

# **UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL**

**SUSTAINABILITY MARKET ORIENTATION AND  
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF STAR RATED HOTELS**

**IN GHANA**

**BY**

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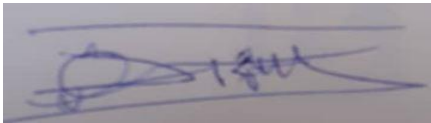
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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
GHANA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN  
MARKETING.**

**JULY 2019**

## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research work and has not been presented either partially or fully by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been duly acknowledged.



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## CERTIFICATION

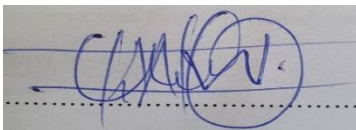
I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University.



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## **DEDICATION**

This portion seems to be challenging than writing the entire thesis. However, this work is dedicated to Allah for the countless blessings, including good health and sound mind to complete this thesis. To my parents (Alhaji Abdul-Hamid and Hajia Sahadatu), for their decisions to have me in school and their several sacrifices. My brethren (Alhaji Abdul-Basit and Adnan) were remarkable in their encouragements and support.

My dedication equally goes to my wife (Adamu Suhiyini) for her love and support throughout the PhD journey. May I finally dedicate this piece to my children (Hussein Wunzooya and Eeman Tahma) for their forgiveness in my somewhat absenteeism from fatherly household tasks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people have contributed in diverse ways to the completion of this thesis. I am unable to write all of these individuals, groups, and institutions who have, in various ways assisted in getting my thesis done.

Much gratitude goes to my Principal Supervisor and Mentor — Prof. Robert Ebo Hinson for his immense support and fatherly mentorship. Also, I am very grateful for the unflinching support and guidance from my co-supervisors: Dr Mahmoud Abdulai Mahmoud and Dr E.Y. Tweneboah-Koduah.

PhD financing remains a challenge in Ghana. I want to thank Professor R. E. Hinson and the Building Stronger Universities Project for the opportunities and support during my PhD training. Similarly, I would like to thank the Management of the University of Professional Studies for paying two years fees for my four year PhD programme. Equally, I am indebted to BANGA-Africa Project for awarding me the PADA Grant for Thesis Completion, which included the payment of my final year PhD fees, printing fees and proof reading cost. I am very grateful My Uncles, Alhaji Abdul-Rauf and Dr. Hakeem Weimah and Son (Rashid) for their financial support.

I want to acknowledge the support of Dr Henry Boateng and Mr John Paul Kosiba; for their readiness and willingness at all times to provide directions when called on. May I also acknowledge the support of: Mustapha, Abubakar, Winston, Manaf, Reihanatu, Ruhaima, Richard and all my team for supporting in getting this thesis completed.

## ABSTRACT

Market orientation was criticised for being a micro marketing concept with limitations in handling stakeholder concerns. In an attempt to enhance market orientation into a macro marketing concept, sustainability market orientation was advanced as a replacement. The main aim of this study was to develop a framework for optimising sustainability market orientation in Ghanaian hotels. The study argued that economic, social, environmental, and ethics are the lower-order dimensions of sustainability market orientation. Also, the study claimed that there is a relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance. Furthermore, the study advanced that the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance was mediated by sustainable technology. Finally, the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage was mediated by sustainable technology. A positivist paradigm was used alongside a quantitative research approach. The study surveyed two hundred and twenty-five star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra region. However, the study used one hundred and eighty-seven responses for analyses after data cleaning. A structural equation modelling technique, precisely, a partial least square (PLS) was used. The study found a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance in the Ghanaian hotel sector. Also, the study found a significant association between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel sector. The study did not find support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and Hotel performance in the Ghanaian hotel industry. However, the study found support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel industry. Sustainability marketing practices are no longer a cost to hotels but an investment. Consequently, hotels should consider developing and implementing sustainability market orientation. The integration of sustainable development principles into firm activities is no longer a choice. As regulators and customers are demanding sustainable practices, products, and packaging. Managers of hotels in their attempts to realise the full benefits of sustainability market orientation should consider engaging and identifying stakeholder needs and satisfying them profitably.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Chapter Overview

This thesis presents an integration of the concepts of sustainability, sustainable development, marketing, and market orientation for the enhancement of hotel performance. The thesis begins with an introductory chapter (this current chapter). The chapter proceeds as follows: section 1.0 is a chapter overview; section 1.1 presents the research background; and section 1.2 provides the research problem. A research purpose is provided under section 1.3; research objectives is under section 1.4; research questions is under section 1.5; the scope of the study is section 1.6 and contribution to marketing knowledge is under section 1.7. The chapter ends with a study report synopsis in section 1.8 and chapter summary in section 1.9.

#### 1.1 Research Background

There is an increasing interest in corporate behaviours (cf. Hinson, Agbleze, & Kuada, 2018; Abukari & Abdul-Hamid, 2018; Abraham, Asor, Torviawu, Yeboah, & Laryea, 2018; Nyarku & Hinson, 2018; Bawua & Owusu, 2018; Ayuso & Navarrete-Báez, 2018; Mahmoud, Blankson, & Hinson, 2017), resulting in concepts like: sustainable development, sustainability marketing, corporate social responsibility, corporate sustainability, environmental management, green marketing, corporate citizenship, triple-bottom-line, and corporate social performance becoming topical management concepts. Therefore, an investigation into hotel sustainability market orientation is timely.

The research background is presented by outlining a background of the key concepts and context of the study. Thus, the research background has subsections on sustainability, sustainability marketing, sustainability market orientation, hotels, sustainability, marketing practices, and sustainable technology. The concept of sustainability is discussed next.

### 1.1.1 Sustainability

The term sustainability originated from the concept of sustainable development (cf. Lee & Jan, 2019). Accordingly, sustainable development is at the forefront of most discussions on sustainability. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). Likewise, the Centre for Sustainable Enterprise (2010) defines sustainability as a way of doing business that generates profit while avoiding harm to the planet and people.

From the definitions of both sustainable development and sustainability, it is clear that both concepts encourage firms to engage in activities that consider future generational needs. Accordingly, firms that aspire to be considered as sustainable should be mindful of their environmental integrity, ethical behaviours, and social equity in addition to their economic prosperity (Bansal & Song, 2017; Scherer, Palazzo, & Seidl, 2013). Sustainability is an organisational responsibility that reduces business risks and increases market opportunities (Bansal & Song, 2017; Kiewiet & Vos, 2007). Sustainable practice is an issue of strategic importance to corporations, governments, and policymakers (Epstein, Buhovac, & Yuthas 2010; Epstein, 2018).

Sustainability is a strategy for crafting a competitive advantage in industry (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Sustainability is a practice that is assessed in terms of environmental, economic, ethical, and social dimension (Epstein, 2018; Lim, 2016). This thesis holds that sustainability has tremendous linkages with the marketing discipline. Thus, the concept of sustainability marketing or sustainable marketing is advanced next.

### 1.1.2 Sustainability Marketing

The concept of sustainability is inherent in marketing (cf. Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, & Hillier, 2008). Sustainability marketing is not a novel concept to scholars as it has evolved from concepts like ecological marketing, ethical marketing, social marketing, and societal marketing (cf. Kumar, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2016). According to Belz and Peattie (2009), sustainability marketing may be defined as building and maintaining sustainable relationships with the economic, social and the natural environment. The concept of sustainability marketing is broader than past concepts as it includes four dimensions, namely: economic, social, environmental and ethical (Kumar et al., 2016; Lim, 2016).

Sustainable marketing is a macro-marketing concept that involves the adoption of a sustainable development orientation (Belz & Peattie, 2009). That is, the concept embraces economic, ecological, ethical, and social issues. Sustainable marketing is, therefore, a holistic marketing approach that is ecologically driven, viable, ethical, and relationship-based (Belz & Peattie, 2009). The implementation of sustainability marketing as an essential approach in industry is meant to create real value for a firm or product when it is look at from consumers' perspectives (Hult & Ketchen, 2001).

According to Nkamnebe (2011), emerging markets like Ghana are beginning to adopt and implement sustainability concerns. As a result, this investigation into the sustainability marketing of Ghanaian hotels provides insights on the implementation of sustainability marketing in an emerging economy of Sub-Saharan Africa. Some emerging markets are indifferent while others are beginning to commit and invest into sustainability strategies (Nkamnebe, 2011). Sustainability practices in emerging markets is firm-level efforts while at the macro-level, sustainable development goals and millennium development goals is champion by governments (Nkamnebe, 2011).

### 1.1.3 Sustainability Market Orientation

The concept of sustainability market orientation is an integration of market orientation and sustainable development (Mitchell, 2012). Sustainability Market Orientation is a strategic orientation that implements a balanced and equitable intergenerational management of social, economic, and environmental resources (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2013). Sustainability Market Orientation is an organisational philosophy that combines market-oriented principles, macro-marketing systems, stakeholder approach, sustainable development management approach to balance environmental integrity, social equity, and economic prosperity (Lim, 2016; Crittenden, Crittenden, Ferrell, Ferrell, & Pinney, 2011; Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2010; Bansal, 2005).

Sustainability Market Orientation is argued to offer firms with an improve performance, competitive advantage, reduce regulation, and build an excellent corporate citizen reputation (Crittenden et al., 2011; Mahmoud, 2016). Firms may implement market-focused sustainability by integrating the customer (and other vital stakeholders) into a marketing strategy. Sustainability market orientation has the opportunity to create a marketing strategy that is inimitable, rare, valuable, and difficult to substitute (Mitchel et al., 2010; Hult, 2011; Barney 1991; Wernerfelt 1984). Sustainability Market Orientation can be leveraged on to secure improved firm performance. This may be because organisational culture is a foundation for superior performance and sustained competitive advantage (Olavarrieta & Friedmann, 2008).

A market-focused sustainability may be considered as a strategic resource (cf. Barney 1991) which could result in superior performance and competitive advantage (cf. Ketchen et al. 2007; Hult, 2011). A firm realizes market-based sustainability to the extent that it strategically aligns itself with the market-oriented product needs and wants of customers and the interests of numerous stakeholders about social responsibility issues involving social, environmental, economic, and ethical dimensions. A brief definition of the four (4) sustainability market orientation constructs is provided while a detailed discussion is found in chapters two and three. Firstly, economic sustainability is the continuing ability of an economic system to cater for every human needs (Martin & Schouten, 2014). Second, social sustainability describes to the continuing ability of communities to cater for the well-being of their members (Martin & Schouten, 2014).

Thirdly, environmental sustainability encourages a functioning ecosystem (Martin & Schouten, 2014). And finally, ethical sustainability is the application of moral standards (including dictums of wrong and right) to behaviour, institutions, marketing decisions, and practices (cf. Laczniak, 1999). Sustainability is considered a critical success factor (driven by ethics or morals) in achieving long-term performance (Knosmanen & Knosmanen, 2009). Sustainability market orientation may have some benefits when practised. Firms could increase their performance, enjoy product preference, achieve a competitive advantage, attract a better workforce, and avoid fines from regulators (Mahmoud, 2016; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Gordon et al., 2011; Luchs, Naylor, Irwin & Raghunathan, 2010).

#### 1.1.4 Hotels, Sustainability and Marketing Practices

The hotel sector plays a significant role with regards to sustainable consumption and production (Alameeri, Ajmal, Hussain, & Helo, 2018). The focus of hoteliers seems to have turned towards sustainability as it has to do with hotel operations and development, including the economic, environmental, social, and ethical impacts (Stottler, 2015). Hotels have historically had an intense environmental impact through energy and water consumption, hazardous and solid waste creation, and use of durable and consumable goods (Stylos, & Vassiliadis, 2015; Hsiao, Chuang, & Huang, 2018). Hotels are high consumers of energy for heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) operations, fuel, lighting, and other power needs. Water is also in high consumption for bathrooms, food and beverage, and laundry, as well as other general operations (maintenance, cleaning, and irrigation).

Waste is generated by the disposal of paper, appliances, furniture, batteries and bulbs, and equipments. Thus, sustainability is an essential issue for the hotel industry (Bracket & Carr, 2015). Subsequently, sustainability initiatives by hotels can make a substantial contribution to sustainable development by alleviating the adverse outcomes linked to hotel operations (Melissen et al., 2016). Against this background, international hotel chains and hotel owners are gradually embracing ethical, social, environment, and economic practices to address sustainability issues (Legrand et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Chan, 2013). Similarly, hotels are looking for opportunities to reduce the use of paper and other disposables. Consequently, this study examines the sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels in Ghana.

#### 1.1.5 Sustainable Technologies

Due to growing interest in the sustainability phenomenon, concepts like sustainable technology are receiving scholarly and managerial attention. Sustainable technology is the deployment of innovative technologies that incorporate sustainable development. The goal of adopting sustainable technology is to promote sustainable management of resources and reduce waste while maintaining efficiency. Some examples of sustainable technologies are: key card master switches or occupancy sensors, motion-sensitive bulbs, linen (both towels and sheets) reuse programmes, and low-flow showerheads and sink aerators, among others. Sustainable technological solutions increase energy efficiency, cut down on material waste and even increase profits for hotels. Firm sustainability with technological use describes the readiness of managers to use technologies that offer value to both customers and firms without compromising the needs and welfare of future generations (Lim, 2016).

Within the hotel purview, such technologies primarily describes technologies used for energy savings, solid waste management, air pollution control, and water conservation as well as to more specific green activities, such as product reuse and recycling (El Dief & Font, 2010; Chan & Lam, 2003; Chan & Lam, 2001).

#### 1.1.6 Market Orientation and Sustainability Market Orientation of Hotels

In search of excellence, hotels in the past utilized market orientation to improve on their performance (Hinson et al., 2017). Therefore, hotel market orientation is not novel. In operationalising hotel market orientedness, Hinson et al. (2017), avers that customer centricity, competitor intelligence and inter-functional coordination are crucial. Thus, hotels' may improve on their performance when they anticipate or identifies client needs and develop need satisfying services. To complement the customer centricity, it the ability of hotels to continuous be aware of the activities of their competitors and developing strategies to contain their impact on their performance. It is imperative to say that, how a hotel disseminate the customer and competitor intelligence within its functional areas is crucial.

With this existing knowledge this study introduces a somewhat new or developing concept. This concept is described as sustainability market orientation. Some earlier attempts had described it as sustainable market orientation. As such the next section provide insights on why the need to move from market orientation to sustainability market orientation.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Marketing researchers and practitioners have advanced arguments in support of market orientation (Morgan & Vorhies, 2018; Iyer, Davari, Zolfagharian, & Paswan, 2018). Market orientation is argued to effectively and efficiently create actions necessary for the creation of enhanced firm performance (Iyer et al., 2018; Hinson et al., 2017). Notwithstanding these, existing findings argue to the consequences and weakness of practising market orientation alone (Blankson et al., 2013; Boso et al., 2013; Hinson et al., 2017). Accordingly, some other strategic orientations have been introduced to augment the consequences of practising market orientation alone (Hinson et al., 2017; Iyer et al., 2018). Strategic orientations like positioning (Hinson et al., 2017), innovation (Naidoo, 2010), entrepreneurship (Boso et al., 2013), and corporate social responsibility (Mahmoud et al., 2017) have been integrated with market orientation in the past for improved firm performance. Therefore, market orientation is not potent for achieving sustained firm performance.

Market orientation is a microeconomic and functional management concept (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell, 2012; Gronross, 1989). Thus, market orientation focuses on the immediate business environments comprising of competitors, customers, and the market (Mahmoud, Hinson, & Duut, 2019; Crittenden et al., 2011; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990). This means that market orientation focuses on some stakeholders (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2010). As a result, market orientation fails to handle ecological, social, and ethical issues (Mitchell, 2012; Hult, 2011; Sin, Tse, Yau, Chow, & Lee, 2005; Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001).

Market orientation has failed to handle macro-level issues in the development and putting into practice of firm strategy (Mahmoud, 2016; Hult, 2011; Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2010). In the same way, using the stakeholder theory as an analytical tool, market orientation again fails to meet the requirements of all stakeholders (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2010). Due to these weaknesses of market orientation, market-focused sustainability, which is an elevated market orientation, is required (Mahmoud, 2016; Kotler, 2011; Hult, 2011). The enhanced (sustainability) market orientation is expected to incorporate all stakeholders (Mena, Hult, Ferrell, & Zhang, 2019; Hult, 2011). Accordingly, the need for incorporation of ethics, environment, and social issues into economic practices (market orientation) is necessary (Lim, 2016).

There are existing attempts at conceptualising and integrating sustainability and market orientation (Lim, 2016; Mahmoud, 2016; Kotler, 2011; Hult, 2011; Crittenden, Crittenden, Ferrell, Ferrell, & Pinney, 2011; Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2010). These papers and their focus, shortcomings, and avenues for further studies are discussed in chapter three of this thesis. However, some critical gaps in a few of them are provided. For instance, Mitchell et al. (2010), conceptualise sustainable market orientation by examining the existing three (3) sustainability development constructs and marketing. Thus, to them, sustainable market orientation comprises of a firm's economic, social, and environment engagements. This conceptualisation fails to provide some insights on ethical issues and corporate governance issues which are critical to the attainment of sustainable development goals (Samuel, Ong, Rahman, Olumide, & Alam, 2019). Ethics is critical in being sustainable (Lim, 2016; Knosmanen & Knosmanen, 2009).

In response to the call for more studies and empirical verifications of sustainable market orientation by Mitchell et al. (2010), Mahmoud (2016) introduced a revised conceptualisation by adding market orientation to the existing three constructs of social, economic, and environment. As such, Mahmoud (2016), advanced market orientation, economic, social and environment as the dimensions of market orientation. Like Mitchell et al (2010), Mahmoud (2016) equally fails to handle ethical issues. However, the fusion of market orientation directly into the model as a dimension is quite problematic is inherently an economic issue. This is because the goal of market orientation is to enhance firm performance by understanding client needs and monitoring competitors (Mahmoud, Hinson, & Duut, 2019; Crittenden et al., 2011; Narver & Slater, 1990; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

Lim (2016), provided one of the holistic conceptualisations of sustainability market orientation. In his contribution, sustainability marketing was advanced to dimensions like social, economic, environment, technology, and ethics. This contribution addresses the limitations of the earlier conceptualisations. However, the inclusion of technology as a dimension of sustainability is problematic. This is because firms deploy technologies in their attempts to be either ecological, social, ethical or economical. Accordingly, it may be inappropriate to combine technology as a dimension of sustainability marketing. Consequently, this study provides a new conceptualisation for sustainability market orientation leveraging on the existing works (Lim, 2016; Mahmoud 2016; Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010).

The reconceptualised sustainability market orientation comprises of economic, social, environmental, and ethical concerns as dimensions (Lim, 2016; Singh, de Los Salmones Sanchez, & Del Bosque, 2008). Just like market orientation, firms that implement sustainability market orientation are likely to realize enhanced productivity (Mahmoud, 2016).

The Ghanaian hotel sector is very competitive with foreign and multinational hotels (hotel chains) joining the market (Hinson et al., 2017). Accordingly, hotels are in search of strategies to enhance their efficiency and sustainability market orientation is a possible avenue. However, little is known about how hotels are implementing sustainability marketing? Moreover, what are the consequences for hotels that successfully implement sustainability market orientation? Technology as an enabler may be able to mediate a relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance. In the hotel sector, achieving sustainable development goals is a link to the adoption of innovative technologies. These technologies will assist in reducing the effects of hotels on the environment, for example, the reduction of waste by hotels.

### 1.3 Research Purpose

The main aim of this study is to develop a framework for optimising sustainability market orientation (SMO) in the Ghanaian hotel Industry.

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the research problem and existing gaps in the extant literature, this research has the following objectives:

1. Develop a sustainability market orientation conceptualisation.
2. Examine the relationship between sustainability market orientation and business performance (competitive advantage and hotel performance) of Hotels in Ghana.
3. Analyse the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and business performance of Hotels in Ghana.

#### 1.5 Research Questions

Based on the study objectives, the following research questions are advanced:

1. What are the sustainability market orientation dimensions of hotels in Ghana?
2. What is the relationship between SMO and Business Performance of Hotels in Ghana?
3. What is the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between SMO and Business Performance of Hotels in Ghana?

### 1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in an emerging or developing market. Discussions on the need to implement sustainability practices may very common in the developed or west economies. However, emerging markets or developing economies are beginning to implement sustainability practices whiles others are still not sure of the need to practice sustainability (Nkamnebe, 2011). Therefore, this study is timely and necessary. Specifically, the study was conducted Ghana an emerging or developing market. Within the Ghanaian market, the service sector was used. Sustainability practices are most discussed in manufacturing and mining sectors. Accordingly, a study in the services sector was deem essential in the understanding of sustainability practices.

Some sustainability marketing studies in the service sector like banking have been assessed. With another of attempts in the hospitality sector. The hospitality sector of the service economy is used in this study because it used more of natural resources. Therefore, the hotel sector in Ghana was examined using star-rated hotels in Accra and Tema. The star-rated hotel category was investigated because of their turbulent environment, highly regulated operations, competition, and relevance to the Ghanaian economy. The hotel sector is known for its consumption of energy and high waste discharge into the environment. Star rated hotels operating in Ghana are identified using the Ghana Hotels Association Diary. Accra and Tema have the highest number of star-rated hotels. On a visit to the star-rated hotels in Accra and Tema. A total of two hundred and forty-three (243) star rated hotels were used.

### 1.7 Contribution to Knowledge

This study will be a contribution to the extant literature on sustainability. Sustainability is discussed globally by policymakers, practitioners, media, and academics (cf. Golini, Longoni, A., & Cagliano, 2014; Etsy & Winston, 2009). The discussion on management orientation, for instance, will be provided using managers of hotels in an emerging market. This perspective could provide insights into how sustainability issues are perceived and managed.

Also, sustainability marketing practices with a specific focus on the product, place, processes, people, and promotion would be highlighted. The hypothesised relationships of SMO on sustainability marketing practices will provide useful insights to practitioners on the possibilities of having knowledge about sustainability, but failing to practice sustainability marketing. Similarly, this study will also provide insight on the possibility of stakeholder influence on firms' decisions to practice sustainability marketing. Finally, the study provides an empirical verification to the several conceptualisations that conclude that having a sustainability market orientation could deliver superior performance or/and achieve competitive advantage to firms.

### 1.8 Study Report Synopsis

The study report has nine (9) chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter and provides a general background to the thesis. Chapter two provides a literature review on sustainable development, sustainability, and market orientation. The chapter also makes attempts at combine sustainability and marketing to discuss sustainability marketing. Chapter three also presents a literature review on sustainability market orientation. Existing models and conceptualisation on sustainability market orientation are examined to provide a novel concept for examination. Chapter four is the study context chapter. The Ghanaian hotel sector is discussed. Providing some insights into how hotels practice sustainability marketing.

Chapter five presents theory and conceptual framework. Hypotheses are developed based on existing theory and arguments (literature). Chapter six delivers a research methodology. The research paradigms, approaches, designs and how data was collected and analyses were discussed. Chapter seven is the findings and analysis chapter. The descriptive and inferential analysis were examined. Chapter eight provides for the discussion of study findings. Attempts are made at explaining the study findings and also comparing with existing literature. Chapter nine provides for a summary, conclusion, recommendation, and managerial and theoretical implications of the study.

### 1.9 Chapter Summary

The opening chapter presented insights on the need to examine sustainability, sustainable development, market orientation, macro marketing, and hotel performance in a Ghanaian context. The integration of these concepts is discussed. The role of technology as a mediator of the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance (marketing and financial performance) as well as on competitive advantage are discussed. The next chapter provides a literature review on sustainable development, market orientation, and sustainability marketing.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

#### 2.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter two is a literature review on the concepts of sustainable development, marketing, sustainability marketing, and some empirical works on sustainability marketing. These concepts are building blocks to the concept of sustainability market orientation. As such, this chapter provides the definitions, perspectives, and understandings of these concepts.

#### 2.1 Sustainable Development

Sustainability is considered as a megatrend due to its growing importance (Memili, Fang, Koc, Yildirim-Oktem, & Sonmez, 2018; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). The origins of sustainability are traced to the 1960's modern environmental movement (cf. Trisoglio, 1996). Recent conversations on sustainability credit the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) or what is also recognised as the Brundtland's report. Other institutions and activism like the RIO+5 special session of the United Nations, Rio de Janeiro conference, and the Rio+20 UN conference on sustainable development may have together popularised the concept. The Brundtland Report is credited to be the beginning of the sustainable development discussion. Sustainable development was a development that meets present needs without conceding future generational abilities (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; WCED, 1987).

Sustainable development is a well-thought-out concept which does not lend itself to a precise definition (Dryzek, 2005). More so, the views of the Brundtland's commission on sustainable development have been opposed (Banarjee, 2003; Carruthers, 2001). For instance, the report is observed to be vague, thus, sustainable development understanding is very open to different interpretations (Dresner, 2008). As a consequence, the concept has a wide range of discourse and actions subsumed under its auspices (Bebbington, 2009). The adoption of sustainable development by different actors has questionably rendered the term practically meaningless (Banarjee, 2003). Indeed, the Brundtland report acknowledges this observation by alluding to a compromise that "painful choices have to be made" (WCED, 1987). The WCED, however, failed to elaborate on what painful choices must be made. Sustainable development is human progress that can be maintained into the future.

The sustainability concept originated from the idea of sustainable development (Lee & Jan, 2019). Accordingly, sustainable development is at the forefront of most sustainability discussions. There are several definitions of sustainability. Institutions presented some definitions, while others are from individual scholars. More so, the descriptions of sustainability are arguably different according to market environments, institutions, and industrial settings (Memili et al., 2018). Some leading definitions of sustainability are outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Some Sustainability Definitions

Definition / Explanation	Source / Reference
Sustainability is a way of doing business that creates profit while avoiding harm to people and the planet.	Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, 2010
Sustainability is a concept recognised to integrate social, environmental, and ethical limits to economic growth.	Dresner, 2008
Sustainability is a multidimensional concept which involves several stakeholders and incorporates efficiency in production and equity in the distribution.	Aras & Crowther, 2008; Sharma & Henriques, 2005
Sustainability is an organisational responsibility that reduces business risks and increases market opportunities.	Bansal & Song, 2017

Sustainable development and sustainability encourage firms to engage in activities that consider the future generation's needs. Thus, firms should be mindful of their environmental integrity, ethical behaviours, and social equity in addition to their economic prosperity (Bansal & Song, 2017; Scherer, Palazzo, & Seidl, 2013). Sustainable practice is an issue of strategic importance to corporations, governments, and policymakers (Epstein, 2018; Epstein, Buhovac, & Yuthas 2010). Sustainability issues are the focus of managerial decision-makers because of the growing interest of stakeholders (Chabowski, Mena, & Gonzalez-Padron 2011).

Sustainability is considered a firm strategy for generating competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Corporations that strive to gain long-term competitive advantage adopt sustainable activities as their core strategy (Chabowski, Mena, & Gonzalez-Padron, 2011; Rodriguez, Ricart & Sanchez, 2002).

### 2.1.1 Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly set a fifteen (15) year target for members. The aim was seventeen (17) world-wide goals commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015; Tuokuu et al., 2019). According to the UN resolution, the 17 goals were a plan of action for the planet, people, and prosperity (United Nation, 2015).

According to the UN resolution 70/1, these are the 17 sustainable development goals: good health and well-being; partnerships for goals; decent work and economic growth; zero hunger; quality education; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; peace, justice and strong institutions; no poverty; life on land; climate action; life below water; gender equality; affordable and clean energy; reduced inequalities; climate action; sustainable cities and communities; and responsible production and consumption (Tuokuu et al., 2019; Hak, Janouskova, & Moldan, 2016; United Nations, 2015). These goals are interconnected and give a blueprint for the achievement of a sustainable future by protecting the earth and encouraging well-being of humanity (Tuokuu et al., 2019; Rasul, 2016). More so, these goals are meant to combat climate change, fight poverty, and build a peaceful and healthy society (Tuokuu et al., 2019; Hak et al., 2016).

This study is relevant to the following goals of the sustainable development goals: goal 3: good health and well-being; goal 8: decent work and economic growth; goal 9: industry, innovation, and infrastructure; and goal 12: responsible consumption and production. The goals were specially selected based on their relationship with the economic, environment, ethics, and social dimensions. These dimensions, when implemented, may lead to the accomplishment of sustainable development goals.

### 2.1.2 Sustainability Frameworks

Due to the diverse and fragmented definitions of sustainability (Mitchell, 2012), this section of the review on sustainability describes some of the existing frameworks that have classified or framed sustainability. Several frameworks are competing to assist in the understanding and definition of sustainable development (Mitchell, 2012).

#### The Triple Bottom Line

The idea of the triple bottom line is credited to Elkington (1997), although this attribution has been contested by other scholars (Buhr, 2007; Norman & McDonald, 2004). The triple bottom line is a common framework for sustainability discourse and measurement (Richter, 2010; Norman & McDonald, 2004). The triple bottom line has the planet, people, and profits as the fronts (Slaper & Hall, 2011). Terms like the “three pillars of sustainable development” or “triple bottom line of sustainability” are standard in the strategic management literature showing the growing interest in the framework (Bansal, 2005; Hart & Milstein, 2003).

Some scholars associate the triple bottom line to corporate social responsibility (Richter, 2010), whereas some scholars see it as an accounting framework (Slaper & Hall, 2011). Triple bottom line ideation holds that a firm has a responsibility to ensure the maintenance of both natural environment and social concerns along with economic success (Beske & Seuring, 2014; Seuring & Muller, 2008). Interestingly, some scholars think the triple bottom line should not be confused with sustainability (Milne & Gray, 2013) as the triple bottom line does not require firms to change their behaviours (Norman & McDonald, 2004). It is entirely beneficial when environmental and social goals are matching with financial ones (Milne et al., 2006), however, there exist variations in how the triple bottom line is applied or measured (Slaper & Hall, 2011).

According to Elkington (2013), the triple bottom line motivates the firm to consider social and environmental issues in their economic strategy. Some drivers for triple bottom line implementation are compelling and require critical consideration by firms:

1. a move from an old paradigm to a new paradigm;
2. a move from compliance in markets to competition;
3. a move from hard values to soft values within firms;
4. a move from closed to open transparency; and
5. a move from exclusion to inclusion of corporate governance (Elkington, 2013).

These shifts reflect the drivers encouraging the adoption of the triple bottom line (Elkington, 2013). The contribution of the triple bottom line to sustainability requires all stakeholder involvement (Elkington, 2013).

#### Technological Optimism and Pessimism Distinction

The technological distinction provides an understanding of how sustainability is defined. Some scholars define sustainability using an optimism perspective, while others are guided with pessimism (Mitchell, 2012). The contribution of Boulding (1966) in the “Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth”, arguably laid the foundations to this framework. Boulding (1966), avers that economists failed to come to grips with the magnitudes of the evolution from an open to closed earth. Thus, resources are becoming scarce and limited. By the 1970s, the discussion on whether technological innovation provided economical solutions to environmental problems emerged (Meadows, Meadows, & Randers, 1992). The Optimists argues that man is ingenious, compelling, and can solve problems as they arise. While the Pessimists believes that nature is vulnerable and human establishments are slow-moving and imperfect. Both optimists and pessimists consider technology to be a source of problems and solutions to problems.

Interestingly, both optimists and pessimists support sustainable development. They have different recommendations for policymakers to achieve a sustainable development goal. An optimist promotes growth and innovation, while a pessimist limits growth and innovation. However, both argue that their views contribute to sustainability (Mitchell,

2012). As Boulding (1966) advances a “cowboy economy” as against a “spaceship economy”.

The “cowboy economy” refers to a type of economy which acts like there exist an infinite natural resource supply and wastes are easy absorbed ([www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com), 2019). Similarly, Boulding (1964), avers that firms’ behaviour towards resources and waste managements as if resources were infinite is described as a “cowboy economy”. Also, the “cowboy economy” is described as a reckless “live-fast, die-young” model (Visser, 2015).

The “spaceship economy” is an alternative to the “cowboy economy”. According to Boulding (1966), a “spaceship economy” describes an economy with finite natural resource supply and deliberate efforts in reducing waste generation and management. Specifically Boulding (1966), argues that “the earth has become a single spaceship, without unlimited reservoirs of anything, either for extraction or for pollution, and in which, therefore, man must find his place in a cyclical ecological system which is capable of continuous reproduction of material form even though it cannot escape having inputs of energy”.

Gladwin, Kennelly, and Krause (1995) push for a technocentrism as against ecocentrism. While Ayres (1993), advances neo-Malthusian as against cornucopian. Goodwin (1994) presents an ultimate luxury as against future misery. Mol and Spaargarten (1993), argue for ecological modernisation as against eco-alarmism. Scholarship on sustainable development takes either an optimism or pessimism view Brooks (1992) avers that reality lies intermediate between optimism and pessimism.

Similarly, Lecomber (1975), asserts that everything fulcrums on the degree of the possibilities of substitution and technical progress. This technological distinction is obligatory for appreciating different perspectives on sustainable development, which is not sufficient (Mitchell, 2012).

#### North and South Distinction

The north and south distinction of sustainable development began after the developmental roots of sustainability (Brandt Commission, 1983). A North distinction prioritises the environment and seeks to protect standards of living (Redclift, 1992). The South, on the other hand, is concerned with socio-economic development, improving education and health, and poverty alleviation (Redclift, 1992). The north has characteristics of environment-focused issues, such as over-consumption, the rich (exploiter), and individual and moral problem (Mitchell, 2012), while the south, on the other hand, has characteristics of development-focused issues, such as excessive population growth, the poor (exploited), and collective and population problem (Mitchell, 2012).

#### 2.1.3 Sustainability Approaches

Systems and economical approach to sustainability are discussed in this thesis as some of the approaches to sustainability.

##### Systems Approaches

Sustainability could benefit from a systems theory perspective. From the sustainable development concept; the dimensions of ecology, social, ethics and economics are

complex, interrelated sets of elements and processes (Lim, 2016; Mitchell, 2012). As such, systems thinking perspective is established. This systems approach to sustainability is attributed to the ecology literature, specifically, the concept of resilience in ecosystems and populations (Mitchell, 2012). Resilience is an ability to persist by engrossing fluctuations to critical parameters and variables (Holling, 1973).

Sustainability within the systems approach may be considered as the ability of a nature, human, or a mix of the two (natural & Human) to survive or acclimatise to exogenous or endogenous change for the foreseeable future (Mitchell, 2012; Dovers & Handmer, 1992). Therefore, sustainable development is a conduit of deliberate change and enhancement, which enhances or maintains this attribute of the system while responding to the needs of the current population (Dovers & Handmer, 1992). The Brundtland conceptualisation of sustainability is a systems perspective (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). Also, the Brundtland report argues for the “interdependence” of environment and economy, calling for collective action and global co-operation.

Moreover, explicit consideration of both intergenerational (present) and “intra-generational” (future) equity is central in sustainable development. This idea of a “new era of economic growth”, with natural limitations circumvented by new technology and global collaboration, positioned sustainable development as a universal, “win-win” panacea for environmental degradation and inequity (Meadowcroft, 2000). The Brundtland report offered a concept potentially appealing to radical environmentalists and free-market economists (Meadowcroft, 2000).

### Economic Approaches

Economic theory has played a crucial role in debates about sustainable development (Dresner, 2008). Economic theory has been used to deal with exhaustible and renewable natural resources (Mitchell, 2012). Sustainable economics is explored within the neo-classical paradigm (Mitchell, 2012; Klaasen & Opschoor, 1991; Dasgupta & Heal, 1979). Therefore, sustainable economics may suffer from the criticisms directed at neo-classical theory (Mitchell, 2012).

The neo-classical traditions of rational economic actors, decreasing returns to scale, and equilibrium is questioned (Trisoglio, 1995; Parker & Stacey, 1994). These reproaches tend to be ignored in economic discussions on sustainability. Thus, sustainability based on an economic approach is a non-declining function of a participant in society for a long period of time (Pezzey, 1992). More so, the economic approach calls for every generation to leave the subsequent generation a stock of capital more than their opening capital (Pearce et al., 1993).

This capital encompasses human-made and natural capital (Pearce et al., 1993). However, their neo-classical economics failed to provide a theoretically experimentally valid and convincing account of economic decision-making. On the other hand, the economic approach ignores social, human, and environmental values (Mitchell, 2012). Thus, the economic approach stimulates inequitable development, unfairness, ecological degradation, and social decay (Costanza, Daly, & Bartholomew, 1991).

### Strong Sustainability

A strong sustainability perspective was credited to Turner in 1993. The paradigm is rooted in economic theory (Dresner, 2008). Strong sustainability paradigm avers that natural capital is not replaceable with human-made capital (Davies, 2013), but they are complements to each other. Strong sustainability accepts that there are certain functions that the environment performs which humans or human-made capital cannot duplicate.

### Weak Sustainability

Turner also developed a weak sustainability perspective in 1993. Weak sustainability is grounded on the work of two neo-classical economists (Davies, 2013; Solow, 1974; Hartwick, 1977, 1990). Weak sustainability is an extension of neo-classical welfare economics. Thus, a belief that human-made capital is more important than natural capital (Mitchell, 2012). According to this perspective, it is conceivable to substitute natural capital for human-made capital (Neumayer, 2003).

Weak sustainability is an idea within [environmental economics](#) which states that [human capital](#) can substitute [natural capital](#). Weak sustainability is more about natural capital regarded as a substitute to human-made forms of capital. Weak sustainability accepts that manufactured capital and natural capital are fundamentally exchangeable and contemplates that there are no crucial dissimilarities between the kinds of well-being they produce (Neumayer, 2012; Ekins et al., 2003).

Also, technological progress is implicit to frequently generate technical explanations to the environmental problems caused by the more significant than before the manufacture of products (Ekins et al., 2003). Table 2.2. demonstrates examples of weak and strong management strategies.

Table 2.2: Comparing of Weak and Strong sustainability

Form of sustainability	Management strategies and policy instruments
Very weak sustainability	<p>“Conventional cost-benefit approach.”</p> <p>Infinite substitution of natural capital Elimination of “perverse subsidies” (Hawken et al., 1999)</p>
Weak sustainability	<p>“Modified” cost-benefit approach</p> <p>Valuation methods for natural capital</p> <p>Pollution taxes and permits</p>
Strong sustainability	<p>Precautionary principle</p> <p>Constant natural capital rule</p> <p>Conservation zoning</p> <p>“Degree of ‘decoupling’ of the economy from the environment.”</p>
Very strong sustainability	<p>“Stationary state” (Daly, 1996)</p> <p>No cost-benefit analysis</p> <p>Bioethics – standards and regulations</p>

Source: Mitchell, 2012

#### 2.1.4 Sustainability Paradigms

Several perspectives can help shape our understanding of sustainability and sustainable development.

##### Dominant Social Paradigm

Pirages and Ehrlich introduced this paradigm in 1974. According to them, the lens through which most individuals see the world is coloured by a belief in the primacy of economic growth, free markets, industry, and technology. The values of the dominant social paradigm clash directly with a concern for the environment as the dominant social paradigm is characterised by “a view of nature as something to be subdued by mankind” (Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974).

As Kilbourne et al. (2002) elaborate, the dominant social paradigm is particularly influential in the dominant institutions of society, meaning that it is the worldview through which most important decisions are made. Many of the critical assumptions of the dominant social paradigm are incompatible with sustainable development (Gladwin et al., 1995). For example, exponential economic growth cannot continue indefinitely (Jackson, 2009). Also, the “laissez-faire” dominant social paradigm economy is ill-suited to sustainable development as financial markets do not recognise the value of natural resources or “natural capital” (Hawken et al., 1999; Daly, 1996). The neo-liberal capitalist ideology, which fits so well with the dominant social paradigm, does not deliver optimum societal welfare, in fact perpetuating inequality and failing to maximise well-being (Jackson, 2009).

### New Environmental Paradigm

The new environmental paradigm (NEP) was championed and proposed by Dunlap and Van Liere in 1978. According to them, this new paradigm was emerging to counter the dominant social paradigm. The new environmental paradigm was conceptualised as a list of values indicative of pro-environmental orientation. The list of values was tested for validity among US respondents. They considered preference for a less anthropocentric relationship with nature, recognition of limited natural resources, and concern over population growth (Dunlap et al., 2000).

Humanity must redefine its relationship with nature, recognising that we are all interdependent. The new environmental paradigm articulates a “systems thinking”. Thus, humans are merely a part of an interconnected ecosystem encompassing all of nature and beyond (Schumacher, 1973; Meadows et al., 1972). The new environmental paradigm touches on the principles of “deep ecology” (Naess, 1973). More so, the new ecological paradigm proposed that “nonhuman interests” are equally as important as human ones (Dillard, 2007). Table 2.3 compares the difference between the dominant social paradigm and the new environmental paradigm.

Table 2.3: Dominant social paradigm and New environmental paradigm comparison

Dominant Social Paradigm	New Environmental Paradigm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological optimism</li> <li>• Nature to be dominated</li> <li>• Resistance to change</li> <li>• Liberal economics</li> <li>• Self-interested individuals</li> <li>• Relatively free markets</li> <li>• Economic growth prioritised</li> </ul> <p>Anthropocentric (Kilbourne et al. 2002; Olsen et al., 1992, Gladwin et al., 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science and technology create more problems than they solve</li> <li>• Limits to growth</li> <li>• Environmental protection prioritised</li> <li>• Systems thinking</li> <li>• Eco-centric population control</li> </ul> <p>(Dunlap et al., 2000; Olsen et al., 1992, Gladwin et al., 1995)</p>

### 2.1.5 Analogous Sustainability Concepts

The growing importance of sustainability and sustainable practices has influenced the development and realignment of existing concepts. This section of the chapter provides information on some of the concepts associated with sustainability. The concept of corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability are discussed.

### Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The concept of corporate social responsibility continues to receive scholarly attention (Mahmoud et al., 2017). According to Carroll (2016), corporate social responsibility is a firm's ability to act above the economic and legal requirements of companies. However, responsibility has diverse meanings for stakeholders (Dawkins & Lewis, 2003; Frankental, 2001). For some industries and firms, corporate social responsibility practices may pertain to human and labour rights (employee treatment), while others can refer more widely to environmental concerns (Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005).

Some scholars are seeking for the incorporation of corporate social responsibility with economic development and protection of local cultures (Scherer et al., 2013). The practice of corporate social responsibility delivers firms with improved performance (Boateng & Abdul-Hamid, 2017; Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012).

Conceptually, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development are very different (Montiel, 2008). However, there are growing attempts to suggest these concepts are the same. It can be argued that the pursuit of corporate social responsibility would lead to the achievement of sustainable development goals. Several scholars have conceptualize corporate social responsibility to include economic, social, and ethical responsibilities (Carrol, 1991). With some scholars defining corporate social responsibility from a sustainable development view point of social, economic and environmental responsibilities.

Corporate social responsibility focuses on social responsibilities of firms, often times to the exclusion of economic and environmental issues. Sustainable development, on the other hand, requires the incorporation of economic, social, and ecological concerns. Therefore, from the earlier conceptualisations of corporate social responsibility, these concepts are not the same.

Sustainable development is a systems-level concept relating to planetary sustainability and global equity, while corporate social responsibility is an entity-level articulation of organisations' responsibilities to society (Montiel, 2008). Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, although different, are both valuable concepts.

#### Corporate Sustainability

Some attempts have been made to combine sustainable development and corporate social responsibility to coin the term “corporate sustainability” (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010; Bansal, 2005). Corporate sustainability is a shift in the focus from global environmental sustainability to sustaining corporations (Banarjee, 2008). Business, rather than societal or ecological concerns, define the parameters of corporate sustainability (Banarjee, 2008).

## 2.2 The Concept of Market Orientation

Market orientation concept is dominant in contemporary marketing decision-making (Mahmoud et al., 2019; Hinson et al., 2017; Qu, 2009). Increasing interest in market orientation is refreshing. Market orientation is an organisational culture which efficiently and effectively builds the creation of the essential behaviour of superior value for customers and excellent firm performance (Narver & Slater, 1990). Similarly, market orientation describes an organisation-wide gathering of market intelligence, diffusion of market intelligence among departments, and organisation-wide responsiveness to market intelligence (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

Apart from the above definitions, there are other definitions of market orientation. Langerak (2003) concluded that irrespective of the description, two perspectives have dominated in most definitions. These are the cultural and behavioural perspectives (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990). However, the Narver and Slater and Kohli and Jaworski definitions overlap considerably and can be integrated into a broader aggregate definition (Qu, 2009).

### Market Orientation Conceptualizations

Market orientation has two unique harmonising perspectives (Hinson et al., 2017; Langerak, 2003). Thus, cultural and behavioural perspectives are available in the existing literature. The other views are the decision-making process; strategic marketing focus; and customer orientation (Zebal, 2003). Market orientation also has several scales in the existing literature due to the different conceptualisations.

For instance, Kohli et al. (1993) established a valid measure that comprises dissemination, responsiveness, and intelligence generation. Additionally, Gray et al. (1998), suggested a parsimonious model for market orientation grounded on the work of previous studies (Kohli & Jaworski 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990). Inter-functional coordination, competitor orientation, responsiveness, customer orientation, and profit emphasis are the five dimensions. More so, Anwar (2008) avers that market orientation includes competitive focus, customer focus, environmental scanning, new service development, and strategy implementation. However, Anwar (2008) notes that firms may adopt diverse strategies. Finally, market orientation influences firm performance (Hinson et al., 2017).

#### Antecedents of Market orientation

Market orientation, like many strategic orientations, has factors that improve or impede firm market orientation (Kohli & Jaworski 1993). Marketing scholars have studied the antecedents of market orientation (Theodosiou & Katsikea, 2012; Kuada & Buatsi, 2005; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). Marketing scholars Kohli and Jaworski (1990), are credited to have begun investigations on the antecedents to market orientation. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1993), the following are antecedents of market orientation: organisational systems, interdepartmental dynamics, and senior management factors. To them, organisational systems include departmentalisation, formalisation, and centralisation. More so, high-level management factors that are pre-requisites to market orientation include: top management emphasis on being market-oriented, attainment of formal education, risk-taking behaviours, and upward mobility of senior management (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

Also, Interdepartmental dynamics are conflicts that impede the level of market orientation and connectedness that enhance the level of market orientation. Studies on Market orientation in extant literature have examined the relationship between market orientation and performance without investigating the antecedents of market orientation (Arshad et al., 2012).

#### Moderators of Market Orientation

A moderator variable is any variable that by its inclusion in the analysis helps explain or accounts for more variance than would otherwise be the case (Cano et al., 2004). Therefore, moderators of market orientation are external factors which impact on the market orientation and firm performance relationship. These factors may enhance or decrease or stay neutral in market orientation and firm performance relationship (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Moderators are contextual factors that either more or less make market orientation appropriate for an organisation (Cano et al., 2004). Also, moderators are brought to light because of their support for the hypothesis that environmental factors influence the usefulness of organisational variables. These moderators are sometimes employed as control variables. Marketing scholars have identified competitive intensity, market turbulence, technological turbulence, buyer power, and economic turbulence as moderators of market orientation (Zebal & Godwin, 2011; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993).

### Mediators of Market Orientation

Market Orientation is not the single solution to organisational performance (Hinson et al., 2017). Alternative strategic orientations can also result in business performance (Noble et al., 2002; Hult & Ketchen, 2001). Latest conceptualisations of the market orientation construct sought to argue that mediating variables are essential for superior performance to occur (Ferrall et al., 2008; Han et al., 1998). Scholars argued that market orientation alone might not provide the desired effect unless it is integrated with other organisational variables such as positioning, innovation, learning, service quality, and corporate social responsibility (Pratono, Darmasetiawan, Yudiarso, & Jeong, 2019; Hinson et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2010).

### Consequences of Market Orientation

The result of market orientation has been established as improved business performance (Mahmoud et al., 2019; Hinson et al., 2017; Narver & Slater, 1990). Market orientation delivers firms with a competitive advantage (Morgan et al., 2009). According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), market orientation leads to higher satisfaction of customers, repeat customer business, employee commitment, and job satisfaction; all of which positively impact the overall performance of firms (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

This section will explore the consequences of market orientation into details by examining customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and customer retention as well as overall business performance. Urde et al. (2013) have identified these constructs as the typical performance

metrics of market-oriented businesses. Qu and Ennew (2003) also examine the market orientation performance link through customer satisfaction and retention.

#### The Impact of Market Orientation on business performance

The link between market orientation and business performance has been extensively studied (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012; Agarwal et al., 2003). Grinstein (2008) suggests that market orientation substantially contributes to firm performance more than alternative strategic directions. Scholars agree that market orientation impacts on business performance (Narver & Slater, 1990; Sorensen, 2009) and some report no linkage between market orientation and business performance (Greenley, 1995). Noble et al. (2002) reported mixed results concerning the relationship between market orientation and performance.

Some studies have found a positive impact of market orientation on business performance (Mahmoud et al., 2019; Hinson et al., 2017; Harris & Ogbonna, 2001) while others have found a negative impact of market orientation on business performance (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001). The mixed findings have stimulated researchers to verify the relationship in different contexts and from different perspectives (Kirca et al., 2005). Accordingly, Kirca et al. (2005) provided support for a positive, significant, and robust link between market orientation and firm performance in a Meta-analytic review of market orientation and firm performance.

Narver and Slater (1990) began empirically testing the relationship between business performance and market orientation. They reported that the degree of market orientation is positively linked with business performance. After their first report, researchers studied the relationship between market orientation and business performance (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012; Qu & Ennew, 2003).

Some arguments have been made for contextual differences between developed and undeveloped economies; service and goods; as well as among sectors (Qu & Ennew, 2003; Ngai & Ellis, 1998). These differences have accounted for some variations reported on the market orientation and performance relationships. Although there are general agreements that support market orientation and performance relationship in the developed countries, mixed results are emanating from the developing countries (Qu & Ennew, 2003).

Liu et al. (2003) studied market orientation in China and have suggested that a high level of market orientation may be associated with a higher level of learning, entrepreneurship, and the potential to achieve higher performance. Scholars have also found an association between market orientation and business performance in Ghana (Mahmoud et al., 2010; Hinson et al., 2008). For example, Hinson et al. (2008) studied market orientation and export performance in Ghana using both subjective and objective performance measures. They found that an export firm's market orientation was positively and significantly related to an export firm's performance.

Mahmoud (2011) also performed a similar study in Ghana and found a positive relationship between the market orientation of small businesses and their performance, concluding that a higher level of market orientation would achieve a greater level of performance.

Similarly, Mahmoud and Hinson (2012) examined market orientation, innovation, and corporate social responsibility practices in Ghana. They found out that a firm's degree of market orientation and corporate social responsibility has a substantial impact on innovation and subsequently influence firm performance. Equally, Mahmoud et al. (2010) tested the market orientation and business performance relationship in the pharmaceutical sector in Ghana. They found a strong and positive relationship between market orientation and business performance. According to Mahmoud et al. (2011), the market orientation of Ghanaian banks influenced their performance which was discovered through combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research in conducting interviews and collecting questionnaires.

#### Shortfalls (Weaknesses) of Market Orientation

Market orientation is a concept describing a central philosophy enhancing firm marketing management (Mitchell, 2012; Hunt & Lambe, 2000; McKitterick, 1957). Since then, the concept has been refined and complemented with other strategic orientations (Hinson et al., 2017; Baker & Sinkula, 1999). However, there is confirmation that market orientation has considerable conceptual inadequacies necessitating an assessment of how market orientation may be reconceptualised.

Marketing has, by tradition, highlighted a customer orientation (Fry & Polonsky, 2004; Slater & Narver, 1999). However, the inadvertent concerns of marketing practices call for contemplation of stakeholder interests (Fry & Polonsky, 2004). A fruitful application of the marketing concept is meeting the needs of stakeholders (Mitchell, 2012). Regrettably, it is an approach with only customer interests (Ferrell, 2004). An evolving disquiet is a need for firms to focus on all stakeholders and not just their customers. This new emerging logic of marketing provides that economic, ethical, social, and environmental considerations be integrated to serve stakeholder needs (cf. Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Therefore, there is a need for a new marketing concept to handle all stakeholder requirements profitably.

A crucial issue is market orientation's attentiveness to functional management and macro-economic concerns. By that, market orientation fails to align with contemporary marketing management (Mitchell et al., 2010; Layton, 2007). Due to the increasing interest of stakeholders in ecological, ethical, social and economic issues, the need for a replacement to market orientation is heightened. For instance, there are corporate governance issues in Ghana. Several banks in Ghana collapsed or lost their licenses in 2017 and 2018 due to corporate governance issues (BOG, 2018).

Social concerns are gaining relevance as it influences customer purchase decisions. These developments question the potency of market orientation. Therefore, enhancing market orientation may offer a potential to long-term performance. A capable avenue for a

reformulation of market orientation lies in an amalgamation of sustainable development, market orientation, and macro- marketing concepts into sustainability market orientation.

### 2.3 Sustainability and Marketing

Sustainability is rooted in a multiplicity of business activities and no longer seen as an obligation, but as an opportunity (Ludema et al., 2012). Marketing can inspire the adoption or use of behaviour modifications such as to eat healthily, recycle, drink sensibly, and buy fairtrade, save energy, reuse, and support good causes (Gordon et al., 2011). Sustainability impacts a wide range of organisational activities, including product integrity and manufacturing, disclosure packaging and labelling, advertising and marketing, and selling practices, distribution, and pricing.

#### 2.3.1 Sustainability Marketing

The concept of sustainability is inherent in marketing (Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, & Hillier, 2008). The literature on sustainability marketing has discussed how marketing practices and decisions border on ethical, environmental, social outcomes, as well as economic prosperity (Lim, 2016). Sustainability marketing is not a new concept to researchers as it has evolved from concepts like ecological marketing, ethical marketing, social marketing, and societal marketing (cf. Kumar, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2016).

Sustainability concept in the marketing field is examined via diverse perspectives. Investigators examine green, ecological or environmental issues whereas some scholars have examined social concerns. Conversely, sustainability is a four-dimensional construct

comprising of ethical, environmental, economic, and social factors. Sustainable marketing is a macro-marketing concept that involves the adoption of a sustainable development orientation (Belz & Peattie, 2009). That is, the concept embraces economic, ecological, ethical, and social issues. Sustainable marketing is, therefore, a holistic marketing approach that is relationship-based, ecologically driven, ethical, and viable (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

### 2.3.2 Sustainability Practices

This section highlights some sustainability practices available for firms to consider implementing.

#### Good Labour Practices

An example of good labour practises is the freedom of employees. Employees are key to organizational success. Accordingly providing employees the need freedom to operate or work is regarded as one of the sustainability practices. For example, employees can be allowed to work from home or remotely. This could reduce the energy waste via fuel to go to work.

Another issue of concern to sustainability practices under labour practices is the calibre of labour employed. Some firms use children is not acceptable. Accordingly, when firms avoid the use of children in their work and supply chains it is considered as a sustainability practice.

Also, hiring and firing of employees are one of the essential social concerns in planning for supply chain activities, especially in relations to demand fluctuations and competition. The management of these issues, to a considerable extent, influences employee motivation, which is also a critical productivity issue.

#### Incentive structure

An incentive structure of an organisation may recognise the contributions of sustainability marketing or inhibit the application of sustainability marketing.

#### Pressure from society

The pressure of society can be a potential challenge for industries in the application of sustainability marketing. Unless the community (stakeholders of the organisation) requires significant changes in the desired characteristics of the services provided by the organisation.

#### Cost reduction

Firms should become committed to reducing cost when adopting sustainable practice. Costs concerning sustainability include the cost of production, operation, transportation, and storage costs (Lee & Lam, 2012).

## Waste Reduction

Producing, distributing, and consuming products in general produce enormous amounts of various types of wastes. Air pollution and toxic wastes monitoring, and intervention continue to dominate the agenda of environmental protection agencies.

### 2.3.3 Dimensions and Consequences of Sustainability Marketing

This section of the review provides for both the antecedents and consequences of sustainability marketing. The precursors are provided first while the outcomes are presented next.

#### Dimensions of Sustainability Marketing

The sustainable marketing concept has a multi-disciplinary meaning and potential consequences. However, there seems to be an agreement on what constitutes sustainability marketing. Generally, social, economic, and environmental concerns are dominant dimensions of sustainability marketing practice (Martin & Schouten, 2014). Conversely, ethical concerns are gradually being considered as a dimension of sustainability marketing (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012). More so, ethics (moral) are critical for the successful implementation of sustainability practices (Kuosmanen & Kuosmanen, 2009). Therefore, this study argues for the inclusion of ethics into existing sustainability marketing. The four sustainability marketing dimensions are explained next.

### Economic Dimension

According to Alhaddi (2015), an economic dimension describes the influence of a firm's activities in an economic system. Similarly, Martin and Schouten (2014) aver that an economic dimension is an ongoing ability of the economic system to offer for human needs. For instance, firm decisions and activities about profits. The focus is an economic value delivered by the firm in a manner which promotes and supports current and future generational needs (Alhaddi, 2015).

### Social Dimension

According to Martin and Schouten (2014), social concerns refer to the continuing ability of a community to deliver for the well-being of members. Social dimension comprises of a community ability to acquire access to goods (medicines, food, or clothing) and services (Martin & Schouten, 2014), thus providing for the welfare and health for members. These are areas of social concerns or issues that firms are encouraged to deliver. Also, community members require prospects to contribute and participate in community activities. Social concerns comprise of fair trade and labour practices, human rights, product responsibility, and community impacts.

### Environmental Dimension

The environmental concerns originated from the increasing demand for resource management and reduction of pollution (Martin & Schouten, 2014). The environmental dimension outlines the impact of business practices on the environment. These concerns

are geared towards protecting the ecology for the benefit of the current and future generation.

#### Ethical Dimension

Ethical concerns describe the use of moral standards for marketing practices (Laczniak, 1999). The concept of ethics in marketing describes the nature and grounds of morality in the practice of marketing (Ferrell & Skinner, 1988). Morality means moral standards, judgements, and rules of conduct (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). Ethics is argued to be a dimension of corporate social responsibility (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012). More so, ethics has been incorporated into marketing (Laczniak & Murphy, 2006). Table 2.4 provides a summary of sustainability marketing practices, highlighting the four dimensions of sustainability market orientation and its practices.

Table 2.4: Summary of Sustainability Dimensions and Practices

<b>Environmental Dimension</b>	<b>Economic Dimension</b>	<b>Social Dimension</b>	<b>Ethical Dimension</b>
Waste Reduction	Stakeholder Management	Health and Safety of Stakeholders	Fairness
Greenhouse Gas	Quality Management	Human rights	Honesty
Emissions Reduction	Cost Reduction	Child and forced labour avoidance	Integrity
Negative Environmental Impacts Reduction	Competitive Pressure	Job security	Law abiding
Materials and Resources optimisation	Innovation	Human and worker rights	Respect for others
Renewable Energy	Economic development	Paying appropriate wages	Concern for others
Biodiversity	Local industry participation	Working conditions	Accountability
Pollution	Jobs created	Freedom of association	Morals
Resource use, e.g. water	Public reporting	Workforce diversity	Trustworthiness
Waste generation			Corporate governance
Material sourcing			
Atmospheric pollution			
Toxic material disposal			

### Consequences of Sustainability Marketing

There are several effects of sustainable marketing practices. The effects are either positive or negative consequences. Numerous strategic orientations have effects for adopters and non-adopters. The concept of sustainability marketing has several implications. Some of the consequences are: promoting higher living standards and economic development (Gordon et al., 2011); product preference (Luchs, Naylor, Irwin & Raghunathan, 2010); brand performance and sustainable performance (Mahmoud, 2016); competitive advantage, innovation, being ahead of regulation, lower costs, differentiation, and better workforce (Martin & Schouten, 2014); re-manufactured green products and green customers (Sharma & Iyer, 2012); and economic and equity growth (Hunt, 2011).

Some of the benefits of sustainability marketing are: increasing efficiency or reducing costs; delaying or avoiding regulatory action; reinforcing or enhancing a confident image in the marketplace as a good corporate citizen; inspiring employee productivity over increased employee pride and corporate culture; and gaining competitive advantage (Grimstad 2011) for sustained profitability and growth (Sisaye 2011). The benefits of applying sustainability marketing in organisational operations are at three primary levels, which are the strategic level; tactical level, and operational level (Sisaye, 2011). Strategic level advantages comprise of better coordination and enhanced resources, organisational culture, increased savings, better resource utilisation, improved operational performance, strengthened financial performance, and regulatory compliance.

Tactical level benefits may include: better definitions of job responsibilities ; incorporation of learning activities; reduction in costs; reduction in workload; retention of human resources; systems that reduce bureaucracy; employee morale and motivation; removal of inter-branch conflicts; optimisation of resources; reduction of duplicated procedures; and cost-saving and effective communication audit. The benefits at the operational level include reducing the duplication of documents; simplified business processes; improved understanding of the procedures; integration of operations; saving time and improving efficiency; improved compatibility and limitations in a safe and responsible environment.

Companies adopting a more sustainable approach have positive benefits. These include improving operational efficiency; license to operate; improving brand and reputation value; promoting and increasing innovation; attracting and retaining customers; improving access to capital; increasing human and intellectual capital; building and maintaining shareholder value; improving risk management; generating higher income; attracting and retaining talented staff, and identifying new opportunities (Nejati et al., 2010). These benefits are achieved by integrating organisational sustainability marketing.

## 2.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter two provides existing literature on sustainable development and sustainability marketing. The literature review highlighted the growing relevance of sustainable development and sustainability practices. Also, the chapter made attempts at interrogating the existing frameworks, approaches, paradigms, and analogous sustainability concepts. These concepts have together enhanced the understanding of sustainability and sustainable development in general. The marketing theory and practice section provided insights on market orientation. A review of the existing market orientation was discussed to show the weakness in the concept.

The sustainable development and marketing theory were then incorporated to discuss the concept of sustainability marketing. Some antecedents and consequences of sustainability marketing were provided. The chapter also provided some empirical studies on sustainability marketing. This chapter laid the foundations for discussing the concept of sustainability market orientation. Therefore the next chapter provides insights on sustainability market orientation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SUSTAINABILITY MARKET ORIENTATION

#### 3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to define, review, and conceptualise sustainability market orientation.

#### 3.1 Sustainability Market Orientation

Sustainability market orientation is an integration of market orientation and sustainable development (Mitchell, 2012). More so, sustainability market orientation describes a strategic orientation which incorporates an equitable and balanced intergenerational management of economic, environmental, social, and ethical issues (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, & Higham, 2013).

Sustainability market orientation integrates market-oriented principles, macro-marketing systems management, stakeholder approach, and sustainable development approach to balance ethics, environmental integrity, economic prosperity, and social equity (Lim, 2016; Crittenden et al., 2011; Mitchell et al., 2010; Bansal, 2005). It also provides firms with fewer regulations, competitive advantage, improved performance, and an excellent corporate citizen reputation (Crittenden et al., 2011; Mahmoud, 2016).

The implementation of sustainability market orientation means that firms are moving beyond their normal concentration on functional management and microeconomic views (Mahmoud, 2016). According to Mitchell (2012), sustainability market orientation has four components. These components are objective, strategy, process, and benefit. Consequently, sustainability market orientation is corporate marketing management practices. Sustainability market-oriented firms utilise sustainable management principles to predict customer needs by effectively integrating environmental intelligence with marketing systems. They also use profitable, ethical, environmental, and socially responsible value systems for their operations. Furthermore, such firms will create long-run outcomes in ethics, social, economic, and ecological issues satisfactory for stakeholders.

The market orientation scholarship has recognised the need for pro-active corporate management to usefully handle stakeholder interests (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). Therefore, market orientation research may be improved by a discussion on how ecological forces can be insulated, measured, and evaluated (Lawer & Knox, 2007; Cadogan, Souchon, & Proctor, 2008). Accordingly, market orientation is related to stakeholder management. Firms should invest in gathering ethical, social, and environmental intelligence for building stakeholder relationships. As a result, market orientation is a micro-marketing concept and requires macro-marketing ideas.

The sustainability market orientation is anchored in the systems approach, ethics, sociology, politics and macro market (Mitchell et al., 2010; Varman & Costa, 2008; Uzzi, 1996). Accordingly, in implementing sustainability market orientation, firms should embed their activities into their host communities. More so, firms must avoid the partial implementation of sustainability concerns. This will lead firms to fail to benefit from the opportunities of the holistic use of sustainability marketing (Mitchell et al., 2013; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996; Fisk, 1967). The sustainability market orientation implementation may necessitate some trade-offs between environmental concerns and a firm's other priorities (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Also, to ensure effective and efficient sustainability marketing activities, regulators may have to increase their monitoring and assessments (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996).

Sustainability market orientation is conceptualised to offer a comprehensive managerial framework with the support of four dimensions: social, economic, environmental, and ethics. Previous conceptualisations of sustainable marketing and sustainable corporate management focussed on micromanagement. For instance, ecological issues were explored by van Dam and Apeldoorn in 1996. The United Nations and firm stakeholders may have increased interest of firms in sustainability (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995).

These developments have led to the guidelines on sustainability management, value-added sustainability strategies, sustainability performance, and stakeholder evaluation of sustainability management offer indicators for further research into strategic corporate sustainability (Figge & Hahn, 2004; Epstein & Roy, 2003). Sustainability market orientation is advanced as a corporate marketing management concept that moves beyond market orientation's market-based fundamentalism to corporate marketing. Long-term strategies characterise sustainability market orientation to meet market expectations using environmentally responsible resources (Bansal, 2005; Barney, 1991). Likewise, sustainability market orientation is advanced as a stakeholder focussed marketing concept which is enriched by the four dimensions (Griffiths, Dunphy, & Benn, 2005).

### 3.2 Sustainability Marketing Models

In an attempt to establish a sustainability marketing theory, three sustainable marketing models are advanced in the extant literature. These models comprise of a socio-ecological model, an ecological lifecycle model, and macro-marketing model.

#### Socio-Ecological Model

Marketing scholars Sheth and Parvatiyar are acknowledged to be the source of the socio-ecological model of sustainability marketing (Mitchell et al., 2010). The socio-ecological model of Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) emphasised the role of marketing theory and practice on the environmental condition. More so, the socio-ecological model highlights sustainable development and its role in corporate marketing.

According to Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), the free-market approach had ecological and social problems. These problems may be solved by using a corporate marketing management framework. In marketing's attempts to serve the societal needs of customers, there is a need for firms to develop products that are ecologically valuable (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995).

The focus of Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) on environment and marketing recognises the possibilities of incorporating sustainable development management into marketing. Nonetheless, this socio-ecological model does not have all the components of the triple bottom line (Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010). However, it focuses on environmental marketing and reliance on the regulation of free-market forces rather than using sustainability marketing management (Mitchell, 2012). The socio-ecological model admonishes firms to redirect customer needs towards ecological practices and safe products via technological innovations.

### Ecological Model

The benefits of an environment are central to arguments made by scholars of the ecological model. Fuller (1999) is credited to have championed and started this area of research. The ecological model incorporates corporate marketing strategies into ecological lifecycle management of firms and their products (Menon & Menon, 1997). The ecological model criticises market orientation that positions corporate management as simply gathering intelligence and coordination (Mitchell, 2012).

The responsibility of corporate management rather comprises of the anticipation, appreciation, and adaptation to stakeholder pressure (Mitchell et al., 2010). Within this scope, there is the acknowledgement to the significance of environmentally responsible lifecycle management of firm activities. However, the ecological model does not integrate social and economic concerns into environmental management (Mitchell et al., 2010).

### Macro-marketing

Macro-marketing is an aspect of marketing interested in the influence of marketing systems on society and society on marketing systems (Layton, 2015; Hunt 2011). Similarly, Dixon (1984), argued that marketing was a sub-system of societies as it acclimate environment. Macro-marketing's primary unit of analysis is the marketing system (market), instead of individuals or firms. Even though macro marketing is seen as a sub-discipline of marketing. Macro-marketing is a broader conception of marketing activities (Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010).

Macro-marketing emphasises social, cultural, or policy orientations. Macro-marketing emphasises on the marketplace as a whole, placing more emphasis on systems of transactions rather than on individual exchanges. Macro-marketing is the market and the marketing system. Macro-marketing is a study of the agora different from neo-classical economics. Moreover, they operate efficiently when they propose suitable solutions to meet this heterogeneity. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that optimising behaviour by some firms can have suboptimal impacts for other firms. The scope of macro-marketing goes beyond the market. Macro-marketing literature separates market orientation from

sustainability market orientation by encouraging corporate marketing strategies. These strategies are to combine economic paybacks with actions that align corporate marketing activity, environmental, ethical norms, and social concerns (Varman & Costa, 2008).

According to micro-marketing, marketing is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing indirect and direct, economic and social exchange networks (Layton, 2007; Dixon, 1984). Macro-marketing, on the other hand, integrates sustainability marketing via the amalgamation of green marketing, and ecological marketing into an environmental marketing concept (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Furthermore, the new marketing paradigm of sustainability has macro-marketing as a central concept (Kilbourne et al., 1997).

Macro-marketing tacitly criticises the conventional approach to corporate marketing (micro-marketing). Micro-marketing considers short-term economic gain. As a result, micro-marketing is inadequate to find long-term ecological, social, ethics and economic costs of deterioration (Mitchell, 2012). According to van Dam & Apeldoorn (1996), sustainable marketing is a request to accept the social and ecological limitations of the conventional corporate marketing philosophy. Sustainability marketing approach echoes how micro-marketing could incorporate environmental and social management into corporate marketing management (Mitchell et al., 2013).

### 3.3 Dimensions to Sustainability Market Orientation

This section discusses the four (4) sustainability market orientation constructs. Justification and the connection of each dimension to the sustainability market orientation are advanced.

#### Ethical Dimension

Ethics is the application of moral standards (good or bad; right or wrong) to marketing decisions and practices (Laczniak, 1999). Ethical responsibilities are in dynamic interaction with legal obligations and thus appear to suggest that firms must do well to work beyond what the law requires (Carroll, 2016). Carroll goes further to argue that firms must be good corporate citizens by acting ethically, desist flouting ethical norms in an attempt to accomplish business goals, and appear not to be unfamiliar with and respect ethical standards. Moreover, firms should act in behaviour that conforms to societal traditions and ethical norms (Carroll, 2016). Even though Carroll's argument was for corporate social responsibility; this study finds ethics to be unique and independent from social responsibility. Therefore the need to examine differently, rather than add it to social dimension.

Sustainability is considered a critical success factor (driven by ethics or morals) in achieving long-term performance (Kuosmanen & Kuosmanen, 2009). Moral requirements are based on the inherent value of the environment (Garcia-Rosell & Moisander, 2007). The environment has a moral right to respectful treatment (Garcia-Rosell & Moisander, 2007). Consequently, ethics encourages marketers to engage in sustainable actions.

### Economic Dimension

Economic dimension concerns producing products that serves consumer require profitable. Also, the economic dimension relates to an economy's capability as a subsystem to evolve and survive into the future (Alhaddi, 2015). Accordingly, Carroll (2016), argues that economic responsibility of firms is a baseline prerequisite. Finally, a firm's ability to offer value to stakeholders is a component of the economic dimension (Mahmoud, 2016). Notwithstanding this understanding of the economic dimension, the expectation is extended to include welfare of society as a whole. Thus, firms must pursue their economic interest but not to the detriment of other stakeholders. When firms are able to remain profitable without affecting the environment then such a firm is practicing sustainability market orientation.

### Social Dimension

Social dimension describes the ongoing ability of a community to provide for the well-being of members (Martin & Schouten, 2014). The social dimension argues that businesses should be responsible for the impact of their actions on society and balance the external social consequences with firm profit, thus social development should be incorporated into business strategy (González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández & Simonetti. 2015). The social dimension as three-folds: responsibility towards customer; responsibility towards employees; and responsibility towards the community (Uddin, Tarique, & Hassan, 2008). When firms engages in social interventions, such a firm is practising sustainability market orientation.

## Environmental Dimension

Environmental dimensions are measures that are used to assess a firm's actions that affect the environment either negatively or positively. The environmental dimensions explain a firm's policies development and practices that seek to enhance its environmental performance (Singh, Sethuraman & Lam, 2017). These policies are developed to address improvement plans to reduce energy, water and paper consumption, track greenhouse gas emission rates, and implement material usage reduction programmes. Accordingly, firms should continue to measure the effect on the environment and put in strategies to stop or reduce their impact on the environment. Sustainability market orientation is linked to firms practising environmental issues.

### 3.4 Moderators and Mediators of Sustainability Market Orientation

A moderator variable is any variable that by its inclusion in the analysis helps explain or accounts for more variance than would otherwise be the case (Mahmoud, 2016). Therefore, moderators of sustainability market orientation are external factors which impact on the sustainability market orientation and firm performance connection. These factors may enhance, decrease, or stay neutral in sustainability market orientation and firm performance connection (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Marketing scholars have used competitive intensity, technological turbulence, buyer power, market turbulence, and economic turbulence are moderators of market orientation (Mahmoud, 2016; Zebal & Godwin, 2011; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993).

Moderators are contextual factors that either more or less makes sustainability market orientation appropriate for an organisation (Cano et al., 2004). Also, moderators are brought to light because of their support for the hypothesis that environmental factors influence the usefulness of organisational variables. These moderators are sometimes employed as control variables.

Sustainability market orientation is not the single solution to organisational performance. Alternative strategic orientations can also result in business performance (Hinson et al., 2017; Noble et al., 2002). Sustainability market orientation may have many concepts mediating its relationship with firm performance (Mitchell et al., 2010; Maignan et al., 2005). There is a need to continue to search for the mediators of the sustainability market orientation and firm performance relationship. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) suggested that technological innovations could mediate the relationship between sustainability marketing orientation and firm performance. This study provides an empirical verification of their conclusion.

### 3.5 Consequences of Sustainability Market Orientation

Sustainability market orientation has the prospect of delivering strategic marketing, which is inimitable, challenging to substitute, rare, and valuable (Mitchel et al., 2010; Hult, 2011). Sustainability market orientation may protect improved firm performance since organisational culture is a foundation for sustained superior performance and competitive advantage (Olavarrieta & Friedmann, 2008). Also, market-focused sustainability is a

strategic resource delivering competitive advantage leading to superior performance Hult, 2011; Ketchen et al. 2007).

Some of the consequences of sustainability market orientation are: increased firm performance, competitive advantage, product preference, innovation, lower costs, differentiation, better workforce, being ahead of regulation, green customers, equity and economic growth, green products, promoting economic development, and raising living standards (Mahmoud, 2016; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Hunt, 2011; Gordon et al., 2011). Firms use environmental considerations as one of the critical strategies to improve their image, create a competitive advantage, and reduce costs (Wilson, 2015).

### 3.6 Existing Sustainability Market Orientation Conceptualisation

There are some existing studies on sustainable market orientation. This section provides insights and criticises these extant conceptualisations for paving the way for a revised conceptualisation. Most of these current conceptualisations used only the three prominent dimensions (economic, social, and environment) as the factors of the sustainability market.

According to the conceptualisation of Mitchell et al. (2010), sustainable market orientation was the incorporation of sustainable development management into marketing. They examined the existing three (3) sustainability constructs of economic, social, and environment into market orientation. This was a novel approach to appreciating sustainability marketing. However, this study left out ethical issues. These ethical issues

are today very prominent in corporate management. As such, there is a need to revisit the conceptualisation of sustainability market orientation to have a comprehensive model.

Mahmoud (2016) extended the conceptualisation of Mitchell et al. (2010). He provided an empirical verification in the Ghanaian banks. The challenge with Mahmoud's (2016) contribution was the failure to integrate market orientation into an economic dimension, but instead interacted market orientation with the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The contribution of Lim (2016) provides a basis for this study's inclusion of ethics in the sustainability market orientation dimension. Lim (2016) conceptualised sustainability marketing to include: economic, social, environment, ethics, and technology. However, this study argues that technology is an enabler or support to the attainment of sustainability, but not a dimension of sustainability.

This study provides a new conceptualisation based on the works of Mitchell et al., (2010); Mitchell, (2012); Mahmoud (2016) and Lim (2016). The conceptualisation advanced sustainability market orientation to include: economic, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions (Lim, 2016; Singh, de Los Salmenes Sanchez, & Del Bosque, 2008).

### 3.7 Conceptualising Sustainability Market Orientation

The concept of market orientation (a micro marketing concept) when incorporated with sustainable development (a macro marketing concept) would result in sustainability market orientation. The concept of sustainability market orientation can describe as a macro marketing concept. However, the practice of sustainability market orientation is firm-level (micro marketing). This makes the new concept quite challenging to understand or implement but do able.

According to Belz and Peattie, (2009), the concept of sustainability marketing incorporates ecological, economic, social, and ethical issues. Similarly, Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), avers that firms and society agree on the amalgamation of political, economic, ecological, and social norms to achieve sustainability marketing. Mitchell et al. (2010), advanced that social, economic, and environment were crucial in firm sustainable market orientation implementation. Nkamnebe (2011) and Lim (2016) noted that ethics, social, economic, environment were critical in the development and implementation on sustainability strategies.

Following existing conceptualizations and models, this study proposes sustainability market orientation. The novel concept would have elements like social, economic and environment from sustainable development, Mitchell et al. (2010); Mitchell (2012); and Mahmoud (2016); with the introduction of ethics as stand-alone dimension of sustainability market orientation. This is in attempt to provide a model for sustainability market

orientation for understanding and supporting sustainability-based marketing management (Mitchell, 2012).

### 3.8 Sustainability Market Orientation and Market Orientation Compared

Sustainability market orientation presents a more comprehensive, stakeholder-based approach to corporate marketing management. Also, sustainability market orientation combines the principles of market orientation with macro marketing systems management approach (Layton, 2007; Shultz, 2004; Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). Furthermore, sustainability market orientation is a stakeholder approach to incorporating corporate social responsibility and marketing strategy (Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005).

Market orientation is weak in the influence of external stakeholders. The failure of market orientation is found in its lack of monitoring the potential impacts of political debate and social trends in corporate strategy. Configuration of corporate marketing management to integrate sustainability management principles, including sustainable production and consumption (Lawer & Knox, 2007).

### 3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter defined and conceptualised the sustainability market orientation. Sustainability market orientation was advanced as an enhancement to the existing market orientation. The chapter also provided the dimensions and consequences of practising sustainability market orientation. More so, some current conceptualisations were examined, and a way forward discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONTEXT OF STUDY

#### 4.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter four presents information on Ghana as well as the country's service sector and hotel industry which served as the research context. The chapter also provides insights into studies on sustainability in the hotel sector.

#### 4.1 Study Country

Ghana is a nation on the African continent that gained its independence from British rule on 6th March, 1957 and became a democratic republic. The country has sixteen regions, many of which have a distinct cultural identity, boasting of famous landmarks and tourist attractions. Ghana is a tropical country with favourable weather and sunshine throughout the year and has a very fertile land which also makes it a favourable travel destination year round (GTA, 2019). The official language is English, but many local languages are spoken.

Ghana has enjoyed more twenty (20) years of stable democracy with different political parties and different Presidents coming to office. Starting from the year 1992 to the year 2020. Ghana has had five (5) Presidents from the NDC and NPP political parties. This clearly suggest that the country Ghana has enjoyed some political stability. Businesses flourish under political stability than under political instability. Accordingly, a stable country attracts more visitors to the nation. Ghana also has a reach cultural heritage which attracts visitors to the country.

Figure 4.1: Map of Ghana



Source: Ministry of Local Government, Ghana, 2019

#### 4.2 Service Sector

The service industry is growing and becoming the most competitive industry globally (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2011), the service industry accounts for more than 60% of GDP worldwide. The service industry explosion is not only experienced in the developed economies, but emerging economies like Ghana are also experiencing a consistent growth of the service industry (Hinson, 2012).

According to [www.statsghana.gov.gh](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh) (2019), the service industry of Ghana accounts for more than half (50.1%) of the country's GDP. This makes the industry a significant contributor to employment, income generation, and development of Ghana (Hinson, 2012). The Ghanaian service industry includes the hotel and restaurant sector, banking sector, telecommunication sector, education sector, insurance sector, and the health sector. The competition in these sectors is so intense that some sector players are developing competencies to deliver services of other sector players (Kuada & Hinson, 2014).

The service characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability make services a prime context to employ strategic orientations (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012; Kuada & Hinson, 2014). Adopting the right strategic orientation in tandem with a service firm's resources capabilities would result in an improved service firm performance, which would lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Boso, Cadogan & Story, 2012). Strategic orientation is particularly important in determining a firm's success in developing economies like Ghana (Lau, Yiu, Yeung & Lu, 2008).

#### 4.3 Hotels and Sustainability Practices

There is an increasing number of sustainability research into the services sector (Cainelli, Mazzanti, & Zoboli 2011; Erdogan & Tosun 2009) which includes the hotel industry. Hotels include the provision of accommodation, food service, and leisure (Ottenbacher et al., 2009). Hotels are crucial for global economic growth. Hotels also provide a forum for various activities such as trade shows and business meetings, which are a critical catalyst for economic growth. The hotel sector plays a significant role with regards to sustainable consumption and production, thus making it more sensitive to its impacts on the natural and social environment (Alameeri, Ajmal, Hussain, & Helo, 2018).

The focus of hoteliers seems to have turned towards sustainability as it relates to hotel development and operations (Stottler, 2015), particularly with an eye to energy and water consumption, consumable goods, hazardous waste generation, and durable goods (Hsiao, Chuang, & Huang, 2018). For instance, hotel consumption of energy is attributed to hotel air conditioning operations, fuel, heating, and ventilation. Similarly, the disposal of bulbs, equipment, paper, and appliances are some examples of waste generation. On water usage, hotels use water for food, bathrooms, and laundry.

According to Wang (2012), the higher the rating of a hotel, the higher the hotel usage of energy and water as rated hotels tend to attract more clients. . Some hotels have challenges in managing their impact on society (Buhalis, 1999). For examples their waste, water and energy usage. As a result, sustainability marketing and practices are necessary for hotel management (Bracket & Carr, 2015).

The sustainability marketing of hotels could lead to competitive advantage and hotel performance (Connelly et al., 2011). According to Kasim and Minai (2009), star-rated hotels are very competitive and in search of strategies to differentiate themselves. Consequently, a study into the sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels could provide insights into hotels. More so, sustainability initiatives of hotels could significantly contribute to sustainable development management and strategic orientation (Melissen et al., 2016).

Hotels are increasingly taking up social, ethical, economic, and environmental practices to address sustainability concerns (Jones et al., 2016). Consequently, this study examines the sustainability market orientation of hotels operating in Ghana. The focus is on star rated hotels because of the increasing entry of foreign or global hotels into Ghana (Hinson et al., 2017). The hotel sector is changing towards green hotels and eco-tourism (Punitha & Mohd Rasdi, 2013; Chan, 2013). Indeed, some hotels in Ghana are gradually be green hotel like the Labadi beach hotel and La palm royal hotel.

### **Drivers of Hotel Sustainability**

The following are some drivers of hotel sustainability practices: stakeholder pressures, regulations, and codes of conduct, institutional environment and economic benefits (Pulver, 2007; Bansal & Roth, 2000). Sustainability drivers are classified into four areas: social, market, regulatory, and financial (Bansal & Howard, 1997). Similarly, Roarty (1997) avers that an increase in green investor influence and environmental pressure groups on customer behaviour are sustainability practice drivers.

Other drivers are government policies, laws (regulations), lawsuits, investors, markets, employees, costs, environmental NGOs, public, industry standards and codes, self-regulation and international factors as drivers of ecological management (Kirkland & Thompson, 1999).

#### **4.4 Ghanaian Hotel and Sustainability Practices**

The Ghanaian hotel sector is steadily growing and gradually implementing sustainability practices (Mensah, 2006). The Ghanaian hotel sector comprises of both large and small hotels. According to Mensah (2006), hotels in Ghana are not evenly distributed across the country with the majority of hotels in the southern regions. The Greater Accra region has the largest hotels in Ghana, followed by the Ashanti region and the Western region, respectively (Mensah, 2006; 2007). Similarly, Narteh et al. (2013) argued that all four and five-star rated hotels were situated in Accra.

Sustainability practice is commonly adopted in developed economies where institutional conditions are known to have a weighty role in the adoption of voluntary initiatives (Sajjad et al., 2015; Utting, 2000). Developing countries such as Ghana face a distinctive set of sustainability issues that are quite different from those encountered in the industrialised economies (Sajjad et al., 2015; Visser, 2008). Accordingly, this study presents the sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels operating in an emerging market.

#### **4.5 Studies on Hotels and Sustainability Practices**

Premier studies on environment and social issues emerged from marketing scholars (Font & McCabe, 2017; Menon & Menon, 1997). Researchers from management discipline are now front runners in the environment and social issues. The frequent calls of individuals, the public, and to a large extent, the government in the 1990s has resulted in the exponential growth of the sustainability discipline (Leonidu & Leonidou, 2011; Menon & Menon, 1997).

Hotel sustainability practices affect the attitudes and behaviour of hotels (Kasim, 2009). Positive attitudes affect the adoption of environmental protection and higher revenue (Penny, 2007). Some of the motives for hotel sustainability practices comprise of ethical issues, growth in sales, and an increase in profits (Garay & Font, 2012). More so, hotel environmental practices may be separated into operational and planning (Bohdanowicz, Zientara, & Novotna, 2011).

There has been increased attention given to issues of hotels and the natural environment (Kasim, 2009). Extant literature is, by extension, vague in matters of environmental marketing within the hotel industry (Hudson & Miller, 2005). Nevertheless, the investigation into these issues is imperative because contemporary tourist buying behaviour has drastically changed as shown in the rising involvement of people in environmentally conscious activities, rising concerns on matters on sustainable problems, as well as customer desire to pay a relatively higher cost for eco-friendly products (Han, Hsu, Lee, & Sheu, 2011).

The frontline of the hotel's environmentally friendly actions depends mostly on the marketing function as it determines, defines and proceeds to meet the satisfaction needs and wants of customers on green issues (Kotler & Lee, 2008). The eco-marketing activities of hotels – products, prices, place, and promotion, improve business performance as a result of their direct influence on the end-users (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011). Hotels like Ibis Homebush, Novotel, Greotel, Fairmont Hotels, Resorts, and Ramada Renaissance Hotel are aggressively pursuing environmental initiatives (Mensah, 2006).

Sustainability issues that have been of a worry to the hotels are waste management, recycling of waste, water conservation, energy savings, compliance with legislation, and purchasing policy (Mensah, 2006). The thrust of the sustainability campaign in the hotel sector focused mainly on energy savings, as evidenced by the number of hotels engaging in energy-saving measures which range from the use of compact fluorescent bulbs to shutting down unused appliances (Mensah, 2006).

Reducing wastage of water and improvement of water quality is very crucial for hotels. This is because hotels are affected by water availability and quality (Zhao & Merna, 1992). Despite the growing popularity of sustainability concerns in hotels. Only star-rated or larger hotels are at the forefront of sustainability practices (Mensah, 2006). However, large hotels, because of their deeper pockets, can also allocate more considerable resources for sustainability practices. Since hotel size is a good measure of firm power, larger hotels are better able to resist stakeholder pressure by investing in lobbying and litigation (Darnal et al., 2010; Meznar & Nigh, 1995).

Hotels have varied resources and there is a large resource gap between large and small hotels. The resource variations may compel hotels to seek competitive advantage in diverse ways (Kasim, 2009). To compensate for their lower access to resources, smaller hotels focus on niche markets and implement more innovative ideas into their operations (Darnal et al., 2010). However, this limitation in resources can be an inhibitor to small hotels in practicing environmental management (Mensah, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 1998). Large hotels, on the other hand, tend to face difficulties in agreeing and implementing creative ideas (Gong, Zhou, & Chang, 2013), yet they tend to excel in environmental management practices (Mensah, 2006; Edwards, 2000).

According to Kasim (2009), small hotel managers think that their hotels' activities and impact on the environment are insignificant and thus are less inclined to implement environmental practices (Horobin & Long, 1996). Similarly, Edwards (2000) argues that small hotels place little burdens on the environment and thus do not warrant as big a commitment to environmental practices. According to Cespedes-Lorente et al. (2003), large hotels have resources and may implement environmental management to enjoy economies of scale. Similarly, Branzei et al. (2002) state that large hotels may suffer stakeholder pressures and threat of bad reputations thus creating a need to adopt environmental practices. This is in stark contrast to Meznar and Nigh (1995) who state that large hotels are resistant to stakeholder pressure. Large hotels have resources that allows them to be able to engage in activities that limits or reduces the influences of some stakeholders.

Scholars like Eesley and Lenox (2006), aver that small hotels are more responsive to stakeholder pressure as owners can easily integrate environmental practices into the hotel's mission. Bowen (2002), argues that there is no reliable evidence on the size of hotel influencing environmental management practices. A study on the environmental performance of hotels did not establish a link between environmental performance and the size of hotels (Erdogan & Tosun, 2009).

#### **4.6 Studies on Ghanaian Hotels and Sustainability**

Studies on the Ghanaian Hotel sector began in 1970. Various facets of Ghana's tourism industry were researched, concentrating primarily on tourism impact calculation. Foreign exchange earnings (Ghosh & Kotey, 1973), tourism multiplier effects (Ayittey, 1975), Ghana's tourism position (Blankson et al., 2004), hotel location decision-making (Adam, 2012), hotel development patterns (Adam, 2013), hotel internet usage (Ayeh, 2007), and relationship marketing in hotels (Narteh et al., 2013) are some examples.

Narteh et al. (2013) found that relationship marketing provides value for customers and is a crucial strategy for achieving customer loyalty in the Ghanaian luxury and first-class hotel industry. Differently, Mensah (2007) established that hotel managers in Accra are sluggish in recycling and the use of solar energy, even though some multinational hotels are proactive. The most successful environmental management and sustainable practices of the hotels were the use or re-use of linen and towels and energy-efficient light bulbs.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter described Ghana, the services industry and the hotel sector as the context within which the study was carried out. Sustainability issues in this context were explored. Providing insights on how these contexts contribute to the sustainability discourse. Existing studies with this context have also been acknowledged.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 5.0 Chapter overview

Marketing scholarship has utilised theories to explain the marketing phenomenon. This chapter presents the theoretical underpins and conceptual framework for this study.

#### 5.1 Theories for Sustainability Marketing Research

A theory describes the coherent explanation of experienced, documented, or observed phenomena (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). Theories are statements of constructs and interrelationship showing why and how a phenomenon happens (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Scholars have emphasised the usefulness of theories in accomplishing several study objectives and outcomes.

According to Hambrick (2007), a theory can assist in four (4) ways. These include organising researchers' ideas and thoughts about a phenomenon, generating and explaining relationships among constructs, improving our prediction and expectation about construct, and achieving better understandings of the world. The role of theory in research has been emphasised time without number. According to Painter, Borba, Hynes, Mays and Glanz (2008), research backed by theories tends to be more robust and informative than studies that evade the use of theory.

Scholars such as Eccles, Grimshaw, Walker, Johnston, and Pitts (2005) warned that the veracity and integrity of research findings to a large extent depend on the use of theory in the process of establishing research conclusions. The role of theory in research is paramount, especially in postgraduate study. This thesis, thus, sought to incorporate two theories fundamental to the core hypothesis postulated by the researcher. However, three theories are presented here. These theories have been used in examining sustainability concerns. Cai and Mehari (2015) explain that without an underpinning theory, research lacks a basis for interpreting and understanding an observed phenomenon.

Several management theories can be used to explain sustainable marketing and sustainability market orientation. According to Connelly et al. (2011), theories like the resource-based view of the firm, signalling theory, institutional theory, agency theory, social network theory, population ecology, resource dependence theory, upper echelons theory, and transaction cost economics may be used to explain firm sustainability marketing practices.

Table 5.1: Summary of Theories and insights for sustainability research

Theoretical perspective	Key premise	Key ideas for sustainability
Resource dependence theory	Their external relationships constrain organisations, so managers act to reduce the power others have over them and increase their power over others.	A firm's ability to implement sustainable practices may be constrained when it is dependent on others. The environment contains limited resources, so firms must learn to forbear and trust if they are going to coexist over time
Institutional theory	To survive, organisations must earn legitimacy by conforming to institutional pressures prevailing in the environment.	Firms can improve their ability to survive and thrive by being aware of and conforming to emerging industry trends and policy changes about sustainability initiatives. There may be value in mimicry of successful sustainability initiatives that competitors are not attempting to model.
Organisational ecology	Organisations emerge, evolve, and die in response to changes in their environment.	New organisations and organisational forms will arise that are well suited to the triple bottom line. Organisations that do not adapt their processes to become more sustainable may be selected out of the population.
The resource-based view of the firm	The basis for sustainable competitive advantage resides in its resources and in how the firm structures, bundles, and leverages those resources.	Sustainability practices can provide a competitive advantage. Firm resources are limited, so sustainability efforts should consider how they might be maintained or renewed over time.

Source: Connelly et al., 2011

### 5.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

The foundation of stakeholder theory is in strategic management and micromarketing literature (Danso, Adomako, Lartey, Amankwah-Amoah, & Owusu-Yirenkyi, 2019; Ferrell & Ferrell, 2008; Freeman, 1984). Freeman (1984) is credited with proposing and beginning this mindset into a theoretical framework. The stakeholder theory avers that stakeholders are crucial for firm success (Andersen, 2008; Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders comprise customers, management, owners, employees, local community, suppliers, and activist groups (Mainardes et al., 2012).

Stakeholders are categorised as either primary stakeholders or secondary. Primary stakeholders have contractual relationships with a firm. For instance, clients, employees, suppliers, shareholders (Friedman & Miles, 2002; Freeman, 1999). Secondary stakeholders such as government authorities and the local community (Friedman & Miles, 2002), on the other hand, have no contractual relationships.

The stakeholder theory has mostly been successful because of its simplicity in conceptualisation (Fassin, 2009). Stakeholder management is a crucial component of stakeholder theory. Accordingly, managers search for ways to reconcile their expectations with that of stakeholders (Mainardes et al., 2012). More so, the stakeholder theory advocates for firms to design policies incorporating pressures and expectations of any individual or group whose actions or activities can affect or are affected by a firm (Hasnas, 2013; Walsh, 2005).

The integration of stakeholder wellbeing into a firm's strategic decisions is essential for firm success (Theodoulidis, Diaz, Crotto, & Rancati, 2017). As firms aspire to integrate stakeholder concerns into their activities, Mitchell et al. (1997) argue for stakeholder identification and salience. The stakeholder identification and salience have made a tremendous contribution to the development of stakeholder theory (Beckman et al., 2016; Neville et al., 2011). Stakeholder theory assigns priority to stakeholders built on stakeholder salience (Beckman et al., 2016). A stakeholder may be apportioned different salience levels (Savage et al., 1991). The salience of stakeholders is reliant on an amount of legitimacy, urgency, and power exerted (Beckman et al., 2016).

This salience determines the interaction dynamics of stakeholders (Rubinelli & Von Groote, 2017; Mitchell et al., 1997). Stakeholder legitimacy is a universal perception that the actions of the firm are proper, desirable, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of values, norms, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman, 1995). The legitimacy of a claim is eventually a more crucial issue, and when stakeholder interests diminish, managers may not overlook the legitimacy of a claim (Neville et al., 2011). Stakeholder urgency implies that the stake is crucial to the stakeholder and is time-sensitive (Neville et al., 2011). The urgency attribute is related to the claim's importance and perceived urgency to a stakeholder, but is more accurately an attribute of the claim itself (Mitchell et al., 1997).

According to Parent and Deephouse (2007), the urgency of a claim by a potential stakeholder is not enough for managers to attribute salience to the stakeholder. Urgency does not appear to be sufficient to grant a claimant stakeholder status. With that said, the

urgency attribute is still relevant in terms of salience because it may motivate claimants to action if they have power or a legitimate claim on the company (Neville et al., 2011).

Stakeholder Power is the ability of a promoter to produce or affect behaviour, influence, processes, objectives, outcomes, or direction (Neville et al., 2011). Power is best understood in its outcomes since outcomes are overt and, therefore, easy to observe (Wilemon, 1972). It represents the ability of those possessing the power to bring about outcomes desired by them (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). The logic is that the more independent the organisation, the more powerful it is as a stakeholder (Savage et al., 1991).

There is a rising influence of societal stakeholders (Doh & Guay, 2006). These societal stakeholders include public interest groups like environmental and community organisations and professional groups like industry associations and labour unions (Etzion, 2007). According to Freeman (1984), societal stakeholders could mobilise public opinion in favour or opposition to a firm. Similarly, Sharma and Henriques (2005), aver that societal stakeholders may use indirect ways to influence firm behaviour. These approaches comprise of public strikes, protests, and industry calls for engagement.

Mitchell et al. (1997) posit that to increase stakeholder salience, societal stakeholders may align to influence a firm's sustainability strategy. More so, regulators may create sustainability requirements and scrutinise business compliance with those requirements (Fineman & Clarke, 1996). Firms that fail to comply with these regulators or maintain

satisfactory communications with regulators risk suffering non-compliance penalties (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1996). Some firms may lose their operating permits.

Sustainability is a concept that involves several stakeholders (Aras & Crowther, 2008; Sharma & Henriques, 2005). Accordingly, businesses and their stakeholders are encouraged and expected to adopt sustainable practices to ensure the well-being of current and future generations (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011; Choi & Ng, 2011). Sustainability is a focus of firms on delivering social, environmental, ethical, and economic benefits concurrently (Hunt, 2011).

#### 5.1.2 Resource-based view of the firm

The resource-based view is one of the two theories adopted by this study on the sustainability market orientation of hotels in Ghana. The resource-based view is a well-known theory in strategic management literature. \ The theory has been used in several strategic orientation types of research to help in understanding firm performance. This study finds the resource-based view of the firm adequate to explain the implementation of sustainability market orientation.

The theory sees firms as a bundle of resources and explains the differences in firm performance (Barney et al. 2001). Resources are, therefore, the foundational blocks for this theory. A resource comprises of assets, financial capital, technologies, human knowledge, and processes (Connelly et al., 2011; Hofer & Schendel, 1978). More so, a resource refers

to any asset, piece of information, attribute, or process that allows a firm to develop and implement strategies that increase efficiency or effectiveness (Barney, 1991).

Within marketing theory and practice, resources have been explained to include: customer and brand equity, customer preference, product development, selling, pricing, and channel relationships (Connelly et al., 2011; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). These resources are reasons why firms outperform each other and also a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). However, the resources of the firm must not be entirely mobile and be heterogeneous to deliver the desired competitive advantage (Barney et al., 2001; Barney, 1991). Thus, a firm's resources are non-substitutable and inimitable to achieve a competitive advantage.

This calls on managers to structure, bundle, and leverage valuable resources in ways that maximise their contribution in achieving competitive advantage (Connelly et al., 2011; Sirmon et al., 2007). The foundation of the resource-based view is resources. The concept of resource is often linked with the term sustainable. For instance, statements like the resources should be used sustainably are quite common in strategic management discussions.

More so, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) definition of sustainable development highlights the need to deploy resources in a manner that do not compromise the future generational needs. Therefore, the two concepts have some relationship. When a firm possesses resources that are non-substitutable and inimitable, the

firm is expected to have a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Accordingly, those resources must be cultivated, preserved, and improved over time (Connelly et al., 2011). For instance, hotels that possess boreholes (water sources) may be able to provide more water than hotels that buy water from external suppliers. According to Rechenthin (2004), firms will ascribe to sustainability practices only when they consider them useful to deliver competitive advantage. Therefore, the implementation of sustainability market orientation might provide firms with a competitive advantage.

According to Connelly et al. (2011), the development of sustainable products may translate into a firm's competitive advantage. From a resource-based view perspective, firm initiatives can be described as sustainable when the initiatives are inherent in an intersection of ethics, social, and environmental concerns alongside market opportunities (economic). Such firms may stand the sheer chance of success in a competitive market (Connelly et al., 2011).

Sustainability practices or concerns offer the potential for firms to differentiate themselves. Firms may engage in activities that others are yet to practice like water reuse and energy conservation. These practices would reduce the cost of operations of firms. Consequently, Hart (1995) advanced an enhanced resource-based view of the firm by incorporating the natural environment. This revision was necessary as scholars began to criticise the resource base view for failing to handle the physical environment (Stead & Stead, 1995).

According to Hart (1995), the natural environment was a source of competitive advantage. Hotels that employ sustainability practices enhanced their financial performance (Garay & Font, 2012) because a hotel's unique resource such as environmental protection is a basis for the development of innovative strategies that can improve hotel competitiveness and may lead to financial performance (Garay & Font, 2012).

López-Gamero et al. (2011), aver that complementary resources are required in developing proactive green management schemes among Spanish hotels. Some scholars, however, still oppose the resource-based view (Priem & Butler, 2001; Collis, 1994). They argue that the resource-based view is a tautology. Thus a statement of relationship that is true in logic. Consequently, such a mindset cannot be generalised into a theory (Priem & Butler, 2001). However, proponents of the resource-based view argue that at a definition-level, all strategic management theories may be reduced to their tautological reasoning (Barney, 2001).

### 5.2.3 Organisational Ecology Theory

The organisational ecology theory is anchored in the population of organisations (Connelly et al., 2011). Consequently, the analysis level is corporate level. The theory examines the birth and mortality of organisations over some time (Sheth & Sisodia, 2002). According to population ecologist, organisational change is as a result of concluded selection rather than an adaptation. For instance, the rate of establishing firms and firm mortality are reliant on the market density or number of organisations.

Conversely, Amburgey and Rao (1996), aver that a less deterministic version of the organisational ecology places a higher weight on finding and adapting to a population niche, or serving a market niche, that increase the likelihood of survival. Similarly, Hannan and Freeman (1989), argue that empirical analysis of the organisational ecology is longitudinal. Also, they aver that firm accountability and reliability were relevant to guarantee firm survival over time. According to Connelly et al. (2011), existing studies on organisational ecology theory examined survival correlates. These correlates have been explored using firm size, firm age, and relational density.

The organisational ecology theory is a natural fit for sustainability research (Connelly et al., 2011). This is due to the ability of the theory to create attention to the processes and characteristics of organisations. Accordingly, sustainability concerns are discussed from population perspectives. In doing so, some fresh ideas may be explored. According to Rugman and Verbeke (1998), there are growing changes in the institutional environment regulating sustainable firm practices. Thus, old fashioned firms are compelled to adopt sustainability practices.

Firms that are prone to changes in environments may be readily selected within a population (Hannan & Freeman 1989; Lambkin & Day 1989). Shrivastava (1995), recommends that such firms, to survive may connect closely to institutions for recognising environmental changes and implement sustainability concerns proactively. These actions could assist in avoiding costly setbacks.

According to Hannan and Freeman (1977), organisational ecology refers to survival enhancing features and selection processes that arise from organisational birth and environmental density and change. Sustainability concerns for institutions have been refined to integrate the economy, society, and physical environment (Stead & Stead, 2008). Concerns like emissions control or product take-back programmes were the earlier rules. Subsequently, green designs and packaging (product stewardship) with a global objective became the rules (Peattie, 2001).

This theory hypothesises that firms may arise to meet sustainability challenges. Newly founded firms are susceptible due to turbulent markets (competition) and may benefit from sustainable practices. According to Shrivastava (1995), innovative processes and disruptive technologies are necessary for solving sustainability problems due to their newness in the market.

## **5.2 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework explains the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance in Ghana. More so, the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage. The earlier chapters (2 and 3) have described the concepts of economic, social, ethical, and environment. So these constructs will not be discussed here again. The other study constructs are explained below.

### **Sustainable Technologies**

Sustainable technology is the deployment of innovative technologies that incorporates sustainable development. The goal of adopting sustainable technology is to promote sustainable management of resources and reduce waste while maintaining efficiency. Some examples of sustainable technologies are: key card master switches or occupancy sensors, motion-sensitive bulbs, linen (both towels and sheets) reuse programme, low-flow showerheads and sink aerators, among others. Sustainable technological solutions increase energy efficiency, cut down on material waste, and even increase profits for hotels.

Firm sustainability with technological use describes the preparedness of managers to use technologies that deliver value to both firms and customers without compromising the needs and welfare of future generations (Lim, 2016). Within the hotel domain, such technologies mainly refer to technologies used for solid waste management, energy savings, water conservation, and air pollution control, as well as to more specific green activities, such as product recycling and reuse (Dief & Font, 2010).

### **Control variables**

In line with studies in the hotel marketing literature (Hinson et al., 2017), this study also tested for several control variables: market turbulence, competitive intensity, hotel rating, and hotel size since previous studies show that these variables have the potential to influence hotel performance and competitive advantage (Hinson et al., 2017).

### **Market turbulence**

Market dynamism is the perceived frequency of change in marketing forces in the firm's operating market (Achrol & Stern, 1988). It can also moderate the influence of sustainability marketing strategy on competitive advantage. Dynamic environments are endemic in the hotel business, which is characterised by uncertain demand, changing products/services, and shifting consumer preferences (Sharpley, 2000). Under such dynamic conditions, hotels are forced to understand their consumers' needs better, quickly absorb information from the market, and continuously revise the way their strategy is organised and implemented (Cui, Griffith, & Cavusgil, 2005). Thus, the ability to develop and sustain a competitive advantage in highly dynamic environments can be facilitated by creating first-mover advantages and resource position barriers that affect the competitors' ability to build substitute resources and capabilities (Baker & Sinkula, 2005; Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995).

### **Competitive intensity**

Competitive intensity is a situation where competition is fierce due to the presence of numerous competitors and the lack of opportunities for further growth (Auh & Menguc, 2005). It has long been regarded as a significant contributor to the hostility of the operating environment (Zahra & Covin, 1995). From this perspective, marketing scholars have contended that under a situation of low competition, a firm may not suffer a significant deterioration in performance even if it does not pay enough attention to customer requirements. This is because customers have to stick to the firm's offerings due to the lack of alternatives (Cadogan et al., 2003).

Conversely, as customers in a highly competitive markets are much freer to change their suppliers, a firm that better satisfies customer requirements than its rivals in this market is likely to boost its performance significantly. This implies that when compared with those operating in a less competitive market, firms operating in a more competitive market are likely to enjoy higher returns if they can cope with customer requirements effectively. Consistent with the preceding line of reasoning, Murray et al. (2011) have recently contended that as firms need to be more market-responsive to counter rivals' aggressive actions in a highly competitive market, those employing sustainability market-oriented strategies to satisfy customer needs in such a setting are expected to enjoy even better performance than firms doing the same when facing less competition.

### **Hotel Rating**

Hotel rating is a classification of accommodation establishments (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008). Hotel ratings are published and have been conventionally broken down into classes, categories, or grades according to their common physical and service characteristics and established at government, industry, or other private levels. A hotel rating system embraces two parts: a basic registration standard and a grading standard (Callan, [1993](#)). The basic registration standard is the physical requirement that a hotel property must meet; it is the minimum quality requirement.

The grading standard is an extension of the basic requirements of qualitative and intangible services, allowing a hotel to be compared with other properties. To communicate the quality level a hotel achieves, a variety of grading symbols is used, such as stars and

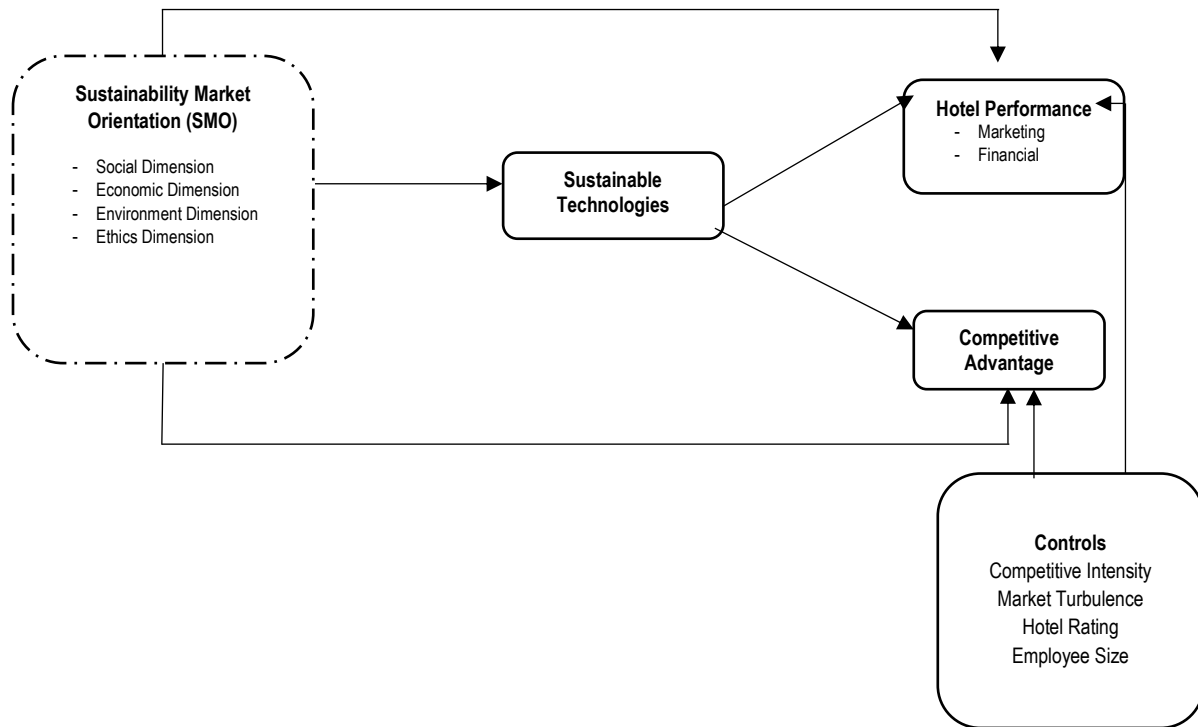
crowns. The symbol most universally recognised is stars, as most countries have at least one rating system using stars to represent quality grades (Callan, [1993](#)). Different studies have shown that the higher the category, the higher the hotel performance levels (Claver-Cortés, Molina-Azorín, & Pereira-Moliner, 2007; Pine & Phillips, 2005).

### **Hotel Size**

Conventional wisdom in the broader corporate social responsiveness and market orientation literature indicates that large firms are more environmentally responsive. For instance, a review of academic research on environmental issues in which the research design controlled for size (Bowen, 2000) revealed that 9 out of 10 relevant studies showed a significant correlation between firm size and environmental performance. In each instance, larger firms were associated with ecological proactiveness to a greater extent than smaller firms (Etzion, 2007).

Hotel size captures the scope of operations differentiation and increased bureaucratic complexity (Vaccaro, Jansen, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2012; Pawar & Eastman, 1997). A larger hotel may be better suited to pursue sustainability market orientation (Vaccaro et al., 2012). Hotel size is a critical contextual variable in the study of sustainability market orientation as it relates to the underlying complexity.

Figure 5.1: Study of Conceptual Framework



Source: Study Model

In the discussions, hotel performance will be used but it includes both marketing and financial performance. The test for outcomes of sustainability market orientation will also be on these individual hotel performance measures.

### 5.3 Hypotheses Development

This section provides the hypotheses development of the study.

#### Sustainability Market Orientation Dimensions

Sustainability market orientation (SMO) is conceptualised to have four (4) dimensions, including economic, social, environmental and ethical dimensions (Lin, 2016; Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2010; Mitchell, 2012). Accordingly, these dimensions are discussed to reflect their association with sustainability market orientation. The economic dimension of sustainability describes the ability to generate an adequate amount of cash flow to guarantee liquidity and return for the long term (Golini, Longoni, & Cagliano, 2014; Steurer & Konrad, 2009).

Some of the economic activities or strategies deployed by firms are market orientation and many other strategic orientations, which are micromarketing inclined (Hunt & Burnett, 1982). The social dimension, on the other hand, describes a business identifying the significance of conforming to the social norms of host communities (Varman & Costa, 2008). Hotels are proactively managing social factors to attain sustainability. Centring on the micromarketing perspective alone to the neglect of macro marketing may deny hotels from achieving sustainability (Hunt & Burnet, 1982). The social dimension also includes hotels actively supporting the creation and preservation of capabilities and skills of stakeholders such as promoting democratic and equal treatment for both internal and external stakeholders (McKenzie, 2004).

Another dimension of sustainability market orientation is the environmental dimension. The environmental or ecological dimension refers to the degree of emotions, knowledge, willingness, and behaviour on pollution-related issues (Ling-Yee, 1997). A hotel's environment is dependent on stakeholders, primarily target customers (Ling-Yee, 1997). This is because consumers who are environmentally cognisant may engage in environmental information searches to select ecologically sensitive hotels (Hoffart, Rieskamp, & Dutilh, 2019).

Hotels may be compelled to be environmentally conscious (Erdogan & Baris, 2007). More so, the macro-marketing view is valuable in relating the environment to the sustainability marketing discussion (Polonsky, 2011). When hotels recognise the importance of operating sustainably, hotels may engage within the realm of environmental practices (Cummins et al., 2014). The ecological dimension is achieved when hotels use resources without compromising future usage (Vachon & Mao, 2008). Similarly, such hotels have natural regeneration and generate limited emissions and waste (Yusof, & Jamaludin, 2013; Kirk, 2010). The final dimension is ethics. Ethics is a fundamental mind-set, attitude, and belief of a firm (Ahmed et al., 1998). Ethics shapes hotels' behaviours and values (Chang, 2011).

Utilising the resource-based view, the business landscape imposes the utmost constraints and challenges. As a result, hotels cultivate cultures and capabilities that competitors may not be able to imitate perfectly (Leonidou, Leonidou, Fotiadis, & Zeriti, 2013). Consequently, hotels build advantages in three interconnected levels comprising of sustainable development, product stewardship, and pollution prevention (Hart, 1995).

Hotels' sustainability marketing practice is the most relevant indicator of hotel competitiveness (Xu et al., 2018). Sustainability market orientation would deliver economic, ethical, social, and environmental impacts (Molina-Azorín et al., 2009). Consequently, this study avers that:

H1: Economic, Social, Environmental, and Ethical facets are significant and positive lower-order dimensions of Sustainability Market orientation

### **Sustainability Market Orientation and Hotel Performance**

Sustainability market orientation should be considered as a strategic orientation. This is because a strategic orientation is a multidimensional or higher-order construct that captures a hotel's relative emphasis in understanding and managing the environmental forces acting on it (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2010; Voss & Voss, 2000; Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997). As already espoused, sustainability market orientation focuses on an organisation's strategic posture reflecting economic, social, environmental, and ethical behaviours (Mitchell et al., 2010; Voss & Voss, 2000).

Sustainability marketing strategy describes a degree to which sustainability issues are integrated into the strategic marketing planning process (Banerjee et al., 2003). Sustainability is a megatrend and affecting every aspect of human endeavour (Mittelstaedt, Shultz, Kilbourne, & Peterson, 2014). As a result, most stakeholders are interested in whether hotels operate in a manner that is in line with the sustainable development goals.

Hotels may practice sustainability marketing because they see a market opportunity, or are merely complying with the law, or they see it as the right thing to do (Baker & Singula, 2005). Accordingly, Sustainability market orientation should encompass hotel policies and practices to take advantage of stakeholder interest (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2014). For instance, hotels should also proactively manage social responsibilities to attain Sustainability market orientation because the neglect of social interventions would negatively affect hotel performance (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García, & Marchante-Lara, 2014).

Ethical hotels are willing to follow standards of regulators, for example, pollution reduction or waste management (Menguc et al., 2010). Such hotels have a low possibility of paying for the punishment caused by disobeying public standards (Menguc et al., 2010). Therefore, hotels efficiently serve clients to save energy and labour and offset the costs of environmentally friendly behaviour (Miles & Covin, 2000). Starting with a resource-based view, a hotel's strategic orientation like the sustainability market orientation is a valuable, intangible resource that should guide the strategic practices, and enhance hotel performance (Jerman & Janković, 2018; Grant, 1991).

Sustainability market orientation may be regarded as part of the core corporate values and beliefs of a firm (Hind, Wilson, & Lenssen, 2009). Corporate leaders may instigate sustainability market orientation out of their exposure, awareness, or ideas (Hind et al., 2009). Owing to the encouragement of hotel managers, their personal beliefs may ultimately be fused throughout the entire firm (Egri & Herman, 2000).

Accordingly, sustainability market orientation might be implemented. Sustainability market orientation might then assist hotels in developing a collective consciousness of the relevance of environmentally, socially, and ethically responsible operations, and in time stimulate hotels to find ways to reduce environmental impacts of their activities (Banerjee, Iyer, & Kashyap, 2003).

The business landscape imposes extreme constraints and challenges on hotels (Melissen, van Ginneken, & Wood, 2016). Resource-constrained hotels need to innovate via integrating sustainability friendly policies into their overall strategic marketing planning (Martín-Tapia, Aragón-Correa, & Rueda-Manzanares, 2010). Accordingly, hotel management is expected to cultivate cultures and capabilities that cannot be perfectly imitated by competitors (Gurlek & Tuna, 2018; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Grant, 1991).

When hotels are successful in developing and deploying such cultures and capabilities, they are expected to build competitive advantages (Fraj, Matute, & Melero, 2015; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Thus, hotels with the ability to deal with sustainability-related problems are most likely to achieve competitiveness (Xu, Martinez, Van Hoof, Estrella Duran, Maldonado Perez, & Gavilanes, 2018).

The integration of hotel capabilities related to internal and external firm skills, resources, and functional competencies developed within firms could improve hotel performance (Lee & Klassen, 2008; Teece et al., 1997). This integration could have a critical role in developing environmental, ethical, economic, and social sustainability (Lim, 2016;

Christmann, 2000; Hart 1995). Also, the capabilities may allow a hotel to develop multifaceted sustainability strategies through knowledge sharing and integration of operational activities comprising of product design, production, procurement, and distribution (Gunasekaran & Spalanzani, 2012).

Following Hart (1995) and Baker and Singula (2005), who argued that sustainability marketing strategies lead to unique capabilities, this study considers sustainability market orientation as a resource and not a capability. However, sustainability market orientation can enable hotel capabilities (Baker & Singula, 2005). For instance, hotels leaning highly toward sustainability marketing practice would develop well-honed sustainability-related capabilities.

Also, the stakeholder theory argues that when a hotel manages its relationship with various stakeholders, the hotel will improve its performance (Darnall, Henriques, & Sadorsky, 2010; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders may pressure hotels to adopt proactive sustainability marketing practices which could improve hotel performance. The enhanced hotel performance might increase hotels' internal efficiency and external legitimacy that can lead to competitive advantage and financial performance (Hart, 2005; Hart & Milstein, 2003).

For instance, a hotel's sustainability marketing practice is suggested to be influenced by target consumers (Ling-Yee, 1997). Notably, in markets where consumers are sustainability conscious. Such consumers might engage in sustainable product information

search and buy sustainable products. Consequently, hotels are compelled to practice sustainability marketing to serve target markets that are sustainability marketing conscious.

Hotel sustainability marketing may help manage a significant amount of stakeholder needs and help hotels attain competitive advantage (Viswanathan, Jung, Venugopal, Minefee, & Jung, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2010). Similarly, hotels that practice sustainability market orientation due to social, ethical, economic, and environmentally responsible practices are more likely to generate more income and operating efficiency (Mitchell et al., 2010; Dean & McMullen, 2007). Sustainability marketing literature argues that sustainability market orientation relates to firm performance (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010). As such, sustainability market orientation is a vital firm capability that helps firms to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Viswanathan et al., 2014). Therefore, hotels with a high degree of sustainability market orientation would generate superior long-term hotel performance (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2010).

### **Sustainability Market Orientation and Marketing Performance**

Marketing performance is the effectiveness of a marketing function. For instance, the ability of a hotel to meet customer requirements is an indicator of marketing performance. Also, marketing performance describes a hotels' ability to satisfy, develop, and retain customers by offering products that meet or exceed customer needs (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012; Moorman & Rust, 1999). There are different ways to assess the results of marketing (González-Benito & González-Benito, 2005). Hotels depend on the interactions between employees and customers (Zhou, Brown, & Dev, 2009; Matzler & Renzl, 2007).

Sustainability marketing strategy comprises policies, practices, and procedures in the context of marketing that incorporates a sustainability friendly focus to create revenue and profit while achieving hotel objectives (Menon et al., 1999). Adopting a strategic sustainability stance in hotels can lead to client satisfaction (Stabler & Goodall, 1997). Sustainability marketing strategies significantly lower costs in the long run and help differentiate offerings from the competition, resulting from the use of cheaper recyclable supplies/materials, energy-saving processes, waste-minimisation solutions, and operating process improvements (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995). Therefore, hotels with a high degree of sustainability market orientation may achieve long-term marketing performance (Mitchell et al., 2010). Therefore, this study holds that:

H2a: There is a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel marketing performance.

### **Sustainability Market Orientation and Financial Performance**

Firms that practice sustainability market orientation due to socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible practices are more likely to generate additional income (Mitchell et al., 2010; Dean & McMullen, 2007). Also, pollution prevention can allow a hotel to save control costs, input and energy consumption, and reuse materials through recycling (Molina-Azorín, Claver-Cortés, Pereira-Moliner, & Tarí, 2009). Similarly, implementing ISO 14001 improves financial results by reducing costs, improving quality, or improving reputation (Raines 2002). Therefore this study argues that:

H2b: There is a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel financial performance.

### **Sustainability Market Orientation and Competitive advantage**

Competitive advantage refers to firms' capability to achieve more exceptional performance than their competitors (Porter, 1998). Also, competitive advantage may describe value creation that hotels pursue to driving market competition (Kuncoro & Suriani, 2018). A hotel's superiority over competitors as regards sustainability marketing practices enables the hotel to benefit from increased customer selection, satisfaction, and retention (Mahmoud, 2016; Chen, 2015; Sim, Mak, & Jones, 2006). This is achieved by communicating the sustainability benefits and possible savings to customers (Sharma, Iyer, Mehrotra, & Krishnan, 2010; Dechant & Altman, 1994).

Consumers may also show a preference for a sustainability-friendly hotel (Banerjee et al., 2003). This client preference may enable hotels to charge higher prices, generate more cash, and increase sales (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007). Accordingly, sustainability market orientation is becoming a source of competitive advantage (Golini, Longoni, & Cagliano, 2014). Also, hotels that practice sustainability market orientation (social, economic, ethical, and environmentally responsible practices) are more likely to generate income and operational efficiency (Mitchell et al., 2010; Dean & McMullen, 2007). The adoption of ISO 14001 helps to create valuable resources to maintain or create competitive advantages (Cañón-de-Francia & Garcés-Ayerbe, 2009). Similarly, Melnyk, Sroufe, and Calantone (2002) argue that sustainability management systems provide a hotel with an information

system that reduces contamination and achieves a competitive advantage. As such, this study demonstrates that:

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation (SMO) and hotel competitive advantage.

### **Mediating Role of Sustainable Technologies**

Sustainability market orientation is not a single solution to firm performance. Alternative strategic orientations can also result in firm performance (Mahmoud et al., 2017). Mediating variables are essential for superior performance (Ferrall et al., 2008). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) argue that firms, in their attempt to provide safe products, may use technologies. Sustainable technology has the power to influence and transform business processes, products, and services, as well as accommodate environmental attitudes and shape environmental marketing strategies (Srinivasan, Lilien, & Rangaswamy, 2002). Sustainable technologies have economic consequences and may be costly (Russo & Fouts, 1997). The sustainability marketing literature argues that hotel sustainability market orientation has an association with hotel performance (Mahmoud, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2010).

Along the same lines, some contributions have shown that the use of sustainable technologies positively influences hotel performance. Although most research considers that sustainability market orientation has a positive impact on hotel performance, this direct relationship does not seem to be empirically conclusive (Mahmoud, 2016). Similarly,

sustainability market orientation may not directly improve a hotel's performance, but rather that it may pass through sustainable technology use that may intervene between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance. Hotel customers may be willing to pay higher prices for sustainable technologies and simultaneously for hotels recognising the benefits sustainability marketing practices (Arora & Gangopadhyay, 1995). Therefore, this study considers that it is necessary to examine the mediating role of sustainable technology.

H4a: The positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance is mediated by sustainable technology.

H4b: The positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is mediated by sustainable technology.

#### **5.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided insight on theory, conceptual framework, and hypotheses development. Six (6) predictions were advanced for empirical verifications.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 6.0 Chapter Overview

The chapter six outlines the step by step activities and procedures used in conducting the study. As a research methodology chapter, it describes the processes, methods, and underlying assumptions used in gathering and analysing the study data (Creswell, 2009). Similarly, Amaratunga et al. (2002) aver that a research methodology describes a procedural framework within which the research is conducted. Accordingly, this chapter provides the various forms of research methodologies, with a choice and justification for the selection of methodological decisions. The chapter begins with a review of research paradigms and philosophies, research approach, research design, research strategy, population of this study, study sampling and sample used, sources of data, the data collection methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques.

#### 6.1 Paradigms and Philosophies of Research

To understand the paradigms and philosophies of research, it may be essential to reexamine our understanding of research methods or research methodology. The central issue is about how research is conducted. As a result, how research is conducted may determine the dependability or acceptability of the study observations and recommendations (Nachamias & Nachamias, 1996).

Due to this mindset, some researchers argue that a research methodology should be selected based on its suitability with the study problem and study objectives (Saunders 2011). With this understanding of the relevance of a research methodology, researchers in their attempt to strengthen or justify a particular research methodology, use systems of explicit rules (Nachamias & Nachamias, 1996). These systems are based on clear rules and principles (Eldabi et al., 2002). Cognisance of the role of scientific laws and principles influence research methodologies (Wong, Musa & Wong, 2011).

Therefore, this study commences its research methodology by first examining research paradigms and philosophies in the extant management or business research methodologies. The choice to use both the terms paradigm and philosophies is because of the ambiguity on whether a research paradigm is the same as a research philosophy. Some studies describe them as distinctly different whereas other scholars use them interchangeably (Blaikie, 2000). This study will also use them interchangeably.

A paradigm is an overall conceptual framework within which a researcher works (Healy & Perry, 2000). Accurately, a paradigm describes a set of values, beliefs, and techniques that members of a scientific community shares (Kuhn, 2012; Guba, 1990; Kuhn, 1970). A paradigm is a set of beliefs and practices shared by communities of researchers which regulate inquiry within a discipline (cf. Bunniss & Kelly, 2010). These values, beliefs and techniques are expected to provide direction and guidance on kinds of problems and how the issues are solved (Kuhn, 2012).

Paradigms are essential building blocks for a study methodology (Balakrishnan, Muhammed & Sikdar, 2013). Finally, a research paradigm shapes the worldview of researchers (Myers, 2013; Krauss, 2005). Academic research, like this thesis, should be inspired by an established philosophical assumption (Blaikie, 2000). Therefore, a paradigm is the anchorage for the methodological choice in a study.

A continuum is suggested for a further understanding of the values, beliefs, and techniques (paradigm) of research (Myers & Avison, 2002; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). On this continuum are the types of paradigms of research methodologies (Myers & Avison, 2002). The conventional paradigms in management research are interpretivist, relativism, realism, critical realism, and positivism (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). Each of the paradigms is explained using some philosophical assumptions known as epistemology, ontology, and axiology (Creswell, 2014).

These philosophical assumptions are very critical in understanding and justifying why a particular paradigm is adopted. More profound is the guidance of how to remain in a specific paradigm as apparent differences are provided. Reading from Guba and Lincoln (2000), there are five alternative inquiry paradigms in social science research: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, interpretivism, and participatory. According to Weaver and Olson (2006), these paradigms are different based on their ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (how we know what we know), and axiology (value perspective).

In marketing research, researchers have identified interpretivism, positivism, realism, and critical realism (Boateng & Boateng, 2014; Hanson & Grimmer, 2007) as crucial paradigms. Notwithstanding these paradigms, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) observed that the three main research paradigms include: positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Comparing these classifications of paradigms by researchers, this study will examine positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism as paradigms to the enquiry. This was arrived at due to the seeming similarity in the other paradigms.

### Ontology

The first philosophical discussion is on ontology. In Greek, ontology is said to mean “being” or “on” (Kuhn, 1970). According to Dieronitou (2014), ontology refers to a study of existence or being. Similarly, ontology is the study of reality. This is because existence is a reality. The ontology is “the starting point of all research”, after which one’s epistemological and methodological positions logically follow (Grix, 2002). Ontological assumptions are “concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality” (Blaikie, 2000: p.8). An investigator’s ontological position is their ‘answer to the question (Neuman, 2007). What is the nature of reality to be investigated? The assumption was impossible to refute empirically (Grix, 2002; Crotty, 1998). Some examples of ontological positions include perspectives of ‘Interpretivism’ and ‘objectivism’. Interpretivism is an ontological position which avers that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Grix, 2002).

Objectivism is ‘an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors’ (Grix, 2002). These assumptions make claims about what kinds of social phenomena do or can exist, the condition for their existence, and how they are related (Blaikie, 2000). Two aspects or positions among ontologists are constructionism or interpretivism and realism or objectivism (Saunders et al., 2016).

### Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and global basis. It deals with how we create new knowledge or validate existing knowledge (Crotty, 1998). It is a philosophical theory of understanding of how we know what we know (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Epistemology is a pivotal issue in any form of research as it addresses the question of what do we mean by the concept of ‘truth’ and how we know whether or not some claims are true or false? (Saunders et al., 2016). Epistemology aims to provide philosophical grounding for deciding the kinds of knowledge which is possible and how to ascertain its adequacy and legitimacy (Crotty, 1998).

Like ontology, epistemology is one of the core branches of philosophy which is concerned with the theory of knowledge, especially regarding its methods, validation, and ‘the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be (Grix, 2002). Epistemology claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known (Blaikie, 2000).

Derived from the Greek words episteme (knowledge) and logos (reason), epistemology focuses on the knowledge-gathering process and is concerned with developing new models or theories that are better than competing models and theories (cf. Grix, 2002). Knowledge and the ways of discovering it is not static, but forever changing. According to Grix (2002), the two contrasting epistemological positions are those contained within the perspectives ‘positivism’ and ‘interpretivism’.

The critical epistemological debate in terms of conducting social science research is whether or not the social world can be studied according to the same principles as the natural sciences (Bryman, 2001). Philosophical ideas have a significant influence on research practices, and therefore, they must be identified (Creswell, 2014). Epistemology distinguishes knowledge from opinion, belief, or falsehood (Creswell, 2014) and justifies knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Epistemology specifies the relationship between the researchers and the reality (Crotty, 1998). While ontology deals with the nature of being (the nature of reality/knowledge), epistemology deals with how to acquire and understand the knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### Axiology

The method is an outline for researching a paradigm (Wahyuni, 2012). The methodology specifies both logical and empirical work (Creswell, 2014). A methodology is only one of the three elements of a paradigm that researchers either explicitly or implicitly work within – a paradigm that includes the other elements of ontology and epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Principally, quantitative researchers use numbers and large samples to test theories, whereas qualitative researchers use words and meanings in smaller samples to build theories (Hyde, 2000). Some researchers use only one type of methodology, while others suggest that both types may sometimes be appropriate (Hyde, 2000; Borch & Arthur, 1995). Even though the two methods may produce contradictory findings of the same phenomena or at least unrelated ones it is likely that quantitative methods and qualitative methods will eventually answer questions that do not easily come together to provide a single, well-integrated picture of the situation (Patton, 1990).

Table 6.1: Summary of Paradigms and Philosophies in Research

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Ontology</b>	<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Axiology</b>
Interpretivist	Multiple realities exist subject to human experiences and interpretations. Reality is socially constructed.	Value-laden, knowledge is subjective, time-bound, and context-dependent	Knowledge is created through researchers identifying the various interpretations and constructions of reality that exists and attempting to establish patterns. Inductive logic and new design.
Critical Realism	Two words- transitive and intransitive. Transitive is what we observed and learn with our minds- the perceptions of reality, intransitive embodies the truth, which is independent of what the mind thinks.	Transitive words are value-laden and changing continually. The intransitive world has underlying structures and mechanisms that are relatively enduring- that is what we want to study.	Researchers seek to deconstruct and understand that structures and mechanisms underlying the subjective realities that exist. Triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it — retroactive reasoning.
Realism	Reality is “real”, but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible, so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it.	Value –cognisant / value – aware. Findings are probably true...the researcher needs to triangulate any perception collected.	The social phenomenon is understood through hypotheses which are tested to establish patterns of associations and hence the possible explanation. Hypothetical-deduction.
Relativism	Multiple realities exist. Reality as truth is not “absolute”, it is relative; dependent on “something”, and it does exist.	The interpretation of the world requires some form of human processing.	The construction of knowledge is influenced by the worldview and research paradigm of a researcher. Researchers should focus more on creating and developing new “useful” theories- useful solutions to specific problems
Positivism	There is a single, objective and tangible reality.	Value-free knowledge created is objective, free of time impacts, and it is context-free.	Researchers formulate research questions and hypotheses and then test them empirically under carefully controlled circumstances. Deductive reasoning

Source: Boateng, 2014

### 6.2.1 Positivism Paradigm in Marketing

A positivist paradigm is widely used in management research (Neuman, 2007). Some scholars refer to positivism as 'scientific', 'objectivist', or 'experimentalist' paradigm. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) is credited to have coined the paradigm (Thomas, 2004). To Comte (nd), positivism describes the power of rational and scientific thought to understand and manipulate the world (Fisher, 2010). Researchers working within positivism separate themselves from their study whereas investigators within some other paradigms admit having participated in their studies with a justification of trying to understand better and express emergent properties and features (Healy & Perry, 2000).

Positivism uses deductive and inductive inquiry. Nevertheless, the idea is to develop a universal causal law or principle than use logical deduction to specify how it operates. Positivism assumes that reality is measurable and knowable. A positivist uses a scientific method in developing general laws to describe and predict patterns. Positivism employs quantitative methodologies in testing hypotheses (Healy & Perry, 2000). Positivist paradigm in marketing research is either a hard ontology or soft ontology (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). An ontology is described as hard positivist when it emphasises that objective reality is out there to be found (Carson et al., 2001), and epistemologically executed with a knowable degree of certainty using objectively-correct scientific methods (Carson et al., 2001).

The result is guaranteed knowledge, even when bounded by probabilities of correctness. The hard positivist ontology is a traditional approach and dominant in social sciences disciplines (Kral, Burkhardt & Kidd, 2002). A hard positivist ontology research uses reliability, validity, and statistical significance. Therefore, hard positivist ontology assumes that it is possible to determine the extent to which reality has been described (Kral et al., 2002). Researchers who ascribed to this paradigm are known as positivists. They believe in an objective, a single and tangible reality. Accordingly, positivist researchers hold that to generate a research strategy to collect data; one must use existing theory to develop hypotheses which can be tested to confirm its veracity (Remenyi et al., 1998).

Positivism mainly uses quantitative data derived from the application of strict rules and procedures (Robson, 2011). It uses experiments, observations, surveys, and statistics to collect and analyse data (Neuman, 2007). Data obtained from experiments and surveys are used to prove relationships between variables. Through these processes, the behaviour of the net or part of it, selected for study can be understood, explained, and predicted. Observations are expressed as descriptions which are only valid if they objectively depict the properties of the object and exclude elements which cannot be verified by multiple observers (Niglas, 2010).

### 6.2.2 Interpretivist Paradigm in Marketing

The Interpretivism or Interpretivist paradigm believes that human social life is different from natural sciences. Consequently, social sciences cannot derive the scientific principles of natural sciences. Accordingly, interpretivism is a type of science. Interpretivism is based on the distinctiveness of humans. Many interpretivist adopt a constructionist view of social reality. This makes many scholars term the interpretivist research as a constructionist approach (Neuman, 2007). Therefore, interpretive researchers are not likely to adopt a nomothetic approach, but instead favour an idiographic form of explanation and use inductive reasoning. Idiographic refers to “specific descriptions and explaining aspects of the social world by offering a highly detailed picture of description of a specific social setting, process, or type of relationship” (Neuman,2007). Thus, the best test of good social knowledge is not replication, but whether the researcher demonstrates that he or she captured the inner world and personal perspective of the people studied.

Interpretivism asserts that reality is subjective and changing, and therefore, there is no ultimate truth. Meaning is socially constructed, resulting in multiple and diverse interpretations of reality. Interpretivism uses qualitative methodology to understand various explanations of the phenomenon. (cf. Walsham, 1995). Thus, the purpose of this paradigm is to describe, understand, and interpret human thought, interactions and discourse, including the reasons for such actions. The strength and power of the interpretive approach in marketing lie in its ability to address the complexity and meaning of situations (Black, 2006). Byrne (2001) talks about qualitative research being “contextually laden, subjective, and richly detailed”. This describes a situation where we must make detailed

explanations and interpretations of data that can hold a myriad of meaning. Interpretivist has relativist ontology; that is, each person has his or her reality (Neuman, 2007).

According to Creswell (2009), meaning can be inferred through an object or thing. Therefore, the researcher must understand the context and relate them to the several purposes to be able to fully understand the behaviour of the subjects of study (Thomas, 2004). Therefore, reality becomes the product, socially constructed from the experiences of both researchers and participants, indicating that truth becomes the reality of people based on the experiences of the phenomena (Robson, 2011). Reality then becomes a function of a conceptual schema produced out of the interpretation of the events, which is guided by culturally acceptable way thinking (Robson, 2011). Researchers desist from generalisation, recognising that other perspectives to the reality may exist outside what they have captured (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This shows that meanings are often negotiated socially and historically with a focus on individuals and their cultural contexts (Niglas, 2010; Robson, 2011).

Researchers add to their strategy the need to gain insight into relevant historical issues and cultural values. This paves the way to gain insight into people's patterns of thought (Creswell, 2014; Robson, 2011). Constructionists aim to understand various constructions of meanings and knowledge (Creswell, 2014; Robson, 2011). Creswell (2014) observes that this approach is simplified in qualitative studies because it lends itself to examine phenomena in their natural settings. For this reason, researchers tend to see and conduct

in-depth interviews to gain multiple reality asking open-ended questions to capture the holistic reality (Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014).

An organisation is a socially constructed product, a label used by individuals to make sense of their social experience, so it can be understood only from individuals who are directly involved in its activities (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Researchers who share such a view opposed the notion of the objective reality of a subject of study (Creswell, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

### 6.2.3 Pragmatism Paradigm in Marketing

The pragmatist paradigm is also known as post-positivism or critical realism (Boateng & Boateng, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Pragmatist argues that reality may be objective, but competing groups continually contest the truth. They are not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism paradigm arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (Boateng & Boateng, 2014). This is important for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the issue (Creswell, 2009). Researchers are free to select methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes (Creswell, 2009).

The paradigm is an increasingly useful worldview for some social scientists (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Indeed, it is a “growing movement transforming the intellectual scene” in management research (Bhaskar, 1978). Its philosophical position is that reality exists

independently of the researcher's mind; that is, there is an external reality (Bhaskar, 1978). This external reality consists of abstract things that are born of people's minds but exist independently of any one person, it "is largely autonomous, though created by us" (Magee, 1985: p. 61).

The real decisions are made in the world outside. This means that marketers cannot do whatever they feel like doing in a post-modern fashion (Brown, 1996) because they must aim to meet the needs of an external market place at a profit. Thus pragmatism research is searching towards an understanding of the ordinary reality of an economic system in which many people operate inter-dependently. That is, pragmatism believes that there is a "real" world "out there" to discover (Sobh & Perry, 2006).

Researchers who adopt the pragmatism paradigm utilise quantitative and qualitative methodologies to advocate for change (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This research paradigm is emerging as a potentially significant stream in research. Pragmatism research can enrich understanding and improve practice; it offers an avenue for discharging social and ethical responsibilities more fully (Stahl & Brooke 2008). The pragmatist research can challenge prevailing assumptions; which reminds us of the continually changing potential of humans who need not be confined by their immediate circumstances (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Accordingly, Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) classify research as pragmatist where a critical stance is taken toward taken-for-granted assumptions and where the aim is to critique the status quo through the exposure of what are believed to be deep-seated, structural contradictions within social systems.

Mixed-method research with its pragmatic approach does not align itself with a single system or philosophy (Creswell 2009) and instead is most often driven by the research question, rather than being restrained by paradigmatic assumptions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

#### 6.2.4 Marketing Research and Paradigms

Marketing scholars have utilised positivism (Narteh, Agbemabiese, Kodua, & Braimah, 2013; Boso, Cadogan, & Story, 2012), interpretivism (Goulding, 2005), and pragmatism (Boateng & Boateng, 2014; Easton, 2002). These three paradigms are dominant in marketing research and contribute to knowledge creation (Lowe et al., 2004). Another significant discussion in marketing today is how to address the adherence to research paradigms. The debate arises as to whether there has been a dramatic shift in the dominance of one research philosophy over another in the past years (Rod, 2009; Gummesson, 2005). Majority of well-known marketing principles, models, and theorisations from the early and mid-twentieth century were results of positivist research and aimed to establish universally applicable rules and guidelines for generic strategies in marketing.

Discussions in marketing regarding this methodological approach have focused primarily on the philosophical assumptions that guide qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research approaches (Bahl & Milne, 2006). The pragmatist paradigms have been discussed with assumptions that guide research (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). An important assumption controlling pragmatist research mandates an objective view of reality, in which research is aimed to measure or explain, creating knowledge that is generalisable across different

people, time, and place (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). This study adopts a positivist paradigm. Accordingly, the study verifies the conceptualisation of sustainability market orientation in the hotel sector. According to Robson (2011), positivist uses quantitative approaches to examine phenomena.

Table 6.2: Differences between the three research paradigms

Elements	Positivist	Interpretivist	Pragmatist
Ontology	Naïve realism- Real reality but apprehensible	Critical relativism – multiple local and specific constructed realities	Critical realism – real realism but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it
Epistemology	Dualistic / objectivist, findings true	Transactional/ subjectivist; created findings	Modified dualistic/ objectivist; critical tradition/community, findings probably true
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses, chiefly quantitative methods	Hermeneutical/ dialectical	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiple; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods and use structural equation modelling
Axiology	Value free	Value laden	Value free/laden

Source: Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 2000

## 6.2 Research Approach and Design

This section combine and discusses the research approach and research designed used in this study. The research approach is presented next.

### Research Approach

A research approach is the broad category of research design (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush, 2008). In determining an appropriate research approach, the research objectives and information requirement are crucial (Hair et al., 2008). According to the existing research approach literature, Qualitative; Quantitative; and Mix methods are the three existing research approaches (Hair et al., 2008; Creswell, 2009). More so, an overall decision on which approach to adopt for a study is influenced by the researcher's worldview, researchers' personal experience, nature of research problem, and the target audience for the study findings (Creswell, 2009).

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning groups or individuals assigned to an issue. On the other hand, a quantitative research approach is a means for testing scientific theories (Creswell, 2009). A mix method research approach involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is more significant than a soley qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

The Quantitative research approach is adopted for this study because it uses standard procedures and replication is assumed (Neuman, 2007). Also, to test the hypotheses of the study, quantitative data were required (Zebal, 2003). More so, similar studies (Mahmoud, 2016) have used a quantitative research approach supporting the use of the approach in the study.

### Research Design

A research design is a procedure and plan for research that spans the decisions from broad assumptions to specific methods of data collection and analysis in achieving research objectives (Creswell, 2009). Similarly, Cooper and Schindler (2008) defined research design as a blueprint for fulfilling study objectives. According to research scholars (Hair et al., 2008; Zikmund & Babin, 2010), descriptive, causal, and exploratory are the three main research designs. The descriptive analysis describes the existing characteristics of a defined target population or market structure (Hair et al., 2008). A causal research design, however, collects data that enables decision-makers to determine the cause and effect relationships between two or more variables (Hair et al., 2008). Finally, exploratory research generates insights and deepens the understanding of a phenomenon/research problem (Hair et al., 2008).

This study used the exploratory research design to understand and seek new insights on sustainability market orientation; hotel performance (marketing and financial) and competitive advantage (Robson, 2002; Hair et al., 2008). More so, exploratory research is

preferred because it would assist in clarifying ambiguous situations and discover ideas that may be potential for business opportunities (Zikmund & Babin, 2010).

### 6.3 Research Strategy

Survey research and experimental research are the main research strategies (Creswell, 2009). Nonetheless, Zikmund and Babin (2010) contended that the utmost method of collecting primary data is the survey strategy. A survey is a research technique in which a sample is interviewed in some form, or the behaviour of the respondent is observed and described in some way (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). The survey research was preferred to the experimental research due to its numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying just a sample-using questionnaires in gathering primary data (Creswell, 2009).

The survey also provides quick, often inexpensive, efficient, and accurate means of assessing information about a population. Furthermore, researchers can use straightforward statistical tools in analysing sample survey results (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Moreover, previous market orientation researchers have relied on survey methods to achieve good results (Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012; Hinson et al., 2008; Narver & Slater, 1990).

A cross-sectional study was employed. Cross-sectional design involves the collection of information from any given sample of the population only once (Kuada & Hinson, 2012). This design is suitable for studies that aim to analyse a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude, or issue by considering a cross-section of the population at one point in time. The

advantage of this method is that it is cheaper and less time consuming than a longitudinal design. It is worthy of knowing that some market orientation and firm performance studies have employed cross-sectional design (Hinson et al., 2017; Aggarwal & Singh, 2004).

#### 6.4 Population and Sampling

This section details the population and sampling techniques. The discussion begins with the population and then sampling techniques. The sampling techniques explored sampling design, sampling frame, and sampling size. The population of a study is the aggregate of all elements, sharing some standard set of characteristics that comprise the universe for the research interest (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). The population of interest for this study is hotel executives in Ghana. This target population is subject to the strategic selection of hotels reflecting their inclusion in this study. Scholars have advocated for executives as informants when the researcher is interested in information that has to do with the strategic decisions of firms (Morgan et al., 2009; Qu & Ennew, 2003). Two hundred and forty-three (243) star-rated hotels are listed by the Ghana Hotel Association as operating in the Greater Accra region.

The Ghana Tourist Authority is responsible for promoting and regulating tourism in Ghana. The Authority is also in charge of licensing and classifications of tourism facilities and services. Accordingly, the researcher visited the Authority for information on star-rated hotels in Ghana. As at the end of 2017, the Authority had licensed only two hundred and forty-three star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra region. These hotels were the population of this study.

Three executives representing the marketing, housekeeping, and accounts departments at each hotel were requested to respond to the questionnaire. The target population is the collection of elements that possess the information sought by the researcher and on which inferences are made (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). The study-targeted executives of star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra region, because more star-rated hotels are in this city (Narteh et al., 2013).

### Sampling and Sampling Design

According to Malhotra and Dash (2011), the sample design has to include target population definition, sample frame, sampling technique, sample size, and sampling process. The following sections discuss the sampling process of the study. There are two main types of sampling techniques (Webb, 2000). These are the probability sampling and non-probability sampling. With probability sampling, all elements are given equal chances of being selected. While under the non-probability sampling, the chances of selection are not known. However, they are sampled to fulfil the demands of research objectives (Webb, 2000).

This study used non-probability sampling technique, specifically the purposive sampling to identify executives in hotels. According to Webb (2000), sample members under this non-probability sampling technique should meet specific criteria, which are appropriate to the successful completion of their investigation. The approach was based on respondents' exposure to strategic decisions of a star-rated hotel (Qu & Ennew, 2003).

### Sample Size

The sample size is the number of elements to be included in the study (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). All two hundred and forty-three (243) hotels were contacted. However, two hundred and twenty-five (225) questionnaires were received. Out of the collected questionnaires (225), one hundred and eighty-seven (187) were included in the analysis due to incomplete information on fifteen of the questionnaires received for further investigations. According to Hair et al. (2006), the required sample size for research using exploratory factor analysis and regression as a significant form of analysis are fifty (50) for factor analysis and one hundred (100) for regressions. The sample size used for this study was one hundred and eighty-seven and acceptable for both factor analysis and regression (Hair et al., 2006).

### 6.5 Data Collection Method and Instrument design

This section discussed the data collection, data sources, data collections tools, data collection instrument, and questionnaire development. The next section provides for data collection.

#### Data collection

In the existing research methodology discourse, data collection methods are essential. This is because they may inform the level of credibility associated with study findings. Therefore, data collection methods are crucial parts of a study report. According to Zikmund and Babin (2010), data collection describes the process of collecting information. This section of the study provides data collection methods and how the study instrument was developed and used.

### Data sources

There are several ways or sources for collecting data. According to Hair et al. (2008), the sources of data needed to address research problems are classified as either primary or secondary. Primary data is the data researchers collect on their own directly from respondents or participants. Primary data are obtained directly from first-hand sources to address the current research problem (Webb, 2000). Primary data for testing the hypothesis were collected via self-administered questionnaires to executives of star-rated hotels in Greater Accra.

Secondary data, on the other hand, involves the use of existing data or data collected earlier for different purposes. According to Webb (2000), secondary data is data that has already been collected for some purpose other than the one under consideration. Secondary sources of data include scholarly journal internet websites like Google scholar, Emerald, and Science Direct, or printed books and databases. These sources were visited to collect information on studies to guide the researcher in the primary data collection (Webb, 2000).

### Data collection tools

In collecting data, there are different tools or strategies available. Some of the standard tools are interviews, questionnaires, and observations. This study used questionnaires to collect information on the sustainability market orientation, hotel performance (marketing and financial performance), sustainable technology, competitive advantage, market turbulence, competitor intensity, hotel characteristics, and respondent profiles.

The study used questionnaires as some existing studies have relied on questionnaires to collect data (Mahmoud, 2016; Mahmoud & Hinson, 2012). A questionnaire is a data collection tool where each participant responds to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (Webb, 2000).

#### Study Instrument

Appendix A of this thesis has a copy of the study instrument. The questionnaire had four (4) sections. Section “A” collected information on respondent’s profile and hotel characteristics. The section “B” received information on sustainability market orientation dimension of economic dimension, environmental dimension, social dimension, and ethical dimension. Also, the section “C” collected data on outcomes of sustainability market orientation.

These outcomes are marketing performance, financial performance, and competitive advantage. The final section (D) collected data on intervening and control variables. These variables were competitive intensity, market turbulence, and sustainable technology.

#### Questionnaire Development

The economic environment and social dimensions of sustainability market orientation dimensions were measured using existing scales from Mahmoud (2016), and Mitchell et al. (2010, 2013). The ethical dimension was measured using scales from scholars Mahmoud & Hinson (2012) and Maignan et al. (1999). Hotel performance included

marketing and financial performance. Marketing and financial performance were measured using scales from Gabler, Richey jr, and Rapp (2015).

Competitive advantage was measured using scales from scholars Gabler et al. (2015) and Banerjee et al. (2003). Competitive intensity and market turbulence were measured using scales from scholars Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Hinson et al. (2017). Sustainable technology was measured using scales from Gabler et al. (2015). The study uses a five-point Likert scale in measuring these adopted scales where 1 meant strongly disagree up to 5 which signified strongly agree.

In collecting the data, as indicated earlier, a survey strategy was used. To achieve a high response, the researcher personally drove to some targeted hotels in Accra and Tema to collect data. Two additional research assistants were used to collect data from specific hotels within an area. In the end, only two hundred and twenty-five hotels were approached for data collection.

#### 6.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the application of reasoning to understand the data that have been gathered (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). More so, the analysis may involve determining consistent patterns and summarising the relevant details revealed in an investigation (Zikmund & Babin, 2010).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used in the analysis of data collected. SEM refers to a technique which integrates a whole assortment of standard multivariate analysis methods. These methods include factor analysis, analysis of variance and regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010). SEM is made famous due to its hypothesis-testing approach, also referred to as a confirmatory approach (Byrne, 1994). Various researchers have adopted SEM due to its ability to conduct simultaneous processes together while maintaining the robustness of analysis and ensuring rigorousness and integrity of results obtained (MacLean & Gray, 1998). More so, SEM offered a better opportunity to conduct such a series of analysis while catering for error as well (Ullman, 2006).

The study used Smart PLS software version 3.0 for structural equation modelling. The partial least squares (PLS) examined the structural component of the structural and measurement model (Hair et al., 2014). PLS is a regression-type data analysis method (Sanchez, 2015). PLS is suitable to handle a complex predictive model and higher-order models (Hair et al., 2014; Joreskog & Wold, 1982). Also, Gimbert, Bisbe, & Mendoza (2010) argue that PLS analyses predictive research models that are in the stages of theory development. Also, the PLS-SEM approach has no assumptions about data distribution (Hair et al., 2014; Vinzi, Trinchera, & Amato, 2010). Finally, PLS is a good alternative when the sample size is small (Hair et al., 2014).

To test mediation effects on PLS-SEM, the procedure proposed by Nitzl et al. (2016) was employed. This procedure also enabled the research to identify the types of mediation. The procedure considers five statements which was followed using SmartPLS.

1. The testing the indirect effect helped researchers with all the information they need to assess the significance of a mediation. Therefore, it was not necessary to conduct separate tests for paths as required when using other analytical tools.
2. The strength of the indirect effect helped determine the size of the mediation. Therefore, it is also not necessary to test the difference between technology and technology'.
3. With PLS-SEM the significant of the indirect effect is the only prerequisite for establishing a mediation effect.
4. Bootstrapping was be used to test the significance of the indirect effect.
5. The significance of the direct effect (technology') was tested in order to determine the type of effect and/or mediation.

Klarner et al. (2013) noted that mediation analysis procedures in PLS-SEM may also be applied to multiple mediators in a PLS path model. Following these scholars, this thesis conducted the mediation test.

Upon receipt of the data, the data was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 21). The data were screened for outliers and missing data, and based on this process of data cleaning, out of the two hundred and twenty-five (225) questionnaires received, only one hundred and eighty-seven (187) were found to be usable with the others containing large sections of missing data, rendering them unusable. Confirmatory factor analysis and mediation tests were then conducted using PLS.

#### Reliability Analysis

Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used measure of reliability. The acceptable threshold level is 0.70 and above (Hair et al., 2010). This study used scales drawn from prior research to measure all constructs. Cronbach's Alpha values were examined to ascertain the inter-item consistency of all constructs as multi-item scales were used to measure each construct. Nunnally (1978) proposes that Cronbach's Alpha of each instrument should exceed the recommended levels of 0.70 to ensure the satisfactory internal consistency of the measured items under each correspondent construct. In order to refine the questionnaire and avoid potential problems when conducting the survey, a pilot test was done to ensure the content and face validity of measurement items in the questionnaire.

### Validity Analysis

The scales were modified (adapted). The modification began with two PhD marketing students and 3 Masters Students (who are or have worked for hotels), reviewing the instrument to improve its readability and understandability. Secondly, a Professor and two senior lecturers of Marketing reviewed the instrument for clarity and validity. Finally, a few (15) staffs of hotels who were qualified to respond to the study instrument were contacted to check the ease and clarity of completing the instrument.

### 6.7 Ethical Considerations

As a requirement of the College of Humanities, this study went through ethical clearance from an Ethical Clearance Committee. The approval from the Committee is attached to this thesis as Appendix B. Ethics in research work describes the behavioural appropriateness (right or wrong) of a researcher (Sauders et al., 2016). More so, the level of a researcher's openness to and treatment of respondents are core areas of ethical concerns (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). According to Malhotra and Dash, 2011, intent disclosure, confidentiality, and transparency are crucial ethical principles for researchers to consider.

Accordingly, this study was guided with these three ethical principles. As can be verified on the study instrument (Appendix A), this study upheld these principles. The aim and purpose of this research were communicated to participants on a cover letter introducing the researcher and the research. The confidentiality of respondents and their hotels were assured.

## 6.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed research methodological choices and provides some justifications for those decisions. The next chapter provides the presentation of empirical data.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

#### 7.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter seven is the findings and discussion chapter of the thesis. The chapter contains information on hotel characteristics, descriptive statistics, an assessment of the measurement model, and finally, the assessment of the structural model.

#### 7.1 Hotels' Characteristics

As noted in the methodology chapter, the total population of star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra region were two hundred and forty-three (243). Consequently, two hundred and thirty questionnaires (230) were sent to identified star-rated hotels in Accra and Tema metropolises. In picking up the administered questionnaire, some of the two hundred and thirty were not received back while others were not completed answered. Also, in cleaning up the received questionnaire for analysis, only one hundred and eighty-seven (187) questionnaire were retained for further analysis. Representing about seventy-seven per cent (77%) response rate.

The study considered the hotel's rating, respondent's length of working for the hotel, and the number of employees working for the hotel as demographic characteristics for the study. These hotel characteristics were examined to provide insights on the calibre of hotels that were contacted or/and used for this study. Table 7.1 provide details on the profiles of hotels.

Table 7.1 Hotel Characteristics

Details		Frequency (n=187)	Per cent (100%)
Hotel's years of operations	Less than 1	24	12.8
	1-5	132	70.6
	6-10	21	11.2
	More than 10	10	5.3
Hotel's Employee size	Less than 25	49	26.2
	25-50	114	61.0
	51-75	16	8.6
	More than 75	8	4.3
Hotel's Rating	1 Star	124	66.3
	2 Star	58	31.0
	3 Star	3	1.6
	4 Star	2	1.1

Source: Field data, 2019

Reading from table 7.1, most of the hotels have operated for a period between a (1) year to five (5) years (70.6 % of hotels). The period of hotel operation provides insights on the length of hotel operations. Also, the period of operation may suggest how long a hotel has experience. Thus, the more a hotels' year of operations, the more it may have experienced. However, in this study the hotels were largely in their prime years (one to five years). This is due to the recent investments or attractions to the hotel development in Ghana (Narteh et al., 2013).

Also, most hotels had a staff strength between twenty-five (25) to fifty (50) employees (61% of hotels). The staff strength provided insights on the size of a hotel. With majority (74%) of hotels having more than twenty five (25) employees. This observation shows that hotels used were not small hotels but of medium to large hotels. Similarly, the ratings of a hotel describes the size of a hotel. One (1) star-rated hotels dominated this study (66.3 % of hotels). There were more low-rated hotels than high-rated hotels, manifesting in a significant number of respondents representing low-rated (1- and 2-star) hotels.

Based on these hotel characteristics, the study findings applies clearly to luxury or high end hotels (star rated hotels). These hotels are costly to operate and as such, adopting and / or implementing sustainability practices is of strategic imperative. The next section provides the descriptive statistics for this study items, variables and constructs.

## 7.2 Descriptive Statistics

In line with previous scholarships, this study provides the descriptive statistics. Conducting a descriptive analysis is critical before further analysis (Pallant, 2016). Descriptive analysis shows the extent to which study respondents' agree or disagree with the statements on a questionnaire. More so, the descriptive analyses show the performance of each statement and could be used to compare the responses to one statement as against another statement on the study instrument. Accordingly, this section of the findings and analysis discusses the descriptive analysis of this study's findings. Some of the analytical tools used for descriptive analysis are measures of central tendency (means, standard deviations, standard error); a range of scores, skewness and kurtosis (data normality).

Tables 7.2 A, 7.2 B, 7.2 C, 7.2 D, and 7.3 presents the descriptive analysis for this study. The study measured sustainability market orientation on four dimensions comprising of economic, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions. Hotel performance was measured with marketing performance and financial performance. The other study constructs were a competitive advantage, sustainable technology, hotel size, hotel rating, market turbulence and competitor intensity. The statements measuring these constructs, as were descriptively analysed, are presented.

Reading from table 7.2 A and 7.2 B, the statements measuring economic, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions of sustainability market orientation and marketing performance are presented. The means, standard deviations, and standard error of each statement are presented to show how respondents showed their agreements or disagreements.

The means of all statements on table 7.2 A and 7.2 B were below a mean of 4. The highest mean score was 3.81 for corporate governance practices under the economic dimension of the sustainable market orientation. While the lowest mean score was 2.4 for delivering superior services under marketing performance. On the individual constructs, economic dimension had corporate governance recording the highest mean score of 3.81 while providing value to either employees or shareholders jointly had the lowest mean scores of 2.79. The environmental dimension had environmental values recording the highest value of 3.8 and pollution into the atmosphere recording the lowest mean score of 3.06.

Also, the social dimension had diverse sociocultural backgrounds of employees' recording the highest mean score of 3.47 with acceptable working conditions as the lowest mean score of 2.77. The ethical dimension had sustainable practices as the highest mean scoring 3.4 and reprimanding of employees as the lowest mean scoring 2.71.

Table 7.2 A: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainability Market Orientation measurement items

Measurement items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Economic Dimension			
Our hotel offers value to its customers	2.94	0.93	0.06
Our hotel offers value to its employees	2.79	0.93	0.06
Our hotel offers value to investors	2.79	0.88	0.06
Our hotel offers value to all stakeholders	3.51	0.97	0.07
Our hotel employs members of host communities	3.4	1.02	0.07
Our hotel practices corporate governance	3.81	0.89	0.06
Environmental Dimension			
Our hotel minimises environmental impact	3.55	0.94	0.07
Environmental values are important for our hotel	3.8	0.86	0.06
Environmentally friendly operations are essential for our hotel	3.16	0.93	0.06
Our hotel responds to environmental concerns such as disposal of waste	3.2	0.98	0.07
Our hotel monitors resource (water, electricity) use	3.1	0.95	0.07
Our hotel avoids polluting the atmosphere	3.06	1.01	0.07

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 7.2 B: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainability Market Orientation measurement items

Measurement items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Dimension			
Our hotel effectively integrates marketing intelligence to social development	3.05	0.98	0.07
Our hotel incorporates sustainable development practices into its activities	3.29	0.98	0.07
Our hotel's operations reflect market orientation sustainability practices	3.33	0.90	0.06
Our hotel has employees with varied sociocultural backgrounds	3.47	0.89	0.06
Our employees have acceptable working conditions	2.77	1.00	0.07
Our hotel respects employee rights	2.82	0.98	0.07
Ethical Dimension			
We are recognised as a trustworthy company	2.71	0.98	0.07
A confidential procedure is in place for an employee to report any misconduct at work (such as stealing or sexual harassment)	2.95	1.04	0.07
Members of our hotel follow professional standards	2.98	1	0.07
Unethical practices are not accepted in this hotel	2.82	0.96	0.07
Fairness toward coworkers and business partners is an integral part of our employee evaluation process	3.4	1.03	0.07
Our business has a comprehensive code of conduct	3.08	0.97	0.07

Source: Field data, 2019

Reading from table 7.2 C, the statements measuring hotel performance (marketing performance, and financial performance). Similar to the presentations of findings for table 7.2 A and 7.2 B, this section provides same for table 7.2 C. The individual statements for measuring hotel performance which is broken down into marketing and financial performance. Also, the means, standard deviations, and standard error of each statement is presented to show how respondents showed their agreements or disagreements.

The marketing performance had pleasing of clientele as the highest mean scorer of 3.34 and delivering superior services as the lowest mean score of 2.4. The highest mean score for financial performance was 3.45 for a statement on having a better return on investment and a lower mean score of 3.06 for increasing profits.

Table 7.2 C: Descriptive Statistics of Hotel Performance measurement items

Measurement items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Marketing Performance			
Our clients are delighted with what we do for them	3.34	0.88	0.06
We receive new customers in our hotel regularly	2.71	0.99	0.07
Our hotel has loyal customers	2.65	0.99	0.07
Our hotel delivers superior services	2.4	1.02	0.07
Our hotel has happy employees	3.31	0.97	0.07
Financial Performance			
Our hotel has an increasing sales volume	3.09	0.94	0.07
Our hotel has increasing profits	3.06	0.96	0.07
Our hotel has a better return on investment	3.45	0.87	0.06
Our hotels have a better cash flow	3.37	0.84	0.06

Source: Field data, 2019

Reading from table 7.2 D and 7.2 E, competitive advantage, sustainable technology, market turbulence, and competitor intensity are presented. The means, standard deviations, and standard error of each statement is presented to show how respondents showed their agreements or disagreements. Similar to the presentations of findings for table 7.2 A, 7.2 B, 7.2 C, this section provides same for table 7.2 B. The individual statements for measuring financial performance, competitive advantage, sustainable technology, market turbulence, and competitor intensity are stated.

The competitive advantage also recorded a higher mean score of 3.3 for hotels having a lucrative market and a lower mean score of 2.9 for a hotel, increasing their service quality via sustainable practices. The competitor intensity had known competitive landscape as the highest mean score of 3.2 and intense competitive landscape having a lower mean score of 3.09. Market turbulence also had a change in preference as the highest mean scorer with 3.45 and a change in marketing strategy as the lowest mean scorer with 3.12. Finally, sustainable technology had research into sustainable technologies as the highest mean of 3.22 and responding to changes in sustainable technologies as the lowest mean of 3.06.

Table 7.2 D: Descriptive Statistics of Competitive Advantage and Competitive Intensity measurement items

Measurement items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Competitive Advantage</b>			
Our hotel has realised cost savings by improving sustainability practices	3.29	0.866	0.06
Our investment in sustainability-friendly technologies and processes may result in us being a market leader	3.11	0.834	0.058
Our hotel enters lucrative markets by adopting sustainability strategies	3.3	1.017	0.07
Our hotel may increase service quality by making its current processes more sustainable	2.99	1.024	0.071
Our hotel investments in sustainable strategies result in becoming a market leader	3.24	0.913	0.063
<b>Competitive Intensity</b>			
Competition in our hotel industry is intense	3.09	0.895	0.062
Our hotel industry is noted for competition among hotels	3.22	0.858	0.059
There is substantial competition among hotels	3.1	0.888	0.061

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 7.2 E: Descriptive Statistics of Market Turbulence and Sustainable Technology measurement items

Measurement items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Market Turbulence			
Customers' product preferences change quite bit overtime	3.45	0.933	0.064
Our customers tend to look for a new product all of the time	3.44	0.917	0.063
We cater to many of the same customers that we used to in the past	3.43	0.89	0.061
Marketing strategies change very frequently	3.12	0.801	0.055
Customer preferences in the price of the service offered change very frequently	3.4	0.989	0.068
Sustainable Technology			
Our hotel uses sustainable technologies	3.11	0.95	0.066
Our hotel researches on sustainable technologies	3.22	0.912	0.063
Our hotel responds quickly to technological changes	3.06	0.875	0.06
Our hotel lags in responding to new technological changes	3.19	0.843	0.058

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 7.3 provides the final descriptive analysis for the study. As tables 7.2 A to 7.2 E provided for the individual statements measuring the constructs, Table 7.3 provides for the descriptive analyses for the study constructs. The means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis are provided for each study construct.

The market turbulence constructs recorded the highest mean score of 3.37. The market turbulence measures the intensity of customer need or want changes in a market. Thus, this study in the hotel sector also examines the level customer sophistication in the Ghanaian hotel sector. Market turbulence describes the increasing sophistication of customers in their needs and wants as well as technological improvements in the hotel sector. Therefore, a mean score of 3.4 out of 5 (likert scale) suggest that hotel sector has some moderate to high turbulence. As such hotels must strategies in order to survive in this market.

The environmental dimension recorded a mean of 3.31 and was the second highest mean. This observation means that hotels in Ghana were aware of their impact on the environment and were making attempts are reducing or stopping their impact on the environment. This observation was arrived at based on the mean score of 3.3 out of 5 (likert scale).

The financial performance recorded a mean of 3.24. This observation suggest that hotels in Ghana were profitable or broke even. This is because of their view of moderate to high financial performance (3.2 out of 5, on a five point likert scale). Similarly, the economic dimension recorded a mean of 3.21. Both measures are related to the profitability hotels in

Ghana. They both have a 3.2 mean. Therefore hotels in Ghana are either breaking even or profitable.

The competitive advantage recorded a mean of 3.18. This observation suggest that hotels in Ghana possess some competitive advantages. A mean score of 3.1 out 5 suggest that hotels have a moderate to high competitive advantages. On the use of sustainable technology, a mean of 3.15 out 5 suggest that hotels in Ghana were deploying some technologies that were sustainable. The competitor intensity recorded a mean of 3.14. This measured the level of competition in the Ghanaian hotel sector. A mean score of 3.2 suggest a moderate to high competition in the market. The social dimension recorded a mean of 3.12. Generally, this can be described as the social responsibility of hotels. As such, Ghanaian hotels indicated they were good citizens.

Although very close to a mean of 3, ethical dimension of sustainability market orientation and the marketing performance of hotel performance were the least respectively. The ethical dimension recorded a mean of 2.99. This observation mean that Ghanaian hotels were mindful of ethical practices and may be practicing some ethics. This conclusion is based on the low mean score. Marketing performance on the other hand recorded a mean of 2.88, suggesting that hotels in Ghana may not be doing very well in marketing activities.

Reading from table 7.3, the standard error of mean provide insights on how accurate the estimated means above are. The standard error of means for constructs were within 0.04 to 0.05. The higher a sample size, the more likely the standard error of mean may be accurate (Hair et al., 2006).

Again the standard deviation of the means are presented on table 7.3. A standard deviation is how a number is spread out (Hair et al., 2006). The standard deviation is used to examine how close the values in the dataset are to the estimated means. The standard deviations of the means of constructs on table 7.3 ranges from 0.53 to 0.77. This observation reflects the variability in hotels. Thus, each hotel has different ways of handling the concepts under investigations.

Aforementioned to performing any multivariate analysis, it is crucial to check the assumption of data normality (Hair et al., 2006). In checking whether the data are normally distributed can be indicated by measures of distributions, such as skewness and kurtosis (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, skewness and kurtosis were used to assess the normality. Generally, skewness measures the symmetry of a distribution; while kurtosis is a measure of 'peakedness' or the 'flatness' of the distribution when comparing with normal distribution (Hair et al., 2006).

The assumption of data normality was established using skewness values. The skewness values from Table 7.3 fall within the range of -1 to + 1 (Hair et al., 2006). Also, the kurtosis values on Table 7.3 are within -3 to +3 (Hair et al., 1998). Both skew and kurtosis values can be positive or negative. A positive skew value reveals that the data tails off to the right while a negative skew value indicates that the data tails off to the left. A positive kurtosis distribution shows a flatter and more rounded peak with shorter and thinner tails.

Table 7.3 Descriptive Statistics of Construct, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Normality

Details	ECD	END	SD	ETHD	MP	FP	CA	CI	MT	ST
Mean	3.21	3.31	3.12	2.99	2.88	3.24	3.18	3.14	3.37	3.15
Std. Error of Mean	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Std. Deviation	0.53	0.57	0.61	0.67	0.62	0.60	0.67	0.77	0.70	0.72
Skewness	0.22	-0.01	-0.16	0.09	0.11	-0.29	-0.46	-0.29	-0.58	-0.45
Std. Error of Skewness	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17
Kurtosis	0.37	-0.02	0.02	-0.39	0.50	0.31	0.55	0.09	0.49	0.23
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33
Minimum	1.83	1.50	1.00	1.33	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.83	4.83	4.83	4.67	4.80	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Economic Dimension (ECD); Environmental Dimension (END); Social Dimension (SD); Ethical Dimension (EthD); Marketing Performance (MP); Financial Performance (FP); Competitive Advantage (CA); Competitive Intensity (CI); Market Turbulence (MT); Technology (T)

Source: Field data, 2019

### 7.3 Assessment of measurement model

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.2.8 was used for the data analysis. However, before testing the hypothesis proposed in this thesis, the validity and reliability of the measurement items and construct were first assessed based on the suggestion of Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010). First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to determine how well the measurement items loaded on their various constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Since the CFA seen as a statistical method for empirically identifying the structure and underlying measured or factored entities (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, the CFA was used to confirm or reject measurement items based on its loading on the construct. Therefore, based on the suggestion of Hair et al. (2014), all the items with outer loadings less than 0.7 were dropped.

The “recursive model” (Holmes-Smith, 2011: p. 4.14) comprising 41 observed variables (i.e., measurement items) was tested using  $n = 187$ . From the 41, 32 items loaded while nine items did not load well on their respective constructs. As a result, the following were deleted: CA1 and CA2 for competitive advantage; END1, END2 and END3 for environmental dimension; ETH1 for ethical dimension, FP1 and FP2 for financial performance; and MP1 for marketing performance. All the retained items had loadings higher than 0.7, as shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Factor Loadings

	Competitive Advantage	Competitive Intensity	Economic Dimension	Environmental Dimension	Ethical Dimension	Financial Performance	Market Turbulence	Marketing Performance	Social Dimension	Sustainable Technology
CA3	0.808									
CA4	0.887									
CA5	0.861									
CI1		0.889								
CI2		0.879								
CI3		0.819								
ECD1			0.794							
ECD2			0.848							
ECD3			0.841							
END4				0.785						
END5				0.830						
END6				0.821						
ETHD2					0.872					
ETHD3					0.880					
ETHD4					0.742					
FP3						0.863				
FP4						0.895				
MP2								0.764		
MP3								0.863		
MP4								0.777		
MT1							0.872			
MT2							0.905			
MT3							0.853			
MT5							0.788			
SOD1									0.702	
SOD2									0.786	
SOD3									0.805	
SOD4									0.713	
ST1										0.863
ST2										0.869
ST3										0.736
ST4										0.769

Note: Economic Dimension (ECD); Environmental Dimension (END); Social Dimension (SD); Ethical Dimension (EthD); Marketing Performance (MP);

Financial Performance (FP); Competitive Advantage (CA); Competitive Intensity (CI); Market Turbulence (MT); Sustainable Technology (ST)

Source: Field data, 2019

### 7.3.1 Assessment of constructs

Computation of the constructs was based on the measurement items that loaded well during the CFA process. Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) indicate some criteria for assessing construct validity and reliability using PLS-SEM, namely: (i) convergent validity; (ii) construct reliability and (iii) discriminant validity. As a result, the constructs were assessed based on convergent validity, reliability, and Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity criterion, which are evaluated concerning the model in this section.

Convergent validity represents “a measure of the magnitude of the direct structural relationship between an observed variable and the latent construct” (Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991, p. 283). Convergent validity was assessed based on factor loadings and by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 7.5, all measurement items loadings are significant on their construct, providing support for convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE is used to evaluate the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level due to measurement error.

Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability were used to assess the construct reliability analysis. According to Hair, et al. (2010, p. 634), reliability refers to “the degree to which a set of indicators of a latent construct is internally consistent in their measurements”. Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991, p. 289) support the assertion indicating that reliability reflects “the degree to which a measure is free from random error”.

Hence, high-reliability scores are an indication that the constructs are relevant and “all seem to measure the same thing” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 634). The constructs – competitive advantage, competitive intensity, economic orientation, environmental orientation, ethical orientation, financial performance, market turbulence, marketing performance, social orientation, and technology – all had values that were above the acceptable levels for Cronbach’s alphas  $> .70$ ; Average Variance Extracted  $> .50$ ; and composite reliability  $> .70$  as recommended by scholars for first-order construct (Hair et al., 2011). See details in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competitive Advantage	0.812	0.889	0.727
Competitive Intensity	0.828	0.897	0.745
Economic Dimension	0.771	0.867	0.685
Environmental Dimension	0.742	0.853	0.660
Ethical Dimension	0.781	0.872	0.695
Financial Performance	0.707	0.872	0.773
Market Turbulence	0.877	0.916	0.732
Marketing Performance	0.723	0.844	0.644
Social Dimension	0.743	0.839	0.566
Sustainable Technology	0.832	0.885	0.658

Source: Field Data, 2019

Discriminant validity examines the extent to which a construct is different from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Discriminant validity was assessed based on Fornell-Larcker Criterion. According to Hair et al. (2010, p. 710) the reasoning behind the Fornell-Larcker test is based on the view that “a latent construct should explain more of the variance in its item measures than it shares with another construct”.

The figures on the diagonal are the square root of AVE between the constructs and their measures while the off-diagonal elements are correlations between constructs. For discriminant validity, diagonal figures (AVE) should be higher than off-diagonal elements in the same row and column (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 7.6 Inter-Construct Correlations and Squares of AVEs

Details	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Competitive Advantage	0.853									
2 Competitive Intensity	0.504	0.863								
3 Economic Dimension	-0.037	0.046	0.828							
4 Environmental Dimension	0.073	0.08	0.191	0.812						
5 Ethical Dimension	-0.079	0.044	0.224	0.306	0.834					
6 Financial Performance	0.473	0.367	-0.101	0.092	0.000	0.879				
7 Market Turbulence	0.684	0.531	-0.047	0.174	0.000	0.645	0.856			
8 Marketing Performance	0.208	0.287	0.121	0.322	0.332	0.040	0.159	0.802		
9 Social Dimension	0.101	0.121	0.216	0.558	0.386	0.201	0.124	0.263	0.753	
10 Sustainable Technology	0.841	0.722	-0.040	0.066	-0.106	0.429	0.643	0.210	0.049	0.811

Source: Field data, 2019

In table 7.6, the diagonal numbers are average variance explained by each construct (AVE). While the off diagonal numbers are the inter-correlation between the constructs. Again, the positive correlations between competitive intensity on one hand and each of financial performance (0.367) and market performance (0.287) gives an indication to the level of competition in the market. More so, the observations is suggestive that the marketing and financial performance of hotels are affected by the level of competition in the sector.

#### 7.4 Assessment of Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated based on the sign, magnitude, and significance of path coefficients of each hypothesised path. To determine the significance of each estimated path, the bootstrapping procedure was used with 5000 re-samples drawn with replacement. The explanatory power of the structural model was assessed by its ability to predict endogenous constructs using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Results for the structural model assessment are presented in both tables 7.7 and 7.8 A and 7.8 B.

The quality of the inner model was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and path coefficients. The rule of thumb is that  $R^2$  values should be substantial (0.67), moderate (0.33), and weak (0.19) see table 6 (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 7.7: R-square

	Original	Sample	Standard	T Statistics	P Values
	Sample	Mean	Deviation	( O/STDEV )	
	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)		
Competitive Advantage	0.767	0.776	0.053	14.455	0.000
Financial Performance	0.155	0.179	0.048	3.216	0.001
Marketing Performance	0.230	0.259	0.054	4.24	0.000
Sustainable Technology	0.002	0.007	0.01	0.171	0.865

Source: Field data, 2019

Hypothesis 1 states that economic orientation, social orientation, environmental orientation, and ethics orientation are lower-order dimensions of sustainability market orientation. Using 5,000 bootstrap resamples, we found that social dimension ( $g = 0.817$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), economic dimension ( $g = 0.551$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), environmental dimension ( $g = 0.802$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and ethical dimension ( $g = 0.742$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) exhibited significant reflective path coefficients. These results confirmed the reflective index structure of the sustainability market orientation as their higher-order construct. Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported. The results of this study indicate higher levels of sustainability market orientation result in organisational basic attitude, beliefs, or feelings towards social, economic, environmental, and ethical responsibilities.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted that sustainability market orientation is positively associated with hotel performance (hotel marketing and financial performance) and competitive advantage. The regressed path coefficient results also showed a positive and significant relationship between the sustainability market orientation construct on financial performance ( $b = 0.36$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 4.808$ ); marketing performance ( $b = 0.406$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 7.462$ ); and competitive advantage ( $b = 0.041$ ;  $p < 0.049$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1.975$ ). Thus, hypothesis H2a, H2b, and H3 is supported. Firms employing sustainability market orientation as a strategy would improve their hotel performance and competitive advantage.

Hypothesis 4a and 4b on table 7.8B proposed that the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance; and sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is mediated by sustainable technology respectively. Sustainable Technology is found to significantly positively affect the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage ( $b = 0.841$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 9.315$ ), but is not significant for the relationship between sustainability market orientation and market performance. Thus, hypothesis 4b is supported, but not and 4a.

Table 7.8A Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Controls					
Competitive Intensity -> Competitive Advantage	-0.256	-0.266	0.078	3.273	0.001
Competitive Intensity -> Financial Performance	-0.121	-0.115	0.1	1.205	0.229
Competitive Intensity -> Marketing Performance	0.173	0.176	0.079	2.181	0.03
Employee size -> Competitive Advantage	0.057	0.054	0.031	1.8	0.073
Employee size -> Financial Performance	0.003	0.002	0.065	0.051	0.959
Employee size -> Marketing Performance	0.105	0.1	0.065	1.607	0.109
Hotel rating -> Competitive Advantage	-0.048	-0.044	0.067	0.714	0.476
Hotel rating -> Financial Performance	-0.039	-0.04	0.067	0.582	0.561
Hotel rating -> Marketing Performance	-0.028	-0.025	0.079	0.357	0.721
Market Turbulence -> Competitive Advantage	0.262	0.26	0.042	6.226	0.000
Market Turbulence -> Financial Performance	0.066	0.06	0.09	0.73	0.466
Market Turbulence -> Marketing Performance	0.079	0.073	0.078	1.017	0.309
Low Order Construct Examination					
Social Orientation -> SMO	0.817	0.819	0.026	31.568	0.000
Economic Orientation -> SMO	0.551	0.547	0.065	8.441	0.000
Environmental Orientation -> SMO	0.802	0.8	0.03	26.718	0.000
Ethical Orientation -> SMO	0.742	0.742	0.036	20.784	0.000

SMO – Sustainability Market Orientation

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 7.8 B Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
<b>Direct Relationship</b>					
SMO -> Financial Performance	0.36	0.366	0.075	4.808	0.000
SMO -> Marketing Performance	0.406	0.409	0.054	7.462	0.000
SMO -> Competitive Advantage	0.055	0.052	0.028	1.975	0.049
<b>Indirect Relationship</b>					
SMO -> Sustainable Technology -> Competitive Advantage	0.841	0.855	0.09	9.315	0.000
SMO -> Sustainable Technology -> Financial Performance	0.172	0.166	0.114	1.50	0.133
SMO -> Sustainable Technology -> Marketing Performance	-0.006	-0.002	0.101	0.056	0.955

SMO – Sustainability Market Orientation

Source: Field data, 2019

Unlike the covariance-based (CB) SEM such as AMOS, LISREL and Mplus, the objective of the PLS-SEM is prediction-oriented, hence the focus measures such as R squares, effect sizes and cross validated redundancy used to evaluate the PLS models rather than fit. Hence Ranjan and Read (2016, p. 302) indicated that “there is no overall fit index in PLS path modelling”. Accordingly, the thesis focused on measures show the model’s predictive capabilities (see Henseler et al., 2014). Therefore, in this thesis and its tables, measures like  $X^2$ , GFI, RMSEA, CFI, NFI are reported.

Table 7.9 A: Summary of Study findings

Hypotheses	Findings	Decision
H1: Economic, Social, Environmental, and Ethical are lower order dimensions of Sustainability Market orientation	Social dimension ( $g = 0.817$ ; $p < 0.001$ ), economic dimension ( $g = 0.551$ ; $p < 0.001$ ), environmental dimension ( $g = 0.802$ ; $p < 0.001$ ), and ethical dimension ( $g = 0.742$ ; $p < 0.001$ ) exhibited significant reflective path coefficients. These results confirmed the reflective index structure of the sustainability market orientation as their higher order construct.	hypothesis 1 was supported
H2a: There is a relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel marketing performance.	A positive and significant relationship between the sustainability market orientation construct and marketing performance exists ( $b = 0.406$ ; $p < 0.001$ , $t\text{-value} = 7.462$ ).	Hypothesis H2a is supported.
H2b: There is a relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel financial performance.	A positive and significant relationship between the sustainability market orientation construct on financial performance exists ( $b = 0.36$ ; $p < 0.001$ , $t\text{-value} = 4.808$ ).	Hypothesis H2b is supported.

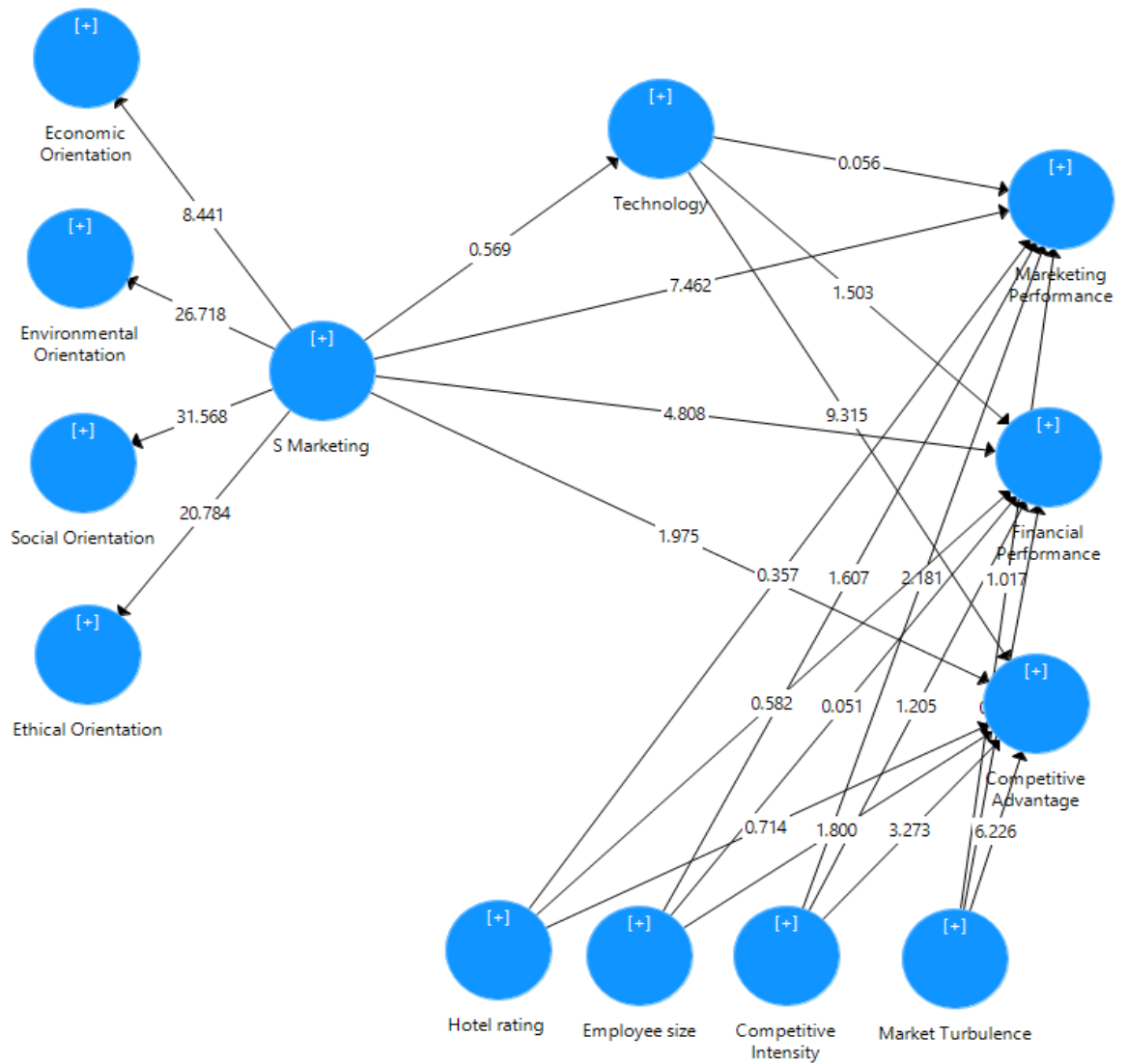
Source: Field data, 2019

Table 7.9 B: Summary of Study findings

Hypotheses	Findings	Decision
H3: There is a relationship between sustainability market orientation (SMO) and hotel competitive advantage.	A positive and significant relationship between the sustainability market orientation construct on competitive advantage exists ( $b = 0.041$ ; $p < 0.049$ , $t\text{-value} = 1.975$ ).	Hypothesis H3 is supported.
H4a: The relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance is mediated by sustainable technology.	Sustainable Technology is found to have no significant effect on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and market performance.	Hypothesis 4a is not supported.
H4b: The relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is mediated by sustainable technology.	Sustainable Technology is found to have a significantly positive affect on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage ( $b = 0.841$ ; $p < 0.001$ , $t\text{-value} = 9.315$ ).	Hypothesis 4b is supported.

Source: Field data, 2019

Figure 7.1 Structural Equation Model



Source: Field data, 2019

Figure 7.1 provides the picture from the PLS software showing the model of relationships and t values. The Orientation in ethics, social, environment, and economic was subsequently changed to dimensions. S marketing refers to sustainability market orientation. Technology refers to sustainable technology.

## 7.5 Chapter Summary

Data from one hundred and eighty-seven star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra Region (Accra and Tema) were used for this analysis. Under this chapter, the profile of respondents and characteristics of hotels who participated in this research was presented. Also, the descriptive statistics of the study data was provided using the means, standard deviations, standard error skewness, and kurtosis. The descriptive analysis was done for both statements and constructs. The chapter also provides an assessment of the measurement model and the structural model.

The study found that the majority of the study respondents were males, working for the marketing department, and worked for their hotels for a period of one to five years. Also, the majority of the participating hotels had operated for one to five years, had a staff strength of twenty-five to fifty employees, and were one-star rated.

The study found support for the introduction of ethics as a dimension to the sustainability market orientation. The existing three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environment) were also confirmed. The hypothesis relationships of sustainability market orientation influencing hotel performance via marketing performance or financial performance were also ascertained and confirmed.

Hotel rating, hotel size (employee size), competitor intensity, and market turbulence were found as control variables for the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance relationship as well as the sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage.

More so, sustainability market orientation influenced hotel marketing performance and financial performance (hotel performance). Similarly, the sustainability market orientation affects competitive advantage.

The deployment of sustainable technology was found to mediate the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage. However, sustainability market orientation and hotel performance were not mediated by sustainable technology.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

#### 8.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter eight presents a discussion of the study's findings. The chapter is organised according to the study objectives. The chapter discusses the dimensionality of sustainability market orientation; the relationship assessment of sustainability market orientation and hotel performance; an examination of the sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage; the mediation effect of sustainable technologies on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance was ascertained; and finally, the mediation effect of sustainable technologies on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage.

#### 8.1 Sustainability Market Orientation's Dimensions of star-rated hotels in Ghana

The study found support for economic, social, ethical, and environmental issues as the dimensions of sustainability market orientation. This observation of the study's findings are similar to the proposals of Lim (2016) as he avers that issues of ethics should be incorporated into sustainability marketing dimensions. More so, Mahmoud et al. (2017) equally argues for the inclusion of ethical problems into corporate social responsibilities. The other three dimensions (economic, social, and environmental concerns) have also been thoroughly supported by authors such as Mitchell et al. (2010) whose conceptualisation of sustainable marketing includes these three dimensions.

According to Mahmoud (2016), these dimensions are taken from sustainable development management literature. Although several empirical investigations are using these dimensions to examine sustainability practices in general, this approach seems to suffer from weakness as it fails to handle moral (ethical) issues. In line with Lim (2016) and Mahmoud et al. (2017), this study introduced a fourth dimension known as ethics. Surprisingly, ethics has been argued to be related to sustainability over three decades ago (Shearman, 1990).

To Peterson (2009), ethics delineates what is good or bad and right or wrong. More so, ethical stands affect stakeholder decisions on who to associate with and even buying decisions (Irving et al., 2002). Similarly, firms use ethics in their determination to be fair and procedurally appropriate (Thorne et al., 2011). This study found that ethics, just like the other three (3) dimensions, are significant dimensions of sustainability market orientation. This observation suggests that ethics should be considered as a contributor to achieving sustainability practices. Interestingly, a firm's decision to implement new technologies requires some ethical reflections beyond the economic, social, and environmental considerations (Biedenweg, Monroe, & Oxarart, 2013).

Ethics is an essential mindset, attitude, and belief of a firm (Ahmed et al., 1998). Ethics shapes hotels' behaviours and values (Chang, 2011). Furthermore, ethical principles assist firms and their managers' brawl with moral obligations to their stakeholders (Kibert et al., 2011). Therefore, ethical issues are indeed a dimension of sustainability market orientation.

The economic dimension of sustainability describes the ability of firms to generate an adequate amount of cash flow to guarantee liquidity and long-term returns (Golini, Longoni, & Cagliano, 2014; Steurer & Konrad, 2009; Vachon & Mao, 2008). The economic dimension provides for all stakeholders of a firm. Thus in a manner that stimulates support for current and future generations as well. Therefore, the creation of a strategic market advantage achieved through cost, quality, or time may sustain competitive advantage over the long term (Wilson, 2015). Finally, cutthroat competition and the notion of creative destruction are some concerns under the economic dimension (Foster & Kaplan, 2001). Therefore, economic issues are indeed a dimension of sustainability market orientation.

The social dimension, on the other hand, describes the significance of conforming to the social norms of host communities (Varman & Costa, 2008). Hotels are proactively managing social factors to attain sustainability. Centring on the micromarketing perspective alone to the neglect of macro marketing may restrain hotels from achieving sustainability (Hunt & Burnet, 1982). The social dimension also includes hotels actively supporting the creation and preservation of capabilities and skills of stakeholders (McKenzie, 2004) as well as supporting the health and promoting democratic and equal treatments for internal and external stakeholders (McKenzie, 2004). Therefore, social issues are indeed a dimension of sustainability market orientation.

Another dimension of sustainability market orientation is the environmental dimension. The ecological aspect comprises of the emotions, knowledge, willingness, and behaviour on pollution-related issues (Ling-Yee, 1997). A hotel's environment is dependent on stakeholders, primarily target customers (Ling-Yee, 1997). This is because consumers who are environmentally cognizant may engage in environmental information searches which influence their buying behaviour and selection of ecologically sensitive hotels (Hoffart, Rieskamp, & Dutilh, 2019).

When hotels recognise the importance of operating sustainably, hotels may engage within the realm of environmental practices (Cummins et al., 2014). The ecological dimension is achieved when hotels use resources without compromising future usage (Vachon & Mao, 2008). Similarly, such hotels have natural regeneration and generate limited emissions and waste (Yusof, & Jamaludin, 2013; Kirk, 2010). Therefore, environmental issues are indeed a dimension of sustainability market orientation.

This study avers that ethics, social, economic, and ecological dimensions are lower order constructs for sustainability market orientation. The section has provide individual support for each dimensions and also a composite support for them. The works of Lim (2016) and Nkamnebe (2011) suggested that the four dimensions found in this study may have relationship to sustainability practice. While scholars like Mitchell et al. (2010) and Mahmoud (2016) advanced three (3) out of four (4) dimensions to be related to sustainable market orientation.

## 8.2 The Relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and Hotel Performance

This study found that sustainability market orientation influences hotel performance, specifically marketing and financial performance. This finding is similar to the results of Mahmoud (2016). He found that banks that implemented a sustainable market orientation achieved sustainable, balanced performance. Again, these studies' findings provide empirical justifications to the propositions of Mitchell (2012) who suggested that firms that adopt sustainable market orientation might improve their firm performance.

Again, the sustainability market orientation is a strategic orientation (Mahmoud, 2016). In the existing literature on strategic direction, their consequences are argued for (cf. Hinson et al., 2017; Mahmoud, 2016). As already espoused, sustainability market orientation focuses on an organisation's strategic posture reflecting economic, social, environmental, and ethical behaviours (Mitchell et al., 2010; Voss & Voss, 2000). These behaviours have been examined individually to influence firm performance. For instance, environmental marketing or ethical marketing have been advanced to improve firm performance. Hotels may practice sustainability marketing because they see a market opportunity, or are merely complying with the law, or they see it as the right thing to do (Baker & Sinkula, 2005).

Accordingly, sustainability market orientation should encompass hotel policies and practices to take advantage of stakeholder interest (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2014). Similarly, ethical hotels are willing to follow standards of regulators, for example, pollution reduction or waste management (Menguc et al., 2010).

Such hotels have a low possibility to pay for the punishment caused by disobeying public standards (Menguc et al., 2010). Therefore, hotels should efficiently serve clients to save energy and labour and offset the costs of environmentally friendly behaviour (Miles & Covin, 2000). Sustainability market orientation might assist hotels in developing a collective consciousness of the relevance of environmentally, socially, and ethically responsible operations (Banerjee, Iyer, & Kashyap, 2003). Moreover, it could stimulate hotels to find ways to reduce the environmental impacts of their services (Banerjee et al., 2003). Consequently, hotels are compelled to practice sustainability marketing to better serve their target markets.

Firms that practice sustainability market orientation through socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible practices are more likely to generate additional income (Mitchell et al., 2010; Dean & McMullen, 2007; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). Practices such as pollution prevention can allow a hotel to save control costs, input and energy consumption, and even reuse materials through recycling (Molina-Azorín, Claver-Cortés, Pereira-Moliner, & Tarí, 2009). Similarly, implementing ISO 14001 improves financial results by reducing costs, improving quality, or improving reputation (Melnyk, Sroufe, & Calantone, 2002). Accordingly, sustainability market orientation was advanced as a strategic direction that influenced firm performance.

### 8.3 The Relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and Competitive Advantage

The study found support for the relationship between sustainability market orientation and achieving competitive advantage for hotels. Although this finding is quite novel in the sustainability marketing literature, there is some evidence in the strategic orientation literature suggesting that competitive advantage could be achieved via the implementation of strategic orientations (Danso, Adomako, Amankwah-Amoah, Owusu-Agyei, & Konadu, 2019; Zhou, Brown, & Dev, 2009).

A hotel's superiority over competitors concerning sustainability marketing practices enables the hotel to benefit from increased customer selection, satisfaction, and retention (Mahmoud, 2016; Chen, 2015). This may be achieved by communicating sustainability benefits and possible savings to customers (Sharma, Iyer, Mehrotra, & Krishnan, 2010). Consumers may also show a preference for a sustainability-friendly hotel (Banerjee et al., 2003). This client preference may enable hotels to charge higher prices, generate more cash, and increase sales (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007). The practice of sustainability market orientation (social, economic, ethical and environmental practices) generates income and operational efficiency (Dean & McMullen, 2007). The hypothesised relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is therefore justified.

#### 8.4 The Mediating Effect of Sustainable Technology on the Relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and Hotel Performance

The study failed to find support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance (both marketing and financial performance) in Ghana. Although, sustainable technologies take account of altering production and consumption configurations to reduce impact (Lim, 2016). The hotels in this study acknowledge use of sustainable technologies, however, this study failed to find the mediating effect of same on sustainability market orientation and hotel performance.

The adoption of sustainable technologies and their impact is currently ongoing (Mejia, 2019). This study's findings further depend on the need for studies examining sustainability market orientation and sustainable technology relationships (Lim, 2016). Again, such results of the role of technology are not different, as Lim (2016) noted that technology might not deliver the desired outcome. Hotel customers may be willing to pay higher prices for sustainable technologies as well as hotels recognising the benefits sustainability marketing practices (Arora & Gangopadhyay, 1995). Hotel sustainability practices include solid waste management, energy savings, water conservation, air pollution control, and product recycling and reuse (Dief & Font, 2010).

This section highlights some contributions that have investigated sustainable technologies and hotel performance. Scholars like Mejia (2019), found a positive and significant impact of technology on firm performance (Mejia, 2019). Therefore, hotels should continue to invest in sustainable technologies.

#### 8.5 The Mediating Effect of Sustainable Technology on the Relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and Competitive Advantage

The study found support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage. Similar to the arguments made earlier in section 8.5, this section provides some insights on sustainable technology and competitive advantage. Sustainable technologies account for altering production processes (Lim, 2016). This study's finding is similar to that of existing studies. Sustainable technology leads to the achievement of competitive advantage (Bilgihan et al., 2011; Piccoli, 2008). Accordingly, the study findings are supported by these previous observations.

## 8.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter provides insights into the study's findings by making attempts at explaining the study's results. More so, the present findings are compared with existing studies to show similarities and discrepancies. Where necessary an explanation is given for the differences and similarities of the study's findings from the existing literature. The research's aim and objectives presented in the chapter one of this thesis was the basis for the chronological arrangement of the discussion chapter. Similarly, the conceptual framework and hypotheses presented in chapter five (theoretical and conceptual framework chapter) informed this chapter's arrangement. With the exception of the hypothesis of the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance (marketing and financial performance), all other predictions of the study were supported, as provided for under table 7.9 of chapter seven of this thesis.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION, AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

#### 9.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter nine is the final chapter of this thesis. As a result, the chapter provides a snapshot of the entire thesis. Moreover, it provides a conclusion for the study as well as recommendations, and managerial and theoretical contributions to the study. Finally, a direction for future studies is presented.

#### 9.1 Summary of the Study

Sustainability has become a megatrend and is affecting every aspect of human engagements. At the beginning of the sustainability conversation, scientist and environmentalist were championing and leading the need for individuals and corporations to be sustainable or practice sustainability. The concept of sustainability is now accepted in many disciplines, including management and marketing. Consequently, this study examines the concept of sustainability marketing and sustainability market orientation. These concepts are examined in hotels operating in a developing economy (Ghana).

Currently, most existing literature examine these concepts in developed economies like Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. There are as well few studies from developing economies. Also, most of the existing studies on sustainability practices of firms typically concentrate on the manufacturing and extractive industries with little focus on the services industry.

The services sector is gradually dominating all sectors in its contribution to the gross domestic product of nations and also becoming the highest employer in most economies. Indeed, some existing studies have found that the activities of service firms or industries affect the environment and societies. For example, the hotel sector transforms the lives of people living within the community in which they operate in various ways. More specifically, the waste generated by hotels is a concern of many sustainability commentators.

The use of natural resources is a concern for many. For example, how much hotels use water and energy. These observations are found in developed countries. However, developing country perspectives are nascent. Accordingly, this study examines the sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels in Ghana. Moreover, this study ascertains the mediation role of sustainable technologies on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance. Furthermore, the study also verifies the mediation role of sustainable technologies on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage.

The sustainable development literature was reviewed in chapter two of this thesis to understand the existing frameworks, approaches, and paradigms of sustainability. Within the chapter, the technological optimism and pessimism distinction was discussed to demonstrate the differences in understanding and defining sustainability. Chapter two also explored the global north and south perceptivities on sustainability. These sustainability frameworks ended with a review of the Triple Bottom line. Accordingly, chapter two discussed all these frameworks stating the varied views on what and how sustainability should be defined or understood.

Chapter two also discussed the following sustainability approaches, economical, strong, and weak. Finally, chapter two highlighted and discussed the dominant social paradigm and the new environmental paradigm as the prevailing paradigms in sustainability research.

Chapter two also presented the literature on marketing and market orientation. Also, macro marketing literature is discussed to show its contribution to sustainability marketing. Chapter two (literature review) ended with discussing sustainability and marketing nexus. The section demonstrated the role of marketing in achieving or practising sustainability. Some empirical findings were presented to support the study gap.

Chapter three of this thesis described and argued for the concept of sustainability market orientation. A definition of sustainability market orientation was provided. The antecedents and consequences of sustainability market orientation were presented. Some previous attempts at conceptualising sustainability market orientation were produced and described to show avenues for enhancing them.

This study's conceptualisation is advanced as an enhancement to the existing conceptualisations. Ethics is incorporated with the existing three (3) dimensions (economic, social, and ecology) of sustainability market orientation.

Sustainability research is nascent in the services literature. Accordingly, chapter four (4) provides insights into the services industry as the context of this study. The chapter further discusses hotels and their sustainability practices. It also provided insights on the study country, Ghana, and the country's hotel industry and sustainability practices.

The theoretical and conceptual framework for this thesis was presented in chapter five. The chapter discussed the relevance of theory in research and highlighted some approaches that have been advanced to assist in understanding the sustainability phenomenon. This study uses the stakeholder theory and resource-based views as the theories for understanding sustainability market orientation. The organisational ecology theory was also examined.

Chapter five provided support for six (6) hypotheses. The predictions were: 1: Economic, Social, Environmental, and Ethics are lower-order dimensions of Sustainability Market orientation. 2a: There is a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel marketing performance. 2b: There is a positive and significant connection between sustainability market orientation and hotel financial performance. 3: There is a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation (SMO) and a hotel's competitive advantage. 4a: The relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance is mediated by sustainable technology. Moreover, 4b: The relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is mediated by sustainable technology.

Chapter six (6) presented the study research methodology. A positivist paradigm guided the research methodology of this study. Accordingly, the study adopted a deductive research approach and quantitative research approach to test the six (6) study hypotheses. A survey research design was utilised to examine hotel sustainability market orientation. The study population was all-star-rated hotels in the Greater Accra region (Accra and Tema). A total of two hundred and forty-three (243) star rated hotels operate in the Greater Accra region. However, only one hundred eighty-seven (187) star rated hotels were used for further analysis. The study used a structural equation modelling technique (PLS technique and software).

The study found that the majority of the hotels had operated for one to five years, and hotels had between twenty-five to fifty employees. Moreover, one-star hotels dominated in this study. Thus, more hotels in Ghana are one-star rated.

The study found that economic, ethics, social, and environment are dimensions of the sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels in Ghana. Hotel performance was conceptualised to be both marketing and financial performance. The study found a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and marketing performance in the Ghanaian hotel sector. As well as a positive and significant relationship between sustainability market orientation and financial performance in the Ghanaian hotel sector. Also, the study found a significant association between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel sector.

Hotel rating, hotel size (employee size), competitor intensity, and market turbulence were found as control variables for the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance relationship as well as the sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage.

The study did not find support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance (marketing and financial performance) in the Ghanaian hotel industry. Nevertheless, the study found support for the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

Table 9.1: Summary of Major Study Findings

Study Objectives	Findings
Develop sustainability market orientation of star-rated hotels in Ghana	The dimensions of sustainability market orientation were found to be economic, social, environmental, and ethical.
Examine the relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and hotel performance	The study found a positive effect of sustainability market orientation on hotel performance (Marketing and Financial)
Examine the relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel industry	The study found a positive effect of sustainability market orientation on competitive advantage.
Analyse the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and Hotel performance (marketing and financial).	The study found no mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and hotel performance (marketing and financial).
Analyse the mediating effect of sustainable technology on the relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian Hotel sector.	The study found that sustainable technology mediates the relationship between Sustainability Market Orientation and competitive advantage in the Ghanaian hotel sector.

## 9.2 Study Conclusion

Sustainability practices are no longer a cost to hotels but an investment (cf. Mahmoud, 2016). Consequently, hotels should consider developing and implementing sustainability market orientation. In developing sustainability market orientation, hotels are encouraged to incorporate ethical concerns and issues under a new dimension. Therefore, this study advances sustainability market orientation to have four (4) dimensions comprising of economic, social, ethical, and environment.

In the Ghanaian hotel sector (developing economy perspective), these dimensions have been verified and found to be lower-order dimensions of sustainability market orientation. When hotels implement sustainability market orientation, their performance is expected to improve, primarily via marketing performance and financial performance. Similarly, hotels who aspire to achieve a competitive advantage should deploy sustainability market orientation.

Sustainability practices are often linked to improved ways of doing things (innovations), thus the deployment of sustainable technologies and innovations. This study hypothesised that hotels sustainability market orientation and hotel performance relationship is mediated by sustainable technology. Similarly, the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage is mediated by sustainable technology. However, the study found support for the mediating impact of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and competitive advantage only.

Notwithstanding these findings, hotels are encouraged to deploy sustainable technologies. As there are other publications suggesting a positive effect of competitive advantage on hotel performance, when technologies are deployed.

This study extends marketing theory and practices. A well-known and empirically tested micro marketing concept (market orientation) is reconceptualised into a macro-marketing idea. The proposed concept of sustainability market orientation leverages on stakeholder theory of the firm and resource-based view of a firm. More so, sustainability market orientation incorporates macro marketing thoughts with a micro marketing concept.

Hotels who intend to differentiate themselves from the competition by possessing competitive advantage and improved performance should consider developing and implementing sustainability market orientation. In implementing sustainability market orientation, economic, social, and environmental issues should be aligned with ethical behaviours. When these integrations are well executed, hotels will achieve marketing and financial performance (hotel performance).

### 9.3 Study Recommendation

The recommendation of this study reflects the specific findings of this study. The study develops a robust sustainability market orientation construct for hotels in Ghana. Hotels in implementing sustainability market orientation should ensure that all dimensional elements (economic, social, environmental, and ethical) are integrated adequately. Each of these dimensions has indicators or indices that hotels must pay critical attention to in the integration. Some of these are: practising corporate governance, developing environmental values, employing from varied socio-cultural backgrounds, and engaging in sustainable practices.

When harnessed strategically, a sustainability marketing mind-set would have beneficiary consequences on hotels. More so, the resources available to hotels are limited. There is, therefore, the need to maintain or improve these resources. This is where the linkages of sustainability and resource base view are available. Furthermore, hotels with managerial staff who are informed or aware of sustainability issues or concerns may lead them to adopt sustainability marketing practices.

The use of sustainable technologies can be considerably expensive. However, hotel management is encouraged not to consider or be influenced by the cost requirements of sustainable technologies but rather consider it as an investment that will yield marketing performance, financial performance, and competitive advantage.

The integration of sustainable development principles into firm activities is no longer a choice as regulators and customers are demanding sustainable practices like products development and packaging. For instance, some customers may avoid products of firms that they suspect are using children in their production. Similarly, regulators sometimes close down businesses for forensic investigations when they suspect some malfeasance in their activities. Any of these activities will affect firm performance. Consequently, firms are encouraged to implement sustainable development principles.

#### 9.4 Managerial Implications of Study Findings

Managers of hotels in their attempts to realise the full benefits of sustainability market orientation should consider engaging and identifying stakeholder needs and satisfying them profitably (Hinson et al., 2017; Blankson et al., 2013; Narver & Slater, 1990). Similarly, hotel managers should continue to engage with stakeholders to appreciate their needs and find out if there are changes in requirements. The implementation of sustainability market-orientation by hotels will provide hotels with capabilities to serve their stakeholders well by understanding stakeholder needs and concerns.

The role of market orientation in improving firm competitiveness and performance is established in the existing literature. However, market orientation is a functional strategy which does not incorporate sustainability principles and values into its planning. For instance, being market-oriented is only taking care of customer needs and gathering intelligence about competitor activities in the market place. This study findings propose a new mind-set or strategic direction for firms. Thus, sustainability market orientation is advanced as enhanced market orientation.

Furthermore, the study proposes to firms who are yet to incorporate sustainability practices into the corporate strategy to do so now. For the benefits of adopting sustainability, marketing is more than the short term cost burdens (Mahmoud, 2016). Consequently, firms that delay in adopting sustainability market orientation could suffer soon through tight regulation and customer boycott.

In today's turbulent and highly regulated markets, firms must be mindful of the requirements of all stakeholders and not a selected few. Stakeholders, like regulators and media, may influence some customers. Therefore, engaging in sustainability marketing could elevate a firm's reputation. This corporate reputation, when harnessed well, could lead to a firm achieving competitive advantage and also less regulation.

### 9.5 Theoretical Implications of Study Findings

The use of theory in sustainability marketing and sustainability market orientation research is nascent (cf. Starik & Kanashiro, 2013; Cornelly et al., 2011). There are few attempts to apply theory to sustainability market research (Hörisch et al., 2014; Cornelly et al., 2011). Consequently, this study has theoretical implications.

The use of the stakeholder theory in this study is to emphasise the importance of stakeholders and their role in the long-term profitability and growth of firms (cf. Hörisch et al., 2014; Montiel & Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). The market orientation concept focused on customers and competitors (Hinson et al., 2017; Narver & Slater, 1990). However, the stakeholder theory argues for identifying and relating with several stakeholders. Moreover, it encourages strategic management of stakeholder relationships (Hult, 2011; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The stakeholder theory avers that when firms implement sustainability market orientation, they merely recognise the importance of stakeholders.

Stakeholders, be they the natural environment or human groups and organisations, are critical to the decision to practice sustainability marketing. For instance, regulators sometimes create a conducive business landscape for the adoption and implementation of sustainability marketing. Therefore, building long-lasting relationships with stakeholders is critical to the successful implementation of sustainability market orientation (Hult, 2011). Sustainability market orientation enhances market orientation beyond the narrow focus on customers and competitors to integrate more stakeholders and the triple bottom line issues at the strategic level (Hult, 2011).

The use of the resource-based view to examine sustainability market orientation is crucial. As firm resources are limited, there is the need to maintain or improve them. When these substantial resources are kept or developed, firms will secure a competitive advantage (Cornelly et al., 2011; Barney et al., 2001). Furthermore, marketing resources should be maintained and enhanced through the implementation of the sustainability market orientation (Cornelly et al., 2011). Some of these marketing resources for clarity include relationships, product development, brand equity, promotions, pricing, and selling (Cornelly et al., 2011; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). Moreover, these study findings provide firms with empirical evidence to the fact that sustainability market orientation leads to competitive advantage (Cornelly et al., 2011; Rechenthin, 2004). Also, firm sustainability marketing practices may exist in the incorporation of ethics, social, economic, and environmental issues into the maintenance and enrichment of marketing resources to achieve competitive advantage.

Some other theories like institutional theory, systems theory, and organisational ecology could make potent contributions to the extension and enhancement of the sustainability market orientation concept (Hult, 2011; Cornelly et al., 2011). For instance, firms may enhance their ability to survive and grow by conforming to sustainability marketing practices. Similarly, firms could be selected out of the market by just implementing sustainability market orientation (Cornelly et al., 2011). These theories are very well established and known in the existing management literature. Accordingly, their use in sustainability marketing research would provide further insights.

The introduction and verification of an ethical dimension to sustainability market orientation is a contribution to the literature on sustainability marketing. The extant studies on sustainability marketing seem not have given ethics the prominence it deserved and instead concentrated on the three sustainable development dimensions of economic, social, and environment (Mitchell et al., 2010; Mahmoud, 2016). Given that, this study makes some theoretical contributions to how sustainability market orientation should be theorised. Therefore, sustainability market orientation should measure economic, social, ethical, and environmental issues.

An investigation into the services industry's sustainability practices is timely and contributes to the existing knowledge. The services industry is known to have characteristics that make it unique and challenging to manage (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). The hotel sector is in the services industry, making its complex characteristics different to manage. Therefore the findings of this study provide services firms perspectives to the existing knowledge as the current sustainability management practices are mainly on manufacturing and extractive firms.

The role of market orientation in improving firm competitiveness and performance is contested. A promising avenue for the enhancement of market-oriented strategy is an integration of market orientation, sustainable development management, corporate social responsibility, and macro marketing to form sustainability market orientation. The combination fuses market orientation into the economic dimension of sustainable development management.

#### 9.6 Contribution to Marketing Knowledge

There are calls for more conceptual papers into the marketing literature (MacInnis, 2011). This study conceptualises sustainability market orientation to include ethical, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Also, this study argues for some outcomes for sustainability market orientation to include hotel performance and competitive advantage. Thus, this study responds to the call by MacInnis (2011). Similarly, there are calls for empirical verification of existing or modified conceptualisations of sustainability marketing. For instance, Mitchell (2012) calls for empirical verification of sustainable market orientation. More so, Lim (2016) requests for confirmation of sustainability marketing. This study responds to these invitations.

There seems to a paucity of marketing research using macro-marketing thoughts (Shultz & Peterson, 2019; Layton, 2007). As already discussed, macro marketing investigates an intricate interaction among marketing, markets, and society (Shultz & Peterson, 2019). This study arguably is a macro-marketing investigation. Accordingly, this study makes some contributions from an emerging market perspective to the macro marketing literature. Besides, the concept of market orientation is a micro marketing concept. So the revision incorporates all stakeholder concerns. This revision takes an idea from micro-marketing into macro marketing. Thus, market orientation now sustainability market orientation.

The sustainability market orientation spreads out the existing literature on green marketing by incorporating ethical, social, and economic dimensions into the design and deployment of strategies on promotions, products and packaging, pricing, and distribution (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019).

More so, the deployment of sustainability market orientation has been hypothesised to have consequences to hotels that adopt them. This study provides evidence to support the existing theory. More so, this study enhances our understanding of the effects of sustainability market orientation. Competitive advantage, marketing performance, and financial performance are consequences advanced by this study as the outcomes for hotels that implement sustainability market orientation.

In the current emerging market literature on sustainability marketing and sustainability market orientation, little is known about the use of sustainable technologies or innovations. Accordingly, this study examines the mediating role of sustainable technology on the relationship between sustainability market orientation and firm performance as well as competitive advantage. Sustainable technologies mediate the sustainable market orientation and competitive advantage relationship. This study argues that firms who achieve competitive advantage may increase and improve firm performance.

This study uses a quantitative research approach to test the dimensionality of sustainability market orientation. Also, the study examined hypothesised relationships using structural equation modelling. These methodological choices used in the existing literature are varied but few.

### 9.7 Direction for future research

There are three research areas in the form of gaps and next enquiry into sustainable marketing and sustainability market orientation. The direction for future research is organised under conceptual/theoretical issues, methodological issues, and contextual issues.

The research on sustainability marketing is gaining global relevance. As such, the theorisation and conceptualisation of what is or considered to be sustainability marketing are on-going. There are different perspectives for understanding sustainability marketing. These include economic and systems approaches. There are also attempts by scholars to conceptualise sustainability marketing as corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability. This is because these scholars conceptualise these concepts using the triple bottom line or the sustainable development management framework. As such, there are still avenues for contribution in clarifying what sustainability marketing and sustainability market orientation are.

The use of theory to examine sustainability practices is not very common. Indeed, there are few attempts at using theory to explain sustainability market orientation. The prevailing theory in sustainability research is the stakeholder theory. This theory may be used mostly because it is intrinsically interwoven with justification for the need to adopt sustainability. In the same vein, single theories are usually used in the few papers to examine sustainability marketing. As a result, Connelly et al. (2011) called for the combination of theories to explain sustainability marketing.

Existing studies have used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine sustainable marketing or sustainability market orientation. However, to extract more comprehensive and exhaustive information on sustainability marketing, an appropriate option is to mix quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Thus, combined methodologies will provide further insights into the sustainable marketing practices of firms (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Many of the conceptual underpinnings of sustainability marketing has been provided for scholars (Gordon et al., 2011). However, there is a gap in the literature on the sustainable practices of Ghanaian firms in exception of Tuokuu, Kpinpuo, & Hinson, (2019); Mahmoud (2016), and Hinson et al. (2015). These contributions focused on sustainable development in mining firms, the sustainable market orientation of banks, and sustainability communications of universities. Therefore, there is an opportunity for research into hotel sustainability market orientation. It is also worthy to also acknowledge that there is some environmental-based research in hotels from Ghana (Mensah & Enu-Kwesi, 2019; Mensah, 2014).

There are numerous opportunities for research into sustainability market orientation, hotel performance, and sustainable technology. Indeed, the sustainability market orientation is a mindset about sustainability marketing practices. Scholarship on why firms like hotels may implement or do not implement sustainability may still be relevant as the concept is gaining some prominence among scholars and practitioners.

There are differences in the country of origin and industry used for sustainability marketing publications. Therefore, the findings of one country might not be potent for the development of strategies for another country. There is an opportunity to explore the concept of sustainable marketing in some other contexts to confirm the findings and also provide new insights about sustainable marketing (cf. Kotler, 2011).

#### 9.8 Chapter Summary

As a final chapter of this thesis, the chapter revisited the need for this study and highlighted the study's objectives and findings. Sustainability market orientation is advanced as a strategic orientation which has the potential of maintaining or improving firm resources. More so, the sustainability market orientation is argued to have the potential to manage stakeholder relationships. The introduction of ethics as a dimension to sustainability market orientation is a contribution to the existing conceptualisations. Managers are reminded of the benefits of sustainability market orientation, including avoidance of stiff regulations and meeting the requirements of other stakeholders. Research in the area of sustainability marketing and sustainability market orientation is ongoing, therefore, there are several ways for further research to contribute. The use of theories is that sustainability marketing is another avenue for future research.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire



University of Ghana Business School

Dear Madam / Sir,

I am a Doctor of Philosophy candidate in marketing who is conducting a research in partial fulfillment of an academic requirement. I will remain grateful if you could facilitate the study on *Sustainability market orientation and Business Performance of Star Rated Hotels in Ghana*. The objective of this study is to assess the adoption of sustainability market orientation by Star Rated Hotels in Ghana. You have been contacted due to the researcher's confidence in you being able to provide appropriate and accurate information to the achievement of the study's objectives. I, therefore, desire your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. The study is strictly guided by ethical protocols in relation to research data collection (i.e. respondents' anonymity, neutrality, and confidentiality). So kindly feel free to respond to all the items. I am available for any further clarification and you may contact me via 0246633253 or [ikabdul-hamid@st.ug.edu.gh](mailto:ikabdul-hamid@st.ug.edu.gh). More so, further concerns may be directed to the Head of Department, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Ghana Business School, P.O. Box LG 78, Legon.

Thank you  
Ibn Kailan

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### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please indicate and/or tick [✓] the most appropriate response that applies to you. Please do not leave any item unanswered.

1. Number of years in operation: Less than 1 [ ] 1 -5 [ ] 6-10 [ ] More than 10 [ ]
2. Employee size: Less than 25 [ ] 25 – 50 [ ] 51- 75 [ ] More than 75 [ ]
3. Hotel's Rating: 1 Star [ ] 2 Star [ ] 3 Star [ ] 4 Star [ ] 5Star [ ]

**SECTION B: SUSTAINABILITY MARKET ORIENTATION**

Kindly assess the following statements and tick [✓]. The appropriate responses using the given anchors: 1 is Strongly disagreed; 2 is Disagree; 3 is not sure; 4 is Agree and 5 Strongly agrees. Please do not leave any item unanswered.

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 = DISAGREE	3 = NOT SURE	4 = AGREE	5 = STRONGLY AGREE				
				1	2	3	4	5
<i><b>Economic Orientation</b></i>								
1. Our hotel offers value to its customers								
2. Our hotel offers value to its employees								
3. Our hotel offers value to investors								
4. Our hotel offers value to all stakeholders								
5. Our hotel employs members of host communities								
6. Our hotel practice corporate governance								
<i><b>Environmental Orientation</b></i>								
1. Our hotel's minimizes environmental impact								
2. Environmental values are important for our hotel								
3. Environmental friendly operations are important for our hotel								
4. Our hotel responds to environmental concerns such as the disposal of waste								
5. Our hotel monitors resource (water, electricity) use								
6. Our hotel avoids polluting the atmosphere								
<i><b>Social Orientation</b></i>								
1. Our hotel effectively integrates marketing intelligence to social development								
2. Our hotel incorporates sustainable development practices into its activities								
3. Our hotel's operations reflect market orientation sustainability practices								
4. Our hotel has employees with varied sociocultural backgrounds								
5. Our employees have acceptable working conditions								
6. Our hotel respect employee rights								
<i><b>Ethical Orientation</b></i>								
1. We are recognized as trustworthy company								
2. A confidential procedure is in place for employee to report any misconduct at work (such as stealing or sexual harassment).								
3 Fairness toward coworkers and business partners is an integral part of our employee evaluation process.								
4. Unethical practices are not accepted in this hotel								
5. Our business has a comprehensive code of conduct								
6. Members of our hotel follow professional standards								

**SECTION C: SMO Outcomes**

Kindly assess the following statements and tick [✓]. The appropriate responses using the given anchors: 1 is Strongly disagreed; 2 is Disagree; 3 is not sure; 4 is Agree and 5 Strongly agrees. Please do not leave any item unanswered.

Item	Rate				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Marketing Performance</b>					
1. Our clients are very pleased with what we do for them					
2. We receive new customers in our hotel on a regular basis					
3. Our hotel has loyal customers					
4. Our hotel delivers superior services					
5. Our hotel has happy employees					
<b>Financial Performance</b>					
1. Our hotel has an increasing sales volume					
2. Our hotel has increasing profits					
3. Our hotel has a better return on investment					
4. Our hotels have a better cash flow					
<b>Competitive Advantage</b>					
1. Our hotel has realized cost savings by improving sustainability practices					
2. Our investment in sustainability-friendly technologies and processes may result in we been a market leaders					
3. Our hotel enters lucrative markets by adopting sustainability strategies					
4. Our hotel may increase service quality by making its current processes more sustainable					
5. Our hotel investments in sustainable strategies result in becoming a market leader					

**SECTION D: INTERVENING AND CONTROL VARIABLES**

Using a Likert scale of 5 points, 1 is Strongly disagreed; 2 is Disagree; 3 is not sure; 4 is Agree and 5 Strongly agrees. Kindly tick to show your evaluation and do not leave any unanswered.

Item	Rate				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Competitive Intensity</b>					
1. Competition in our hotel industry is intense					
2. Our hotel industry is noted for competition among hotels					
3. There is substantial competition among hotels					
<b>Market Turbulence</b>					
1. Customers' product preferences change quite bit overtime					
2. Our customers tend to look for a new product all of the time					
3. We cater for many of the same customers that we used to in the past					
4. Marketing strategies change very frequently					
5. Customer preferences in the price of the service offered change very frequently					
<b>Technology</b>					
1. Our hotel uses sustainable technologies					
2. Our hotel researches on sustainable technologies					
3. Our hotel respond quickly to technological changes					
4. Our hotel lags behind in responding to new technological changes					

**THANK YOU**

## Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance



### UNIVERSITY OF GHANA ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

*P. O. Box LG 571, Legon, Accra, Ghana*

1<sup>st</sup> March, 2019

My Ref. No.....

Mr. Ibn Kailan Abdul-Hamid,  
Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
University of Ghana Business School  
P.O. Box LG149  
Legon, Accra

Dear Mr. Abdul-Hamid,

#### **ECH 007/18-19: SUSTAINABILITY MARKET ORIENTATION OF STAR RATED HOTELS IN GHANA**

This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for a full board review and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

Expiry Date:	28/02/20
On Agenda for:	Initial Submission
Date of Submission:	19/11/18
ECH Action:	Approved
Reporting:	Bi-Annually

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole  
ECH Vice Chair

Cc: Professor Robert Ebo Hinson, University of Ghana Business School  
Dr. Mahmoud Abdulai Mahmoud, University of Ghana Business School  
Dr. Ernest Yaw Tweneboah-Kodua, University of Ghana Business School



Appendix 3: Summary of Licensed Accommodation Units as At December 2017

REGION	5-STAR			4-STAR			3-STAR			2-STAR			1-STAR			GUEST HOUSE			BUDGET			TOTAL LICENSED ACC. ESTS.			TOTAL STAR RATED HOTELS		
	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BEDS	NO.	RMS	BE DS	NO.	RMS	BEDS
GREATER ACCRA	3	559	728	7	158	1389	7	581	664	73	2310	2667	110	1923	2102	57	384	396	536	6392	6586	793	12307	14532	200	5531	7550
TEMA							1	68	73	13	498	544	29	475	513	22	146	154	182	2062	2119	247	3249	3403	43	1041	1130
ASHANTI				1	160	208	8	415	447	44	1287	1633	70	1331	1492	13	97	108	426	5253	5460	562	8543	9348	123	3193	3780
EASTERN				2	122	162	7	255	271	24	834	912	52	1119	1190	22	156	176	268	3400	3563	375	5886	6274	85	2330	2535
WESTERN				2	232	232	8	398	421	23	636	615	76	1447	1458	23	170	170	170	2436	2443	302	5319	5339	109	2713	2726
CENTRAL							5	1001	343	16	507	559	31	892	865	8	47	50	239	3215	3368	299	5662	5185	52	2400	1767
BRONG AHAFO							1	140	180	9	383	423	16	414	423	5	38	38	200	2214	2240	231	3189	3304	26	937	1026
VOLTA							3	263	305	8	405	420	23	476	510	2	11	12	127	1668	1795	163	2823	3042	34	1144	1235
NORTHERN										8	198	220	10	236	320	7	46	46	96	1289	1471	121	1769	2057	18	434	540
UPPER EAST										4	141	145	4	46	46	7	53	53	94	946	1049	109	1186	1293	8	187	191
UPPER WEST										3	100	100	4	134	158	1	6	6	36	523	563	44	763	827	7	234	258
TOTAL	3	559	728	12	672	1991	40	3121	2704	225	7299	8238	425	8493	9077	167	1154	1209	2374	29398	30657	3246	50696	54604	705	20144	22738

Source: Ghana Tourism Authority