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### BALANCING CUSTOMER AND COMPETITOR IN MARKETING ORIENTATION: A CASE STUDY AT GENERAL COMPANY FOR IRAQI AIRWAYS

*Rounaq Kadhem Hussin Shubar<sup>1</sup>, Sarmad Hamza Jassim<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Administration, College of Administration and Economics,  
University of AL-Qadisiyah, Dewanyah, Iraq

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration, College of Administration and Economics,  
Mustansiriyah University , Baghdad

E-mail: [Rounaq.Hussin@qu.edu.iq](mailto:Rounaq.Hussin@qu.edu.iq)

[dr.sarmad08@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq](mailto:dr.sarmad08@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Companies generally face difficulty in accurately diagnosing their marketing orientation that may be customer-centered company and competitor-centered company, which is a field problem that this research is trying to find an appropriate solution by designing a checklist that suits this purpose. General Company for Iraqi Airways has been chosen as a sample for the research because of its significance in the transportation industry, some results have been reached that marketing orientation of company are customer-centered and competitor-centered in varying proportions at the same time. The research proposes to the company some steps that identify its marketing orientation and help it achieve a balancing between it be the customer-centered and be the competitor-centered in a way that company ensures achieving goals efficiently.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Marketing is the name given to a collection of business activities that used to make potential customers aware of a company and the benefits of its products

or services to the public, it includes the planning, pricing, packaging, and promoting of goods or services. In order to be successful, a marketing campaign must communicate the value offered to consumers over and above the value offered by the competition. Marketing orientation emergence after the past two eras, namely the production era and the selling era, as companies began to search for the needs and desires of customers and try to satisfy them. That makes company focus on customer and the competitor with proportions varying and determined by the market conditions and internal resources of General Company for Iraqi Airways. This company is one of the formations of the Iraqi Ministry of Transport, one of the major companies in the air transport industry, it is the national carrier in the Republic of Iraq and headquarters are in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. It produce of domestic and regional air and freight services that consider the largest air navigation lines in Iraq, the company was founded in 1945 by the Iraqi Aviation Association. Business of General Company for Iraqi Airways is continue to flourish and achieved foreign trips between countries of the world, in addition to domestic flights between local cities in Iraq. It be note that the air transport industry in Iraq includes several Iraqi companies from the public and private sectors, which are Al-Nasser Aviation, National Aviation Company, Jupiter Aviation Company, Saqer Al-Rafidain Aviation Company, Fly Baghdad Company, Ishtar Aviation Company and Al-Burhan Aviation Company. General Company for Iraqi Airways is in continuous progress and development for the prosperity of the air transport industry in Iraq. Company's management wishes that the company had an efficient marketing orientation that enhances its position in the air transport industry and achieves its goals. In order to assist the company in choosing an appropriate combination of its marketing orientation, which should balance between customer-centered and competitor-centered, a work mechanism should be prepared that explains to the company how to diagnose its current position toward the customer and competitor at the same time, where the company must to achieve its goals. All of this will be covered in the research, in addition to preparing checklists for examining the marketing orientation of General Company for Iraqi Airways which will determining if customer-centered company or competitor-centered company.

### ***Research Questions***

This research aims to solve the following issues:

- 1- Can companies operating in the air transport industry define their marketing orientation?
- 2- Do marketing manager of company have an impact on its business?
- 3- Which one has the greatest influence on the company the customer or the competitor?
- 4- Can the company abandon its marketing orientations and work without it?

### ***Research Objective***

The objectives of this research:

- 1- What are the principles of the company's marketing orientation?
- 2- How can the company diagnose the nature of its marketing orientation if it is the customer-centered or the competitor-centered?
- 3- Can the company change its marketing direction?
- 4- What the checklist of marketing orientation that company can application it to define balancing on both customer and competitor.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Marketing orientation of company*

Marketing orientation company can be define as the process of managing coordination between the marketing activities of a company that aims to achieve the requirements of meeting the customers' needs and of success over competitors at the same time, such a thing is achieve according to the company's specialized capabilities and resources (Dwyer and Gilmore, 2017). Accordingly, the marketing orientation of a company determines the nature of its interaction in the markets and industry; it further contributes to preparing and implementing business plans to achieve the company's goals. The marketing orientation of a company is describe as a marketing philosophy that is concerned with placing the customer and the competing companies at the center of attention and interest, respectively, however, one should take into account that the two centers are parallel in a manner that ensures the meeting of profitable business for the company (Crick, 2019).

Marketing orientation of a company can also be describe as an organizational behavior that affects the performance of individuals, groups and teams working in that company, it thus guides workers in the company on how to achieve the marketing and non-marketing goals of that company (Bello et al., 2018). The marketing orientation of a company may appear in the form of common organizational values that determine the course of the company's business in its current and future markets (Kraidy et al. 2017). These shared values focus on providing the company's products with superior advantages compared to competitors' products, they further focus on realizing a customer's expectations and achieving satisfaction by adopting advanced marketing behaviors by the company (Wisdom and Augustina, 2019). The marketing orientation of a company in the contemporary business world assumes identifying the desires and needs of customers in the targeted markets, then, it fulfills these needs with a marketing mix that invests the company's resources as closely as possible and achieves the goals that are difficult for competitors to achieve (Joensuu-Salo, 2018). Moreover, the estimation of expectations and needs in the markets is done through marketing research conducted by the company regularly and periodically.

The manager of marketing in companies has become of great importance and involved with other managers in the company in matters related to

organization, planning and follow-up of various activities aimed at achieving the goals of the company (Yohn, 2018). The marketing orientation of a company may sometimes fail due to the high intensity of competition and the speed of change in a customer's preferences and the neglect of the development proposals of employees in the company and the weak social responsibility of the company (Mediano et al., 2019). One of the most prominent reasons for the failure of the marketing orientation of a company is the higher management's belief that this approach is the responsibility of only the marketing manager in the company (Musa et al., 2018). Such a belief is a strategic mistake conducted by companies, which should consider that the marketing orientation of a company is the responsibility of all managers within that company, including the marketing manager.

Marketing orientation of a company requires gathering the information available in the markets about the desires, needs and capabilities of existing customers. It further involves knowing about the way the competing companies deal with these customers, the rules and principles followed in managing the markets, and about the supporting companies and products that complement the company's products (Phi-Ho et al., 2018). Thus, the marketing direction of a company forces it to have a clear understanding of the nature of interactions occurring in its markets. Some researchers believe that the marketing orientation of a company is the foundation upon which the company builds its social and sustainable marketing directions. Besides, defining and clarifying the society's demands and needs can contribute to achieving the welfare of the community and the development of its members (Khuwaja et al., 2018). The company must constantly monitor its competitors and have a competitive marketing strategy that places it in an advanced position within the industry in which it operates.

Achieving success in the marketing orientation of a company requires constantly adapting the company's strategies to the requirements of the competitive environment in the industry, which may be fast changing. Moreover, the company must take into consideration a very important matter that is the possibility of the company to achieve balancing between its view of the customer and its view of the competitor (Kotler et al. 2018). Based on this, the company may incur spending a lot of time and effort in tracking competitors at the expense of tracking customers' desires and needs, or vice versa, marketing orientation of the company includes focusing on the customer and competitor, each focus has certain advantages in specific situations. Therefore, there is no appropriate focus for the marketing orientation of a company in all situations and circumstances; this is because marketing orientation of a company depends on produce what can be market (Robert et al., 2018). However, technological and economic changes imposed by the general environment on everyone may influence the desires of customers, which results in a change in their needs or in the diversity of products that they may demand in the future (Armstrong et al., 2018).

Accordingly, the company must continue to update its marketing orientation to ensure the growth and continuity of its business. The present businesses require a marketing orientation for the company that balancing between the customer-centered and competitor-centered, this balancing does not require that the focus rate be equal between the two, but that it should not neglect one of them (Solomon et al., 2018). That is instead of focusing only on monitoring the competitor in order to try to win and achieve the company's victory in the market, one should also focus on monitoring the customer in order to meet his desires and needs and build profitable relationships with him (Nuryakin, 2018). Although the focus should be a dual focus on the customer and the competitor, the greater weight should be on the customer. This is because the basis of the business begins with the process of exploring what the customer wants therefore, marketing orientation of a company that focuses on the customer is the most used in contemporary business (Li et al., 2019). However, it must continue to monitoring the competitor's actions because it has a significant impact on the customer's preferences, besides the company must be well aware of the fact that the success of its business depends on its marketing orientation that is very important in achieving the company's goals and in light of the resources available there (Luu, 2019). Consequently, the final definition of the marketing orientation of a company is the company's focus on meeting the customer's wishes and needs and on the methods of success over the competitor in the industry and market.

### *Customer-centered company*

Marketing orientation of a company that is center on the customer is define as the degree of the company's emphasis on meeting the wishes and needs of current and potential customers in its present markets (Adi et al., 2018). This approach requires that some of the basic business decisions of the company respond to customer's requests to solve their problems and keep them as agents of the company. Customer-centered in marketing orientation is a business style that the company uses to increase its sales in the market by offering products with features that are fully consistent with what customers want exactly (Feng et al., 2019). Thus, the company should conduct its marketing research regularly in order to obtain concrete evidence of customers' beliefs and preferences and do a survey on customers' opinions in a specific market using different methods, the simplest of which is e-mail, which is characterize by ease, speed and low cost (MacDonald, 2020). It is preferable for the company that based on the customer to adopt a qualitative marketing research method that provides the company with a rich description of what customers expect and want in relation to the products that the company can market to them.

The marketing research of a customer-centered company requires adopting formal procedures to know the customers' preferences. These procedures bear the responsibility of implementing a known and clear parameter within the organizational structure of the company or outside it (Byrne et al., 2018). The

process of communication with the customer is very important because it provides the company with a package of benefits, among these benefits are that of informing the customer of the company's capabilities, the types of products in it, and the rewards that a customer might obtain when purchases the company's product (Purwiantia et al., 2019). The company can further clearly explain its organizational values, which emphasizes the customer's preferences in a way that forces the company's business to be innovative and able to take advantage of the new technology available in the industry. Usually, customers look at the quality of the product and its price. However, some customers remain loyal to a particular company and adopt the decision to buy their products, this is because the customer believes that this company seeks to make its customers happy and satisfied and that the opinions of customers are appreciate and interested in the management of the company (Cheah et al., 2019). All this can be achieve by the company through marketing research whose core and essential element is the customer and that enables the company to incorporate the customer's positive thoughts about the company and its products. Thus, the company should think of multiple ways that make it able to respond quickly and correctly to what customers think, taking into consideration the company's budget, its resources and its available capabilities (Kimmo et al., 2020). In this regard, the company must realize the necessity of matching between the resources it owns and the starting point of activities that satisfy customers and meet their requests. Many companies tend to achieve profits and continuously seek to increase profit by acquiring the largest possible number of customers in the market and by maximizing their market share, thus the customer represents a cornerstone and crucial in the process of achieving the company's goals (Lamb et al., 2018). That is why; the customer-centered marketing orientation of a company arose.

The company relies on customers to earn more money to survive and continue to do business; therefor company has two options for achieving it (Mediano, 2018). *First*, it needs to adopt the push strategy, which means that the company offers innovative products to customers in line with the company's current capabilities; this is because the company expects to create a demand for those products as soon as they become available on the market. *Second*, it needs to adopt the pull strategy, which means that the company provides products that conform to the specifications previously determined by the customer in a manner consistent with its current preferences (Zeebaree and Siron, 2019). This strategy is the essence of the customer-centered company, here, the company can achieve through it large sales and high profits. The client's marketing orientation assumes that the company's goals and strategies are achieve only by emphasizing primarily the needs of customers and achieving their satisfaction, accordingly the company needs to attach great importance to the customers, formulates all its marketing strategies with them, and considers them its partners (Kotler et al, 2017). The company should expand marketing research, know the customer's behavior and consider it a step prior to the product development step, that a costly matter that includes high expenses and is one of its main drawbacks.

Company needs to be flexible when employing the marketing strategy due to the possibility of changing customers' preferences in the market, especially curious customers. This because the latter type of customers may spread their new views on the product like a virus in the market, thus, it is necessary that the company remains able to update its marketing strategy constantly; the process of maintaining existing customers is easier than acquiring new customers (Al-Mamun, 2018). This requires the company to build strong relationships with its existing customers. The company assumes that they will spread the good word about the company to their families and friends, expanding as a result the company's current customer base, such an act might further ensure that searching for customer needs is one of the important elements in formulating the marketing strategy for the company (Kerin and Hartley, 2017). However, the management of the company should not forget that there is another element that has the same level of importance for the success of the marketing strategy, which is the employees in the company who can be describe as the main point of interaction between the company and the customers targeted. That is why; some companies place a great emphasis on sales force training programs in them to enhance their marketing skills in two directions: *Firstly* is to persuade the customer to buy, *secondly* to collect information about the customer's preferences and the change that may appear later (Masterson et al., 2017). It is worth for the managing the company to adopt a basic rule for obtaining and retaining customers, such a rule is represent by the following: the secret of obtaining customers lies in adding as much value as possible to the company's product, this is because customers love to buy the company's products that provide them with value.

Customer-centered company involves adding value to the company's products; this can be do in four steps: product design, product quality, right product and product delivery (Solimun and Fernandes, 2018). *First step* is product design, most of the major manufacturers of products are respect because their products are completely design according to the customers' preferences, in case of the luxury category of a product, all small details that the customer is interested in will be capture and include as notes during the product design (Shaltoni et al., 2018). This is because the product must be developing taking into account the end users and not the capabilities of the company. If the company is unable, it must increase its resources to make the product based on customers' preferences, in order for them not to wait a long time for the design of the product, affecting as a result their level of satisfaction (Moorman et al., 2019). *Second step* is product quality; many international standards for product quality are grant to companies only because they work with good manufacturing practices. Accordingly, the company that wants to focus on the customer must obtain international standards in manufacturing to assure the customer that the company should further use the best technologies in manufacturing its products; it also needs to emphasize the time reduction of each manufacturing cycle (Gentsch, 2019). Consequently, the company will not be subject to an additional cost. *Third step* is right product; the company

should divide its target market into homogeneous groups of customers. Then, it should define the marketing part that will meet the customers' needs, it further needs to publish promotional offers to create product awareness, build confidence in the minds of customers and assure them that the company's product is manufacture after adhering to all the manufacturing and design standards to get their satisfaction (Perreault et al., 2017). Company should be aware of the issue of maintaining a balance between supplying and demanding in the targeted marketing segment. *Fourth step* is product delivery, here, the company should implement the promises it made at the design stage. This is because the customer expects certain things when receiving the product that bears the company mark, the satisfied customers are those who believe that they have obtained a value for their money fairly whereas the happy customers are those who got products with a value that exceeds their expectations (Roschk and Hosseinpour, 2020). The decisive aspect of the positive experience of the customer is representing in the after-sales service that the customer may obtain. This aspect is major reasons that make many companies fail or succeed as the company's sales during the period after the delivery of the product may reinforce or break a corporate brand.

Attracting new customers to the company is more expensive than retaining existing customers; besides, satisfying existing customers will result in repeating purchases, and speaking positively with others about the company, this in return will make customers pay less attention to the brands and advertisements of competing companies (Karolos et al., 2017). Accordingly, they may decide to buy other products that the company later adds to its line and product mix, some companies resort to the style of customer's experience of the product, which gives the company a competitive advantage to enhance the customer's confidence in its products. The level of the company's interaction with the customer can be enhance by specific means are websites, social media, customer relationship management and customer experience (Wirtz and Lovelock, 2018). *First* is through websites, which are one of the most common tools in customer relationship management. This is because it enables the customer to register and create an account that allows him to verify the identity of the company and serve it individually. The account further provides continuous access to the websites, makes suitable orders, and improves customers' service, it also manages interactive marketing by requesting customers' feedback, online purchases and incentive programs, and buying online, which all increase the company's sales (Armstrong et al., 2017).

*Second* is through social media, which provides the company with an opportunity to reach a wider market and enables company ads, videos and pictures on social networks to attract potential customers. Such a means may spread very quickly among different social groups, and the challenge lies in focusing marketing efforts through social media on the target customer groups that try to reach them and get them to visit the company's website (Grewal and Levy, 2018). Customer-centered is characterized by its major reliance on social media, its rapid development, and by its increasing use in most



companies recently. *Third* means is the customer relationship management, this entails that the good relations between the company and its customers stimulates the interactions and makes them in a clear escalation situations, such as that of the requests for information, orders, returns, problems, warranty claims and complaints (Huang and Chen, 2019). When a customer calls the company, the company should know what information he actually provided and the aspects of the product that achieved his satisfaction or disturbed him; this is because the goal is to establish a long-term relationship that achieves customer satisfaction (Chaabane and Pez, 2020). *Fourth* means is the customer experience, customer-centered company has evolved to include business in which the company fully manages the customers' experience and controls its results. This due to the fact that the customer can contact the company and ask for answers to his inquiries regarding his experience of the product for the first time as a method of use or maintenance, this can be do through the direct communication on the company's website, e-mail, phone or message to the site (Shanahan et al., 2019). Moreover, the company must provide a quick response that gives the required information or addresses the request or the problem. Accordingly, the company should ensure that the whole experience from the first contact to the final solution is a positive experience for the customer and that he is satisfied with the value provided by the company in its product.

Customer-centered company should be characterize, as an economic approach that benefits both the company and the customer, such a behavior is not a responsive, and results not only from the reaction to customers' requests in a specific market, but also from the proactive behavior (Ejikeme, 2020). Such behavior based on careful marketing research in the market dynamics, the discovery of current and future customers' requests, and on the respond to them in a way that meets or even exceeds the customers' expectations and achieves a high value for both the customer and the company (DeRosia and Elder, 2019). Most studies confirm that the company that does not focus on the customer is a weak company in terms of competitiveness. Besides, adopting the philosophy of focusing on the customer and its application gives the company a competitive advantage represented by the fact that the customer is the center of attention. Further, pioneers in marketing relations emphasize the need for all parts of the company to be coordinated when dealing with the customer, in addition, the marketing manager should play the main role in this dealing, this is because strong relationships with customers are consider one of the most important advantages to outperform competitors (Abdul-Halim et al., 2018). Such a relationship arises through the company's direct and effective communication with customers on an ongoing basis to achieve three important issues: attracting the customer, retaining him, and building his loyalty to the company. Perhaps, the most important thing that the marketing-oriented company can achieve by focusing on the customer is to enhance the customer's feeling that the company exists in order to fulfill his demands and that he is the primary stakeholder in it.

### *Competitor-centered company*

The departments of some companies believe that the appropriate business method is to overcome competitors and defeat them in the market, this can be achieved by providing the company with a better value in its products, so that it becomes more popular than other companies operating in the same industry do (Leoni, 2020). Accordingly, the marketing orientation of the competitor-centered company depends on the company's creation of an advanced marketing intelligence system, such a system helps track competitors' trends, diagnose important developments in their business and in the market, and explain to the company opportunities and threats related to its business (Thama and Azama, 2019). All factors affect the company's profitability and enable it to excel and advance before its competitors to capture the market share.

A dilemma that marketers are experiencing is whether their focus should be on the competitor or on the customer. In spite of the recommendation of most of the marketing studies that strongly confirm that the marketing orientation of the company must focus on customers more than on competitors, some companies do not yet apply that (Kero and Sogbossi, 2017). Besides, their marketing business strategy aims to interact with the competitive environment, forcing the company to think away from customers and close to competitors, focusing on the competitor means that the company collects information about the behavior and activities of competitors and allocates its resources accordingly (Bozkurt, 2019). The company's strategies based on the competitor's database that the marketers manage and update their data according to the information obtained from the competitors of the company. Marketers may fall into a fatal mistake when they focus their attention on customers only; this is because they will be unaware of the changes brought about by competitors (Abid and Gulzar, 2018). In addition, there are critics who argue that customers may choke innovation in companies because they may not be able to express their expectations explicitly or they cannot anticipate their future needs. Besides, since customers often resist change, thus, these companies may refrain from making innovations, changes and improvements in their products, this feature represents a defect in the marketing orientation of the company that focuses on the customer (Bowen, 2019). It pushes marketers to adopt a focus on the competitor to motivate the company to develop and provide innovation skills and continuous improvement of its products.

Sometimes, the blame placed on companies whose marketing orientation focuses on the competitor, for launching products aims only at fighting the competitor. Excessive focus on the competitor forces the company to invest in the mechanisms of understanding the competitor, anticipating his upcoming moves, carefully examining his capabilities (Zhai et al., 2018). Predicting the changes that may occur in the preferences of customers and that the competitor has not taken notice of, using the method of withdrawing

customers from competitors, and maximizing the market share of the company at the expense of declining the competitor's market share. The marketing orientation of the company that is focused on the competitor requires that the company spend most of its time tracking the movements of competitors, monitoring their share for a market, and trying hard to rely on multiple alternative strategies to face the competitors in the market (Gomez-Suarez et al., 2019). This approach has many advantages and disadvantages. The positive side of it is to motivate the company to develop its offensive marketing capabilities, track weaknesses for competitors, and eliminate them. On the negative side of it, it is to motivate the company to become quick by its reaction and impulsive in its business in a risky way. Further, the company may build its private moves based on the movements of competitors, regardless of the expectations and desires of customers (Morales and Ruiz-Alba, 2019). Thus, it may end up expanding the company to its industrial practices instead of creating value for customers. This by itself may represent an opportunity for the company to develop its capabilities to generate changes in customers' requests that fit the company, but make the competitor unable to meet these demands.

The marketing orientation of a competitor-centered company requires the company to spend many resources on competitive activities; this may cause investment restriction and allocate the largest percentage of cases to face the changes in the market demands and conditions (Westerlund and Leminen, 2018). The company might also face atrophy in its marketing activities that are more direct through competitors' actions and moves. The assertion of the company in its business on a competitive pattern makes the company continuously re-evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and compare it with the competitor. Performance evaluation may include production efficiency, pricing, delivery times, customer's satisfaction, innovation, employee retention, and market share; furthermore, the company will operate in a competitive economic system that can maximize the benefits for itself at the expense of its competitors (Grewal et al., 2020). Competitor analysis is considered one of the important marketing techniques adopted in commercial transactions in the market with other companies such as wholesalers or suppliers of raw materials and agents. In addition, competitor analysis is the most important element in its marketing program that guarantees the company to sell its products successfully while maintaining an image and strengthening the level of its mark (Jin and Cho, 2018).

Competitor-centered company requires determining the company's target competitive position in the market; it also requires that the company seek to obtain a greater share of the competitor's market share (He et al., 2018). Besides, the company needs to acquire the major retail spaces and advertising areas, design the most attractive images, and obtain members' loyalty of the market in order to enhance the market position of the company within the chain of companies in one industry (Habel et al., 2020). Most companies want to be the only player in the market and wish to eliminate all of their

competitors. However, when many players try to reach the same advantages, competition arises between them automatically and cannot be avoid. This requires the company to initiate pre-preparedness and mobilize its resources to strengthen its position in the market and in the industry; it works in at the same time. It is worth noting that large established companies spend more resources than, small start-up companies in the field of focusing on the competitor, this is because their large size requires strategic and partial thinking and they have sufficient resources to do so, in addition, small companies may be busy with daily survival in the market (Adi and Adawiyah, 2018). They might not have the depth and sophistication to plan their long-term market position.

Most of the time companies resort to defending themselves, and launching a defensive war against competitors, this done by showing their sound and well-established business in the market, it also done through showing their balanced focus on both short-term and long-term development in their specialized field (Papadas et al., 2019). On the other hand, companies need to attempt to own old companies and revive their memory in the market investing the positive impression generated in the minds of the public and earns the trust of society faster than competitors earn. That the company owns the competitive advantage achieved by providing a greater value in its products to attract customers and push them to repeat the purchase from the company itself (Woodruff, 2019). Accordingly, its market share increases in comparison to the decreasing market share of the competitor. In addition to this, the company's competitive advantage is the driving force or the fundamental value that the company enjoys. Such a value affects the behavior of customers in the framework of the company's dealings with them, it may continue for a long period, regardless of the length or shortening of the product life cycle provided by the company (Oluwatoyin et al., 2018). This is because the company looks at its competitors and monitors their movements with caution, so that it can confront them or deal with them by eliminating them when they pose a threat. Company needs to get closer to its customers, suppliers, and companies that complement its activities, it further needs to know all members of the market, so that it can develop new ways to build profitable relationships with them and provide them with great value compared to the value provided by the competitor (Zhan, 2019).

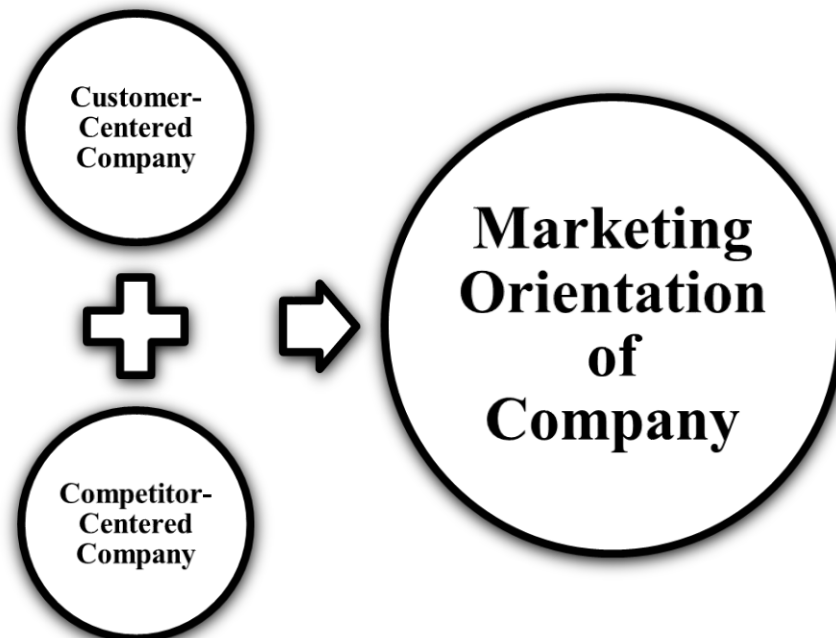
Competitor-centered company assumes that the company obtaining a competitive advantage requires it to strive towards building customers' loyalty to the company's products in a way that makes it difficult for the competitor to attract customers towards his products (Masa'deh et al., 2018). The company can obtain a greater market share through its ability to provide a value in its business that is higher than the value provided by the competitor in his business, including increasing the market share of the company and then increasing the size of its profits. The competitive advantage indicates the degree to which the company outperforms its competitors in the field of building value in the business needed by the market; besides, it shows that the

marketing orientation of a competitor-centered company is more preferred in the fast growing markets (Yousaf et al., 2018). Accordingly, the company must collect more data about the competitor, enabling it to develop and innovate, but at low costs that help outrun the competitor.

### FRAMEWORK

The most prominent subjects in the previous literature and research on the meaning of the marketing orientation of the company has been reviewed with its available options that constitute the central topic of this research in an attempt to develop a working mechanism that enables the company to determine the nature of its marketing orientation towards customers, competitors or together. This research is trying to use the checklist has been designed to measure marketing orientation of company. In addition, try to define the nature of the company's focus on the customer and competitor, and that form is apply and used a case study in General Company for Iraqi Airways and this checklist can be valid for application in all companies operating in the same industry that it works this company. Figure (1) shows the options available in the marketing orientation of the company, which this research considers as its main variables and seeks to address them with analysis and study.

**Figure (1)** the procedural chart of the research



### METHODOLOGY

This research based on a case study method that depends on the checklists that were prepared for measuring the reality of the variables discussed in the General Company for Iraqi Airways. The paragraphs of the checklists form were prepared based on the theoretical contents of each variable as prepared

by the researchers. Then a checklist form presented to a group of experts in marketing management for the purpose of arbitration and support of its paragraphs in proportion to the accurate measurement of the reality of the variables discussed in the company in question. The researchers conducted a preliminary survey of the company and interviews with some of its managers for verifying the existence of a marketing orientation for the company, and this was diagnose.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The researchers used the field coexistence method and the method of personal observation in determining the answer to the paragraphs of the checklist form. After they was confirmed that General Company for Iraqi Airways possessed a marketing orientation, the researchers set out to examine the requirements for customer-centered company in its marketing orientation and examine the requirements for competitor-centered company in its marketing direction through the checklists shown in tables (1) and (2).

**Table (1)** the checklist of customer-centered General Company for Iraqi Airways to marketing orientation

| <b>Principles of customer-centered company</b> |  | <b>Checkout</b> |
|--|--|-----------------|
| <b>1.</b>                                      | <b>The company adopts a principle (the customer is the core and basis of all its production and marketing operations).</b>   | ×               |
| <b>2.</b>                                      | <b>The company considers that the customer is a partner in the success of its business.</b>  | ×               |
| <b>3.</b>                                      | <b>The company conducts marketing and research periodically and regularly.</b>   | √               |
| <b>4.</b>                                      | <b>The company relies in its marketing research on the qualitative approach in the research that provides the company with detailed information about customers.</b> | ×               |
| <b>5.</b>                                      | <b>The company carries out its marketing research based on its own capabilities, and does not involve external parties and parties in the implementation.</b>        | √               |
| <b>6.</b>                                      | <b>The company is working to divide the market into homogeneous groups of customers for studying their needs and desires.</b>  | ×               |
| <b>7.</b>                                      | <b>The company motivates its customers to be involved in its marketing campaigns.</b>  | √               |
| <b>8.</b>                                      | <b>The company gives a price discount to the customer who purchases large quantities of the company's products.</b>  | √               |
| <b>9.</b>                                      | <b>The company offers special benefits to its clients (permanent customers).</b>   | √               |
| <b>10.</b>                                     | <b>The company is keen to keep its customers and make</b>  | ×               |

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
|     | sure that they remain in the company and is continuously following up on this.  |   |
| 11. | The company focuses on determining the expectations of customers to meet those expectations in a way that satisfies them.                 | × |
| 12. | The company will have friendly customer relations and always open the doors of dialogue between the company and customers.                | √ |
| 13. | The company uses modern communication technologies in its communication with customers and depends heavily on Internet applications.      | √ |
| 14. | The company selects its sales representatives strictly and greatly enhances their direct engagement with customers.                       | √ |
| 15. | The company's sales representatives have the ability to influence customers towards creating a positive first impression on the company.  | √ |
| 16. | The company has a market intelligence system that provides it with proactive data on changes that occur in customer preferences.          | √ |
| 17. | The company builds customer databases as the basis for sustaining its marketing operations and maintaining the parameters in the company. | √ |
| 18. | The company allocates a formal postal box to receive customer complaints.   | √ |
| 19. | The company finds suitable solutions for customers who receive it through its official mail and do not neglect any of them.               | × |
| 20. | The company prepares requests in advance to enhance its response to deal with each customer and reduce waiting times.                     | × |
| 21. | The company makes clear efforts to convert its customers into highly loyal clientele.   | √ |
| 22. | The company designs the characteristics of its products based on customer preferences and the specifications they specify.                | × |
| 23. | The company has a website that allows customers to view the nature of the services provided by the company.                               | √ |
| 24. | The company agrees to fulfill the customer's request that it receives by e-mail.  | √ |
| 25. | The company holds the marketing manager responsible for delivering services to the customer exactly as he requests it.                    | × |
| 26. | The company's culture includes organizational values specific to customer service that emphasize  | × |

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
|     | <b>that achieving customer satisfaction is a priority and are values that are acceptable to company employees.</b>   |   |
| 27. | <b>The corporate image in the market is sufficiently clear to reflect the company's sensitivity to customer preferences.</b>   | √ |
| 28. | <b>The company changes the characteristics of its products according to changes that may occur in the preferences and tastes of the customer.</b>  | × |
| 29. | <b>The company uses technologies to complete its business in line with the ability of customers to interact with these technologies.</b>   | √ |
| 30. | <b>The company's product line describes diversity and inclusiveness to meet all customer needs.</b>  | √ |
| 31. | <b>All advertisements for the company show the phrase (the goal of the company is for the customer to be satisfied and gladdened).</b>   | √ |
| 32. | <b>The company requires customers, after consuming their services, to present developmental proposals to them that improve the company's level of service provision.</b>                         | √ |
| 33. | <b>The company determines the quality degree of its products in coordination between its internal resources and external customers' demands.</b>   | √ |
| 34. | <b>The company resorts to increasing its profits by increasing the number of its clients in the market.</b>  | × |
| 35. | <b>The company adopts a product pull strategy that requires customers to order the product with certain characteristics as a first step in the company's production and marketing processes.</b> | × |
| 36. | <b>The company achieves great sales due to its focuses on customers.</b>   | × |
| 37. | <b>The goals of the company need the customers to participate in achieving them.</b>   | √ |
| 38. | <b>The company performs the process of predicting customer behavior before it makes the process of manufacturing its products.</b>   | × |
| 39. | <b>The company allocates a sufficient financial budget to fully predict and complete customer behavior.</b>  | √ |
| 40. | <b>The company adopts relations marketing programs that ensure customer loyalty in the long time.</b>  | √ |
| 41. | <b>The company provides the conditions that allow its customers to transfer their positive experiences to their families, friends and society.</b>   | √ |
| 42. | <b>The company's management allows for interactive marketing between its employees and customers so</b>  | × |



|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | that the employee gets exactly what the customer wants from the company.  |            |
| 43.  | The company emphasizes building value in its products to suit the demands and needs of customers.   | √          |
| 44.  | The company designs its products in light of the customer's desires and tastes, and not in light of the company's capabilities and the desires of its management.     | ×          |
| 45.  | The company takes a short time to redesign its products to suit the requirements of customers.  | ×          |
| 46.  | The company seeks to obtain international certificates confirming the high quality of performance and the product for attracting customers.                           | √          |
| 47.  | The company gets the ISO international certificate periodically, regardless of the ISO series number.   | ×          |
| 48.  | The product mix of the company is satisfactory to the customers in the market and gives them happiness.   | √          |
| 49.  | The company adheres to the deadlines for delivering its products and does not face cases of change in those dates.  | ×          |
| 50.  | The company provides after-sales services, which are an additional package of services through which clients are attracted and their loyalty to the company achieved. | √          |
| <b>The percentage of customer-centered company</b> |   | <b>58%</b> |

Table (2) the checklist of competitor-centered General Company for Iraqi Airways to marketing orientation

| <b>Principles of competitor-centered company</b> |  | <b>Checkout</b> |
|--|--|-----------------|
| 1.   | The company is very popular in society and the public trusts its brand.  | √               |
| 2.   | The company seeks to increase its market share by providing services that competitors cannot emulate.                          | √               |
| 3.   | The company tracks the movements of all competitors in the industry.   | √               |
| 4.   | The company has a marketing intelligence system.   | √               |
| 5.   | The company's marketing intelligence system provides accurate forecasts of competitors' movements.                             | √               |
| 6.   | The company analyzes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) of all its businesses without exception. | ×               |

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 7.  | <b>The company stresses the priority of carrying out its highly profitable activities and gives it the utmost importance.</b>  | √ |
| 8.  | <b>The company has the largest market share in the industry in which it operates.</b>  | √ |
| 9.  | <b>The movements of competitors in an industry limit the performance of company's marketing manager.</b>   | √ |
| 10. | <b>The company is looking to build value in its products, in order to outperform competitors' products.</b>  | √ |
| 11. | <b>The company performs environmental scanning of factors affecting the industry.</b>  | √ |
| 12. | <b>The company is interested in monitoring competitive factors more than other factors in its industrial environment.</b>  | √ |
| 13. | <b>The company's marketing manager is involved in environmental scanning of competitive factors.</b>   | √ |
| 14. | <b>The company adopts a "tracker competitor" policy instead of a "customer tracking" policy.</b>   | √ |
| 15. | <b>The company mobilizes resources that can help it beat competitors, not resources that can help it achieve customer satisfaction.</b>                                  | √ |
| 16. | <b>The company adopts some of its business offensive marketing programs.</b>   | × |
| 17. | <b>The company adopts in some of its business defensive marketing programs.</b>  | √ |
| 18. | <b>The company spends huge sums in marketing campaigns against competitors.</b>  | × |
| 19. | <b>The company has the capabilities to repel competitors' attacks and resist their impact on its market share.</b>   | √ |
| 20. | <b>The company has sufficient and correct information about competitors' resources.</b>  | √ |
| 21. | <b>The company has competitor databases that include all information related to the movements, past events and reactions of the company's competitors in the market.</b> | √ |
| 22. | <b>The company allocates a sufficient budget to collect information on the behavior of competitors in the market and industry.</b>                                       | √ |
| 23. | <b>The marketing manager of the company is responsible for updating the competitor databases periodically and continuously.</b>  | √ |
| 24. | <b>The company is pushing towards achieving innovations in its business due to its obsession about has competitors may being ahead in its industrial</b>                 | √ |

|     | <b>field.</b>  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 25. | <b>The company establishes some a specific business that target competitors' distraction and divert their attention.</b>   | √ |
| 26. | <b>The company determines the priority of carrying out the business aimed at acquiring the market share of competitors.</b>  | √ |
| 27. | <b>The company tries to discover the unsatisfied needs of customers that its competitors overlook.</b>   | √ |
| 28. | <b>The company's management allows its business be based on the method of withdrawing clients from competitors, but provided that it does not violate the law.</b>                   | √ |
| 29. | <b>The company does some business that only aims to reduce competitors' market share.</b>  | √ |
| 30. | <b>The top management of company approves to bear the long time that the company spends in monitoring competitors and tracking their movements.</b>                                  | √ |
| 31. | <b>The company always develops alternative strategies in the marketing of its business, allowing it to be flexible and face sudden fluctuations in the movements of competitors.</b> | √ |
| 32. | <b>The company is ally with international advanced companies in the industry for improving the company's competitiveness capabilities.</b>   | √ |
| 33. | <b>The company views the competitor as a threat that should be eliminate.</b>  | √ |
| 34. | <b>The company is characterize as a risky company and its reactions are rapid.</b>   | √ |
| 35. | <b>The company incentive customers to develop specific needs that the company can meet and competitors cannot.</b>   | √ |
| 36. | <b>The company is expanding its business in a way that is not commensurate with the expansion in its market share.</b>   | √ |
| 37. | <b>The company is characterize always the initiator in waging war on competitors in the market.</b>  | √ |
| 38. | <b>The company cares more about production activities than marketing activities.</b>   | √ |
| 39. | <b>The marketing manager of the company suffers from constant frustration because of limiting his role in the company to following competitors.</b>                                  | √ |
| 40. | <b>The company reevaluates its strengths and weaknesses as a new competitor emerges in its industry.</b>   | √ |
| 41. | <b>The company outperforms all its competitors in</b>  | √ |

|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | <b>product pricing.</b>   |            |
| 42.  | <b>The company is committed to delivery deadlines for suppliers and agents entitlements, immediately without delay.</b>   | ×          |
| 43.  | <b>The company is keen that its production business be ready to meet the sudden demands in the market resulting from the competitors' failure to deliver it.</b>  | √          |
| 44.  | <b>The company motivates its employees to positive interact with customers and encourages them with rewards and compensation commensurate with their efforts.</b>   | √          |
| 45.  | <b>The company has professional workers to perform their duties without mistakes, making it superior to its competitors.</b>  | √          |
| 46.  | <b>The company considers the community's confidence in its brand to be one of the most important factors that make it outperform its competitors in the market.</b>   | √          |
| 47.  | <b>The company adheres to ethical standards and honor in its competitive behavior for all its businesses.</b>   | √          |
| 48.  | <b>The company has a mission and goals that guarantee it will remain in its industry for a very long time.</b>  | √          |
| 49.  | <b>The company contracts with official research agencies specializing in analyzing competition in the current industry.</b>   | √          |
| 50.  | <b>The company's announcements emphasize the impressive successes achieved by the company in the past, show cases its power in its industry, which Embarrassing, and weakens the competitors' position in the market.</b> | √          |
| <b>The percentage of competitor-centered company</b> |   | <b>92%</b> |

Depending on the results presented by the checklists form presented in Tables (1) and (2). The company has a marketing orientation focused on the customer and it meets its requirements by a percentage of (58%) of the total requirements of the customer-centered company. The company also has a marketing orientation focused on the competitor and it meets its requirements by a percentage of (92%) of the total requirements of the competitor-centered company. Based on these results, the data presented in table (3) it found.

**Table (3)** the results of actual application of the principles of the marketing orientation in the General Company for Iraqi Airways

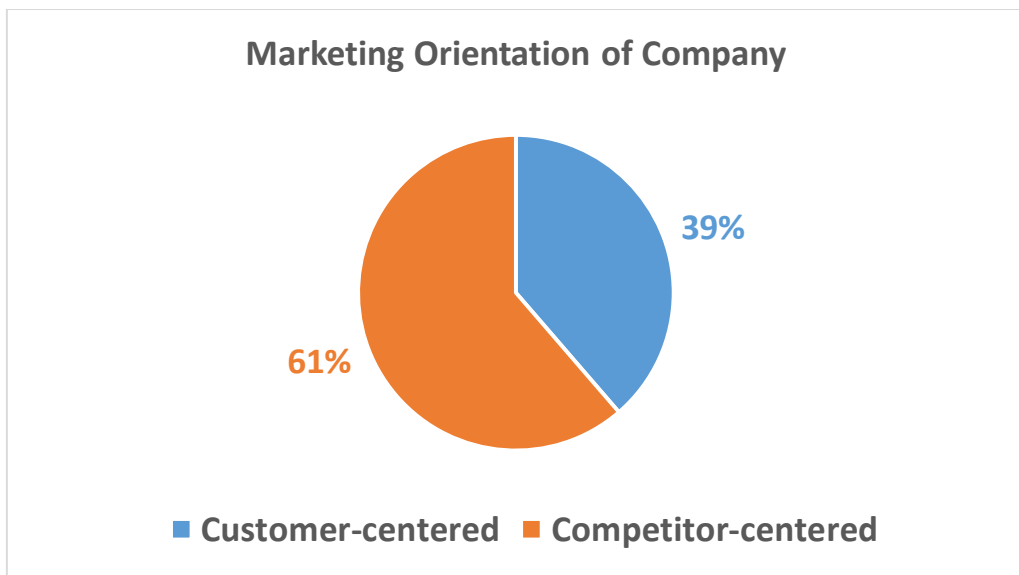
| Requirement | customer-centered | competitor-centered | marketing orientation of company |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|

|                   | number | ratio | number | ratio | number | ratio |
|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| Applied           | 29     | %58   | 46     | %92   | 75     | %75   |
| Not<br>Applicable | 21     | %42   | 4      | %8    | 25     | %25   |
| Kidney            | 50     | %100  | 50     | %100  | 100    | %100  |

## DISCUSSION

In order to measure the variables discussed, a checklist was designed to include (100) items, each of which represents the principles or requirements of the company's marketing orientation in a balanced and equal manner between the customer-centered and the competitor-centered, each one of them (50) items. Table (3) is clear the results presented in that the marketing orientation requirements of the company are actually available in the General Company for Iraqi Airways and are applied at a rate of (75%) of the total requirements for achieve a marketing orientation of company. It is clear that the company varies in its focus between the customer and the competitor, as the company focuses on the competitor (61%) of its total marketing orientation, as opposed to it is focusing on the customer with (39%) of its total marketing orientation. It can be said that General Company for Iraqi Airways is predominantly focused on the competitor, and this can be illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure (2)** marketing orientation of the General Company for Iraqi Airways



## CONCLUSIONS

Marketing orientation of the company is center on the customer and the competitor, and the companies should have a way in which this trend is clearly define, ensuring ease of awareness at the various organizational levels in the company. The company should achieve a balance between its focus on the customer and its focus on the competitor in its marketing orientation. As the lack of focus on one of the two axes may cause it, a great loss and this may

lead to the failure to achieve its goals and may be that caused exit from the industrial world in which it lives. The company can achieve this balance by maximizing investment in marketing research and in market intelligence and building customer databases, competitor databases, conducting customer analysis and competitor analysis processes alike, and the company should not neglect one of the two focuses in its marketing orientation and adopt only one focus either the customer or the competitor. The customer is the one who receives the company outputs of goods and services, but the competitor is the one who provides that customer with goods and services similar to the company outputs, and therefore the customer and the competitor are the main and influential parties in the business deals contracting that all companies and in all industries seek.

Companies, including the General Company for Iraqi Airways, can achieve a balancing of the marketing orientation of the company on the customer and the competitor by relying on the marketing experiences available within the company. Alternatively, using marketing expertise from outside the company such as research agencies and consulting offices in universities with the need to ensure that information is gathered on the characteristics of the current customer and future in the market and about the characteristics of the current and future competitors in the industry in which the company operates. The practical reality currently imposes on companies the need to achieve balancing in its centered on each of its customers and competitors, and the company must not leave the opportunity for its competitors to obtain information related to its customer-centered. The companies must understand that there are compared concentrations between the competitor-centered and the customer-centered, and then the company will have to lose something if it chooses one of the two concentrations. In addition, that the ideal option is to balance the two concentrations and that the company must have a marketing approach that focuses on customers and competitors at the same time. However, the state of achieving a balance is not easy due to the limited resources available in the company and it must realize the choice customer-centered or competitor-centered depends on the environment in which the company operates and the conditions of its industry and markets, as there are external and internal factors that determine the marketing orientation of the company.

The research has been shown that the ideal case for marketing orientation is to maintain a balance between focusing on customers and competitors, as this depends on the way the company looks at its marketing orientation according to the possible performance case and the company's desire to earn more profits in the short and long term. Realism indicates that companies apply the two concentrations together (customer-centered and competitor-centered) in their marketing orientation, but with varying concentration ratios so that their marketing orientation is more focused on one and less focused on the other. In the case study at the General Company for Iraqi Airways, the results showed that the company has a marketing orientation that competitor-centered in the first place and customer-centered in the second degree, and perhaps who

determines the nature of this imbalance in balance is the market conditions, industry characteristics and the capabilities of the company. Nevertheless, the noteworthy of attention is that the company must be achieving the two focuses together in its marketing orientation. Finally, companies must to balancing their view of the customer and the competitor when determining their marketing orientation. Because each affects the performance of the company, and it must to obtain advantages from both orientation the customer-centered and the competitor-centered, which maintain balancing between them, it is represents a challenge that forces the marketing manager to develop a marketing plan Efficiency that suits the company and works to achieve its goals.

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