Abstract: Prior studies on SME marketing have outlined several specific features as unplanned marketing activities, product orientation or reactive strategy. From a functional marketing perspective, these specific features appear most likely to constrain marketing development in SME. As market-based organisational learning (MOL) rely on behavioural dynamism consistent with information gathering and dissemination and possibly learning orientation, it offers a slightly different perspective to study marketing implementation within SME.

Therefore, market-based organisational learning of a French firms sample is related to their specific features in order to observe whether they still constraints to SME.

The survey instrument is based on Sinkula et al. (1997) conceptualisation of market-based organisational learning process as well as on a prior set of 15 interviews with SME owner-managers. Contribution of both survey and prior interviews provide a MOL single scale measure within SME including four dimensions (information generation and distribution, marketing dynamism and market knowledge investigation).

Regardless of product orientation, which was found to contribute to MOL, hypotheses proposing negative consequences were all supported (marketing scepticism, short-term perspective, and lack of formalization). Hypotheses proposing a positive consequence for MOL as adaptation, experimentation and relational exchange were either supported.