ORGANIZED FARM PRODUCTS AND GARMENT RETAILING IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Organized retailing is a sunrise industry with maximum growth rate in India. Many national and international players are in the arena. The intense competition in the market posed many challenges to retailers for better organizational performance. In this study we have attempted to compare the strategic match for retail challenges (RC), competitive advantage (CA) and organizational performance (OP) in the organized garment retailing (OGR) business and organized farm product retailing (OFPR). The confirmatory models have been tested using structural equation modeling.

Keywords: Organized retailing, organizational performance, competitive advantage, retail challenges, structural equation modeling, organized garment retailing, organized farm product retailing.

INTRODUCTION:

Organized retailing is the process of influencing supply chain (SC) activities in the most economical and viable way to minimized SC costs. This concept gained momentum in 1980 and got full boom after liberalization in 1991. According to CMIE report the retail growth doubled from 1990 to 1999. In India there are more than 15 million unorganized retailers, operating in the form of 'mom pop' outlets spread over more than 31 million square meters area, generating sales of USD 11 billion in 2007-08 [1]. Nowadays, the major retail players in the organized farm products and garment retailing are; Reliance Retail, RPG Retail, The Tata Group, K Raheja Corporation, Piramyd Retail, Nilgiris', Subhiksha Trading Limited, Trinethra, Vishal Group, and BPCL etc. To harvest the profits the major players have collaborated with many national and international players like Wal-Mart, Tesco, and Metro etc.

Supply chain management (SCM) enhances OP by integrating the internal business functions within a company and linking them with the external operations of suppliers, customers and other channel members [2]. The organizations need to master the challenges of speed, convenience and reliability. It shall help to reduce costs, improve productivity, and reduces risk to gain competitive advantage (CA) [3].

The SCM focuses on operational cost, time and response, customer services, and profitability or margins [4]. It improves service levels and reduces costs to improve organizational performance (OP). It incorporates logistics as a key SC focused function. The effective SCM and purchasing practices are associated with competitive capabilities of a firm and it has more significant effect on firm performance [5].

The intense market competition and changing customer preferences has made the retailers' job difficult and challenging. The intense competition has shut down many organized stores. This scenario has attracted the attention of many researchers to find solution for the same. The discussion with the practitioners in the field of OGR, and OFPR (fruits, vegetable, spices etc.) revealed the need to study RC for better OP.

In this paper, RC, OP and CA have been adopted from the findings of Rajwinder, et al. [6]. Also the RC, CA and OP have been adopted for OGR. A comparative analysis has been made to find the gap among these two different business lines from the same industry. A structural equation modeling has been applied to test the hypotheses.

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RETAIL CHALLENGES:

Organised retail in India is little decade old industry, facing many challenges. The major RC in consultation of practitioners and consultants and with literature support are shown in Table I.

Table I: Retail challenges

Sr	Author	Retail Challenges
1	[7]	Retail is not recognized as an industry, High stamp duty, High cost of real estate, Multiple and complex taxation system, Inadequate infrastructure, Competitive forces
2	[8]	Arson, Criminal damage, Sabotage, Robbery
3	[9]	Unorganized stores, Requirement of specialization, High operational costs, Correct marketing mix, Strong IT support, Unclear industry status
7	[10]	Effectiveness of marketing and Advertisement, Technological changes, Higher service levels, Transparency, Product sourcing, Management skills and capabilities
8	[11]	FDI in retail, Lack of recognition as an Industry, Difficulty in procurement and movement of goods, Numerous intermediates, Mismatch in demand and supply, Inefficient supply chains, Poor infrastructure, Availability and cost of real estate, Urban land ceiling, Availability of parking
9	[12]	High operational costs, High rate of attrition and retaining a talented workforce, Insufficient investment in strengthening back-end operations

The customers' expectation for a wide product variety has complicated the task to manage the products. Despite the big garment production houses and farm houses owned by the players, still there is a gap for the supply of wide product variety of garment and farm products. It is due the fact that different products have different meaning to the different customers. The product color, size, composition, quality and brand shall quote different meaning to different customers. Hence, efficient *Product sourcing* helps to arrange and manage inventory to better serve the customers.

Transparency is also one of the major challenges for the OGR as well as OFPR because the class of customers visiting these stores is qualified enough to compare products offered by different retailers. They expect detailed

information regarding products displayed with full authentication otherwise they shall churn. Also, the vast variety expectations by the customers need *specialized skilled* staff to convince and satisfy them. The staff should be trained to convince the customers. Otherwise, the sale shall be lost. The organized retailers also revealed that highly qualified people are not much interested to join this sector. They leave the job after some experience. Hence, *manpower management* is also one of the major challenges for this sector.

The *unorganized stores* are operated by traditional retailers and most of them are either owned or hired at very low rental charges as compared to organized retailers. Also, they are located at prominent locations near residential areas in large numbers. Acquiring such locations is a big challenge for the organized retailers. Also, the organized retailers have to pay *multiple taxes* posing more record keeping problems as compared to the unorganized retailers.

Inadequate Infrastructure is also one of the major challenges for the organized retailers. It is due to the fact that the facilities like parking, internet access, and deliveries are not at par with the developed countries like USA, UK, France, Germany etc. Hence, it adversely affects the performance of organized retailers. Also, the *real estate cost* is very high. It has adversely affected the organized retailing business. The traditional retailers have already set the retail stores at the prominent locations in the heart of the cities. Such locations are distant dream for the organized retailers. Hence, to meet both the ends i.e. offering products at lower cost and paying high operational cost is the major threat for the organized retailing.

The vast variety expectations and dynamic market pricing has posed major challenges for *quick response* to the market. Nowadays, the traditional retailers also offer wide variety at competitive prices. Also, the many producers directly sell their garments in the market at the competitive prices in large volume. It has posed a challenge to the marginal retailers. Also, the customer segments visiting the organized stores are the qualified people from middle and high income groups. They expect a better match for price and quality otherwise churn rate shall be more. The organization can easily duplicate the marketing policies but, *customer loyalty* can't be duplicated.

High Connectivity is required to understand the customers' expectations and means to meet them. The dynamic nature of organized retailing business needs high connectivity among customers, markets, and organizations. The failure of which shall result into lost sale and goodwill. Also, the *operational cost* of organized stores is very high as compared to the traditional retailers. It is due to the fact that the traditional retailers own shops and manage the operations by their own. For traditional retailers the rental charges, manpower cost, and tax burden are very less as compared to organized stores. On the other side all the services need to be paid for the organized retailing business. Also, the perfect competition nowadays has resulted into SC vs. SC. Many organizations have collaborated with national and international players to maximized *SC performance*. This intense competition has made the job of marginal organized retailers challenging. The price fluctuations, seasonal fluctuations, and changing customer preference has complicated the task of *demand forecasting*.

The *Government support* is also one of the major challenges for the retailing business. Here, the permission of government to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in organized retailing shall attract more customers by offering wide variety. Also, the presence of multiple nodal points complicates *operations management*. The organized retailing organizations need to focus on inefficient operations to improve profits. This shall also, help to improve *service levels.*

SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:

The focus on CA plays very important role for the success of business. Vivek and Ravindran [13] in their study on SCM and retailer performance showed that in the organized retailing the retailers have to deal with intense market competition both domestically as well as globally due to changing customer expectations. They further added that retail managers focus on three major supply chain trends; global sourcing practices, multi-channel route to market, and relationship based innovation for CA. The major CA items selected in consultations of practitioners and consultants in this field are discussed as follows:

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT:

Inventory shares more than 75% of the operating budget. Hence, organizations search for the ways to minimize inventory levels for CA. Walker et al. [3] highlighted the need to master the challenges of speed, convenience and reliability for better competitiveness.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

The organizations maintain their own production and procurement facilities to satisfy customers for CA. Many

researchers [14, 15, and 16] revealed customer satisfaction as a tool for CA.

PROFITABILITY:

In this competitive world, industrial houses take CA of bulk production or procurement. The cost reduction process forced the organizations to integrate the SC through cooperation, information sharing and developing effective business processes [17]. Many researchers addressed the benefits of improving profitability and strengthening organizational competitiveness [16 &18]. Selldin and Olhager [19] advocated profitability as an important construct for CA.

IDENTIFICATION OF CUSTOMER BASE:

The identification of customer base is also one of the CA for organizations. Ramdas and Speakman [20] in their study advocated it as a tool for CA. The accurate identification of customers' base shall help them to forecast their requirements and accordingly retail facilities shall be developed and filled. Nair [21] revealed that in order to gain CA, companies need to know their customers' base and financial shape.

However, India lacks significant study on CA for organized garment supply chain. Also, the visibility of these practices is limited [22]. Saad and Patel [23] in their empirical study on the automotive sector, quoted that Indian organization are striving hard to adopt new standards such as TQM, JIT, BPR and, SCM to enhance their performance for CA. Hence, more is needed to be done for CA.

SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

The better OP is one of the major requirements to survive in this competitive world. Vivek and Ravinandran, [13] identified; return on investments, market share, growth of ROI, sales, profit margin on sales, and overall competitive position for better OP of small scale industry in India. They further added that supplier performance significantly influences OP. Katou and Budhwar [24] in their empirical study on Greek manufacturing sector found out that OP consists of six variables as; effectiveness, efficiency, development, satisfaction, innovation, and quality. The major items selected in consultation of practitioners and consultants in this industry for CA are explained as follows:

MARKET PERFORMANCE:

Market performance is one of the most important indicators for OP [13]. The organizations having a good market share shall lead in competition.

SUPPLY CHAIN COMPETENCIES:

Nowadays there is SC vs. SC competition. A competent SC can save resources resulting into better OP [25 & 26].

STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION:

Stakeholders are the main actors to develop the financial base of the organization. Satisfied members shall remain attached otherwise they shall depart. Neely et al. [27] considered them as the focal point of the OP measurement process.

INNOVATION AND LEARNING:

It is also an important indicator for the measurement of OP [24]. The history has witnessed many organizations out of the business due to their failure to innovate and learn.

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS:

It is also one of the important indicators for OP as satisfied customers shall become loyal to the organization and repurchase shall be assured [24].

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:

The ultimate objective of all the organizations is to have better financial performance. Many researchers also revealed that financial performance is an important construct for the OP [13, 28, &29].

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

This research is based on primary data. The primary data was collected from the OGR as well as OFPR organisations with the help of a questionnaire for RC, CA and OP. The questionnaire was developed based on strong literature support in consultation of practitioners and consultants in the field of organized garment and farm product retailing. The respondents were selected based on: India Retail Report 2007 & 2009, Retail Telephone Directory, PROWESS, and Organization websites etc. The unit of analysis is the OGR and OFPR

organizations operating in the principal cities of Punjab, Chandigarh, and Gurgaon. The reason for selecting this north India belt is due to, good in sale/production and establishment in large numbers. The pre-pilot and pilot survey was done to improve the questionnaire. Later, large scale survey was done at the top, middle and lower level of OGR organizations by randomly selecting respondents based on telephone addresses. The Likert 5-point rated questionnaires were mailed after telephonic discussion and were followed for response. A total of 600 questionnaires were sent to OGR with receipt of 384 responses (Top=50, middle=100, lower=134) yielding a response rate of 64%. The 17 items identified for RC were based on the findings of Rajwinder et al. [6]. These are-Sourcing challenges (Forecasting, Product Sourcing, Govt. Support, Service Levels, and Operations Management), Locational challenges (Specialized Skills, Unorganized Stores, Transparency, and Manpower Management), Environmental challenges (Multiple Taxes, Quick Response, Inadequate Infrastructure, and Real Estate Cost), and Customer challenges (SC Performance, Customer Loyalty, Operational Cost, and High Connectivity). A total of 560 questionnaires were sent to organized farm product retailers with receipt of 402 responses (Top=100, middle=134, lower=168) yielding a response rate of 72%. Here, 16 items were identified for RC for organized farm products retailing. These are-Strategic Challenges (Product Sourcing, Transparency, Specialized Skills, and Manpower Management), Environmental Challenges (Karyana Stores, Multiple Taxes, Inadequate Infrastructure, and Real Estate Cost), Customer Challenges (Quick Response, Service levels, High Connectivity, and Customer Loyalty), and SC Challenges (Operational Cost, Operations Management, SC Performance, and Forecasting). The technique of confirmatory factor analysis has been used to test and validate the hypotheses. The proposed confirmatory models are shown in Fig. I and II below:

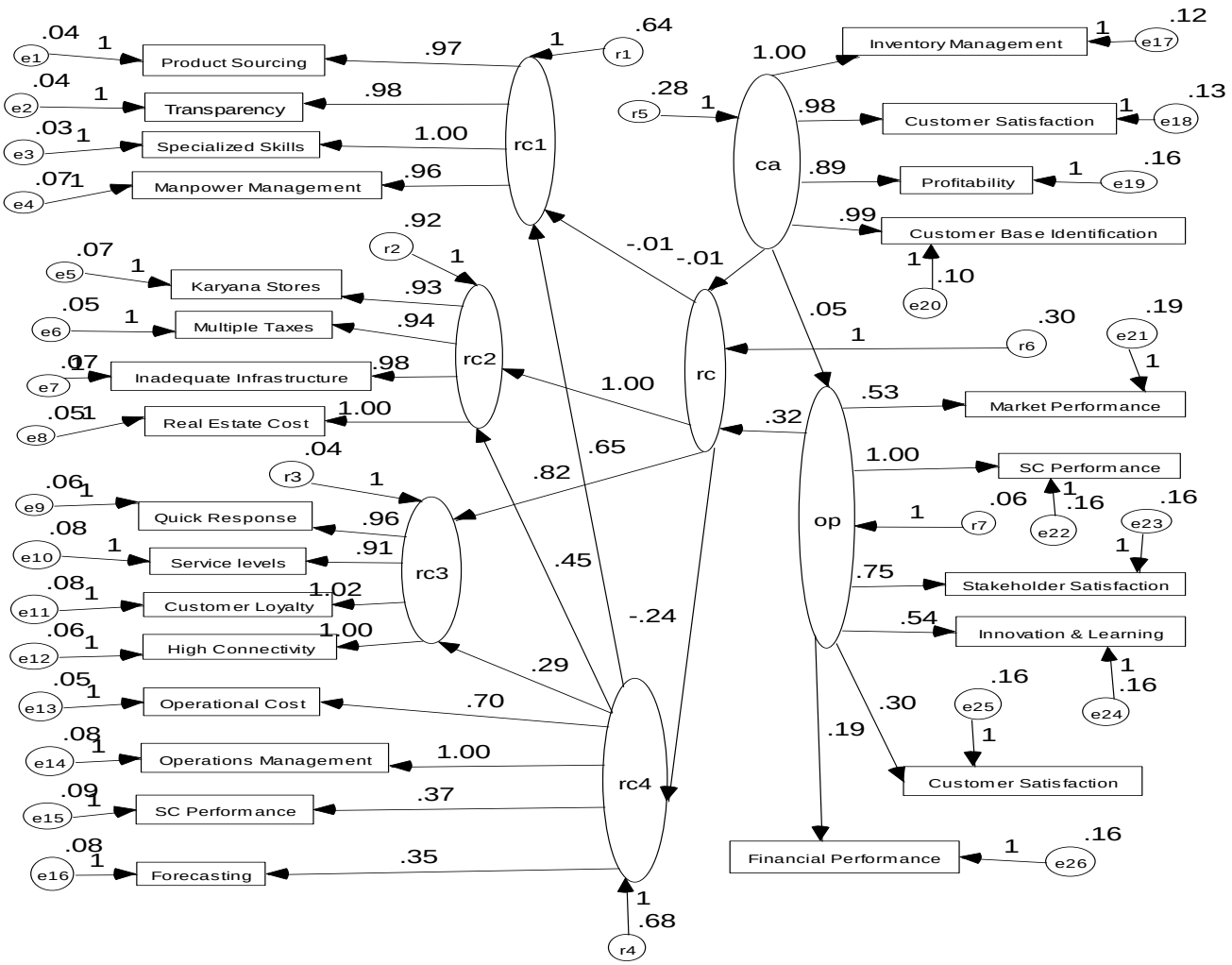

Figure I: The proposed model for organized farm product retailing

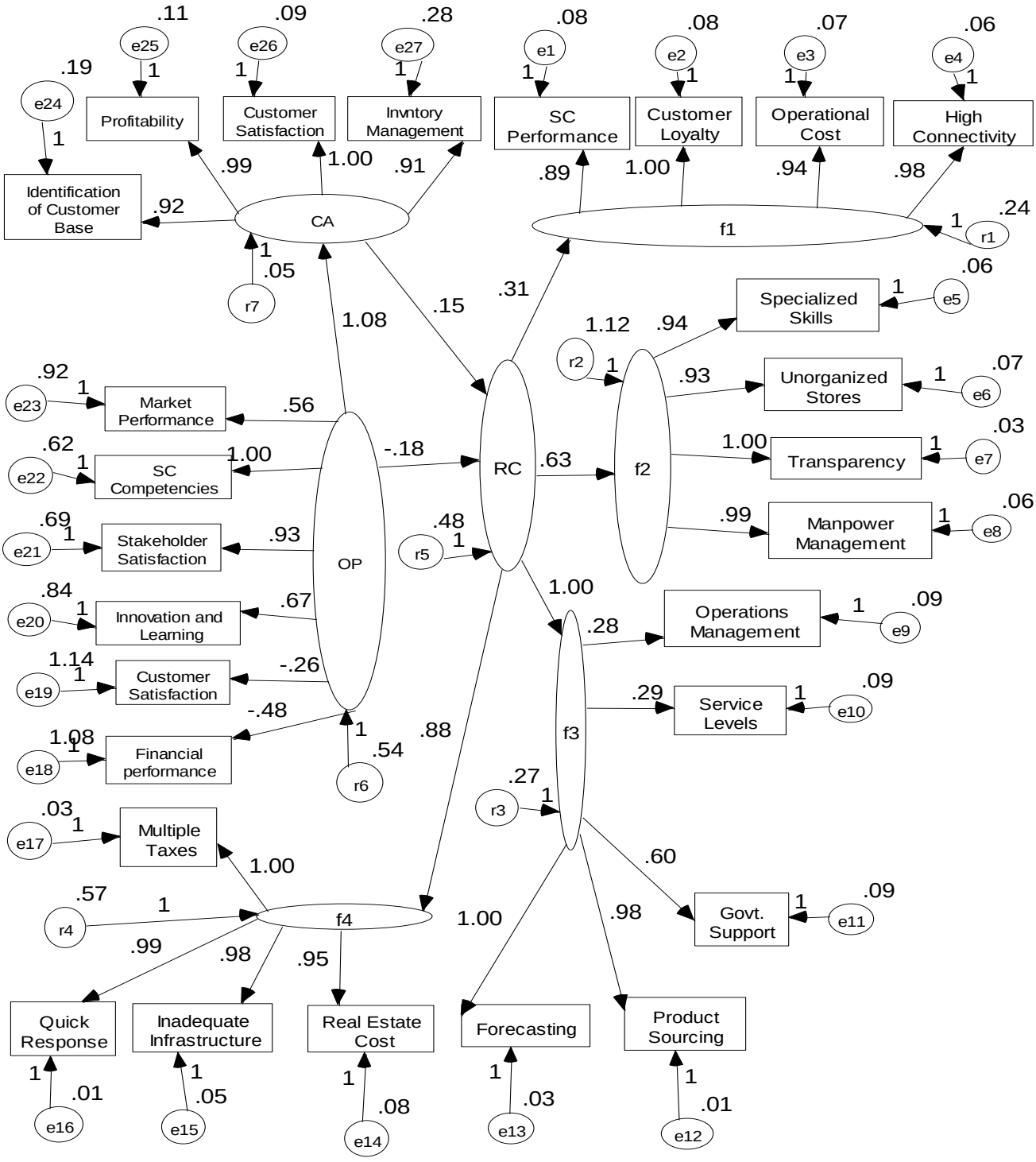

Figure II: The proposed model for organized garment retailing

The models shown in Fig. I and II are not significant. Hence, we have modified them as shown in Figure III and IV.

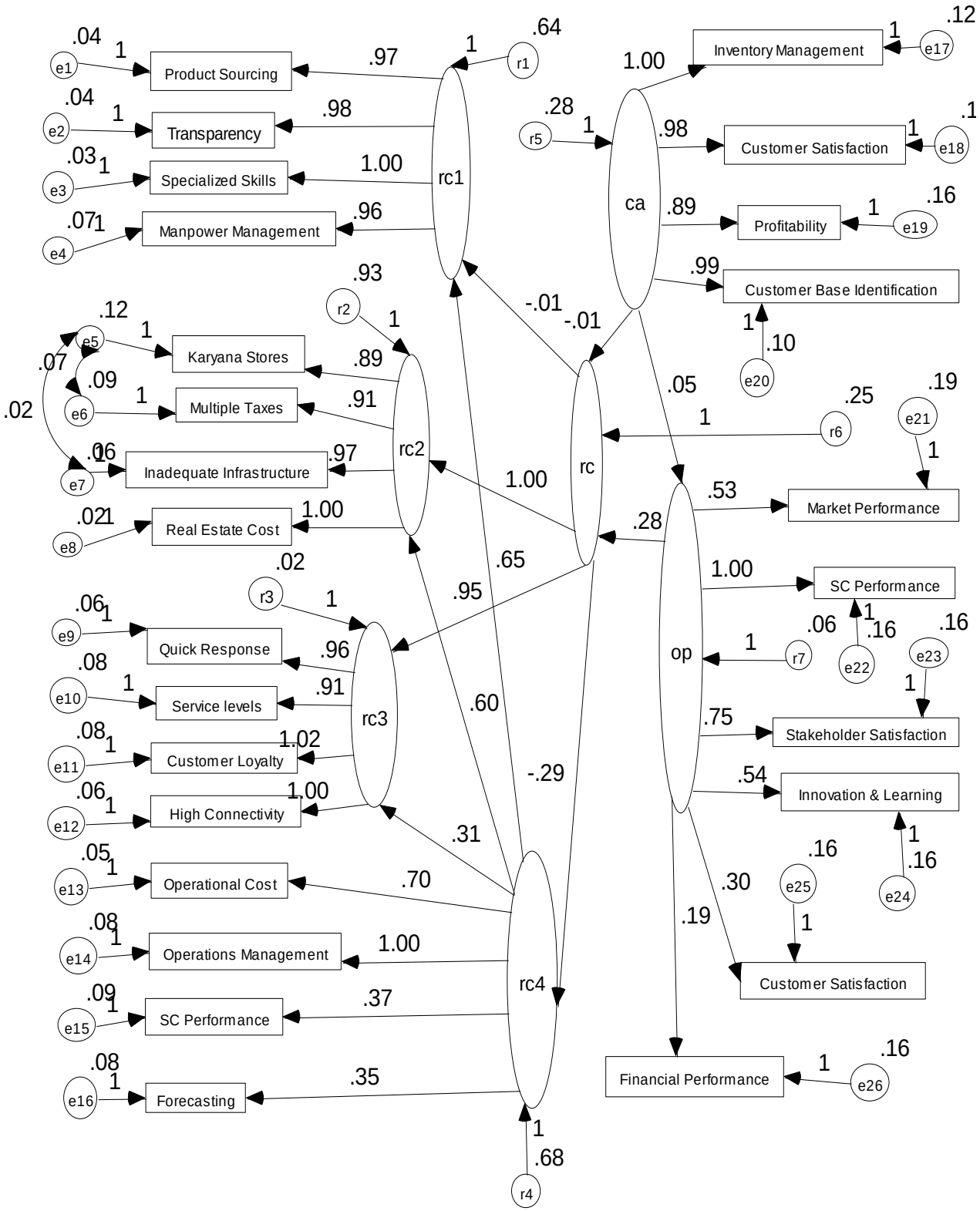

Figure III: The modified model for organized farm product retailing

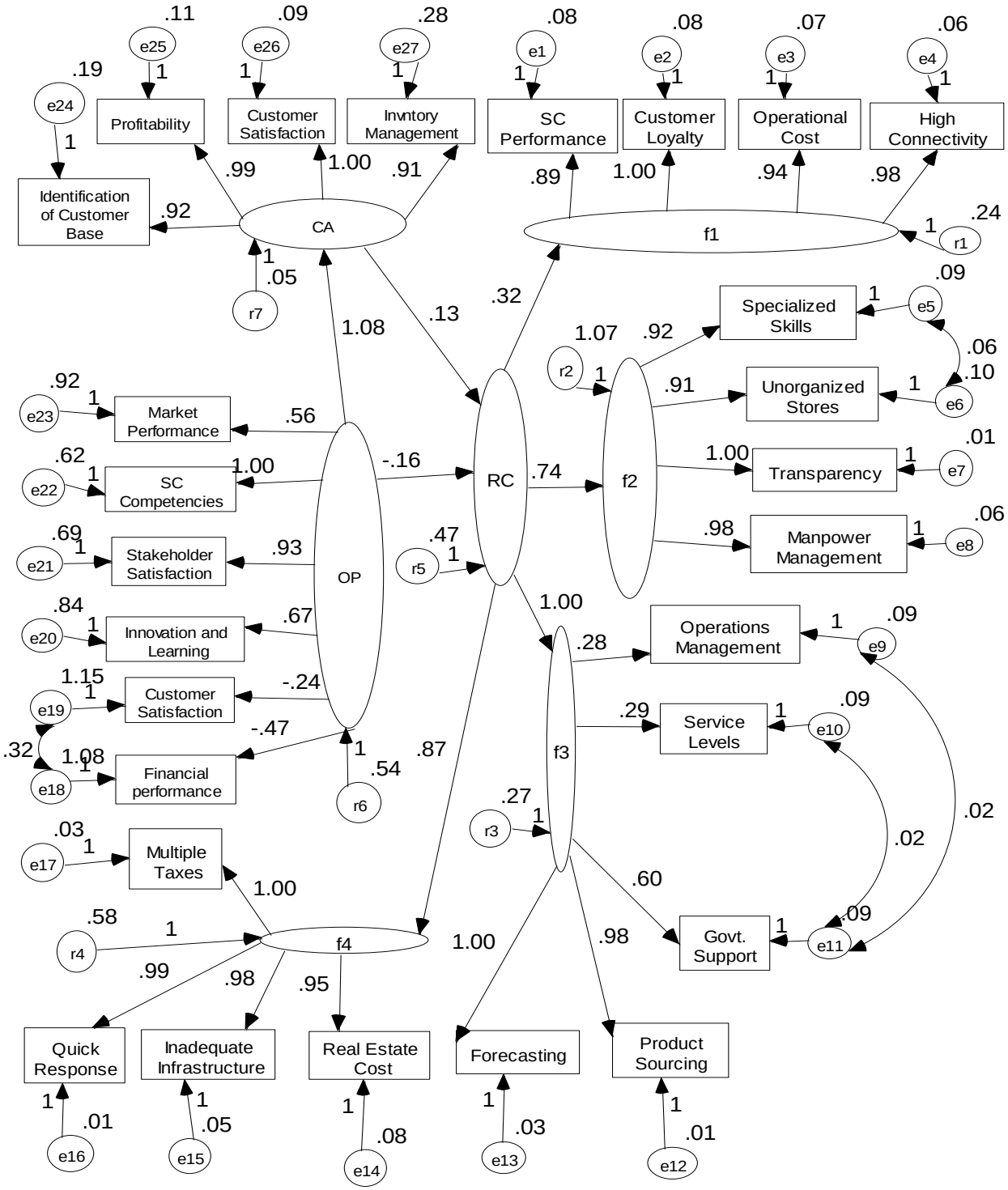

Figure IV: The modified model for organized garment retailing

CONFIRMATORY MODEL RESULTS FOR ORGANIZED FARM PRODUCT RETAILING:

The proposed confirmatory has been shown in Fig. I. This model was not significant. Hence, it was modified as shown in Fig. II. The model has Chi-square=3176.956, Degree of freedom=287, Level of significance=0.000. The values for fit indices have RMR=0.033, NFI=0.8, RFI=0.8, IFI=0.8, TLI=0.8, CFI=0.8. All these values are acceptable to validate the model. Here, it is pertinent mention that values for fit indices: NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, and CFI ≥ 0.8 RMR value≤0.05 and chi-square level of significance ≥0.05 is good enough for structural validity of the model [30]

The loadings for the strategic challenge (RC1) range from 0.96 to 0.96. The loading for specialized skills was set at 1.0. The other items load as; product sourcing (0.97), transparency (0.98), manpower management (0.96). The loading for environmental challenges (RC2) range from 0.93 to 0.98 and loading for real estate cost was set to 1.0.

The loading for other items in this construct are; karyana stores (0.89), multiple taxes (0.91), and inadequate infrastructure (0.97).The loadings for customer challenges (RC3) range from 1.02 to 0.91 and loading for customer loyalty is 1.02. The items in this construct load as; quick response (0.96), service levels (0.91), and high connectivity (1.0).The loading for SC challenges (RC4) range from 1.0 to 0.35 and operations management was set at 1.0 loading. The loading for organizational performance range from 1.26 to 0.22 and the loading for stakeholder satisfaction was set to 1.0. The loading for other items in this construct are; operational cost (0.70), SC performance (0.37), and forecasting (0.35). The loading for CA construct range from 1.0 to 0.89. In this construct the items load as; inventory management (1.0), customer satisfaction (0.98), profitability (0.89), and customer satisfaction (0.99). The loadings for OP are in the range of 1.0 to 0.19. Here, items load as; market performance (0.53), SC performance (1.0), stakeholder satisfaction (0.75), innovation and learning (0.54), customer satisfaction (0.30), and financial performance (0.19). All the loadings for these constructs are significant explaining their contribution for the same.

CONFIRMATORY MODEL RESULTS FOR ORGANIZED GARMENT RETAILING:

The proposed model is shown in Figure II. This model was not significant as the fit indices were not within the range. It has been modified based on the Modification Index and Co-Variance Matrix. Here, the error e5-e6, e11-e10, and e9-f11 have been correlated to improve the model. The modified model is shown in Figure IV. The modified model has Chi-square=196.863, Df= 313, p=0.00, RMR=0.052, RMSEA=0.518, GFI=0.872, NFI=0.880, RFI=0.853, IFI=0.890, TLI=0.882, and CFI=0.879. All these fit measures are significant [30].
All the factors of RC have significant loading. The loading pattern on RC is; Sourcing Challenges (f1)=0.32, Locational Challenges (f2)=0.74, Environmental Challenges (f3)=1.00 and Customer Challenges (f4)=0.84. All these loading are more than 0.05 hence are significant [30]. All the loadings of items on f1 are different and significant in the range of 1.0 to 0.89. The loadings of items on f2differently load from 1.0 to 0.98. The loadings on f3 load in the range of 1.0 to 0.28. Also, the loadings on f4 load differently in the range of 1.0 to 0.98. The loadings on the CA construct differently range from 1.0 to 0.99. Also, the loading pattern on OP differently ranges from 1.0 to 0.93. All the loadings are different and significant.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

The effect estimates for organized farm product retailing are shown in Table II.

Table II: Effect estimates of confirmatory factor model for organized farm retailing

		Competitive Advantage (ca)	Organizational Performance (op)
Total Effect	op	**0.054**	0.000
	rc	**0.008**	**0.277**
Direct Effect	op	0.054	0.000
	rc	-0.007	0.277
Indirect Effect	op	0.000	0.000
	rc	0.015	0.000
Chi-square=3176.956,Df=287,p=0.000.RMR=0.033,NFI=0.8,RFI=0.8,IFI=0.8,TLI=0.8,CFI=0.8.The model is significant			

The loading of OP on CA is 0.054. This value is significant to prove that farm retailers understand the match between OP and CA. Also, the loading of RC on OP (0.277)-is also significant. Hence, it shows that the farm retailers understand the match between these two constructs. However, the loading of RC on OP (0.008)-is not significant. It shows that the farm retailers need to improve the match between two constructs. The effect estimates for OGR has been shown in the Table III as follows:

Table III: The Effect Estimates

Effects		OP	CA	RC
Total Effect	CA	**1.078**	0.000	0.000
	RC	**-0.062**	**0.128**	0.000
Direct Effect	CA	1.078	0.000	0.000
	RC	-0.106	0.128	0.000
Indirect Effect	CA	0.000	0.000	0.000
	RC	0.168	0.000	0.000
Chi-square=196.863, Df= 313, p=0.00, RMR=0.052, RMSEA=0.518, GFI=0.872, NFI=0.880, RFI=0.853, IFI=0.890, TLI=0.882, and CFI=0.879. The model is significant				

The Total Effect of CA on OP (1.078) is significant. It shows that the retailers understand the match between competitive advantage and organizational performance.. Also the total effect of RC on CA (0.128) is significant. It shows that organized garment retailers understand the match between retail challenges and competitive advantage. The loading of RC on OP (0.062) is also significant. It shows that the organized garment retailers understand the match between retail challenges and organizational performance.
The comparison of total effect (Table II & III) shows the OGR practitioners have better understanding to match strategies for CA, OP and RC. On the other hand organized farm retailers fail to match RC with CA. Hence, they need to improve this limiting area for the betterment of the business.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

In this study we fail to contact more respondents from the top as well as middle level. It was due to their highly busy schedule. Also, many respondents hesitate to fill the questionnaire. It was due to the highly complicated procedure to get sanction for the same. Despite these difficulties we were able to get responses for pre-pilot, pilot and large scale survey. During discussion with the OGR and organized farm product practitioners we felt the need to study RC, CA and OP for organized and unorganized retailers for more gap analysis.

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