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### Green innovation, indeed a cornerstone in linking market requests and business performance. Evidence from the Spanish automotive components industry



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#### ABSTRACT

Many studies uphold market orientation as a key factor in creating and sustaining a firm's competitive advantage. This research aims to explore this topic further by including within the model the concept of green innovation. In particular, this paper empirically tests the mediating role of green innovation performance in the relationship between market orientation and organizational performance. This study relies on a sample of 145 firms belonging to the Spanish automotive components manufacturing sector. The results obtained by applying Partial Least Squares (PLS) path-modeling, a variance-based structural equations modeling technique, reveal that market orientation exerts a direct impact on organizational performance. Subsequently, we observe how the green innovation performance construct partially mediates the market orientation-organizational performance link. The paper brings some theoretical conclusions and implications for research and practice.

#### 1. Introduction

The environmental impact of human activity is a constantly growing global ethical concern for citizens, policy-makers and organizations. In this sense, corrective policies have been implemented in recent years to reduce or palliate this environmental damage (Chen, 2008). Organizations are not immune to this reality. On the contrary, as every complex system in search of the balance that will ensure long-term survival, companies should respond effectively to a double adjustment dynamic. On the one hand it is competitive adjustment, to achieve a certain level of market efficiency that requires optimizing the use of resources and capabilities, which are always limited. On the other hand it is legiti-

innovativeness and performance (Laforet, 2009).

In addition, sustainability has gradually become a pivotal concern for managers and policy-makers, to the extent that Esty and Winston (2006, p.18) highlight that "in today's world, no company, big or small, operating locally or globally, in manufacturing or services, can afford to ignore environmental issues". The increasing societal demands compel companies to integrate sustainability topics into their regular activity so that their social, environmental, and economic goals can be attained. There are two major driving forces that promote environmental management (Chen, 2008): (i) the international set of norms and regulations concerning environmental protection and (ii) consumers' environmental awareness (Chen et al., 2006). Whatever the reasons that