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Unveiling the Impact of Entrepreneurial, Organizational Learning, Innovation, and Customer Orientations on Innovation Performance: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract: *This study explores the conceptual framework for understanding how entrepreneurial orientation, organizational learning orientation, innovation orientation, and customer orientation potentially impact innovation performance. Addressing the need for a comprehensive theoretical model, this research aims to clarify the roles of these orientations in fostering innovation within organizations. The study employs a conceptual approach, integrating existing literature to propose a model that outlines the relationships between these orientations and their expected effects on innovation performance. The conceptual framework suggests that entrepreneurial orientation drives innovation performance by creating a proactive and risk-taking environment. Organizational learning orientation is posited to enhance innovation performance through the continuous acquisition and application of knowledge. Innovation orientation is proposed to support innovation performance by emphasizing the development of new ideas and processes. Additionally, customer orientation is expected to improve innovation performance by aligning innovations with customer needs and preferences. This framework offers valuable insights for future empirical research and provides a foundation for understanding how these orientations can be effectively managed to boost innovation. Future studies are encouraged to test this model empirically to validate and refine the proposed relationships.*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial orientation, organizational learning orientation, innovation orientation, and customer orientation are key factors influencing innovation performance within organizations. Alegre and Chiva (2013) emphasize the importance of organizational learning capability and innovation performance as intermediate steps in enhancing the relationship

between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. Additionally, Iqbal et al. (2021) highlight the positive direct relationships among entrepreneurial orientations, organizational commitment, and innovation performance. Cho and Lee (2018) stress that entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial orientation possess the ability to identify new opportunities, create resources for innovation, and frequently introduce innovative products. Moreover, Zhai and colleagues (2018) demonstrate a significantly positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance, particularly when considering absorptive capacity. However, several limitations have been identified in previous research on the relationship between these orientations and innovation performance. One significant limitation is the lack of consensus regarding the direct impact of customer orientation on innovation performance.

While some studies suggest a direct relationship between customer orientation and innovation performance, others propose that this influence may be indirect, mediated by operational processes and capability-building activities (Wang et al., 2016). This discrepancy in findings highlights a gap in understanding the precise mechanisms through which customer orientation drives innovation performance, leading to a lack of clarity in the literature.

Moreover, the existing literature also presents controversies regarding the differential effects of customer acquisition and retention orientations on innovation performance. Arnold et al. (2010) delve into this by investigating how firms' customer acquisition and retention orientations impact radical and incremental innovation performance. This exploration reveals a nuanced relationship between customer orientations and innovation outcomes, indicating that the type of customer focus adopted by a firm can have varying effects on the nature and extent of innovation achieved. However, the specific mechanisms underlying these effects remain unclear, contributing to the existing gap in knowledge within this domain.

Another limitation in previous studies lies in the understanding of how entrepreneurial orientation interacts with organizational resilience. found a positive impact of entrepreneurial orientation dimensions on organizational resilience (Asare-Kyire, 2023), but the specific pathways through which entrepreneurial orientation enhances resilience and the boundary conditions that may influence this relationship remain underexplored. This gap underscores the need for further research to elucidate the intricate dynamics between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational resilience, providing valuable insights for organizational strategy and performance enhancement.

Furthermore, the literature reveals a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the interplay between market orientation, entrepreneurship orientation, and innovation performance. Taheri et al. (2019) emphasize the pivotal role of entrepreneurial orientation in driving innovation within the context of market-focused learning, while Brockman et al. (2012) highlight the significance of market orientation in enhancing firm performance alongside factors like entrepreneurship, innovativeness, and organizational learning. This discrepancy underscores the complexity of the relationships between these orientations and their collective impact on innovation performance, necessitating a more integrated and holistic approach to studying these constructs.

The significance of addressing these gaps in the literature is paramount for several reasons. Firstly, gaining a deeper understanding of the nuanced relationships between entrepreneurial, organizational learning, innovation, and customer orientations can provide firms with actionable insights to optimize their strategies for innovation performance. Secondly, bridging the gaps in previous research can contribute to the development of more robust theoretical frameworks that capture the multifaceted nature of innovation performance.

Moreover, addressing these gaps can have practical implications for managers and decision-makers in organizations. By shedding light on the optimal configurations of entrepreneurial, organizational learning, innovation, and customer orientations for driving innovation performance, research in this area can guide strategic decision-making processes and resource allocation within firms. Thus, the aims of this study is to investigate the effects of entrepreneurial orientation, organizational learning orientation, innovation orientation, and customer orientation on innovation performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Marketing

Entrepreneurial marketing is a strategic approach that integrates entrepreneurial principles into the marketing function. It involves a proactive and innovative mindset that focuses on identifying and seizing opportunities to attract and retain profitable customers (Ismail & Zainol, 2018). This concept emphasizes traits such as innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, and opportunity pursuit, without being constrained by current resource limitations (Kraus et al., 2010). Entrepreneurial marketing is not just about traditional marketing strategies but also about creating a supportive network and fostering relationships to enable the firm to flourish (Stokes, 2000).

Moreover, entrepreneurial marketing is characterized by various dimensions that contribute to its effectiveness. These dimensions include proactiveness, opportunity focus, leveraging, innovativeness, risk-taking, value creation, and customer intensity (Becherer et al., 2012). By incorporating these elements into the marketing function, organizations, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, can achieve qualitative and quantitative outcome goals such as company success, customer satisfaction, financial success, and overall excellence (Becherer et al., 2012).

In essence, entrepreneurial marketing goes beyond conventional marketing practices by integrating entrepreneurial principles into the marketing function. It involves a strategic and forward-thinking approach that prioritizes seizing opportunities, managing risks innovatively, leveraging resources effectively, and creating unique value propositions to drive business success (Ismail & Zainol, 2018). This approach is particularly relevant in today's competitive business landscape, where agility, creativity, and a proactive stance are essential for sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

Factors that influence and shape the entrepreneurial marketing strategies adopted by businesses are essential for understanding the unique approach of entrepreneurial marketing compared to traditional marketing practices. Stokes (2000) highlights the differences between entrepreneurial marketing and traditional marketing theory by examining key marketing concepts. Jones and Rowley (2011) propose a conceptual model for entrepreneurial marketing that integrates entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, innovation orientation, and customer orientation. This model identifies the components of entrepreneurial marketing and illustrates the interplay between different orientations in shaping marketing strategies.

Moreover, Franco et al. (2014) emphasize the significance of networking in entrepreneurial marketing for building and supporting marketing activities. They also stress the role of marketing management competencies in driving entrepreneurial marketing efforts. Additionally, Owusu et al. (2022) introduce entrepreneurial orientation, social network ties, and market intelligence generation as distinct antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. These factors play a pivotal role in shaping the mindset and actions of entrepreneurs towards marketing their ventures effectively.

In essence, entrepreneurial marketing integrates theoretical concepts, and practical strategies, to shape how entrepreneurs execute their marketing efforts. By considering factors such as innovation and customer orientation, businesses can develop a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial marketing and adapt their strategies to excel in a dynamic and competitive environment.

Entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a fundamental concept in entrepreneurship literature, encompassing various dimensions. One common definition of EO is provided by , who describe it as a strategic approach characterized by actively seeking new opportunities and making significant advancements despite uncertainties (Covin & Wales, 2012). However, there is no universally accepted definition of EO, as highlighted by , who notes that scholars have different interpretations, such as entrepreneurial intensity, style, and propensity (Eijdenberg, 2016). This lack of consensus underscores the complexity and multidimensionality of EO.

Moreover, emphasize the importance of environmental factors in shaping sustainable entrepreneurial orientation, which integrates entrepreneurial orientation and corporate social responsibility (Perlines & Cisneros, 2018). They found that sustainable entrepreneurial orientation significantly impacts the international performance of family firms, with the environment playing a positive moderating role. This highlights the evolving nature of EO, where sustainability and social responsibility are becoming integral components.

Additionally, explore the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance, indicating that EO is a critical factor influencing organizational outcomes (Cho & Lee, 2018). This further underscores the significance of EO in driving success and competitiveness in entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, propose a model of sustainable entrepreneurship that involves recognizing social or ecological issues, developing solutions with a triple bottom line approach, and entering sustainable markets (Belz & Binder, 2015). This model showcases how EO can be aligned with sustainability principles to create long-term value. Therefore, entrepreneurial orientation is a multifaceted concept that involves proactive behaviors, strategic decision-making, and a focus on innovation and opportunity-seeking. It is influenced by individual characteristics, environmental factors, and the integration of social responsibility and sustainability principles. Understanding the diverse dimensions of EO is crucial for entrepreneurs and organizations aiming to thrive in dynamic and competitive business environments.

Learning orientation

Organizational learning orientation involves the continuous acquisition of knowledge, skills, and insights within an organization to enhance performance and adapt to changing environments. Market orientation, on the other hand, focuses on understanding and meeting customer needs in a competitive market. Research suggests that a market orientation is a foundational element for a learning organization (Farrell, 2000). Organizations that are market-oriented are more likely to transition into learning organizations as they understand the importance of responding to customer demands and market changes (Farrell, 2000).

Organizational learning orientation can lead to restructuring organizational processes and reallocating resources to improve the effectiveness of commercializing new products (Mu & Benedetto, 2011). This demonstrates the practical implications of organizational learning in driving innovation and competitiveness. Market orientation is considered essential in stimulating organizational learning, acting as a precursor to organizational learning but requiring additional cultural aspects such as entrepreneurship to facilitate higher-order learning (Vijande et al., 2005). This highlights the interconnectedness of various organizational orientations in promoting a

comprehensive approach to learning and adaptation.

Furthermore, integrating market knowledge into organizational learning processes is emphasized as a strategy to gain a competitive advantage (Hoe, 2008). By incorporating a market-based approach to organizational learning, companies can utilize external information on customers and competitors to enhance strategic decision-making and performance. Organizational learning not only involves identifying and rectifying errors but also evolving knowledge and values within the organization to develop new problem-solving skills and capabilities (Gilaninia et al., 2013). This underscores the dynamic nature of organizational learning and its role in improving organizational performance and competitiveness. Therefore, organizational learning orientation is closely tied to market orientation and other cultural elements within an organization.

Innovation orientation

Innovation orientation is a learning philosophy within organizations characterized by shared standards and beliefs about learning and knowledge that guide all functional areas towards innovation (Siguaw et al., 2006). This concept underscores the significance of fostering a culture that values continuous learning and the generation of new ideas to promote innovation across all business aspects.

Various types of innovation orientations exist in organizations. For example, sustainable entrepreneurship involves an innovative, market-oriented, and personality-driven approach to creating economic and societal value through environmentally or socially beneficial innovations (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Market orientation also plays a crucial role in enabling balanced innovation programs within organizations by influencing new product success and different types of innovation based on learning styles, such as adaptive learning leading to incremental innovation and generative learning leading to radical innovation (Baker, 2007).

Furthermore, extensive research has explored the impact of innovation orientation on business performance and survival. Studies have demonstrated that innovativeness, propelled by market orientation and marketing innovation, can significantly impact business performance and enhance firm survival, particularly during crises (Hult et al., 2004; Naidoo, 2010). This underscores the strategic importance of nurturing innovation orientation within organizations to drive growth, competitiveness, and resilience in challenging times. Thus, innovation orientation is a fundamental component of organizational strategy that shapes how firms approach learning, knowledge creation, and the development of new ideas.

Customer orientation

Customer orientation is a fundamental concept in the realm of business and marketing, crucial for organizations aiming to be market-oriented. It encompasses a set of behaviors that demonstrate a high level of concern for understanding and fulfilling customer needs, thereby ensuring long-term customer satisfaction (Homburg et al., 2010). This orientation is not only about meeting customer needs but also about the enjoyment and tendency of employees in doing so (Singh & Koshy, 2008). It is considered an individual-level trait that significantly impacts the performance of service workers and their ability to contribute to the organization's market orientation (Brown et al., 2002).

Customer orientation can be further classified into different types, such as functional and relational customer orientation. Functional customer orientation focuses on understanding and meeting customer needs efficiently, while relational customer orientation emphasizes building long-term relationships with customers to ensure their loyalty and satisfaction (Shu et al., 2019). Studies have shown that customer orientation plays a vital role in fostering innovativeness within

sales departments by enhancing positive conflict and reducing negative conflict, thereby contributing to the overall success of the organization (Matsuo, 2006). Thus, customer orientation is a multifaceted concept that involves not only understanding and meeting customer needs but also building lasting relationships and fostering innovation within organizations.

Innovation performance

Innovation performance refers to the effectiveness with which an organization translates innovative ideas into tangible outcomes that positively impact its overall success. This performance is typically evaluated by the organization's capacity to introduce new products, services, processes, or business models that create value for customers and enhance its competitive position in the market. The concept of innovation performance encompasses various dimensions, including market performance and product performance (Costa & Monteiro, 2016). It is important to highlight that innovation performance is not solely about the economic success of innovations but also involves factors such as knowledge management processes, creativity, and knowledge intensity (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011).

There are different types of innovation that contribute to innovation performance, such as technology-based and market-based innovations. Research indicates that technology-based innovations tend to have a more significant impact on performance compared to market-based innovations, attributed to the enhanced benefits they offer to mainstream customers in established markets (Zhou et al., 2005). Therefore, organizations seeking to enhance their innovation performance should consider strategic orientations that align with these different types of innovations to maximize their impact on overall performance. Therefore, innovation performance is a multifaceted concept that involves leveraging knowledge, creativity, and various types of innovations to drive organizational performance.

Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Framework

Entrepreneurial orientation, organizational learning orientation, innovation orientation, and customer orientation are crucial factors that significantly impact organizational performance. Entrepreneurial orientation involves a proactive and innovative approach towards business activities, which has been linked to improved firm performance through the enhancement of organizational learning capability and innovation performance (Alegre & Chiva, 2013). Organizational learning orientation focuses on the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills within the organization, leading to positive effects on performance directly and indirectly through fostering innovation (Morales et al., 2012). Innovation orientation drives organizational performance by encouraging the development and implementation of new ideas and processes, thereby positively influencing overall outcomes (Morales et al., 2012). Additionally, customer orientation, by prioritizing customer needs and satisfaction, serves as a valuable resource that can enhance frontline employee job outcomes and contribute to organizational performance (Zablah et al., 2012). These orientations, when effectively integrated and managed, can create a competitive advantage for firms by improving their performance (Hult & Ketchen, 2001; Noble et al., 2002). We thus propose several hypotheses:

H1: Entrepreneurial orientation correlates with innovation performance
H2: Organizational learning orientation correlates with innovation performance
H3: Innovation orientation correlates with innovation performance
H4: Customer orientation correlates with innovation performance

The conceptual framework for this study (see Fig. 1) depicts the link between the primary variables investigated.

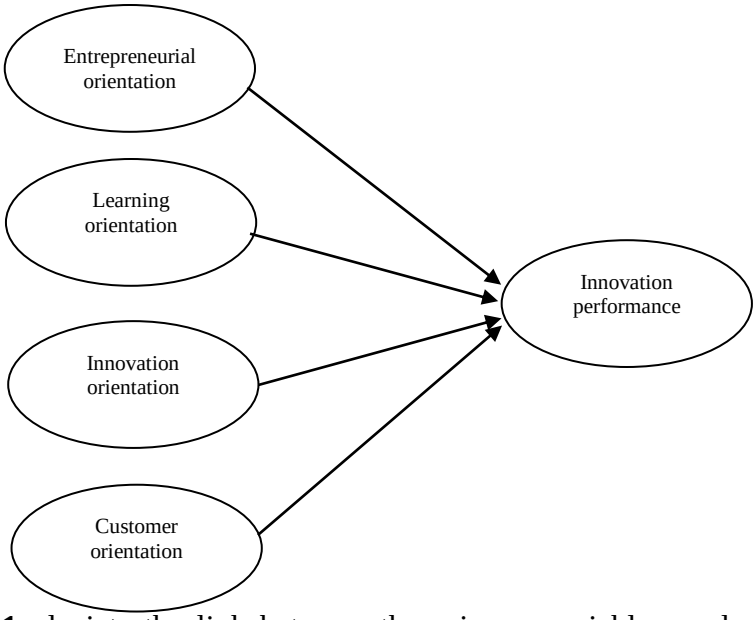


Fig. 1. depicts the link between the primary variables analyzed and serves as the conceptual foundation for this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research will employ a quantitative method to thoroughly understand the relationships among various variables. The population will consist of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across different industries, with a sample size of urbanism companies from North Sumatera, Indonesia, selected based on data availability and study feasibility.

The research constructs and measurement items include Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), which will be assessed using items such as proactivity, risk-taking, innovation, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness. Organizational Learning Orientation (OL) will be measured by items including learning from failures and successes, continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and experimentation. Innovation Orientation (IO) will encompass innovation culture, processes, outcomes, and strategies, while Customer Orientation (CO) will be measured through customer needs identification, satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. Innovation Performance (IP) will be evaluated via product, process, and service innovation. The industry type will serve as a control variable to account for its effects on innovation performance.

Data collection will be conducted through a structured questionnaire distributed to the selected SMEs. For data analysis, the Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS-PM) algorithm will be employed, as it is suitable for complex models with multiple latent variables and effective for small sample sizes. The analysis will involve data preparation, application of the PLS-PM algorithm to estimate the structural model, assessment of the measurement model for reliability and validity, and hypothesis testing to examine the relationships among the research constructs and the control variable.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study anticipates several key outcomes regarding the relationship between different orientations and innovation performance. It is expected that a strong

entrepreneurial orientation will positively correlate with innovation performance. Firms that exhibit high levels of proactivity, risk-taking, innovation, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness are likely to foster an environment conducive to innovation. These attributes will enable firms to identify new opportunities and implement innovative solutions, thereby enhancing their innovation performance. Additionally, the study anticipates that firms with a high organizational learning orientation will experience improved innovation performance. Continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and learning from both failures and successes are expected to create a robust learning culture that supports innovation. This culture will help firms adapt to changes and implement new processes effectively. Furthermore, a positive correlation between innovation orientation and innovation performance is expected. Firms that prioritize innovation culture, processes, outcomes, and strategies are likely to be more successful in developing and implementing new ideas. This focus on innovation is expected to drive overall organizational performance by enhancing the firm's ability to innovate continuously. Moreover, the study expects a significant positive correlation between customer orientation and innovation performance. Firms that prioritize understanding and meeting customer needs are likely to develop more relevant and successful innovations. Customer orientation is expected to provide valuable insights that guide the innovation process, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, the study anticipates that these orientations will improve firms' innovation performance.

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