react to data, you have to incorporate it to your longer-term strategy and what the buyer wants.*

*The buyer wants us as their category partners to look at all categories and to make recommendations – this is working well, this is not working so well, here is a product that could replace it. So, definitely there’s a swing towards the buyer wanting their suppliers to be the category expert. We would never criticise other suppliers but we were able to rely on the data so we can show our understanding and make that recommendation, e.g. the rate of sales or the uniqueness of the product isn’t working for you. So, it’s a very objective say from the data instead of saying that the product does not taste nice, therefore, you should not have it.” (R\_01)*

*“... you need the data; it is massively important for dealing with Tesco. It helps to justify your position on the shelf and have credible conversation with the buying and category team at Tesco. You need to understand how your product performs versus your competitions. If you don’t know that, you are not credible supplier to Tesco. You don’t always get the time of the day, but if you go in and even if you’re not performing well, if you’re able to explain why and explain the opportunities and you’re using the data, you can identify the opportunities and you can quantify the opportunities as well; it gives you a really strong argument and rationale with the buyers and you need that; without the data, Tesco buyers just not interested really.” (R\_04)*

The CMI also provides critical information for target placement and product segmentation with respect to Tesco shoppers and generates KPIs that provide objective evidence of performance relative to the competition. This facilitates more evidence-based decision-making in areas that have the potential to significantly impact sales. Respondent 3 (R\_03) shared that the data gives them the details information needed to make certain adjustment to cater to the buyers’ needs, in this case by adjusting the packaging and sizing of eggs, as quoted:

*“... our product, it’s more premium. So, we’re talking more toward the higher end but then we use the data to help us with the segmentations. Last year, we tried to bring on a value pack of twelve eggs to target the lower end, but it did not work well. So, we went back to the data and changed it for a mix size eggs and that made a different, with the sizing and different price points. Although overall, we are still very much targeting the higher ends. The data is useful for us to target a certain audience.” (R\_03)*

The initial findings from the survey indicated mixed results on the importance of Symbolic Use. The initial findings suggested that Symbolic Use has no impact on organisation level of performance, but it does impact individual performance. During the interview, some of the respondents provided the evidence that Symbolic Use of CMI appeared to be eminent for this group of samples, mainly for the individual (account manager) to preserve their relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). Respondent 4 (R\_04) and Respondent 5 (R\_05) shared

that they used the CMI mainly to justify/carry out the good relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco), as quoted:

*“... you need the data; it is massively important for dealing with Tesco. It helps to justify your position on the shelf and have a credible conversation with the buying and category team at Tesco. You need to understand how your product performs versus your competition. If you don't know that, you are not a credible supplier to Tesco. You don't always get the time of the day, but if you go in and even if you're not performing well if you're able to explain why and explain the opportunities and you're using the data, you can identify the opportunities and you can quantify the opportunities as well; it gives you a really strong argument and rationale with the buyers and you need that; without the data, Tesco buyers just not interested really.” (R\_04)*

*“... So, for a business our size we don't have an abundance of cash to buy data. So, the data we get from yourselves and from the team is phenomenal for us. To be honest, we use it to make a lot of decisions. The first one, if I talk externally, it helps us when I need to speak to the buyers (Tesco) - what's the rate of sale performance, what's in the fixture of the competitors, how's it performing and for our own brands and products as well, what's our rate of sale, is it above the average. Your tool on the portal – we can look at it, is it above the average, is it below, but also the key bits for me are all about penetration, loyalty, repeat rate purchases, they're the key parameters we use to say okay, is there an issue with promotions - are the promotions working or not, are we getting people into the store, shopping, our shopping, the fixture and shopping our product, yes or no. By doing that then allows us to shape - number one is our promo strategy, have we got the right product, have we got the right proposition and ultimately what can we give to the buyers, for example listing our products or change in what we're doing with it. So, it really backs up every bit of information and data point that we want to present to the buyers.” (R\_05)*

Moreover, during the interviews, some of the respondents also provided some evidence that supported the initial assumption that Symbolic Use that is often associated with some ‘negative’ images, such as deliberately distorting, altering the decision to fit with one’s opinion or to justify the decision that is already being made (Goodman, 1993; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003). Amongst the respondents, Respondent 2 (R\_02) shared that they did not necessarily use the CMI, although for them, the CMI posed as a strategic tool whenever they have a meeting and/or are in the position to defend their argument to the supermarket buyer (Tesco), as quoted:

*“... what you tend to find with start-up business, they are running very, very quickly and have to make decisions in real time. I'm making a huge generalisation here, but certainly for the way I use the data, I use it to inform me ahead of any kind of crucial meetings, the bit that I struggle with is having the time and the and the space in the in the calendar to actually use it as a more strategic tool. Whether it's a function of the way I work and it's probably a bit of that, but then it's also probably a function of when you're in a start-up, you're very much hand-to-mouth in terms of resource and time. You don't necessarily use the data as a strategic thinking or development or you're using it as very much an ad hoc – are we heading in the right direction? what do we need to do differently? Making sure that you got a story on where your product is in Tesco and how it's performing ahead of any kind of crucial meetings is more important.” (R\_02)*

One respondent from a newly established firm provided some evidence that the CMI has enabled them to develop a learning culture within the firm. This finding is consistent with some of the findings from previous studies in the literature (e.g. Sinkula et al., 1997; Sadler-Smith et al., 2001; Wang 2008) which emphasise the role that LO plays in the generation of new knowledge to build new skills and capabilities that eventually lead to competitive advantages (Zahra, Neubaum and Larrañeta, 2007; Chirico, 2008; Zahra, 2012; Martín-Santana, Cabrera-Suárez, and Déniz-Déniz, 2020). Moreover, LO also enabled knowledge sharing that boosted firms' capacity to adapt to changes in the market environment (Zahra et al., 2008; Hernández-Linares et al., 2018) and the ability of firms to communicate and exchange information more effectively and efficiently (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Teece, 2014; Hernández-Linares et al., 2018). Respondent 5 (R\_05) provided evidence that CMI encouraged the learning and knowledge-sharing process not only on the individual level between the staff members, but the CMI was also passed into the other departments within the firms, as quoted:

*“Do you know what's quite interesting? The way we take with the data. So obviously my team, myself and the sales team will look at the data, but these days marketing team join to look into the data as well. We are heavily involved in looking at the performance of the data to give the category story of where the products are, how they fit and what's going on. So, you've got two parts of the business looking at the data. What I do is I talk through the data with the team and say this is what I see. They'll tell me what they see and how to understand it, how to interpret it, and then ultimately, they'll come to me, this is the presentation we're doing. This is what the thought is and then we'll go from there. I used to work for Tesco and Unilever. So, if they're new into sales and they're new into start-up or an SME and they haven't had or they haven't got the experience from a corporate background, it is all new to them. And let's be honest, we do workshops with the team to say this is how you understand the data, this is what it means. So, you have to spend time. We spend time with them to understand - okay, this is what loyalty means, this is penetration, this is exceeding the rate of sale, this is what rate of sale means, etcetera. So, you do a bit of upskilling with the team to make sure they're able to interpret it and then, once they get their head around it, then they look and absorb it and take it there, take it going forward into the cell index.” (R\_05)*

### **The Enablers/Barriers to the Use of CMI**

Apart from looking at the importance and the impact of CMI on performance, the other main objective of the study is to look at the potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI on performance at both the organisation and individual levels. The initial findings provided mixed results on some of the constructs that potentially posed as barriers and/or enablers of CMI that reflect on performance. The findings from the semi-structured interviews have provided the requisite evidence that helps to better identify the potential barriers and/or enablers of CMI. Moreover, some of the respondents provided a better understanding of how the potential barriers and/or enablers impact on performance at both

organisation and individual levels. The summary of the barriers and/or enablers to the use of CMI is presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15 – The Summary of the Barriers and/or Enablers to the Use of CMI

Factor	R_01	R_02	R_03	R_04	R_05	R_06	R_07
Cost effective (free)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Authenticity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Simplicity and user-friendly	X			X		X	
Training (webinar)			X		X		
Time constraints	X			X	X		
Fear of technology	X						
(Human) resources		X					

#### Potential Barriers and/or Enablers

The small business literature highlights that one of the biggest barriers that are faced by the small firms is resource constraints that could be found in a few different forms – including skills, time, finances and human resources (Stokes, 2000; Hudson et al., 2001; Lu and Beamish, 2001; Simmons et al., 2008; Ihua, 2011). Some respondents acknowledged and highlighted some of the barriers that they had/faced in regard to the exploitation and/or utilisation of CMI. The major one is finance, as expected, but interestingly, they also mentioned some practical day-to-day operational concerns, such as time constraints and their ability to interpret the data. Respondent 1 (R\_01) shared that in general setting, they would not be able to afford the cost of market information, but the CMI in particular, as quoted:

*“... the cost of Dunnhumby data is so high that we just can’t reach for it. We couldn’t justify the expenditure.” (R\_01)*

Moreover, Respondent 1 (R\_01) also shared their struggle to allocate their time to understand and analyse the data, as quoted:

*“... our barrier would have been time constraints – to take the time to get the reports, analyse the report, work with the data. So that would have been a barrier.” (R\_01)*

Some other respondents expressed concern about their ability to correctly interpret the CMI, reflecting another, frequently cited, resource constraint associated with small firms – a lack of knowledge/know-how and a lack of investment in staff training and development (McDonald et al., 1996; Gruner et al., 1997; Henschion and McIntyre, 2000) as the causes. Apart from time constraints, Respondent 1 (R\_01) further explained that it is the fear of using technology especially for the older employee, that created such an ‘ignorant’ tendency in using the CMI.

*“... the other thing is probably knowledge as well. Before we had an account manager from the older generation, they looked at the data and went “What are they? I don’t know what that means. No, I’m not talking about that”. That person is now retired, so fear could be the barrier to the openness to understand the data and create avoidance.” (R\_01)*

This lack of human resources may be due to the problems associated with the unique trait of family firms, the omnipresence, in which one individual is responsible for multiple roles and responsibilities within the firm (Burns, 2016). Respondent 2 (R\_02) shared that they do not have adequate human resources specifically assigned to utilise the data, as quoted:

*“... We don't tend to have what we call account managers, the people that are running the business are also doing the customer bit as well. I'm generally the one that will be taking the data, looking at the insight and then trying to understand what we need to do.” (R\_02)*

In the context of the study, CMI is offered free of charge to the local SFDPs that are involved in Who Buys My Food? research project in order to overcome the financial (budget) constraint. Having had this exposure and free access to the CMI, all the respondents acknowledged and showed their appreciation that the CMI has eased their financial burden (Stokes, 2000; Hudson et al., 2001; Lu and Beamish, 2001; Simmons et al., 2008; Ihua, 2011) to acquire market information by providing the CMI for free. Respondent 4 (R\_04) emphasised that with their (budget) limitation, they were unable to afford the data, as quoted:

*“... it was good that you gave us the data, because we couldn’t budget to get the data by ourselves.” (R\_04)*

By providing the CMI free of charge to the SFDP, the Who Buys My Food? research project has had considerable success in easing the SFDPs’ financial pressure to gain the access to the important market information. Respondent 7 (R\_07) provided the necessary evidence; the respondent emphasised that CMI positively impacts their business without putting any burden (financially) on their shoulders, as quoted:

*“... It is seen as a very positive thing within our business because we don't have to pay for it. Essentially, we don't have massive budgets for it. So, having the data for free is invaluable and it gives us real insights into the categories ...” (R\_07).*

Apart from the free exposure and access to the CMI, during the interview, the respondents also emphasised the compatibility and authenticity of the data (Humby, Hunt and Philips, 2008). As the suppliers to Tesco, the SFDPs find that it is essential that the market information that they referred to came from the same source (Dunnhumby data), retrieved from the real-time shopping behaviour derived from the Tesco Clubcard, which is used by the supermarket buyer (Tesco) as the point of reference. Consequently, the CMI allowed both supermarket buyer (Tesco) and supplier (SFDP) to be able to ‘talk in the same language’. Respondent 2 (R\_02) and Respondent 6 (R\_06) shared their view on the CMI’s originality and compatibility for preparing a meeting with a supermarket buyer (Tesco), as quoted:

*“... when you walk into a meeting with Tesco and they know that you have got access to Dunnhumby data, the way they treat you does change a little bit. So, throughout a tricky decision, if you've got the sales data to challenge the decision, it's obviously changed the dynamic, in a good way.” (R\_02)*

*“... I think, everyone has got an opinion and it's always based on your personal experiences or your preferences. So, I think it's a good thing to have the data, because it's very scientific and objective, like the data is based on sampling of 1000 customers or so. So yeah, the data helps align people to one view rather than their own personal view. It works in both of my relationships with my bosses as well as with Tesco – it's like you are speaking their language with their data and it's not opinion or internal study, you could kind of challenge, whereas if it's their specific Clubcard data, then that's the data, that's what it says.” (R\_06)*

Moreover, Respondent 1 (R\_01) and Respondent 4 (R\_04) shared that the CMI helped them to build trust and avoid some potential misunderstanding in using different types of market information, as quoted:

*“... the fact that it is Dunnhumby data is very important – the level of trust of the data is very high, from both Tesco and from our point of view. There was never any doubt as to the authenticity of the data. Also because of the source of the data – the Clubcard, there was a high level of trust. I think if we need to rely on things like focus groups carried out by third parties or other surveys, there's always that doubt - has it been set up to succeed, has it been skewed to give the answer you want, whereas there was none of the data could be preconditioned. The data telling you what it is, there is no manipulation on it; therefore, it was highly authentic.” (R\_01)*

*“If you are a small challenger brand - reports from companies like Nielsen and Kantar, your read is so small and you're such a tiny drop in the picture, so it's really difficult to make good commercial arguments using it, but with the Dunnhumby data, with your data, you are able to show it from Tesco's perspective. You are able to give much more when arguing and explaining how you are going to drive their performance, their sales and target their customers. So, you can align it as well with the understanding what their whole objectives and strategies are, so you can make sure that the whole*

*argument is balanced from their overall categories' objectives. So, if you're a small player, you've got to act like a big boy. Your sales will be smaller, your budgets will be smaller, but with the Who Buys My Food data, you can deliver the same quality of rationale behind your product range as the big companies. So, it does level the playing field in that way; it means that you're talking the same language, you are giving the same matrix and you can align what you're doing with the category strategy and with the overall store strategy. This data enables us to talk the same language, even though we're very small.” (R\_04)*

The Who Buys My Food? research project has created a simple and friendly environment for those SFDPs who are willing to expose themselves to the CMI. The research project understood that not everybody is familiar with market information and/or the technicality of using such a complex data set. Therefore, the research project also offered free reports, training (webinars) and one-to-one consultation to get the SFDPs familiar with and always informed in utilising the CMI. Respondent 3 (R\_03) commended the webinar offered by the research project, as quoted:

*“... the webinars were really helpful. They were essential because until that I haven't had a clue on what I was doing or what those numbers meant. It helped me to know what to look for.” (R\_03)*

Respondent 5 (R\_05) shared their learning process (growth), from not knowing about the data, to being familiarised with the information until they were able to transform the data into useful insight, as quoted:

*“My team and the marketing team have joined but I've not joined the webinars. But the webinars are amazing. The feedback from the team – the webinars are perfect, because they allow them to understand and that's the key bit of it - what is the output of all this information and how can you use it, so they appreciate that as well. And I think more webinars are even better because it only helps to add to people's knowledge.” (R\_05).*

### **The Importance of Family Ownership**

Up until this point, the findings from semi-structured interviews have provided the clarity and the necessary evidence to clarify the mixed results on the initial findings regarding the importance and the potential barriers and/or enablers to the use of CMI. Another point of difference when conducting the interview is the addition of the family ownership factor. The literature is inconclusive with respect to the impact of family ownership on performance. The findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews confirmed that family ownership has some influence on performance, at both organisation and individual levels to a certain extent. For this group of samples, the findings suggested that family ownership has a positive influence on both levels of performance. Throughout the semi-structured interviews, the respondents provided evidence that the influence of family ownership is more pronounced



and reflected through some unique characteristics/traits. Table 5.16 provides a summary of the characteristics/traits of family ownership that influence the use of CMI on performance.

Table 5.16 – The Summary of Characteristics/Traits that Influence to the Use of CMI

Factor	R_01	R_02	R_03	R_04	R_05	R_06	R_07
Autonomy					X		
Quick decision-making			X			X	
Flexibility					X		
Stewardship behaviour					X	X	X
Emotional support					X		X
Treated like family member	X						
Generational (family) influence	X					X	
Intuition ‘gut-instinct’	X					X	

On the organisation level, recent studies from the literature have presented some mixed findings in regard to the influence of family ownership on firm performance; some point out that family ownership positively influences firm performance (e.g. Anderson and Reeb, 2003; Villalonga and Amit, 2006); while some suggest that there is no significant relationship (e.g. Westhead and Howorth, 2006; Sciascia and Mazzola, 2008; Carney et al., 2015) and others find non-linear effects (e.g. Mazzola et al., 2013). During the interview, some of the respondents emphasised that first and foremost, family ownership gives a certain ‘family identity’ (Nonaka, 1994) that is unique, valuable and exclusively belongs to them. This unique identity does not necessarily influence firm performance *per se* (through sales and/or cash flow). The respondents mention that the family firm as an entity gives certain benefits, such as flexibility (Brander and Zhang, 2016) and autonomy (Chirico and Nordqvist, 2010; Long and Mathews, 2011) to make a quick decision to respond to the challenging markets. Overall, the findings from the semi-structured interviews have provided some evidence to support the notion that family ownership has a significant impact on performance in general or the use of CMI specifically. However, considering that there were also some non-family firms in the sample group, it could possibly limit the significance of the evidence provided. In those cases,

the respondents felt that family ownership indeed was important and that the impact was generally positive. Respondent 5 (R\_05) and Respondent 3 (R\_03) shared their thought, as quoted:

*"... for our brand, family business means that it is where the business is privately owned so we're not owned by a corporate business. And having privately owned and being part of it means that it's actually a team decision, it's a business decision rather than being told what to do like in the corporates. The owner is still part of the business, he trusts the team to make the decisions as well. He gives autonomy to the MD and the rest of the team and will always support the decision of the business rather than what his views are. So, it's always business, if it's the business decision, it's the business which is great and exactly how we like to work. [...] it means we work at pace. We try to do things quickly, we'll try and get answers quickly, which is great." (R\_05)*

*"... it does not make any difference - being a family business, however, we can make decisions quicker, unlike the big corporation because then you have to go through too many different people." (R\_03)*

On the individual level, the impact of family ownership appeared to be primarily channelled through the owner-manager's stewardship behaviour. Family firm literature highlights that owner-manager with stewardship behaviour is often selfless, respects their employees, treats them fairly and, most importantly, puts the firms' interest before their own (Zahra, 2003; Dyer, 2006; Zahra et al., 2008; Debcki, Van de Graaff Randolph, and Sobczak, 2017). Respondent 7 (R\_07) shared that, for them, the owner-manager positioned themselves as the unsung hero, they showed some attention to details that sometimes went unnoticed, but it significantly affected the employees, as quoted:

*"... not really, they aren't involved in daily things, but still have a say on it, especially on big investment, NPD, we always need to run past them. They're kind of semi silent partners; they come in every day but they take on other roles. They often do things that people take for granted, let's say you want a cup of tea. They always make sure that the tea bags are fully stocked or the milk is always come on time for you. There's lots of stuff happening behind the scenes that you may not notice, so they offer emotional support or presence, they are kind of there for you and they quite often go and reach out to our current or new farmers. So, they're there, not really involved on a the day-to-day basis business but they make sure everything running smoothly and help facilitating." (R\_07)*

Through these gestures, it narrows the gap between family and non-family members that results in non-family employees feeling that they are treated like a family member (Keanon, 2018). Moreover, these gestures/behaviours also boost commitment, loyalty, interdependence and bonds not only among the family members but also among non-family members motivating them to go above and beyond in helping the firms to reach their goals (Eddleston

and Kidwell, 2012; Azizi et al., 2022). Respondent 1 (R\_01) shared that the family culture often influenced the decision-making process, as quoted:

*“... we tried to keep the business and the family very separate. The business is run by a senior management team who are non-family members as well as family members. So, it's not all decisions only by the family members, we have external non-executive directors that support the team. So, there's a lot of objectivity, you know? I think the family business is more on the culture of the business. Having that family feeling of knowing our colleagues, knowing a little bit more about them and making decisions based on what we feel we would like and how our family to be treated. So yeah, it's not a hard corporate culture. There were times where we made decisions that were not the most commercially desirable, but we made them for non-commercial reasons.” (R\_01)*

One important aspect of the use of CMI that featured in almost all the interviews was the role that it plays in strengthening the relationships with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). In regard to this finding in particular, it does not matter whether the respondent was the owner-manager or account manager and whether it was a family or non-family firms, as the findings clearly reflected the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). It is through the stewardship behaviour, this individual willing to put the extra effort and committing to build the B/S relationships. Stewardship behaviour is found to be stronger in family firms (Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006; Chua, Chrisman and Bergiel, 2009; Chen et al., 2016; Neckebrouck et al., 2018) as family members rely on mutual intra-familial trust, concern and devotion (Corbetta and Salvato, 2004; Casprini et al., 2020; Marler et al., 2021). Firms with strong stewardship governance are more inclusive, flexible where employees get more opportunities to be trained, nurtured and assigned to have more responsibilities (Madison et al., 2017; Scholes et al., 2021). Respondent 1 (R\_01) shared that their effort in understanding the data and how it was appreciated and complimented by the supermarket buyer (Tesco), as quoted:

*“... the data helps us in our meeting, when it comes to the buyer; to have a successful relationship with the buyer, you need to bring them the information from the data so that, they can then disseminate with their colleagues. So, if you don't have and don't know the data, you are sitting down to have a meeting without knowing anything, which is a real problem. This data has become very reliant on the format of our meeting and our account reviews had very heavily relied on the data... [...] ... in every buyer-seller relationship, there's always stress points. There has been particular in this last two years with the inflation been so rampant and but our products in would always perform for them (Tesco) and we relied very heavy on the performance of our products. They (Tesco) are very professional and we always have been complimented, “wow, that was one of the best presentations I've had”, “wow, you blew that out of the park”. We confident in what we do but we also listen, that's why we think the data is very helpful.” (R\_01)*

Thus far, the findings from the semi-structured interviews have provided some evidence to confirm that family ownership gives an identity that positively influences both firm and

individual's performance. The findings from the semi-structured interviews also led into another discovery on a subject that originally was not part of the objectives; as it provided adequate evidence to the notion that decision-making in family firms is highly influenced by generational involvement, especially by the older generation (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996). The family firm as an entity comprises active family members, inactive family members, non-family members employees and sometimes external directors on the board, in which they collectively make decisions (Keanon, 2018). The generational involvement often creates confusion (De Vries, 1993). The founding members spend a great deal of time becoming the role models, setting the family identities and culture, providing intensive grooming and mentorship (Gersick et al., 1997; Chua et al., 2003); they play a critical role in shaping the pattern of strategic decision for the next generations (Ibrahim et al., 2001; 2004). Even after they retire, they are not completely gone; as their presence and power, especially when it comes to big decisions (e.g. NPD, investment and expansion) are still dominating (Aronoff et al., 1997; Gersick et al., 1997). Respondent 1 (R\_01) from a second-generation family firm shared that even if the older generation's involvement is still present (e.g. through emotional support, investment, advice), they were no longer personally involved in the day-to-day activities, as quoted:

*"... my parents are now not at the age where they're not involved in the business anymore, but their capital is still in the business. They are no longer involved in daily activities but when it comes to sizeable investment, we put the case to the family to get the agreement to all the shareholders – all are family members."* (R\_01)

As an entity, a family firm is often described as inflexible and resisting change (Eddleston et al., 2008) as they are burdened by old traditions, values and practices set by the founders (Carrasco-Hernández and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2013). The founders are often the central decision-maker within the firms (Hatak and Roessl, 2015), characterised by the paternalistic and authoritative management style which often denies autonomy and input from other employees (Chirico and Nordqvist, 2010). As a result, the founders are often take the central spot as the decision-maker based on central repositories of in-depth tacit knowledge about the business (Nordqvist and Melin, 2010) and custodians of long-standing personal relationships with customers, suppliers and even competitors (Hatak and Roessl, 2015). Respondent 1 (R\_01) elaborated further that the tendency of using 'gut-instinct' that is passed from the older generation is still impacting the way they make decisions, as quoted:

*"... because of the size that we are and the structure that we are, we kind of go with our gut sometimes. There's always that overriding - we're not going blind sight into something just because*

*the data said so. We have had the opportunities in the past to list products and the buyer (Tesco) has been very keen on them. We've gone away and done the commercials and said look it's just simply not going to work; you know there might be a need for it, but the fact that there's a gap for it. We've done the commercials and it did not stack up. That's why there was a gap and it's just not something that can be filled with the current costs of the products. So no, we would be quite strong and saying you know guys this is not going to work because we don't want to go into a project that it's going to end up losing money or costing money. I think it's the family structure and having been part of the business directly for the last 17 years. So yeah, you have that gut feeling that you do rely on and you have to make decisions out of that.” (R\_01)*

The influence of the older generations is still impacting the firms, even if they are no longer present in the day-to-day activities. On one hand, the presence of older generations provides some safety net for the younger generations, in consideration for their experiences and knowledge but on the other hand, the older generation's involvement might challenge their authority and power as the current business owners (Alderson, 2009). Respondent 6 (R\_06) from third-generation family firms shared the sentiment that they had mixed feelings about the involvement of their parents/grandparents while running the business, as quoted:

*“... the business is now on the third generation. The grandparents are no longer involved; however, the parents are involved from a chairman's perspective but not really in day-to-day activities. [...] it's not really affected too much by the family element of it, it's not a big deal. The business is nearly a 50-year-old, it's been around for a while, has a lot of experience there and a lot of different reference points to pull from. It is still a small business, hence, the family is still making sure that the decisions we make are commercially viable and not affecting profits and it's all ultimately, cash can't be tight and profit is a key measure, so it's just making sure that any investment decisions we make are robust enough to not undermine profit or cash positions.” (R\_06)*

Moreover, two respondents from the second and third generations of family firms provided some insight into the current 'battle' between maintaining traditions or keeping up with the *zeitgeist*. The younger generations have a stronger tendency toward evidence-based decision-making and less reliance on 'gut-instinct', unlike their predecessors (Nordqvist and Melin, 2010), as quoted by Respondent 6 (R\_06) and Respondent 7 (R\_07):

*“... as a small business, you always need to balance profit and the return on investment; and you haven't got the size like some of the big multinational companies, like Unilever. We could access all the data, but we'd have to buy it and it wouldn't just be viable. The data helps us to be able to understand how our products are working for customers and for our retailers better. It's meant we can actually understand who our core customers, and from that we can make better decisions in the range we develop or how we demonstrate the success of our brands to the retailers and how we build a more kind of data-based argument for change or for growth. Previously it will be more based on feeling or anecdotal stuffs, which is actually really hard when these days we're very much in a data-driven world and industry.” (R\_06)*

*“...we can use the data to debunk the myths, I think that's the best way to explain it. Because we're not blessed with lots of data and we haven't done lots of customer research and all kind of stuffs.*

*What we could do was to use the Dunnhumby data to really say, "look, this is the customer that is buying.". So, if someone said "Ow, I think our customer is women, late 20s.", for argument's sake, I could go "well, actually, the Dunnhumby data on this product says that your customer is coming from older generation. It's affluent." [...] How to best describe it that there's a lot of assumptions made based on people's experiences of going shopping or the brand or whatever, and this data really showed that this was the actual shopper unlike whatever you thought it was. The Tesco data told you exactly what it was and then, there was no argument, then, you could talk about your products or your categories ..." (R\_07).*

## **5.5. Conclusions for Additional Findings**

The aims for the additional analyses are to analyse the influence of family ownership on performance (through the different use of market information) and also to gain greater clarity on the initial findings from the survey. Consequently, these additional analyses are set based on three main items – the importance, potential barriers and/or enablers on using the CMI in relation to family ownership. Overall, through both correlation analysis and semi-structured interviews, the findings are able to provide some clarity and the necessary evidence. Firstly, the findings confirm that family ownership positively influences decision-making process in family firms to a certain extent. The influence of family ownership is found to be subtle; it is more pronounced on the background and, therefore, family ownership potentially has a weak indirect effect on performance (through different use of market information). At the organisation level, family members (active and non-active), some non-family employees and (sometimes) boards of directors take the full control when it comes to the decision-making process. The findings suggest that firm as an entity is not directly using the CMI in making decisions. It is the individual (account manager) who is actually using the CMI and collecting all the data that will be used for the decision-making process at the organisation level. Additionally, certain characteristics of family firms such as stewardship behaviour, generation involvement and emotion/intuitive based decision-making make their presence more pronounced.

At the individual level, the responsibility falls to the hand of the account manager who is actually using the CMI and is given a certain degree of autonomy in making the day-to-day operational decisions, which later they compile and use to report back to their employer. The findings in particular highlight the importance of the account manager in developing and maintaining a strong relationship with supermarket buyer (Tesco). The findings suggest that the account manager is motivated, committed and willing to put extra effort in building and maintaining this B/S relationship. Regardless of their motivations, the findings suggest that

the account manager clearly perceives that the B/S relationship is vital for the firms and, therefore, they put in all the necessary efforts, including using the CMI to contribute to the relationship. This specific finding is consistent with the correlation result which indicate that family ownership positively correlates with the individual level of commitment.

The next chapter (Chapter 6) concludes the thesis by presenting the discussion of the overall findings, the study's contributions, it's limitations, and finally, giving further suggestions to the future research.

# CHAPTER 6 – RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 6.1. Chapter Overview

This concluding chapter comprises three main parts. The first part presents a discussion of the overall findings from the primary research and how the overall results compare (support/contrast) with the findings from previous studies. This is followed by a discussion of the contribution that the study makes to both literature and practitioners. The limitations of the study are discussed next and finally, the thesis concludes with the identification of areas for future research.

## 6.2. Discussion of the Study Findings

This study has attempted to address two research objectives: 1) to explore different uses of CMI and its impact on performance and 2) to explore the potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI on local SFDP through two different perspectives – from the firm's perspective (through the influence of different Strategic Orientations) and from the individual's perspective (through the influence of the key individual's level of commitment on intra-organisation relationship with the owner-manager and inter-organisation relationship with the supermarket buyer – Tesco). Through an extensive review of the literature, the study develops a conceptual framework and thirteen hypotheses through to analyse these relationships. The following section presents the discussion of all the findings from all the data analyses.

### 6.2.1. The Use of Customised Market Intelligence and Its Impact on Performance

The first four hypotheses ( $H_{1a}$  –  $H_{1d}$ ) were developed based on the discussion on the dimensions of information use, their importance and it sought to address the first objective of the study – to analyse the different use of information and its impact on performance at the organisation ( $H_{1a}$  –  $H_{1b}$ ) and individual levels ( $H_{1c}$  –  $H_{1d}$ ). The initial findings from the survey present mixed results for these hypotheses ( $H_{1a}$  –  $H_{1d}$ ). Based on the initial findings, there is evidence to suggest that SFDPs acknowledged the importance of information use, which is reflected by their use of the CMI both conceptually/instrumentally and/or symbolically at



both the organisation and individual levels of performance. These initial findings are supported by the empirical evidence from the small business literature which suggests that the effective use of market information is an important contributor to firm performance (Yeoh, 2000; Keh et al., 2007; Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011; Carson et al., 2020).

On the organisation level, the initial findings suggest that CMI contributes to firm performance. The impact of Conceptual/Instrumental Use is positively reflected on firm performance, whereas the impact of Symbolic Use is not clearly reflected on the organisation's level of performance. The initial findings from the survey alone were unable to fully explain these hypotheses and justified the results. The evidence from the literature suggests that the majority of small firms are still struggling to allocate appropriate resources in this area, resulting in a lack of understanding of the current market dynamics and consumer demand (Deshpande, 1993; Stoica and Schindehutte, 1999; Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011) which, at best, inhibits their growth and, at worst, resulted in a negative impact to firm performance (Sharp, 1991; Stanton and Herbst, 2005). Moreover, the other empirical evidence from the literature points out that how market information is used results in different impacts on performance (Moorman et al., 1993a; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999). In that regard, Conceptual and Instrumental Use of market information is perceived to be a contributing factor in business performance whilst Symbolic Use of market information is not.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews offer a better clarity in understanding the mixed results from the initial findings. Based on the semi-structured interviews, the evidence suggests that, first, all the respondents also acknowledged the importance of CMI on their business's performance, however, the extent to which each respondent uses the information and how it impacts the business is varied, depending on certain factors (see Table 5.13) that motivated and/or inhibited them in using the CMI. These findings are also consistent with the existing evidence from prior studies (Maltz et al., 2006; Cillo et al., 2010; Parry and Song, 2010; Jayawarna et al., 2014) that highlight the value of market information, CMI in particular, is direct and exclusively relevant to specific distribution channels and customers. Sales growth is a key performance metric for the SFDPs and the supermarket buyer (Tesco). The results suggest that SFDPs which make effective Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI are more likely to grow their sales with the key customers to whom the CMI is targeted and from which it is retrieved than those who do not. The results also show that those SFDPs which are

more inclined to use the CMI symbolically, they are less likely to achieve sales growth as their decision-making is (often) clouded by pre-conceptions and/or ignorance with the respect to the market dynamics and consumer demand.

Generally, the use of market information is only perceived and/or reflected entirely as firm performance. Substantively, market information is also used within the firms at the individual and/or managerial level (Korhonen-Sande, 2010; Keszey and Biemans, 2017; Keszey, 2018). It is supported by the small business literature that acknowledges the important role that human resources play and, in particular, the characteristics of (senior) managers (Goodhew et al., 2005; Way et al., 2018; Gansen-Ammann et al., 2019; Alves et al., 2020). However, the specific contribution of key individuals in their functional role to the overall performance of the firms is often ignored. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the individual – the account manager, who is responsible for the relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). On the individual level, the evidence from the initial findings suggests that CMI also influences the way in which the individual (account manager) uses market information; the impact of Conceptual/Instrumental Use is positively reflected on individual performance, whereas the impact of Symbolic Use is not clearly reflected on individual performance. The findings are supported by the evidence from the literature that suggests Conceptual/Instrumental Use of market information should improve the quality of managerial decisions which is “the most determining factor for the success of marketing management” (Wierenga, 2011, p.89).

In addition, the overall findings indicate that the effective use of CMI not only has a positive impact on firm performance but also the performance of the key individual – the account manager, who plays a pivotal role in the development of evidence-based decision-making within the firms and the development of a strong, collaborative relationship with the supermarket buyer – Tesco. Specifically, the more the account manager uses market information to solve managerial problems in the ‘right’ way the more their individual performance as a manager will improve. In that regard, the utilisation of Conceptual/Instrumental Use of market information means that the account manager recognises that the solution to a specific managerial problem “depends on research providing the market information to fill the information gaps” (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992, p.54). Moreover, the market information is also used to expand managerial knowledge (Jayawarna et al., 2014) which helps the individual to take more assertive decisions informed by

increasing amounts of data from a variety of sources, including critical information about customers, competitors and market developments (Keszey and Biemans, 2017). The evidence from the semi-structured interviews also supports all these initial findings. At the individual level, the evidence shows that the account-manager utilises the CMI in various intensities for a variety of reasons (see Table 5.13); the majority of the respondents indicate more toward Conceptual/Instrumental Use, in which they utilise the CMI for strategy planning. Although the evidence gathered from the semi-structured interviews provides a better understanding of how the SFDPs utilise the CMI, the findings are unable to either confirm or deny that the respondents deliberately use the CMI symbolically. However, one common finding that consistently appears from all the analyses is the confirmation that CMI is vital when it comes to managing/preserving their relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco).

### **6.2.2. The Use of Customised Market Intelligence and Firm's Strategic Orientations**

The second objective regarding the potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI is divided into two sub-parts to enable detailed analyses – from the firm's perspective (through different Strategic Orientations) and from the individual's perspective (through the level of commitment) respectively. This section addresses the first half of the second objective which is summarised through hypotheses  $H_{2a}$ - $H_{2f}$ , as the response for RQ<sub>4</sub>-RQ<sub>6</sub> on the potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI from the firm's perspective.

The initial findings from the survey present mixed results for the hypotheses  $H_{2a}$  –  $H_{2f}$ ; the evidence suggests that there are tensions arising between different Strategic Orientations (MO, EO and LO) within the firms. Strategic Orientations is widely acknowledged as an important influence on those activities that will contribute to the improvement of firm performance (Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Braunscheidel and Suresh, 2009; Hakala, 2011). Prior studies have established the dominance of particular Strategic Orientation, MO (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Narver and Slater, 1990; Slater and Narver, 1995; Hult et al., 2004; Bhuian et al., 2005; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005) and a strong degree of complementarity between different orientations, including MO, EO and LO (Hakala, 2011; Theodosiou et al., 2012; Anees-ur-Rehman and Johnston, 2019), which together were hypothesised to have a positive impact on the effective use of market information through Conceptual and/or Instrumental Use of CMI. Unlike that which is suggested in the literature, these results suggest that, of the hypotheses

(H<sub>2a</sub> – H<sub>2f</sub>), relating to Strategic Orientations and their impact on the effective use of CMI, only the hypothesised impact of LO is accepted (H<sub>2e</sub>).

These findings are at odds with the literature yet but not completely unexpected. Given the challenges that the SFDPs are facing in adopting Strategic Orientations in general and MO in particular, with the specific context of the study, it is perhaps not surprising that the use of CMI is not associated with MO, in which formal, rigid structures and process for the use of market information are an important part (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2007; Didonet et al., 2020). Instead, the findings indicate that what matters the most is the existence of a learning culture, the desire to innovate and the willingness to accept that the use of CMI is a necessary part of doing business with the key supermarket buyer (Tesco) in the dynamic markets, in which the SFDPs are expected to come forward with an evidence-based proposal on sales growth for mutual benefits. On top of that, the evidence from the additional analyses offers better clarity to explain the oddness of the initial findings. The newly gathered evidence provides some pragmatic examples of how the CMI is used to develop the learning culture within the firms. In this particular case, the learning culture is revealed to affect not only the individual but also the firms in general through the inter-departmental dissemination process. It is started by the account manager, as the individual responsible for utilising the CMI and the insight is passed over to the respective team (sales team) and disseminated even more widely into other teams/departments (e.g. marketing team) so that, eventually, this insight will be used on the decision-making process that later is reflected on performance. Accordingly, the insights from the CMI can be benefit for not only one specific individual/team but the firm as a whole.

In addition, the initial findings which suggest that there are potential tensions between Strategic Orientations are also supported and consistent with the alternative approach of different Strategic Orientations by Hakala (2011). This approach highlights the supremacy of a single orientation as the best (amongst others), or this single orientation could potentially pose as an alternative to another orientation (in a given circumstance). Existing evidence from the literature has identified MO as one of the dominant Strategic Orientation (e.g. Pelham, 2000; Martin et al., 2009; Didonet et al., 2012; Hernández-Linares et al., 2018), however, the small business literature, in particular, has highlighted the struggles and challenges that are associated with the adoption of MO amongst small firms (Slater and Narver, 1994; Beverland and Lindgreen, 2007; Gölgeci et al., 2019; Didonet et al., 2020).

Especially in this study context, the majority of SFDPs are micro firms and family-owned and, therefore, they are more likely to be driven by the owner-manager, which is often viewed in the literature as a significant impediment to evidence-based decision-making and organisational development (Brouthers et al., 1998; Allison et al., 2000; Hult et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2003; Wilson and Stokes, 2004; Zontanos and Anderson, 2004; Moriarty et al., 2008; Mazzarol et al., 2009; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). In such circumstances the use of CMI is much less about understanding markets and customers to inform strategic marketing plans, which MO mainly directs the firms toward. For these SFDPs, MO is clearly less important or even not currently extant and, on their current stage, the focus is more directed toward their relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco), which oftentimes is about preparing for quarterly reviews and developing/maintaining a strong relationship with them.

### **6.2.3. Use of Customised Market Intelligence and Individual's Level of Commitment**

This section addresses the other half of the second objective which is summarised through hypotheses H<sub>3a</sub>-H<sub>3b</sub> as the response for RQ<sub>7</sub>-RQ<sub>9</sub> on the potential barriers and/or enablers to the effective use of CMI from the individual's perspective that is analysed through the level of individual commitment.

The initial findings from the survey provide partial support for the hypothesised relationship between individual levels of commitment and the use of CMI. The findings were insufficient in providing the evidence to support the hypothesis (H<sub>3a</sub>) that, the more committed the account manager is, the more likely they are to make effective Conceptual/Instrumental Use of CMI. The findings, however, support the inverse relationship of the hypothesis (H<sub>3b</sub>) between the individual level of commitment and the Symbolic Use of CMI. Amid the unexpected results from hypotheses H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub>, the results offer some interesting findings. The explanation for these interesting findings is two-fold and relates to the specificity of the study context. First, the effective use of CMI is a core focus of the Who Buys My Food? research project, in which SFDPs are provided with regular webinars and one-to-one interactions to support the use of CMI that often targeted for a very specific situation that is related to their relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco) – for example, preparing for a quarterly review meeting, defending a potential de-listing, proposing a promotional plan and increasing distribution of their products. Thus, SFDPs that are engaged in the research project have a good

understanding/perception of what constitutes the effective use of CMI to get the results, regardless of their level of individual commitment to utilising the data. Therefore, there is a possibility that it is not their level of individual commitment but rather their involvement in the research project that is reflected in the effective use of CMI. The findings from the semi-structured interviews were able to provide some adequate evidence to support this first point. All the respondents have clearly emphasised the importance of CMI, more specifically through the benefits (e.g. the authenticity, the simplicity, the cost-effectiveness and the additional training) that come alongside it that encourage more participation and utilisation of the data. Moreover, at some point, these SFDPs are no longer perceived/considered such benefits only as enablers to the effective use of CMI but, for the majority of them, these benefits offer some solutions to overcome the barriers (e.g. financial and human resource poverty) to the day-to-day operational concern when utilising the data.

Second, despite their understanding of Conceptual and Instrumental Use of CMI, there are likely to be occasions when the insight generated from the CMI does not align with the current strategy and/or the tactics of the SFDPs and/or the supermarket buyer (Tesco) currently employs. There are also other potential occasions where the key individuals (owner and/or account manager) experience a potential tension between evidence-based (e.g. using data from market information) and intuition-based (e.g. using 'gut-instinct', prior experience) when it comes to decision-making process amongst the SFDPs. Oftentimes, it leads to indecisiveness and/or scepticism on the decision-making process despite with the benefits (compatibility, authenticity, simplicity, free of charge) that CMI offers. The initial findings from the survey neither confirm nor deny this assumption directly. The evidence, however, suggests that at times, the 'evidence-based' decision-making that is interpreted as the effective use of CMI might be classified as an OCB (Organ, 1990a), requiring the commitment of the key individual (account manager) to 'go the extra mile' (Duffy et al., 2013; Malagueño et al., 2019; Matopoulos et al., 2019). In this context, it translates into effectively uses the CMI on their day-to-day activities such as strategy planning, new product development and building relationships with the supermarket buyer. This finding is supported by the evidence from the literature that argues that the relationship between SFDPs and supermarket buyer (Tesco) might not always be conducive for a collaborative and evidence-based decision-making, where the effective use of CMI plays a critical role in the central of this relationship (Maltz and Kohli, 1996; Li and Calantone, 1998; Yeoh, 2000; Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic, 2011).

On the other hand, for some of the SFDPs, their natural values and unique characteristics are often interfere with their ability to make decisions. It is supported by the small business literature as SFDPs tend to rely on quick, intuitive and impulsive approaches (Allison et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2003; Moriarty et al., 2008; Mazzarol et al., 2009; O'Dwyer et al., 2009); more specifically, it is known as the owner-manager's intuition or 'gut-instinct' based on their accumulated knowledge and experience (Clarke et al., 2006) throughout the years. In such circumstances, the account manager who is less committed to the firms or the relationship with supermarket buyer (Tesco) will be less likely to 'push back' or 'go the extra mile' by investigating the data further; given the pressure that comes from both their employer (the owner-manager) (e.g. Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007; Eddleston, 2008; Pearson and Marler, 2010; Burns and Dewhurst, 2016; Neubaum et al., 2017) and the dominant supermarket buyer (e.g. Didonet et al., 2012; Duffy et al, 2012; Bocconcelli et al., 2017; Brito and Miguel, 2017; Malagueño, Gölgeci and Fearne, 2019; Didonet and Fearne, 2022). The findings from the semi-structured interviews offer better clarity on the potential tension arising between evidence-based and intuition-based decision-making. The findings provide adequate evidence to support this notion; the evidence indicates that the presence and influence of family ownership, especially the involvement of the older generation is the differentiating factor.

The involvement and influence from the older generation spread around through generations and in doing so, they passed around the values and given the identity that differentiate family firms from other types of businesses (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996) and shaped the strategy and decision-making process (Ibrahim et al., 2001; 2004) that tends to rely on their experience, intuition and/or 'gut-instinct' (Nordqvist and Melin, 2010). The evidence from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 5.15) also highlights that the older generation involvement tendency often creates some confusions, especially when the business is now managed by the younger generations. These younger generations tend to be more open and welcoming toward technology (market information) and, therefore, their response to the CMI could diverge from their predecessors. These different types of attitudes/responses are clearly reflected through the findings. On one hand, the evidence shows that the younger generations (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) are more leaning toward 'evidence-based' decision-making based on the evidence retrieved from the appropriate sources (market information) compare to the way the older generations (founding and/or 1<sup>st</sup> generation) reacted; these older generations show more

resistance (and sometimes ignorance) toward technology (market information) and are more eager to make decisions based on their personal observation, experience and/or ‘gut-instinct’ (see Table 5.12).

On top of this, the study also acknowledges the benefits and impact of CMI from Who Buys My Food? research project has to offer. This set of market information not only gives the SFDPs personalised insights about their products’ performance; the evidence also shows that CMI encourages more active utilisation, learning and dissemination of market information that is reflected through significant performance at both the organisation and individual levels. By doing so, CMI also indirectly reducing the barriers of the resource constraints, especially by providing the CMI free of charge, knowingly that these SFDPs would not have specific budgets assigned for it. Simultaneously, the utilisation of CMI comes with added benefit through training, webinars and one-to-one interactions that are proven to be very useful, especially for those individuals within the firms and, more specifically, the account manager. Lastly, considering the source of the data and all the attributes that come with it, the utilisation of CMI also helps to boost the confidence of the individuals to be more active in using the CMI and exploring CMI further that will enable them to glean insights into their competitors and future opportunities.

### **6.3. Contributions of the Study**

This study is inspired by the real-world business problems – the very challenges faced by SFDPs in an increasingly competitive environment and the potential benefits of evidence-based decision-making and the use of CMI therein. Thus, the findings from the study should be of interest to practitioners (owner-manager and account manager) in SFDPs seeking to grow their businesses with supermarkets buyers (Tesco), as well as those service providers (consultants and government agencies) involved in supporting small firms with the development of their businesses. However, the primary purpose of this study is to contribute to the small business literature and the refinement of the theories and concepts associated with small firms’ decision-making processes, the importance of different uses of market information, the tensions and/or complementary relationships arising between different Strategic Orientations and the individual level of commitment on intra and inter-organisation relationships. Thus, this section begins with reflections on the contribution to the small business literature and followed by the contributions to marketing and management practices in SFDPs.



### **6.3.1. Contributions to the Small Business Literature**

This study contributes to the current small business (and family business) literature by providing new insights into and evidence of the impact of different uses of market information on performance – both at the individual and firm levels. The contributions are discussed below.

The pressure for small firms to adopt the management style and structure to be alike with large firms (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003) has been lingering for some time. Some strongly disagree with this notion as the management concepts and techniques developed by large firms are not readily transferable to the context of small business management (McCartan-Quinn and Carson, 2003), mainly due to the small firms' resource constraints (Didonet et al., 2020), mindset and behaviour changes (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2007; Gölgeci et al., 2019). Moreover, the bulk of the management theories with respect to information use, Strategic Orientations and commitment have been developed and tested in the context of large firms (e.g. Beyer and Trice, 1982; Zaltman and Moorman, 1989; Barabba and Zaltman, 1991; Huber, 1991; Faulkner and Johnson, 1992; Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Thomas et al., 1993; Moorman, 1995; Johnson et al., 1999; Beaver, 2002; Day et al., 2013). Thus, the primary contribution of this study is the insight provided as to the relevance and application of these key concepts in the context of small business environment. These contributions are discussed as follows:

Firstly, the study questions the widely reported view where MO is recognised as the most important Strategic Orientation for firm performance (e.g. Speed and Smith, 1993; Ghosh et al., 1994; Greenley, 1995; Matsuno et al., 2002; Cano et al., 2004; Kirca et al., 2005). Through the findings, LO is identified as the sole differentiator in terms of Strategic Orientations and firm performance. This may be indicative of the small scale of businesses involved in the study and their lack formalised structures and processes that are necessary components of MO, where LO is more concerned with generating, utilising and disseminating market information (Sinkula et al., 1997) as the respond to internal and external stimuli (Sadler-Smith et al., 2001) that leads to a change behaviour which is reflected in better firm performance (Wang, 2008). Thus, it may well be the case for SFDPs in the early stages of business development, that adopting a Strategic Orientation that is focused on innovation and learning is more important than a (more formalised, structured, rigid) MO in raising the awareness of and building the capacity in the effective use of market information, of which CMI is an example.

Secondly, the study provides evidence that illustrates the value of moving beyond established performance metrics at the organisation level, to reveal additional benefits from the effective use of CMI at individual level. Unless clearly stated, the majority of the studies refer ‘performance’ as firm performance (e.g. Chrisman et al., 2007; Kellermanns et al., 2008; Zahra, Neubaum and Larrañeta, 2007; González-Cruz and Cruz-Ros, 2016; Alves, Gama and Augusto, 2021; Ghalke, Haldar and Kumar, 2023) and solely focus on firm performance when running the analysis and ignore the individual aspect of performance. However, weighing on the importance of the key individual throughout the various relationships (intra and inter-organisation), the study urges that future studies consider individual performance as one of the performance measurements as, currently, the empirical evidence, especially in a small firm context is limited (e.g. Lansberg, 1983; Moores and Mula, 2000; Carr and Sequeira, 2007; Steier, 2007). Through the findings presented in this study, this thesis is the first to put the focus on the key individual (account manager) perspective within the specific context of the effective use of CMI on SFDPs’ performance at both the organisation and individual level.

Third, the study provides evidence that extend the concept of OCB, from the context of an organisation as a whole to specific functions therein. In so doing, the study highlights yet again the importance of the small firm context. Specifically, in larger firms the role of an account manager would include the generation, analysis and use of market information (Crosby et al., 1990; Tyler and Stanley, 1999; Madill et al., 2007) in decision-making and, largely, it is taken for granted. However, in small firms, where functional boundaries are often blurred and there are rarely, if ever, the necessary time, finances or capacity to execute functional duties in a consistent or structured way, the effective use of CMI is very likely to require an individual to ‘go the extra mile’ which, in turn, will require levels of individual commitment that should not be assumed. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of conceptualising individual commitment at both intra-organisational and inter-organisational levels, given the boundary-spanning role of the account manager in the relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco).

### **6.3.2. Contributions to Marketing and Management Practices in SFDPs**

Apart from giving some significant contributions to the literature, the study also provides some practical contributions to practitioners, specifically to the key stakeholders including the owner and/or account manager, the supermarket buyer (Tesco) and the service providers with an interest in the development and growth of small businesses. At the moment, even if

it is still an ongoing process, this study has successfully introduced and encouraged the utilisation of a new form of technology (CMI) which, for some, is still unapproachable and/or unrecognisable. Accordingly, this process also encourages better participation that starts from an individual level of learning and then disseminates from one department/team to another, and, eventually, affects and is reflected as a change in performance as whole. These contributions are discussed as follows.

First, this study overcomes the common barriers that often hinder the opportunity for small firms to utilise market information; knowing that the majority of small firms would struggle to gain access to the specific market information (Stokes, 2000; Hudson et al., 2001; Lu and Beamish, 2001; Simmons et al., 2008; Ihua, 2011) as they would not have specific budget assigned for this purpose. The Who Buys My Food? research project, first and foremost, dispels the common belief that market information is ‘scary’, ‘complicated’ and ‘unapproachable’, especially for small firms. Thus, in this era of intense competition and an explosion of data made accessible via the web, the value of generic and highly aggregated market data is diminishing as a source of differentiation. Accordingly, in the context of fast-moving consumer goods and supermarket supply chains, this trend is reflected in the pursuit of exclusive products, services and suppliers which enable one supermarket to compete more effectively against another by having exclusive points of difference in their offer to consumers. Therefore, the urgency to possess and utilise appropriate market information is becoming more evident.

It is in line with one of the purposes of the Who Buys My Food? research project, by not only offering a specific set of market information (CMI) free of charge for the SFPDs as it is, but also by offering the necessary training (webinars) and advice, should the owner and/or account manager need it. For these SFPDs, CMI is vital, as it provides them with the actual data based on their product’s performance and their competitors’ and customers’ shopping behaviour. The insight retrieved from the CMI is authentic, made simple and user-friendly. Therefore, it encourages further utilisation of CMI at both the organisation and individual levels. This approach is already proven to be working, as the evidence gathered from the findings show that by breaking some of the barriers and with the addition of extra benefits, it provides the extra boost of confidence for both the individuals and the firms alike to utilise the CMI within the SFPDs.

Second, the study provides the ‘tools’ for the small firms to effectively develop/maintain their relationship with supermarket buyer (Tesco). The small firms’ owner-managers, founder-entrepreneurs, senior managers and/or advisers should prioritise the investment of their resources in this area as a key input to business growth and organisational development. On this account, CMI encourages an effective and respectful B/S relationship, one that is reflected through their treatment of one another. For example, utilising CMI opens more communication and information exchange on the B/S relationship (Jap and Anderson, 2007), allowing greater flexibility to adjust the needs of the partners (Lusch and Brown, 1996), building trust and cooperation (Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Kasper-Fuehrera and Ashkanasy, 2001; Kwon and Suh, 2004; Peterson, Ragatz and Monczka, 2005), promoting transparency, knowledge sharing as well as deeper understanding (Powell, Koput and Smith-Doerr, 1996; Takeishi, 2001), thereby strengthening the engagement, as the CMI enables the suppliers to know, understand and clarify buyers’ needs and expectations and helps buyers to identify suppliers’ capacities (Jap and Ganesan, 2000; Claycomb and Frankwick, 2004) and reduce potentially opportunistic behaviours. Thus, utilising CMI contributes to the successful collaboration on the B/S relationship (Duffy and Fearne, 2004) and builds continuous commitment (Modi and Mabert, 2007) which offers assistance in better understanding product, process, competition and the market better by revealing appropriate actions in response to the market uncertainty (Kotabe et al., 2003; Paulraj et al., 2008) which eventually reflects on performance.

Third, the utilisation of CMI also facilitates the shifting mentality away from using instinct-based (e.g. personal feeling/instinct, anecdotal values) to more evidence-based market information based on the strategy and decision-making activities. The evidence gathered from the findings suggest that less attention should have been given to the development of formalised systems and processes for marketing planning and decision-making. Instead, small firms’ owner-managers, founder-entrepreneurs, senior managers and/or advisers should promote the establishment of a learning culture which for many small firms will be easier to understand and implement amongst the myriad competing priorities, as these individuals play a fundamental role in instilling a learning culture within the firm (Down, 2006).

Contextually, small firms have a distinct management style when compared to larger firms, especially in this study especially via with influence of family ownership. Management processes in small firms are predominantly based on the function of beliefs and attitudes from

their founders (Jennings and Beaver, 1995; Storey and Sykes, 1996) which tend to rely on the prior experience, intuition or 'gut-instinct' and a 'just-doing' mentality which supersedes formal planning (Matthew and Scott, 1995). This mentality/attitude still presents amongst the small firms, although, throughout the time of their existence and passing of the baton to newer generations, it may be observed that the mentality/attitude within the small firms is slowly shifting from 'ignoring' and 'resisting' changes (e.g. technology) toward more 'open' and 'receptive' attitudes toward such changes. It is, however, unnecessary to translate to complete changes in the management style, as factors such as older generational influence, unique family characteristics/traits and convenience offer some form of 'safety net' that justify their informal management style. Therefore, instead of going against what is considered 'normal' for the general consensus (e.g. by adopting MO), the findings encourage different approaches that appear to better suit a small firm distinct management style; it is through learning. In this context, it begins with the willingness/commitment of an individual to, first and foremost, accept and use CMI. The utilisation process will develop their knowledge and understanding that, eventually such insight will be passed on within the firms (inter-department) and/or outside the firms (to the supermarket buyer). This chain of events reflects the learning process as the part of the intelligence cycle (Maltz and Kohli, 1996; Stokes, 2000).

Lastly, the findings emphasise that the mere provision of, or access to market information is insufficient to ensure the growth of small firms or the development of the human capital therein. Thus, when small firms and/or government agencies are charged with supporting economic development they should consider investing in market information and it is essential that they also invest in support and training in the effective use of market information, including CMI.

#### **6.4. Limitations of the Study**

Notwithstanding the novel context of this study and the significance of the findings, several limitations were encountered.

Firstly, because of the specific focus and context of the study its external validity is limited. This study looks into the impact of the different uses of market information on performance at both the organisation and individual levels. Due to the specific context of this study, the

relationship is restricted by the use of a specific type of market information (CMI) that is retrieved from one specific source (Tesco Clubcard); by the specific group of businesses in a specific industry and their geographical coverage (local UK SFDPs); and finally, by a specific supermarket buyer (Tesco). On one hand, the context-specific benefits the study to some extent and makes it unique although, even with the novelty of the findings and the diverse characteristics they possess, it is still difficult, if not impossible, to generalise the findings when working with a homogeneous group of samples. Therefore, the extent to which the findings of this study could be generalised to other contexts is questionable.

Second, the study worked with a relatively small sample size and this is proven to be challenging. The study tried to overcome this obstacle by utilising PLS-SEM to analyse the data, given that PLS-SEM is highly regarded as being more adaptive and to work well with a small sample size (Reinartz et al., 2009; Henseler, 2010; Hair et al., 2012b; Hair et al., 2014b). Overall, the initial findings from the PLS-SEM analysis present mixed results. The findings have confirmed, provided evidence for and answered some of the research questions (through the development of hypotheses). However, the lack of significance of the results could possibly be caused by the small sample size. Moreover, another factor, such as the limitations of quantitative analysis in general, might also contribute to the low significance of the results. Thus, the findings were unable to provide further justification, especially as regards the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions used to explain the initial findings from the hypotheses. In response, the study added and ran some additional data analyses (correlation and semi-structured interviews).

Sample size is indeed significant especially in the interpretation of the results and, therefore, the bigger the sample size, the more stable (and reliable) the results will be. Some studies (Goodhue, Lewis and Thompon, 2012; Kock and Handaya, 2018), however, have suggested that the small sample size obstacle can be overcome by using PLS, as these studies encourage the additional use of multiple simulations/methods (e.g. Monte Carlo simulation, the inverse square root method, the gamma-exponential method) to gain more accurate results from the PLS analysis. However, at the end, despite the struggle, by having a small sample size, the overall results are justified through the additional evidence gathered from the additional analyses.

Third, although the concept of Symbolic Use of information has been widely discussed throughout the literature, at some point during the analysis the study started to question the original concept of Symbolic Use. One common finding that keeps appearing throughout different stages of analysis is the likelihood of the account manager in using CMI symbolically; this odd likelihood is supported further through the inverse relationship arising between the account manager's level of commitment and the Symbolic Use of CMI from the survey findings. Referring back into the literature, there are currently multiple interpretations of Symbolic Use. The majority of the studies (e.g. Goodman, 1993; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Menon and Varadarajan, 1992) tend to lean toward the 'negative' image that is assigned to Symbolic Use as being a 'bad' and 'inappropriate' use of information (Maltz, Sounder and Kumar, 2001), one that is distorted and inconsistent with the declared purpose (Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Toften, 2003), namely the use of information for confirming a pre-determined decision (Beyer and Trice, 1982). Thus, it creates some fear that, by using market information symbolically, the action translates into diluting or concealing the aggregated knowledge base (Toften, 2005), one that potentially leads to negative effects on firm performance (Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996). Unlike Conceptual/Instrumental Use, Symbolic Use is not expected to create new knowledge or to improve the existing knowledge (Toften and Olsem 2003). Instead, it is presumed that distorting some knowledge that can have negative consequences on decision-making (Feldman and March, 1981).

Interestingly, other studies from the literature associate Symbolic Use with the intention to justify/carry out a good relationship with buyers (Brown, 1994; Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Toften and Olsen, 2004; Yawson, 2020). This notion is supported by the evidence gathered during the interviews as all the respondents stressed out that the CMI is important in maintaining/developing a good relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco) and thus took priority. Accordingly, the results confirm that Symbolic Use of CMI is eminently important for the SFDPs, mainly for the individual (account manager). Consequently, it leads to further assumptions that, there are other forms/dimensions of Symbolic Use (to some capacities) and that these particular forms/dimensions of Symbolic Use (if it indeed exists) are sufficiently prominent for the SFDPs to justify/carry out the good relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). At this point, the study could neither confirm nor dismiss these assumptions due to the unproven and limited evidence available on the relationship between Symbolic Use and firm performance. Similarly, the extant studies on the literature as regards Symbolic Use are also inconclusive and in need for future examination as these studies suggest mixed

conclusions and cannot yet provide solid evidence just yet. It is observed some current studies lean toward the negative branding of Symbolic Use (e.g. Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; 1999; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003), while some other studies found no significant relationship (Wisker, 2011), either positive or negative (Vyas and Souchon, 2003) (depending on the actual dimensions applied) and some other studies (e.g. William, 2003) argue that Symbolic Use is not appropriate in the small firm setting and should only be applied in the larger firm context. Moreover, the majority of these studies treat Symbolic Use as a unidimensional construct (e.g. Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; 1999; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003), while only few of them suggest that Symbolic Use is a multi-dimensional construct that could have different effects on outcome variables (Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Yawson, 2020).

The urgency of developing/maintaining the good relationships with supermarket buyers like Tesco is closely linked to the level of individual commitment/involvement (Sheer et al., 2003) and therefore, it possible that, at times, the more committed/involved the account manager, the more likely the account manager is to use CMI symbolically in order to develop/maintain the good relationship with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). In this regard, there is a possibility that Symbolic Use is actually a multi-dimensional construct with different sub-dimensions (Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Yawson, 2020) in which one of the sub-dimensions is not necessarily branded as being 'bad' or 'negative' and yet the purpose is purely 'symbolic' to develop/maintain the relationship. In this study context, apart from boosting firm performance, CMI is also equipped and provided to boost the account manager's confidence, especially when meeting with the supermarket buyer (Tesco). There is no clear evidence from the findings to suggest that the account manager deliberately distorts or manipulates the CMI to present or defend their arguments. However, there is a possibility that the account manager uses CMI symbolically to prove to themselves that they 'possess' and 'use' the same data set (CMI) with the supermarket buyer (Tesco) and therefore, they are taken and treated more seriously.

In such circumstances, future studies might have difficulty in building arguments related to Symbolic Use due to the limitations and inconclusive nature of the evidence (Vyas and Souchon, 2003). Beside the evidence gathered from these findings, the study is still unable to confirm or deny the possibility of the multi-dimensional Symbolic Use of information.



Accordingly, there is a rising concern that future studies may choose to completely omit Symbolic Use when running the analysis and just using Conceptual and/or Instrumental Use. Furthermore, this ambiguity could lead to forming of various assumptions regarding Symbolic Use.

## **6.5. Suggestions for the Future Research**

Currently, the ability to delve deeper into the nuanced relationship arising between different uses of market information and performance, at multiple levels of an organisation, is constrained by the conceptualisation of effective information use as a unified measure of Conceptual/Instrumental, wherein Symbolic Use is often being overlooked or else ruled out completely, mainly due to the negative conceptions and the inconsistent evidence available within the literature. Future studies should re-visit and adopt the study's conceptual framework, focusing on the impact of each dimension of information use on performance and measuring them as regards both organisation and individual levels of performance.

Firstly, the findings could lead to further exploration of the impact of Symbolic Use on small firm performance. The concept of Symbolic Use is often overlooked and/or ruled out (e.g. Williams, 2003; Didonet and Fearne, 2023), mainly due to the negative conception (e.g. Menon and Varadarajan, 1992; Souchon and Diamantopoulos, 1996; Diamantopoulos and Souchon, 1999; Toften and Olsen, 2003; Vyas and Souchon, 2003) of the construct. The majority of existing studies have accepted and treated Symbolic Use as unidimension construct (this study included). However, there are few other studies (e.g. Vyas and Souchon, 2003; Yawson, 2020) that suggest otherwise; these studies suggest that Symbolic Use is actually a multi-dimensional construct, in which not all the sub-dimensions correlate to the 'negative' image branded. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of consistency and availability of evidence on the impact of Symbolic Use in the literature. This study offers mixed results as to Symbolic Use that could challenge the current conceptions of Symbolic Use and encourage further investigation of both the dimensionalities of Symbolic Use and the impact of those different dimensionalities on both firm and individual performance.

Secondly, future research should run a further investigation into the tensions arising between different Strategic Orientations (Hakala, 2011; Didonet et al., 2020; Didonet and Fearne, 2023) and their impact on the performance (through the different uses of market information). The

findings contest the domination of highly regarded Strategic Orientations, especially MO (e.g. Donnelly et al., 2015; Donnelly et al., 2012) on the use of market information in the small firm context. The findings indicate that small firms adopt various Strategic Orientations to fulfil different goals/needs and, in that respect, the chosen orientation is not necessarily to be MO (Didonet et al., 2020) as highly suggested in the literature (Kirca et al., 2005; Kumar et al., 2011; Frösén et al., 2016). Further studies could pick up on the significant positive impact of LO on the use of market information and investigate if the tensions remain (with MO) or if other orientations could be complementary when they are used together, as it is suggested by Hakala (2011). Alternatively, future studies could use the same conceptual framework but use different Strategic Orientations, for example MO and PO. This suggestion, in particular is justified by the findings that indicate a strong presence of PO, which indicate that some of the SFDPs (especially family firms) prioritised and based the firm on their products.

From the statistical perspective, future research should consider re-examining the same conceptual framework with a bigger sample size and multiple methodology approaches, for example by using surveys, databases, observation, interviews and focus groups. The findings of this study reveal some shortcomings from the small sample size and the single methodological approach. In this regard, mixed method (e.g. Harrigan, Ramsey and Ibbotson, 2012; Molina-Azorín et al., 2012; Curado, 2017; Mikalef et al., 2019; Harrison, Reilly and Creswell, 2020) and/or case studies (e.g. Bonoma, 1985; Larsson, 1993; Chetty, 1996; Woodside, 2010; Ghobakhloo and Ching, 2019; Ritz, Wolf and McQuitty, 2019) would possibly afford further spaces for exploration, more accurate data from the respondents, as well yielding more robust results. Lastly, future research should consider different roles for family ownership and incorporate the construct into the conceptual framework. As it is, the findings suggest that family ownership possibly has an indirect impact, although it is not prominent. Future research could adopt the same conceptual framework and treat family ownership as a moderating and/or mediating influence.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

Appendix A contains the screenshots of the study's questionnaire from the online survey. Please be aware that Appendix A does not contain the whole questionnaire as the full version is part of the Who Buys My Food? research project questionnaire. Hence, Appendix A contains all the relevant questions that were used in this study.

## Introduction

This questionnaire has been designed to provide us with **essential information** about the small food and drink producers engaged in our 'who buys my food' research project. It will take around **25 mins** to complete. We really do need you to **answer all of the questions** but you don't have to complete the questionnaire in one go - you can stop and save your answers as many times as you like, provided you access the survey using the same device in the same location. **Don't dwell on your responses** - your **instinctive** and **honest** answers are what we need.

The information you provide will not be shared with anyone and only reported in aggregate. The insight we gain will be shared with all participants, inform our research and help us to improve the service we offer to the 200+ small food and drink suppliers that are part of the 'who buys my food' project.

At the end of the questionnaire you will be able to order your **free Kantar market category report**, highlighting the market growth in 2019 and the market shares for all of the UK supermarkets, for a product category of your choice.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire or the 'who buys my food' project to which it relates, please contact Professor Andrew Fearne ([a.fearne@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.fearne@uea.ac.uk))

## Introduction

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## About You

\* 1. What is your name?

\* 2. What is your gender?

Male  Female

\* 3. What is your age?

Under 18  18-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65+

\* 4. What is your email address?

\* 5. What is your telephone number (preferably your mobile number)?

\* 6. What is your job title?

\* 7. How many years have you been in this specific role?

Less than a year  1-2yrs  2-3yrs  3-4yrs  4-5yrs  More than 5yrs

\* 8. How many years of experience do you have in the following areas?

	None	Less than a year	1-2yrs	2-3yrs	3-4yrs	4-5yrs	More than 5yrs
Sales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Account management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of market intelligence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## About Your Company

\* 16. What is the name of your company?

\* 17. For how many years has the company been trading?

- Less than 5yrs  5-10yrs  10-15yrs  15-20yrs  More than 20yrs  Don't know

\* 18. Is the company a family-owned business?

- Yes  No

\* 19. What is the total number of employees in your company?

- Less than 10  10-20  20-30  30-40  More than 40  Don't know

\* 20. How many people are involved in sales and marketing?

- 1  2  3  4  More than 4

\* 21. What was your total turnover in 2019?

- Less than £0.5m  £0.5m - £1m  £1m - £1.5m  £1.5m - £2m  £2m - £2.5m  £2.5m - £3m
- £3m - £3.5m  £3.5m - £4m  £4m - £4.5m  £4.5 - £5m  £5m - £5.5m  £5.5m - £6m
- £6m - £6.5m  More than £6.5m

\* 22. Approximately, how many retail customers do you currently have?

- Less than 10  10-20  20-30  30-40  More than 40  Don't know

\* 23. How many of your current retail customers would you describe as 'key customers'?

- 1  2-3  4-5  5-6  6-7  7-8  8-9  9-10  More than 10

## Strategic Orientations (Marketing)

These questions are about the marketing orientation of your company

**\* 37. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:**

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Our business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We monitor and evaluate the attitude of staff towards delivering customer satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We measure customer satisfaction frequently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are aware of customer needs and wants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We respond rapidly respond to competitive actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our business pays close attention to industry and market trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We target opportunities for competitive advantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All of our business functions are integrated in serving the needs of our customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is shared with all the functions of the business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a culture of mutual cooperation between the different functions in our business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Strategic Orientations (Entrepreneurial)

These questions are about the entrepreneurial orientation of your company. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

**\* 28. In general, the senior managers of my company favour a strong emphasis on ...**

the marketing of tried and tested products							R&D, technological leadership and innovation
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 29. During the past 5yrs my company has launched...**

No new products							Very many new products
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 30. Changes in products have usually been ...**

of a minor nature							quite dramatic
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 31. In comparison with its competitors, my company...**

typically responds to actions which competitors initiate							typically initiates actions to which competitors then respond
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 32. In comparison with its competitors, my company...**

is very seldom the first business to introduce new products, processes or technology							very often the first business to introduce new products, processes or technology
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 33. In comparison with its competitors, my company...**

<p>typically seeks to avoid competitive clashes, preferring a "live-and-let-live" posture</p>		<p>typically adopts a very competitive "undo-the-competitors" posture</p>
---	--	---

**\* 34. In general, the senior managers in my company have a strong preference for...**

<p>low-risk projects (with average and certain rates of return)</p>		<p>high-risk projects (with chances of very high returns)</p>
---	--	---

**\* 35. In general, the senior managers in my company believe that, owing to the nature of the environment...**

<p>it is best to explore it gradually with cautious behaviour and incremental change</p>		<p>bold, wide-ranging acts are necessary to achieve the firm's objectives</p>
--	--	---

**\* 36. When confronted with decision-making situations involving uncertainty, my company typically adopts a...**

<p>cautious, "wait-and-see" posture to minimise the probability of making costly decisions</p>		<p>bold, aggressive posture to maximise the probability of exploiting potential opportunities</p>
--	--	---

## Strategic Orientations (Learning)

These questions are about the learning orientation of your company.

\* 27. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Completely disagree						Completely agree	
My company's ability to learn is considered as a key competitive advantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My company values learning as a key to improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My company believes that employee learning is an investment, not an expense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning in my company is seen as a key to guarantee its survival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The collective wisdom in our company is that once we stop learning, we endanger our future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my company all employees are aware of what we want to achieve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my company all employees are committed to the organisational goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a total agreement on our company vision across all functions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Completely disagree						Completely agree
The senior management believes in sharing its vision for the company with all employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The senior management has a well-defined vision for the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We reflect critically on the shared assumptions we have about the way we do business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My company places a high value on open-mindedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are encouraged to contribute original ideas that may increase the company's success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Original ideas are highly value in my company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Information Use - Instrumental/Conceptual

These questions are concerned with the instrumental/conceptual use of market information within your company in support of marketing decision-making

**\* 38. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:**

	Strongly disagree							Strongly agree
Market information is actively sought out in response to specific marketing decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is often used specifically to make a particular marketing decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing decisions based on market information are more accurate than wholly intuitive ones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our confidence in making marketing decisions is increased as a result of using market information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without market information our marketing decisions would be very different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is translated into significant practical action	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is preserved so that it can be used by individuals other than the person who collected it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The majority of market information we have is not used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information often has little decision relevance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our uncertainty associated with marketing activity is greatly reduced by the use of marketing information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The same piece of market information is often used for more than one marketing decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No marketing decisions are made without the use of market information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Information Use - Symbolic

These questions are concerned with the symbolic use of market information within your company in support of marketing decision-making

\* 39. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Market information is often collected to justify a marketing decision that has already been made	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is often used to reinforce expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instinct/intuition is often combined with market information when making marketing decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is often not considered in the making of decisions for which it was initially requested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is sometimes manipulated in order to justify marketing decisions that are really made on the basis of instinct	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior managers often distort market information when passing it on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is sometimes taken into account to justify the cost of having acquired it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information is often used to back up hunches, prior to the implementation of a particular marketing decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing information frequently supports marketing decisions made on other grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If market information is difficult to obtain, guesses are made instead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market information frequently supports decisions made on other grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Your relationship with Tesco

\* 60. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
My company has a strong sense of loyalty to Tesco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My company is willing to 'go the extra mile' for Tesco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a strong sense of loyalty to our Tesco buyer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to 'go the extra mile' for our Tesco buyer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## About You

	Not at all						A great deal		N/A
Sales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Account management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Use of market intelligence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	



## APPENDIX B

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Section A: Opening – you and your company (approx. 2 minutes)

N: I will start the recording. Good morning/afternoon/evening Mr/Ms..... My name is Nadia Koerniawan, PGR student from the University of East Anglia (UEA). Thank you for sparing your time and participating in this follow-up interview. Before we start, can I please confirm your:

- Respondent's name – what should I address you as? - .....
- Respondent's company name - .....
- Respondent's position - .....
- Respondent main role(s) - .....
- From family or non-family firm: Y/N
- Have signed and returned the consent form: Y/N

R: [give answers]

N: Thank you Mr/Ms..... This interview will run for approximately for thirty minutes and I have three questions for you. If we still have time at the end, I might ask you to elaborate on your answer. And if you have any questions, we will visit them after I asked you all the questions. If you are happy, we will start with the first question.

**Section B: Main – the importance of CMI (approx. 9 minutes)**

N: The first question is regarding the importance of market information. Mr/Ms..... given the time that you have been involved in the WBMF research project and have had the experiences on using the market information yourself, could you please tell me on how important/useful this market information is, especially in the decision-making process in your company?

R: [give answers]

N: Thank you for your answers, that is very helpful.

Note: Elaborate the question to confirm if there is any influence from family ownership for this particular question

**Section C: Main – the possible enablers of using the market information to get the best possible outcome (approx. 9 minutes)**

N: Move on to the second question, could you share with me what enables you (and the company) to make the best use of the market information to achieve the best possible outcomes?

R: [give answers]

N: Wonderful - thank you for your answers.

Note: Elaborate the question to confirm if there is any influence from family ownership for this particular question

**Section D: Main – the possible barriers of using the market information to get the best possible outcome (approx. 9 minutes)**

N: So far, you have mentioned/we have talking about some wonderful things that you have experienced while dealing with this market information. Now, could you share with me if you have had any moments when you find it hard to make the best use of the market information (like some barriers/something that get in between)?

R: [give answers]

N: Thank you for your answers, that is very helpful.

Note: Elaborate the question to confirm if there is any influence from family ownership for this particular question

**Section E: Closing – concluding remarks (approx. 1 minutes)**

N: Thank you so much for your participation and enthusiasm while sharing your experience with me throughout the interview. Do you have any questions/concern at all?

R: [give answers]

N: If there is none, that will be the end of the interview. As it was mentioned on the information sheet, we will use this recording for transcription purposes. We will share the result on the thesis anonymously (e.g. using R01, R02) and accordingly. Bye for now. End of recording.

Note: If we still have extra time, pick one interesting point and ask the respondent to elaborate more on the point.

N: As we still have few more minutes, can we revisit on one of your experiences on ..... Could please elaborate more on that and give some examples on that?

Possible enablers/barriers (besides Strategic Orientations and Commitment)

Enablers	Barriers
<p>1. From the researcher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webinar(s)</li> <li>• Personalised report(s)</li> <li>• Advice(s)</li> </ul> <p>2. From the owner-manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive</li> <li>• Freedom</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Fair</li> <li>• Effective communication (willing to listen to the ideas)</li> <li>• Reward(s) for a good job</li> <li>• Extra trainings/seminars</li> </ul> <p>3. From the supermarket buyer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful treatments</li> <li>• Effective communication (no delay/ignorance)</li> <li>• Fair</li> </ul>	<p>1. From the researcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too advance technology (report/apps)</li> <li>• Late/slow response</li> </ul> <p>2. From the owner-manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not given enough time</li> <li>• Not given the supports needed (e.g. training, spaces)</li> <li>• Not given the appreciation (if the idea is being used/not, no rewards for good job)</li> <li>• Not given acknowledgement</li> <li>• Not being treated fairly</li> </ul> <p>3. From the supermarket buyer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late/slow response (being ignore)</li> <li>• Not being treated fairly</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**(1) What is this study about?**

This study is about the use of market intelligence, such as the that provided to you as part of the Who Buys My Food? (WBMF) research project, in support of marketing decision-making amongst small food producers.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Have received a copy of this participant information sheet before giving your consent to participate.

**(2) Who is running the study?**

The study is being carried out by Ms Nadia Koerniawan, a PhD student at Norwich Business School, under the supervision of Professor Andrew Fearn.

**(3) What will the study involve for me?**

The interviews will be a conducting online using Microsoft Teams and will take no more than 30 minutes.

A small number of questions will be used in order to gain an understanding of the different ways in which you have used the market intelligence and the barriers/enablers thereto. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed but the details of each participant will be excluded, to ensure complete anonymity. You will be sent a transcript of the interview and have the opportunity to add/delete information as you see fit.

**(4) How much of my time will the study take?**

The interview will takes no more than 30 minutes.

**(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I have started?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part.

Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia. You can withdraw your consent at any point, by informing the organiser by Email.

**(6) What are the consequences if I withdraw from the study?**

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Any information captured prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

**(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?**

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

**(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?**

These interviews are being undertaken in support of my PhD research, the results of which will inform the future development of the WBMF project.

**(9) What will happen to information provided by me and data collected during the study?**

The whole interview process will be recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts will be anonymised and analysed in aggregate, making it impossible for any of the findings to be linked to any individuals or businesses. The information will be stored securely in UEA OneDrive and destroyed on completion of the project.

Data management will follow the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the University of East Anglia's [Research Data Management Policy](#).

**(10) What if I would like further information about the study?**

When you have read this information, Prof Andrew Fearn (a.fearne@uea.ac.uk, 07775848503) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have.

**(11) Will I be told the results of the study?**

You will not receive any direct feedback on the interview findings but they will form part of my PhD, which will be published on completion.

**(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?**

If you have any concerns please contact my supervisor, Prof Andrew Fearn:



Norwich Business School  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich, NR4 7TJ  
a.fearne@uea.ac.uk  
07490688206

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of Norwich Business School: Prof Olga Tregaskis (Olga Tregaskis, 01603597239 ext 1089).

**(13) How do I know that this study has been approved to take place?**

To protect your safety, rights, well-being and dignity, all research in the University of East Anglia is reviewed by a Research Ethics Body. This research was approved by the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee).

**(14) What is the general data protection information I need to be informed about?**

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis for processing your data as listed in Article 6(1) of the UK GDPR is because this allows us to process personal data when it is necessary to perform our public tasks as a university.

The data controller is the University of East Anglia. For further information, you can contact the University's Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@uea.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@uea.ac.uk). You can also find out more about your data protection rights at the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#). If you are unhappy with how your personal data has been used, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@uea.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@uea.ac.uk) in the first instance.

**(15) OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?**

You need to sign and return the consent form ahead of the scheduled interview.

**(16) Further information**

This information was last updated on 08 June 2023.

If there are changes to the information provided, you will be notified by If there are changes to the information provided, you will be notified by Prof Andrew Fearne.

**This information sheet is for you to keep**

## APPENDIX D

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, ....., **am** willing to participate in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, which I may keep, for my records, and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the study and my involvement in it.
- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia (or The writer - Nadia Koerniawan; The gatekeeper - Prof Andrew Fearne; The supervisors - Prof Andrew Fearne and Dr Ricardo Malagueño de Santana) now or in the future.
- I understand that the results of this study will be used in the way described in the information sheet, I will not be identified and my personal results and information will remain confidential.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. All the files will be stored in the secure place, only be accessible by the researchers involved in the study and will be completely erased accordingly.

I consent to:

Audio-recording

YES  NO

**Name of participant** .....

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

# APPENDIX E

## ETHIC APPROVAL I

NBS-REC / E1

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA  
NORWICH BUSINESS SCHOOL  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

### RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST

This form should be completed by all staff and students planning to conduct research that involves collecting data from human participants.

Before completing this form please read the University research ethics principles at:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/en/ren/research-integrity/research-ethics/research-ethics-policy>

Students should also discuss the ethical aspects of their proposed research with their supervisor before completing the form.

#### 1. Applicant Details

**Name:** Nadia Delona Elvaretta Koerniawan

**Student no. (if applicable):** 100103699

**Status (circle appropriate):** PGT student / PGR student / Staff / Other

**Course (if applicable):** -

**Contact telephone number:** 07490688206

**E-mail address:** n.koerniawan@uea.ac.uk

**Primary supervisor's name (if applicable):** Prof Andrew Fearn

#### 2. Project Details

**Title of project:** The Use of Customised Market Intelligence by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs): A Case Study of Tesco and Their Suppliers of Local Food and Drink

**3. Research Ethics Checklist**

Please answer all questions by ticking the appropriate box:

	Yes	No
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. people under 18; people with learning disabilities; students you teach/assess)		√
2. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their informed consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation)		√
3. Will any financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses / compensation for time) be offered to participants?		√
4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics in a personal, social, cultural, or commercial sense? (e.g. sexual activity, bereavement, drug use, illegal activities, whistleblowing)		√
5. Could the study place participants at risk of physical or psychological harm, distress, or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		√
6. Will the research involve any appreciable threat to the health and safety of the researcher(s)?		√
7. Will the study involve any incitement to, encouragement of, or participation in, an illegal act? (by participant or researcher)		√
8. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?		√
9. Will participants be informed about the purpose of the research and the nature of the research procedures?	√	
10. Will participants be debriefed after taking part in the research?	√	
11. Will arrangements be made to ensure that data obtained from/about participants remains confidential?	√	
12. Will participants be informed about the use to which the data will be put?	√	
13. Will the consent of participants be obtained?	√	
14. Will it be made clear to participants that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time, without negative consequences?	√	

If you ticked a **WHITE** box for **ALL** questions in the checklist, further ethical approval from the NBS Research Ethics Committee is not required. Simply sign and return this form as indicated on page 3.

If you ticked a **GREY** (i.e. shaded) box for **ANY** question, you will also need to complete **form E2: NBS ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM**. The form asks you to provide more information about how you plan to deal with the 'grey area' ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research but your proposal will have to be considered and approved by the NBS Research Ethics Committee.

**Important:** Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University research ethics principles and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. **This includes providing participants with appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the use and storage of data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.** Any significant change in the research question or design of the study may require completion of new E1 and/or E2 forms.

**4. Signatures**


Signature of Applicant: 

Date: 17/10/2017

**Supervisor declaration (for student research only)**

Please tick as appropriate:

- I have discussed the checklist and ethical implications of the proposed research with the student and am satisfied that the study does not raise ethical problems that must be considered by the NBS Research Ethics Committee.
- I have discussed the checklist and ethical implications of the proposed research with the student. One or more potential ethical issues have been identified which require completion of form E2: Ethical Approval Form for consideration by the NBS Research Ethics Committee.

Signature of Supervisor: 

Date: 17/10/2017

**Submitting your Form(s)**

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS  
AND SUBMIT THE ORIGINAL

IF YOU ALSO NEED TO COMPLETE AN ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM (E2), PLEASE  
SUBMIT IT WITH THIS FORM (E1)

**Please return your completed form(s) as follows:**

**PGT Students:** NBS Teaching Office/Module Organizer

**PGR Students:** SSF Postgraduate Research Office/Chair of the NBS-REC

**NBS Staff:** Chair of the NBS-REC

# APPENDIX F

## ETHIC APPROVAL II



University of East Anglia  
Norwich Research Park  
Norwich, NR4 7TJ

Email: [ethicsmonitor@uea.ac.uk](mailto:ethicsmonitor@uea.ac.uk)  
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**Study title:** Follow-up interview with survey respondents

**Application ID:** ETH2223-2402

Dear Nadia,

Your application was considered on 30th June 2023 by the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee).

The decision is: **approved**.

You are therefore able to start your project subject to any other necessary approvals being given.

This approval will expire on **31st July 2023**.

Please note that your project is granted ethics approval only for the length of time identified above. Any extension to a project must obtain ethics approval by the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee) before continuing.

It is a requirement of this ethics approval that you should report any adverse events which occur during your project to the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee) as soon as possible. An adverse event is one which was not anticipated in the research design, and which could potentially cause risk or harm to the participants or the researcher, or which reveals potential risks in the treatment under evaluation. For research involving animals, it may be the unintended death of an animal after trapping or carrying out a procedure.

Any amendments to your submitted project in terms of design, sample, data collection, focus etc. should be notified to the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee) in advance to ensure ethical compliance. If the amendments are substantial a new application may be required.

Approval by the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee) should not be taken as evidence that your study is compliant with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. If you need guidance on how to make your study UK GDPR compliant, please contact the UEA Data Protection Officer ([dataprotection@uea.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@uea.ac.uk)).

I would like to wish you every success with your project.

On behalf of the NBS S-REC (Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee)

Yours sincerely,

Scott Summers

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