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RESEARCH ARTICLE



## Conceptualisations of market orientation in the higher education literature

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### ABSTRACT

This paper addresses how market orientation (MO) is conceptualised in the higher education (HE) literature. A search of major research databases with multiple keywords was performed to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles over twenty years. Five categories of literature conceptualising MO in an HE context are delineated. The paper concludes that a conceptualisation of MO in an HE setting needs to reflect the cultural and behavioural perspectives, a comprehensive stakeholder perspective and reflect the evolution that has taken place in the concept. Finally, this conceptualisation must reflect the complexities of MO in the HE sector. The paper offers guidance for an evidence-based assessment and application of MO in HE settings. This review of the literature can serve as a roadmap for academics and help stimulate further interest.

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Market orientation; market-oriented; higher education; higher education institutions

## Introduction

Market orientation (MO) is a key driver of business profitability, innovation, employees' commitment and performance (Kirca et al., 2005). Despite the critique of marketisation (Bruce, 2006) the adoption of a MO by higher education institutions (HEI) is argued as a logical response to the changes in the higher education (HE) environment (Casidy, 2014). The benefits of adopting a MO for an HEI include adapting to the demands of society, generating funding and competing for students (Küster & Elena Avilés-Valenzuela, 2010). Furthermore, MO is argued as allowing HEIs to reach institutional goals, enhance their reputation and improve facilities and faculty (Hammond et al., 2006). In summary, the link between MO and a broad range of measures in the assessment of HEI performance has been empirically established (Abou-Warda, 2014; Casidy, 2014; Modi & Mishra, 2010).

Presently there are multiple perspectives on the conceptualisation of MO (van Raaij & Stoelhorst, 2008). This, in turn, presents an issue for researchers and practitioners as to how MO should be conceptualised in the context of HEIs (Akonkwa, 2009; Guilbault, 2016; Llonch et al., 2016). Furthermore, the transposition of the MO concept directly into an HEI context may be flawed (Abou-Warda, 2014; Akonkwa, 2009). MO, as it relates to HEIs, is different (Scullion et al., 2010). HEIs are different from commercial

organisations which is the original context in which MO was conceptualised (Akonkwa, 2009). Customer satisfaction, competition and measuring performance are more complex in an HE setting, indeed they may even be seen as alien concepts. Furthermore, there may be resistance to and a misunderstanding of MO in an HEI context (De Sabando et al., 2018). Reconciling the concept of MO to the reality of HEIs is required if its importation is to be effective.

This review addresses this issue and elucidates how MO can be conceptualised in the context of HEIs. Thus, the twin aims of this paper are to explore how MO has thus far been dealt with in the HE literature and guide as to how it can be conceptualised. However, initially, this paper will provide a brief introduction to the concept of MO and the specifics of the HE setting that are argued as necessitating its context-specific adaptation.

### *Market orientation*

The marketing concept places customers as a central aspect of organisations (van Raaij & Stoelhorst, 2008; Wrenn, 1997). MO is argued as the implementation of this marketing concept (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Wrenn, 1997). A positive relationship between MO and organisational performance has been well established (Ahmed Zebal & Goodwin, 2012). However, there have been various conceptualisations of MO. Lafferty and Hult (2001, p. 94) outline that 'five different major attempts to conceptualise the construct have emerged out of the scattered research'. van Raaij and Stoelhorst (2008) detail six influential definitions each with different conceptualisations. Nevertheless, the behavioural approach proposed by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and the cultural approach by Narver and Slater (1990) are considered seminal (Vaikunthavasan et al., 2019) in that the authors produced 'models of MO and tested the links between orientation and performance' and thus set the foundations for a resulting significant upsurge in similarly related research (Gray & Hooley, 2002, p. 980). An outline of these seminal approaches will provide a background to any description of MO in an HE context.

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) describe MO as a set of marketing activities or behaviours (Gray & Hooley, 2002; Lafferty & Hult, 2001) hence its description as the behavioural approach. Specifically, Kohli and Jaworski (1990, p. 6) outline that 'Market orientation is the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it'. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) outline market intelligence as including the present and future needs and preferences of customers as well as how they are impacted by competitors' actions and other environmental factors. The three behavioural dimensions of MO are namely the organisation-wide generation, dissemination and responsiveness of said market intelligence. Generation refers to the collection and assessment of customer needs and preferences and the forces that influence the development of those needs. Furthermore, 'multiple departments should engage in this activity because each has a unique market lens' (Kohli et al., 1993, p. 468). Dissemination refers to the process and extent of the sharing of the market intelligence within an entire organisation formally and informally. Responsiveness is the action taken in response to the intelligence and captures the speed and coordination with which the actions are implemented to respond to customers' needs. These three behavioural dimensions were brought together by Kohli et al. (1993) in the MARKOR measurement scale.

Narver and Slater (1990), however, describe MO as a culture or philosophy (Gray & Hooley, 2002). Although Narver and Slater (1990) conceptualised MO as a culture, inherent in their definition is the link to behaviours. Indeed, Lafferty and Hult (2001, p. 98) categorised the approach as the ‘culturally based behavioral perspective’. Specifically, Narver and Slater (1990) outline ‘Market orientation is the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continues superior performance for the business’ (Narver & Slater, 1990, p. 21). Consequently, Narver and Slater (1990) measured the implementation of this cultural approach to MO via three behavioural components: customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination; and two decision criteria long-term focus and profitability. Customer orientation requires an organisation to understand customers’ present and future needs, by acquiring information about them to create superior value (Narver & Slater, 1990). Competitor orientation requires an organisation to understand present and potential competitors, by acquiring information about them, to assess their ability to satisfy customers (Narver & Slater, 1990). Interfunctional coordination requires an organisation to use its resources in the creation of superior value drawing on the information generated via an organisation’s customer and competitor orientations (Narver & Slater, 1990). The long-term focus reflects a market-oriented organisation’s approach to profitability and the implementation of the behavioural components whereas profitability reflects a market-oriented organisation’s objective (Narver & Slater, 1990). This conceptualisation of MO was operationalised by Narver and Slater (1990) via the MKTOR measurement scale.

Although the behavioural and cultural perspectives of MO differ, there is overlap between the two with convergence on ‘principal dimensions’ (Akonkwa, 2009, p. 314). Their major similarity is their focus on the customer (Gheysari et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is argued that to engage in market-oriented behaviours there must be a corresponding culture deeply embedded in the organisation (Shapiro, 1988). Gray and Hooley (2002, p. 981) provide a culturally and behaviourally inclusive definition explaining ‘Market orientation is the implementation of a corporate culture or philosophy which encourages behaviours aimed at gathering, disseminating and responding to information on customers, competitors and the wider environment in ways that add value for shareholders, customers and other stakeholders’. Thus MO can be considered as ‘a hybrid incorporating both cultural and behavioral aspects’ (Gainer & Padanyi, 2005, p. 854). This integrationist perspective has received empirical support (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000; Tiernan et al., 2019).

### **HEI context**

MO has been argued as a relevant strategy in the HEI context. However, HEIs are not your typical commercial organisations. Their missions, culture and structure are different (Akonkwa, 2009). Thus the context-specific aspects of implementing MO in HEIs need outlining. These include the consideration of students and other stakeholders, including academic staff, competitors and the measurement of HEI performance. The complexity of each of these considerations will now be detailed.

The treatment of students as customers is a central issue in the implementation of MO in HE (Guilbault, 2016). While HEIs have arguably many customers students are considered

the core customers (Guilbault, 2016). However, concerns regarding the labelling of and academic integrity of treating students as customers are significant. Alnawas (2015) outlines the argument that the notion of viewing students as customers and courses as products will undermine quality. It may lead students to view a degree as just another commodity to be purchased, not prepare them for classes or the work involved, encourage them to pursue simple programmes with soft assessments, provide negative feedback on academically demanding faculty and avoid taking responsibility for their learning (Alnawas, 2015). However, it is the way that students are conceptualised as customers that are argued as relevant (Guilbault, 2016). While treating students as customers with regard to satisfaction and retention may have benefits, a view that the customer is always right is argued as outdated and should be replaced with the customer as a co-creator of learning. Thus the content and substance of teaching and assessment are not determined to please the customer or student rather the view of a student as a customer should be informed by a long-run view of what is best for students and society (Guilbault, 2016).

While students can be considered an HEI's main customers they also deal with various other stakeholders (Akonkwa, 2009; De Sabando et al., 2018). These stakeholders include employers, families, teaching and research personnel, administrative and service personnel, donors, sponsors, alumni and potential students (De Sabando et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is a need to extend beyond even this list of stakeholders to society as a whole (De Sabando et al., 2018; Llonch et al., 2016). Thus the term customer orientation in an MO context is ill-fitted for HEIs and it is more appropriate to talk of an orientation towards its stakeholders (De Sabando et al., 2018). HEIs must thus satisfy a range of divergent and conflicting stakeholders' expectations complicating the conceptualisation of MO in HE settings (Akonkwa, 2009).

For the key stakeholder of academic staff MO may be viewed as destructive of their HE missions (Akonkwa, 2009). A MO approach may be met with resistance from academics who question its applicability in an educational setting. Academics and other employees may view an MO as a substitute or replacement for their traditional existing values rather than as complementary to the HEIs mission (Gainer & Padanyi, 2005). Furthermore, although it is a narrow and flawed conceptualisation, MO may be viewed as a means to recruit students and generate income and little else (De Sabando et al., 2018) Furthermore, market-driven techniques have been linked with demoralised and de-motivated academics, potentially leading to less time teaching and researching and more to administration, thus damaging and in the end destroying performance. Thus, the concerns of academics need to be reflected in how MO is conceptualised in an HEI context (Alnawas, 2015) in effect requiring a stakeholder perspective of MO (Llonch et al., 2016).

The relationship of HEIs with competitor HEIs is likewise not comparable to that in the commercial sector (De Sabando et al., 2018). While competition is a reality in HE (Akonkwa, 2009) HEIs see other HEIs not just as competitors and as important collaborators (De Sabando et al., 2018). Thus the inclusion of these two aspects – competition and collaboration in the conceptualisation of MO is required (Akonkwa, 2009).

Finally, about performance measurement, the perceptions of stakeholders are a more relevant measure for HEIs (De Sabando et al., 2018). While service quality, loyalty, student retention and word-of-mouth are considered relevant these measures of performance all focus on the single HEI stakeholder of customers/students. Thus, taking into account of

HEIs having a diversity of stakeholders, the best way of measuring performance is through the perceptions of a diversity of stakeholders regarding HEIs achievements whether it be teaching, research, dissemination of knowledge or cultural contribution.

To summarise, it appears inappropriate to transfer the MO concept from a for-profit to a non-profit HEI setting considering its uniqueness. Thus this paper seeks to guide how MO has been conceptualised in an HEI context via a review of the literature.

## Methodology

To examine and provide guidance on the conceptualisation of MO in an HEI context a systematic review of the literature was undertaken.

The literature review search was confined to five online research databases: Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, Taylor and Francis, Science Direct and Web of Science. These databases were selected as they contain publications relevant to the field. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journals ensuring that all articles had been subjected to approval from those knowledgeable in the subject investigated (Jesson et al., 2011). Furthermore, the search was limited to articles published in the English language in the past 20 years. A keywords search approach was adopted ensuring the literature was identified in a rigorous, transparent and reproducible manner (Gomezelj, 2016).

The focus of the keyword search conducted in March 2019 reflected the focus of this paper, MO as it relates to HEIs. Therefore, articles that looked at HE policy and/or a broader look at the marketisation of HE and/or programmes/courses with a market focus were excluded. A search of databases was performed using the keywords 'market orientation', 'market orientated', 'market oriented' and 'higher education' and 'universities' in the title and or abstract. The search results uncovered many articles, as presented in Table 1.

The results were further refined by reviewing the content of the abstracts to ensure their focus was within the boundaries of the proposed research. It is a review of the resulting 43 articles that forms the basis of this paper.

The articles were published across 25 different publications/journals, with more than one paper published in the *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* ( $n = 10$ ), *Higher Education* ( $n = 4$ ), *Market Intelligence and Planning* ( $n = 3$ ), *International Journal of Educational Management* ( $n = 2$ ), *International Journal of Public Sector Management* ( $n = 2$ ), *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* ( $n = 2$ ) and *The Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* ( $n = 2$ ). Five articles had authors who co-authored another of the 43 articles. The 43 articles were published between 1998 and 2018 – with 34 of the articles published in the latter 10 years. As the review was conducted in 2019 articles from that year were excluded, thus avoiding a partial and therefore inaccurate analysis of that year.

**Table 1.** Results after keywords search.

Results after keywords search	
Database	No. of articles
Sage Journals	23
Emerald Insight	32
Taylor and Francis	17
Science Direct	50
Web of Science	223
<i>Total</i>	<i>345</i>

The articles were predominately empirical ( $n = 35$  or 81%) with the remaining conceptual in nature ( $n = 8$  or 19%). Three of the articles were qualitative and 31 or over 70% were quantitative with one article having a mixed-methods approach. Of the 31 quantitative articles, 25 sampled respondents across two or more HEIs. It is 26 when you include the mixed methods paper. Two of the three qualitative papers sampled more than one HEI. Thus leaving one qualitative paper and six quantitative papers sampling a single HEI, see [Table 2](#).

Taking into account the qualitative and quantitative articles, respondents or participants in 27 of the studies were HEI staff. In 21 of these studies non-teaching HEI staff such as senior academic managers, junior academic managers, international officers/managers, administrators or commercial staff were sampled. Six of the studies sampled teaching and non-teaching HEI staff. In 14 of the studies, academic faculty were respondents. In 7 papers, students were the respondents or participants and one paper, a qualitative paper, sampled students and academic staff as well as employers, see [Table 3](#).

While a number of the papers had no specific geographical focus, being conceptual in nature, the United States was the focus of six papers, the United Kingdom six papers, Spain four, Malaysia three and Australia four (with New Zealand included in two of those papers). Results perhaps reflect the English language criteria in the search of the databases. Six papers had a reference to being focused on a public and or private HEI. The remaining papers were focused on public HEIs and/or did not specify.

Concluding on the outline of themes in the articles reviewed, almost half of the articles examined the relationship between MO and performance. Measures of academic staff performance, subjective assessments of HEI performance and student measures of HEI performance all appear to have been impacted positively by MO. The second most frequent theme in the reviewed literature was assessments of MO in particular contexts whether, of a specific programme, in a specific country/countries, or a specific aspect of MO such as export MO or internal MO. Relatedly, another theme was MO in private HEIs. Antecedents to MO in HEIs including export MO were also a theme in the literature and the development of scales for the assessment or measurement of MO. The outline of frameworks for the implementation of MO in HEIs was also typical in many conceptual papers.

It is acknowledged there may be limitations in the keywords utilised and in the content of the databases searched. However, the 43 articles are argued as providing a reasonable insight into the relevant literature. The articles were subsequently categorised as to how

**Table 2.** Sample methodology.

Sample methodology			
	n	%	
> 1 HEI sampled			
Quantitative papers sampling more than one HEI	25		58.1
Qualitative papers sampling more than one HEI	2		4.7
Mixed-method papers sampling more than one HEI	1		2.3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>65.1</b>
<b>1 HEI sampled</b>			
Quantitative papers sampling one HEI	6		14
Qualitative paper sampling one HEI	1		2.3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>16.3</b>
Conceptual papers	8		18.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>		<b>100</b>

**Table 3.** Sample type.

<b>Respondents</b>	Sample type	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
HEI staff	27	62.8
Students	7	16.3
Staff and students	1	2.3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>81.4</b>
Conceptual papers	8	18.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

each conceptualised MO resulting in five categories. The categorisation and commentary on the articles reflect the purpose of this paper; the articles or their original purpose is not being critiqued.

## Findings

A review of literature provides five broad categories of how MO has been conceptualised in an HEI context.

### Category I

The first category of literature offers a limited conceptualisation of MO in an HE setting. This category can be further divided into two sub-categories: the first one contains four papers that provide little to no detail of how MO should be conceptualised in an HEI context and the second one contains a sub-category of five papers that provide a greater degree of understanding of MO. Thus in the first sub-category Dubas et al. (1998), Kaklauskas et al. (2012) and Mokoena and Dhurup (2016) did not provide enough detail as to how MO should be conceptualised in an HEI context. Still, in the first sub-category, Häyrynen-Alestalo and Peltola (2006) concluded on the importance of academic competency as a necessary component of any market-oriented HEI. The authors argue that the necessity of being academically competent is also a relevant response to market demands; however, a conceptualisation of what is a market-oriented HEI is not developed.

The second sub-category of papers provides a more relevant understanding of MO in the HE sector. The papers provide guidelines as to how HEIs can be more market-oriented via being customer-focused but lack a more comprehensive conceptualisation. Thus Lindsay and Rodgers (1998) examining the reforms adopted in the UK HE system over the period 1980–1993 advocated a private-sector approach in HEIs with a greater degree of MO, equating this greater degree of MO with an increased customer focus. Bristow and Schneider (2003) concentrated primarily on adapting the concept of customer orientation to the HEI context in the form of student orientation. Thus the student orientation concept is defined as ‘...the degree to which an HEI takes actions and makes decisions based upon the needs of the students as well as the objectives of the institution’ (Bristow & Schneider, 2003, p. 21). Similarly, Guilbault (2016) outlines correctly that customer orientation is a key element of MO, and therefore, students need to be treated as customers although arguing a long-run perspective of what is best for students and the public should be taken. These three sub-category papers together have



relevance; however, there is more to MO in an HE setting than just being student/customer focused. Mihaela and Amalia (2012) do add a broader perspective in a paper that argues for an HEI having partnership relationships with its stakeholders; externally with customers such as students, employers and wider society and internally with faculty. In the final paper in this category, Ferreira and Hill (2008) assess the perceptions of employees of the organisational culture in two Portuguese Universities: one public and the other private. Accordingly, a MO was conceptualised as a culture based on an orientation to the market, maintenance or expansion of market share, strong adherence to the profit motive and the establishment of ambitious objectives. However, the paper does not persuade that this type of MO culture addresses the complexities of the HEI context.

While the nine papers in the category do address MO in an HE setting they are limited in the degree to which they do so. The necessary detail to allow for a developed understanding of MO in an HEI context is absent.

### *Category II*

Sixteen papers drew on the behavioural approach in conceptualising MO as advocated by Kohli and Jaworski (1990), Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Kohli et al. (1993). This behavioural approach perspective has been operationalised via MARKOR, a scale that assesses the three behavioural dimensions, namely the organisation-wide generation, dissemination and responsiveness to market intelligence. An outline of these papers is now presented.

Caruana et al. (1998a) investigated if HEIs that are more market-oriented perform better. The authors amended the MARKOR research instrument to ensure its relevance to HEIs as opposed to business units, the focus in the original scale. Caruana et al. (1998b) in another paper investigating the MO performance link again measured MO via this amended MARKOR scale. A more recent paper by Khuwaja et al. (2018) assessing the MO HEI performance relationship in a developing country context, in turn, drew on the work of Caruana et al. (1998a) arguing it is an appropriate and context-specific measure of MO for HEIs.

Cann and George (2004) outline how having a marketing orientation is a component in marketing strategy making. MO was similarly conceptualised using the behavioural approach with the assessment not limited to just a customer focus but including additional forces in the marketplace such as competition, legal and political, technological and socio-cultural.

Flavián and Lozano (2006), in a study to identify factors that influence the level of MO adopted by HEI academic staff in their activities of teaching, research and cultural diffusion, undertook a behavioural analysis of their generation, dissemination and response capacity. This adaptation of the concept of MO took into account the plurality of beneficiaries of higher education; students, companies and society, as well as the three-fold objectives of HEI academic staff; teaching, research and cultural diffusion. Flavián and Lozano (2007) investigated the MO of faculty of Spanish public universities again drew on this adapted behavioural approach. This adapted behavioural approach was utilised in a further paper by Küster and Elena Avilés-Valenzuela (2010) investigating the MO performance link and the impact of MO on employee satisfaction.

Zakaria et al. (2011) in a paper that reflects the behavioural approach looking at MO in a private HEI conceptualised it as divided into three elements: market research on

customers, competitors and partners; the dissemination of important decisions and the efforts to satisfy their needs. Tran et al. (2015) in a paper examining the effects of MO on student satisfaction also conceptualised MO as having three behavioural components, namely intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness. Similarly, Kumar (2016) in a paper exploring the MO of agricultural HE in India conceptualised it as the systematic generation, dissemination and responses by an HEI. Vaikunthavasan et al. (2019) in the paper looking at the influence of MO on innovation in HEIs also adopted the behavioural approach from Kohli and Jaworski (1990).

Several papers adapted the behavioural approach in specific ways. Felgueira and Rodrigues (2015) argued that the MO HEI literature offers little with regard to the MO of individual faculty. Hence, the authors developed the I-MARKOR scale. Thus the MO of individuals reflects the attitudes and behaviours of employees while gaining, sharing and responding to market information. Yu et al. (2018) focused on the internal MO within HEIs and outline the dimensions of this concept as (1) internal information collection, (2) internal information communication and (3) responsiveness to internal market situations. Three papers adapted the behavioural conceptualisation of MO in an export context. Thus Asaad et al. (2013) in a paper addressed how export market-oriented HEIs perceive and manage their export MO (EMO). The concept of EMO was proposed by Diamantopoulos and Cadogan (1996) to extend the application of MO to exporting organisations. EMO refers to the implementation of marketing in an export setting based on the three dimensions of the behavioural approach. These behaviours would be oriented towards export customers, competitors and exogenous market influences. Asaad et al. (2015) and Nagy and Berács (2012) also looked at the export market orientation utilising the behavioural approach.

In summary, the behavioural perspective to conceptualising MO is a significant aspect of the HEI literature. Furthermore, this behavioural approach, as the papers outlined indicate, has been adapted to the complexities and uniqueness of the HEI context. Thus the papers look beyond just information gathering and dissemination from a solely customer/student point of view by taking a wider environmental and stakeholder view that acknowledges the relevance of industry/employers, employees as well as society.

### Category III

Five papers draw on the cultural perspective of MO as advocated by Narver and Slater (1990). Narver and Slater's view is that marketing orientation is an organisational culture that creates superior value for buyers and thus a sustainable competitive advantage for an organisation. This culture, in turn, consists of behavioural components; inter-functional coordination, customer orientation, competitor orientation and two decision criteria; profitability and a long-term focus. This cultural approach to MO was operationalised via the MKTOR measure developed by the authors. The lesser number of papers taking a cultural rather than the behavioural approach to MO in the HEI literature is in line with the MO literature (González-Benito & González-Benito, 2005).

Wasmer and Bruner (2000) drawing on this cultural conceptualisation utilised the MKTOR scale in investigating the antecedents of MO within the context of HE. Likewise, Ross et al. (2013) adapted the cultural approach to MO in an examination of the extent to which the components of MO are reflected in the strategies adopted in international student recruitment in an HEI.

Hammond et al. (2006) also utilised Narver and Slater's (1990) cultural MO conceptualisation and thus the MKTOR measure rationalising that the behavioural components of it 'comprehend' and include the activities described by Kohli and Jaworski (1990). Acknowledging the numerous customer groups or stakeholders in an HEI setting Hammond et al. (2006) focused on three groups – students, parents of students and employers of graduates. The MO scale MKTOR was reworded as necessary and applied separately for each of the three groups addressed in this study. Hammond and Webster (2014) in a survey of business schools examining the impact of MO on overall business school performance also conceptualised MO utilising Narver and Slater's (1990) MKTOR scale.

Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010) in a study focused on MO at a faculty level drew on the three behavioural dimensions outlined by Narver and Slater (1990). Thus the student orientation assumes faculties understand the HEI's target markets thoroughly and are capable of creating and providing superior value. Second, the competitor orientation assumes the HEI and faculty managers aim to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of competing HEIs. Third, the inter-functional coordination assumes a core belief shared by all members of the HEI that creating superior value for target customers is significant for success in a competitive marketplace. Furthermore, this can only be achieved through the integration and coordination of the HEI's resources.

In summary, while there are arguably difficulties with the profit dimension of the cultural perspective in an HE context and in the measurement of a concept like culture (Liao et al., 2001) similar to the behavioural approach the cultural approach to assessing MO has been adapted to the specific HEI context taking into account the variety of stakeholders or customer groups and has a market rather than solely customer focus.

### **Category IV**

This fourth category of literature draws on a combination of the behavioural and cultural perspectives previously outlined as well as literature that is broadly consistent in conceptualising MO.

Thus Akonkwa (2009) drawing on the behavioural and cultural approaches of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) identifies the following variables in the conceptualising of MO, namely customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination and responsiveness. Similarly, Ahmed Zebal and Goodwin (2012) in assessing MO and performance in private universities also draw on the behavioural and cultural approaches and other seminal authors in conceptualising MO, namely Shapiro (1988), Ruekert (1992) and Deshpandé et al. (1993). Ahmed Zebal and Goodwin (2012) outline that while these authors all contributed their conceptualisations of MO there is broad agreement to be found on four elements among the five perspectives: (1) customer orientation, (2) information gathering, (3) inter-functional coordination of marketing activities and (4) responsiveness to customers.

The work of Voon (2006, 2008) can also be included in this category drawing on established MO literature. Voon (2006, 2008) developed a measure for service-driven market orientation in HE – a student-focused measure of market orientation, termed service-driven market orientation (SERVMO). The author defines SERVMO as 'The set of beliefs, behaviours, and cross-functional processes that seriously focuses on continuous and

comprehensive understanding, disseminating as well as satisfying the current and future needs of the target customers for service excellence' (Voon, 2006, p. 598). A definition that reflects the cultural and behavioural perspectives of MO. The MO scales of Narver and Slater (1990) and Deshpandé and Farley (1998) and scales for measuring an employee orientation relevant to a service environment were adapted in operationalising SERVMO. Thus SERVMO comprises customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional orientation, performance orientation, long-term orientation and employee orientation. Two additional papers in the review drew on the student-focused work of Voon (2006, 2008). Thus Casidy (2014) examined the relationship between students' perceptions of MO and resulting satisfaction, loyalty and post-enrolment communication behaviour. Additionally, Tanrikulu and Gelibolu (2015) also utilised the conceptualisation of MO operationalised in SERVMO in a paper examining the influence of perceived MO on HEI brand equity and student satisfaction.

De Sabando et al. (2018) outline that a conceptualisation of MO in an HEI context should be consistent with the evolution in the concept about two prominent extensions which are a societal and holistic orientation. The societal marketing orientation constitutes an extension of the classical MO in recognising the importance of satisfying the needs of consumers while preserving their long-term welfare and doing so without this occurring at the expense of the welfare of society. The holistic marketing orientation, which incorporates the previously cited societal aspect, is founded upon the joint consideration of four elements: performance marketing which is related to the need to consider a diversity of measures in the assessment of marketing efforts including societal issues; relationship marketing, directed at establishing lasting relations with an organisation's stakeholders; internal marketing, with the underlying idea that all the members of the organisation should adopt an MO; and integrated marketing, which emphasises the need to coordinate the multiple marketing activities. De Sabando et al. (2018) argue that MO in an HEI context must have this holistic stakeholder orientation and a co-competitor rather than competitor orientation. In essence, as the concept of marketing has evolved so too should its conceptualisation in an HEI context.

To summarise the previous three categories, MO in the HE field has been conceptualised via the cultural and or the behavioural approach. Thus customer/student orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination, intelligence generation, dissemination and responsiveness have been utilised as measures of MO in HEIs. In numerous works the complexities of the HE sector have been acknowledged with adaptations undertaken; an orientation to other stakeholders – employees, employers, parents, other HEIs and society has been considered. In addition, a broader external environmental orientation and a service aspect were evident in how MO has been conceptualised. The developments in the conceptualisation of MO, a holistic orientation, have also been reflected in the literature.

The body of research reviewed thus far has enhanced the understanding of and the applicability of the MO concept in an HEI context. However, there are historical critiques of the cultural approach and the behavioural approach to MO which are also true when they are adapted to an HEI context (Alnawas, 2015; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010). That is the behavioural perspective is argued as ignoring the degree of influence of competitors and other forces on customers, whereas the cultural perspective has been accused of being somewhat superficial and more manager-centric (Rivera-Camino &

Molero Ayala, 2010). Furthermore, the cultural and behavioural conceptualisations of MO were originally developed for manufacturing and or services organisations and are argued as not having all the necessary adaptations to suit HE (Alnawas, 2015; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). Thus it is inappropriate to transfer the MO concept from a for-profit context to the HEI context as any subsequent operationalisation to assess the MO of HEIs will be flawed (Alnawas, 2015). The point being HE needs more than just an evolved version of MO to address its uniqueness. An outline of the literature in the next category moves towards what can be argued as more context-specific conceptualisations of MO for HEIs.

### Category V

The final category of literature provides conceptualisations of MO that are more relevant to the HE sector.

Alnawas (2015) proposes student orientation (SO) as more appropriate in an HEI context. An SO approach is about a collaboration between academic faculty and students in meeting their shared expectations. SO is operationalised as an index providing performance indicators to monitor the level of commitment of HEIs in serving the student market. Thus the SO index evaluates Teaching and learning methods, Programme development and management, Effective personal tutoring system and Coordinating student activities. Alnawas (2015) explains that an SO can build a more market-driven institution. The author explains SO is adapted to the peculiarity of and the specificity associated with the HE sector different from the way MO is practised and understood in manufacturing and other industries. The SO index is argued as 'comprehensive, context-specific and tailored to reflect the specificity associated with and the nature of activities performed by HE institutions' when applying the construct of MO (Alnawas, 2015, pp. 643–644). The SO approach can, however, be argued as having too narrow a conceptualisation of MO with a limited focus on external aspects of an HEI such as the market/competition and the broader set of stakeholders. Thus this conceptualisation meets the criteria of a SO but debatably does not provide enough guidance for a market-oriented HEI.

Rosi et al. (2018) developed what they describe as a comprehensive framework for the development of an MO in business schools in transition economies. The model is aimed at providing a holistic understanding of the complexity of the adaption of MO in HEIs identifying all the linkages and dependencies internally and externally. Thus the following four factors are identified: the global education market, competitive pressures, social responsibility and academic-institutional aspects. Developed for a certain educational context the framework which was operationalised by the authors indicates that MO in an HEI is 'a complex process, which depends on many factors that hinder or promote this process' (Rosi et al., 2018, p. 187). This framework meets its stated objective of being a comprehensive framework for the development of an MO in business schools in transition economies. However, a question does remain about the degree to which it addresses in enough detail the cultural and behavioural dimensions of MO.

Pavičić et al. (2009) examining the MO of the Croatian HE system outline that the term market may not be appropriate in an HE setting. The authors argue the function of the HE institution should fulfil the interests and goals of multiple stakeholders, i.e. students, faculty, staff, parents, relevant sectors of the government and society as a whole,

taking into account the relevance of their interests to the mission of the institution. Therefore, the culture, structure, system and procedures are established in a manner that ensures successful long-term stakeholder relations, to ensure the long-term survival of the organisation. Pavičić et al. (2009) in operationalising their conceptualisation study drew on the work of Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) MARKOR scale guided by Caruana et al.'s (1998a) adaptations and Padanyi and Gainer's 2015 measurement scale of MO in a non-profit context.

Three more papers in this category provide arguably even more robust views of how MO can be conceptualised in an HEI context. Llonch et al. (2016) developed a new multi-dimensional scale, stakeholder orientation, which they argue better fits the HE context. The authors argue it is inappropriate to transfer the MO concept to an HE setting and thus use the term stakeholder orientation to better reflect an HEI's long-term benefit to society. The authors explain that a market and stakeholder orientation as concepts are not mutually exclusive but overlap; however, a stakeholder orientation does not prioritise any one particular stakeholder. Specifically, the construct has five components, namely, beneficiary orientation, resource acquisition orientation, peer orientation, environment orientation and inter-functional coordination. Beneficiary orientation is focused on understanding the needs of stakeholders, designing services to meet those needs, and regularly monitoring their satisfaction. Resource acquisition orientation is how an HEI is focused on knowing who its funders are, communicating regularly with them, and meeting their expectations. Peer orientation is defined as an organisational focus on understanding peer HEIs' strengths, weaknesses, and strategies and wherever necessary collaborating with them to serve beneficiaries better. Environment orientation is a construct defined as an organisational focus on aligning the institutional mission with the demands of external communities (local, national, and international) to collect and disseminate information concerning them. Inter-functional coordination is the extent to which every activity is synergistically contributing to the institution's mission, implying coherent planning, information sharing across all university staff members and alignment of strategy and programmes among the several internal HEI structures.

With a similarity to the previous conceptualisation, Rivera-Camino and Molero Ayala (2010) presented a university market orientation (UMO) model. The UMO model expands on the MKTOR and MARKOR scales and has the following components: (1) student orientation, (2) employee/faculty orientation, (3) competitor orientation, (4) company-donor orientation, (5) environment orientation and (6) inter-functional coordination, thus to explain worker orientation and company-donor orientation, two dimensions not cited previously in the literature. Worker orientation includes academic faculty and employees due to their importance in the quality of the educational service. Company-donor orientation includes donors, government agencies, corporate clients, volunteers and companies that can hire students who have graduated.

Finally, Abou-Warda (2014) proposed a sustainable market orientation (SMO) model. SMO is a 'concept that focuses on producing and delivering sustainable solutions with higher net sustainable value while satisfying customers and other stakeholders continuously' (Abou-Warda, 2014, p. 201). This SMO model incorporates the cultural and behavioural MKTOR and MARKOR, a social marketing approach that takes into account the well-being of society inclusive of stakeholders (employees including faculty, customers/students, the local community, competitors, recruiting firms and

media), an environmental/ecological orientation, an innovation orientation and a sustainable value co-creation approach reflecting the role of HEIs in supporting customer/student value-creating processes. This SMO approach means striving for stakeholder value co-creation consistent with the idea of economical, social and environmental sustainability. This framework addresses how MO has evolved in the marketing literature but with relevance to the HE sector.

These final three papers in this category arguably set the agenda for how MO should be conceptualised in an HE setting.

## Conclusion

Category I offers a somewhat limited outline of MO, Categories II–IV provide established perspectives on MO with adaptations for an HEI context, while Category V which contains 6 of the 43 papers outlines a perspective of MO that is bespoke to the HEI context. Furthermore, there appears to be a degree of chronological development in the literature with all six papers in the final category published in the latter 10 years, whereas five of the nine papers in the first category were published more than 10 years ago and all the other categories containing papers published in the initial 10-year period. The papers reviewed can serve as a guide for academics and practitioners in understanding how MO has thus far been conceptualised in the context of HEIs. See [Table 4](#) for an overview of the papers in each of the five categories.

From the review, it is possible to define a conceptualisation that can help managers who wish to implement and measure MO. Specifically, MO in an HE context should have a culture with resulting behaviours, across all departments of the institution that seeks to understand and respond to students, collaborating/partner institutions, competitors, parents, employees, employers, funders and other stakeholders as well as wider society and the environment innovatively and sustainably. [Table 5](#) provides more details of this conceptualisation of MO.

The final three papers in Category V arguably conceptualise MO for the HE sector in a comprehensive appropriate way. Furthermore, all three of these conceptualisations were operationalised by the authors providing validated scales, thus allowing for the measurement of MO. The validity or otherwise of the scales proposed in conjunction with these conceptualisations have not been assessed. The conceptualisation of MO was deemed as the necessary first step in the measurement process (Uncles, 2000) and thus offers a foundation for the future assessment and application of MO in HE settings. The measurement of MO is not possible without a theory or conceptualisation of what is being measured (Farooq & Vij, 2021; Wrenn, 1997). The operationalisation of the conceptualisation will enable an HEI to know where it is and even where it needs to get to with regard to its MO.

MO may be argued as suitable for an HE context in its present form without any adaptations; however, the contingencies of HE suggest an adaptation or revision of the MO concept is required (Llonch et al., 2016). That is the MO concept should be 'context-specific' (Akonkwa, 2009, p. 312); not making adaptations could even be described as naïve (Darroch et al., 2004). The implication that MO is a concept that can and should be adapted to particular contexts has relevance for other sectors including non-profits. There is counter-arguing literature in the non-profit domain (Kara et al., 2004) that argues that no adaption or a limited adaptation of the MO concept is required. Thus an

**Table 4.** Overview of papers in each of the five categories.

Overview of papers in each of the five categories							
Category	Author(s)	Year	Research focus	Paper type	Methodology	Sample	Geography
I	Bristow D. and Schneider K.	2003	A MO scale called the collegiate student orientation	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 119 students in 1 HEI.	USA
I	Dubas K. et al.	2008	Examination of the market orientation of an MBA program	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 33 students	USA
I	Ferreira A. and Hill M.	2008	Perceptions of the organisational culture in a public and private HEI	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 114 academic and non-academic managers in 2 HEIs	Portugal
I	Guilbault M.	2016	Considerations of students as customers of HEIs and resulting in the impact on student satisfaction/ student retention	Conceptual			n/a
I	Hayrinen-Alestalo M. and Peltola U.	2006	Identification of problems with Finnish universities becoming more market-orientated	Empirical	Qualitative	Interviews with academic managers, faculty, research and commercial staff in 3 HEIs	Finland
I	Kaklauskas A. et al.	2012	Development of a life cycle model of market-orientated and student-centred HE	Conceptual			Lithuania
I	Lindsay G. and Rodgers T.	1998	Argues that HEIs in the UK have not developed a MO but rather a selling orientation and thus outlines the requirements to achieve a MO	Conceptual			United Kingdom
I	Mihaela D. and Amalia P.	2012	Argues that the MO of an HEI requires meeting stakeholders' requirements externally (students, business environment, society) and internally for customers (faculty)	Empirical	Qualitative	Focus groups with employers, students and faculty in 1 HEI	Romania
I	Mokoena B. and Dhurup M.	2016	Identifies barriers to achieving MO in universities	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 507 faculty	South Africa
II	Asaad Y. et al.	2015	Examines how export MO impacts HEI export performance and university performance	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 63 international office managers/ staff surveyed in 63 HEIs	United Kingdom
II	Asaad Y. et al.	2013	Examines the management and perception of export market orientation in universities	Empirical	Qualitative	Interviews with non-academic managers in 8 HEIs	United Kingdom
II	Cann C. and George M.	2004	A conceptual model of the relationship between a learning orientation, MO and marketing strategy in an HEI	Conceptual			n/a
II	Caruana A. et al.	1998	Investigation of the MO performance link	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 184 academic managers across an unspecified number of HEIs	Australian and New Zealand
II	Caruana A. et al.	1998	Investigation of the MO performance link	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 84 academic managers across an unspecified number of HEIs	Australia and New Zealand
II	Felgueira T. and Rodrigues R.	2015	Focuses on the market-oriented behaviours of individuals thus the authors developed the I-Markor scale	Conceptual			n/a

(Continued)



Table 4. Continued.

Overview of papers in each of the five categories							
Category	Author(s)	Year	Research focus	Paper type	Methodology	Sample	Geography
II	Flavian C. and Lozano J.	2006	Investigates antecedents on the MO of university staff in their teaching and research	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 160$ faculty across approx. 48 HEIs	Spain
II	Flavian C. and Lozano J.	2007	Investigates the relationship between MO and the performance of academics	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 160$ faculty across multiple HEIs.	Spain
II	Khuwaja F.M. et al.	2018	Investigates the MO performance relationship in a developing country	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 476$ faculty and administrators in 5 HEIs.	Pakistan
II	Kumar N.	2016	Paper argues for the implementation of MO in agri-education in India	Conceptual			India
II	Kuster I. and Aviles-Valenzuela M.	2010	Analysis of the interconnected nature of the relationship between MO at campus, school and teaching staff level	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 234$ faculty, academic managers and administrators in 1 HEI	Mexico
II	Nagy G. and Beracs J.	2012	Antecedents to the export MO of Hungarian HEIs and the resulting export performance consequences	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 70$ academic managers and international managers in 21 HEIs	Hungary
II	Tran T. et al.	2015	Investigates the relationship between MO and student satisfaction	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 233$ students in 1 HEI	USA
II	Vaikunthavasan S. et al.	2018	Investigates the influence of MO on innovation in HEIs	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 270$ academic managers and faculty across an unspecified number of HEIs	Sri Lankan
II	Yu Q. et al.	2018	Internal market orientation is investigated as a branding tool to enhance brand outcomes such as employees' brand commitment and brand supportive behaviour	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 235$ faculty and non-academic staff in 31 HEIs	United Kingdom
II	Zakaria Z. et al.	2011	Investigates the influence of MO on HEIs with regard to the trust, commitment and relational norms evident in partnerships with other HEIs	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 209$ academic managers in 65 HEIs	Malaysian
III	Hammond K. and Webster R.	2014	Investigates the MO business school performance relationship mediated by business school affiliation and academic position of respondents	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 505$ academic managers in more than 250 HEIs	USA
III	Hammond K. et al.	2006	Investigates the relationship between MO of senior management and performance	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 225$ academic managers	USA
III	Hemsley-Brown J. and Oplatka I.	2010	Assess differences in MO between an English and an Israeli university	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 68$ faculty in 2 HEIs	The United Kingdom and Israel
III	Ross M. et al.	2013	MO of international student recruitment strategies and international student recruitment performance	Empirical	Quantitative	$n = 159$ international student recruitment officers across multiple HEIs.	Australia

III	Wasmer D. and Bruner G.	2000	Antecedents to MO were investigated, such as institution size, public/private funding and innovativeness	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 302 academic managers	USA
IV	Akonkwa D.	2009	Context analysis and research agenda for MO in HE	Conceptual	n/a		n/a
IV	Casidy R.	2014	Relationship of MO to student satisfaction, loyalty, WOM investigated	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 258 students in 1 HEI	Australia
IV	Lafuente-Ruiz-De-Sabando A. et al.	2018	Sets out a framework for the implementation of a MO approach in universities	Conceptual	n/a		n/a
IV	Tanrikulu C. and Gelibolu L.	2015	Investigates the perceived MO of HE by students and its influence on student satisfaction and perceived brand equity	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 368 students in 1 HEI	Turkey
IV	Voon B.	2007	Outlines the development of the SERVMO scale that investigates students' perspectives on the service-driven MO of HEIs	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 558 students in 3 HEIs	Malaysian
IV	Voon B.	2006	Investigates the relationship between MO as measured by the SERVMO scale and service quality in HEIs	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 559 students in 4 HEIs	Malaysian
IV	Ahmed Zebal M. and Goodwin D.	2012	MO and performance relationship investigated	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 314 faculty in 15 HEIs.	Bangladesh
V	Abou-Warda S.	2014	Sustainable MO scale developed and linked to academic accreditation/performance	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 204 academic managers in 6 HEIs	Egypt
V	Alnawas I.	2015	MO conceptualised as student orientation and its relationship to student satisfaction and university reputation investigated	Empirical	Mixed Methods	<i>n</i> = 23 interviews with faculty and <i>n</i> = 295 survey responses from academic managers and faculty in 129 HEIs.	United Kingdom
V	Pavicic J. et al.	2009	Examination of MO in Croatian HE	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 60 academic managers, faculty and administrators.	Croatia
V	Rivera-Camino J. and Molero Ayala V.	2010	Develops a measure/scale for MO	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 176 faculty across multiple HEIs.	Spain
V	Rosi M. et al.	2018	Development of a framework/approach to developing a MO approach in business schools in transition economies.	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 35 academic managers in 35 HEIs	European
V	Llonch J. et al.	2016	Develops a market orientation scale/measure called stakeholder orientation	Empirical	Quantitative	<i>n</i> = 1420 academic managers across multiple HEIs.	Spain

**Table 5.** A conceptualisation of MO

A conceptualisation of MO		
Components	Description of the component	Category V supporting literature
Student co-created value Orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of students, including in the co-creation of value, while preserving their long-term welfare	Abou-Warda, 2014; Alnawas, 2015; Rivera-Camino and Molero Ayala, 2009
Collaboration orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at identifying and responding to opportunities to collaborate with organisations including other HEIs to better serve stakeholders	Llonch et al., 2016; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010
Competitor orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and responding to competitors to better serve stakeholders	Abou-Warda, 2014; Llonch et al., 2016; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010; Rosi et al., 2018
Inter-functional coordination	A culture and behaviours aimed at co-ordination and integration across the HEI in responding to stakeholder needs	Abou-Warda, 2014; Llonch et al., 2016; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010
Parents orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of students' parents	Pavičić et al., 2009
Employee orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of employees (inclusive of teaching and research faculty and non-faculty) in the service of stakeholders	Abou-Warda, 2014; Alnawas, 2015; Pavičić et al., 2009; Rivera-Camino and Molero Ayala, 2009; Rosi et al., 2018
Employer orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of graduate employers	Abou-Warda, 2014
Resource orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of those who provide sources of funding inclusive of governments and other donors	Llonch et al., 2016; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010
Stakeholder orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and continuing to satisfy the needs of other relevant stakeholder communities including in the co-creation of value (with media, alumni, potential students, students' families, etc.)	Abou-Warda, 2014; Alnawas, 2015; Llonch et al., 2016; Pavičić et al., 2009; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010; Rosi et al., 2018
Societal orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and contributing to the sustainability and well-being of society	Pavičić et al., 2009; Rosi et al., 2018
Sustainable innovation orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at the development of sustainable products, processes, services and technologies	Abou-Warda, 2014
Environment orientation	A culture and behaviours aimed at understanding and adapting to changes in the external environment	Llonch et al., 2016; Rivera-Camino & Molero Ayala, 2010; Rosi et al., 2018

evaluation of this argument is an initial step before the implementation of MO. Furthermore, while not the focus of this paper MO in any of its forms may be considered inappropriate in an HE context.

There are implications to a less than robust or an underdeveloped conceptualisation of MO that has relevance for the management including marketing managers of HEIs. Thus a flawed understanding of MO and how it can be achieved will result in the setting of inappropriate goals. Furthermore, striving for a flawed conception of MO in an HEI context will, in turn, be damaging to the organisation and following this the performance impact of MO will not be fully realised.

With regard to further future research, a review of the measurement of the MO construct in an HE context outlining scales and their validity is required. The antecedents and consequences of MO in an HEI context, the moderators and mediators, and thus an understanding of MO in the context of a model in an HE setting can also be argued as necessary. Finally, additional research on the implementation of these Category V conceptualisations of MO in the HE sector and the associated managerial actions can be argued for.

In conclusion, this review was carried out to deliver a foundation or roadmap of the literature conceptualising MO in the context of HEIs. Understanding how MO is conceptualised in this context will help with future attempts to assess it. This paper summarises the conceptualisations of MO for an HE setting outlining the complexities that this involves. The paper guides the measurement and application of MO in HE settings and potentially other non-profit organisations.

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