

The Absorptive Capacity and Knowledge Sharing Models on Seblak MSMEs Business Performance in Bekasi

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Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing on the business performance of Seblak MSMEs in Bekasi City. In the increasingly competitive food industry, absorptive capacity, as an organization's ability to acquire, assimilate, and utilize external knowledge, becomes an important factor for innovation and market response. In addition, knowledge sharing also supports the exchange of information and expertise within and between organizations, thereby improving product quality and operational efficiency. Through a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected from 100 MSMEs through purposive sampling techniques and analyzed using the SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares) method. The results reveal that absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing have a significant and positive influence on business performance, both directly and through synergistic interactions. The findings emphasize the importance of structured knowledge management and a culture of collaboration to drive innovation and improve competitiveness. The practical implications of this study include recommendations for MSMEs to strengthen absorptive capacity and optimize knowledge sharing practices as a strategy to improve market position and business sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) contribute up to 60% of Indonesia's GDP, making them important to the local and national economy amidst intensifying economic competition, especially in the food sector (Anggraeni, S., Kusuma, A., & Lestari, 2022). The traditional food industry, including 'Seblak', is one of the fastest growing food subsectors in Bekasi (Nugroho & Wahyuni, 2021). The Nusantara's specialty food, namely seblak, is in high demand by locals and tourists from other regions, opening up a sizable market and encouraging competition among businesses to keep innovate (Aisyah & Nugraha, 2022).

The ability of MSMEs absorptive capacity to absorb outside information is critical to adapting to changes in the market and creating relevant innovations (Nugroho & Wahyuni, 2021).

MSMEs are able to improve product innovation and competitiveness by identifying, absorbing, and utilizing new information due to their absorptive capacity (B. Utami, N., Dewi, L., & Anggoro, 2022). Profitability, growth, and customer satisfaction are key dimensions of business performance in the culinary sector (Syahyono, 2022). According to a study, MSMEs can respond to market demand and launch trend-setting products faster if they actively build absorptive capacity (Dewi, M., Handayani, R., & Pratama, 2023). These skills help business owners in the Seblak industry to create attractive product designs and new flavors, as well as successful marketing plans (Sari, P., & Pratama, 2022).

Knowledge exchange is important to the growth of MSMEs besides absorption capacity (Kim, S., Park, J., & Lee, 2021). Knowledge sharing refers to a social activity that has been proven to increase productivity and product quality both within and between companies (Kim, S., Park, J., & Lee, 2021). Sharing knowledge on innovative recipes, marketing tactics or operational strategies can improve productivity and product quality in food businesses, including Seblak (M. Pratama, M., Utami, R., & Handoko, 2021). In addition, it has been mentioned that MSMEs are able to develop their business networks and gain more negotiating leverage against larger rivals by engaging in cross-organizational collaboration through information sharing (Valentim, M.L., Lisboa, J.V., & Franco, 2016). With knowledge sharing, companies can maximize the use of information obtained to develop business (Stelmaszczyk, 2020).

The quality and speed of innovations made by organizations can be improved by effective information management, knowledge development, and equitable knowledge sharing among all members of the organization (W. Pratama, M., Utami, R., & Handoko, 2021). As they still hold a small market share, SMEs—a business sector that requires quality and rapid innovation—should strive to effectively implement knowledge sharing (Valentim, M. L., Lisboa, J. V., & Franco, 2016).

The two main components of knowledge sharing are the collecting, which involves staff members or businesses collecting information, and contributing, which involves sharing information with other members of the organization (Kang, M., & Lee, 2021b). Businesses in comparable industries, such as Seblak companies, can collaborate by exchanging knowledge, which encourages learning from each other, adapting to shifting trends, and improving overall business performance by exchanging best practices (Rahardjo, P., Wijaya, S., & Susanto, 2021).

Knowledge sharing and the use of absorbing capabilities work to drive the development of innovations that not only improve product quality, but also shorten time to market (Kang, M., & Lee, 2021). According to previous research, MSMEs, that actively address these two factors can react more quickly to customer demand and create goods that are more in line with market needs (H. Utami, N., Dewi, L., & Anggoro, 2022). For instance, a key competitive advantage in the Seblak business can be gained by recognizing trends, such as the use of organic components or environmentally friendly packaging (Aisyah, N., & Nugraha, 2022). Thus, absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing are not only tools to survive in the market, but also a strategy to expand market reach (Kim, S., 2021).

These two ideas influence the marketing plan and operational effectiveness of MSMEs besides product innovation (Kang, M., & Lee, 2021a). Businesses can adapt new technologies or more efficient work processes by sharing knowledge, thereby increasing efficiency (Kim, S., et al; Wahyuni, L., & Nugroho, 2021). Seblak MSMEs, for example, can exchange knowledge on better food preservation techniques to increase the shelf life of their products. In terms of marketing, information exchange facilitates the creation of more targeted promotional tactics according to consumer demand, including using social media to increase brand awareness (Kang, M., & Lee, 2021a). This provides MSMEs the opportunity to connect with new clients and improve their relationships with current clients.

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As a result, a corporate culture that encourages creativity and teamwork is crucial in the implementation of effective absorptive capacity and information sharing. MSMEs are more likely to produce products that are creative and appealing to customers when they foster a work environment that welcomes new perspectives and information sharing (M. Pratama, M., Utami, R., & Handoko, 2021). Building this culture is an important step in ensuring enterprise sustainability in the highly competitive Seblak sector. In order to improve the competitiveness and performance of MSMEs in the traditional food sector, this research highlights the importance of improving the ability to absorb and exchange information (Valentim, M.L., Lisboa, J.V., & Franco, 2016).

This study aims to analyze the influence of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing on the business performance of Seblak food MSMEs in Bekasi (Aisyah, N., & Nugraha, 2022). The results of the study are expected to provide insight into the key factors that support the improvement of innovation and competitiveness of MSMEs in the traditional food industry in Indonesia (Kusuma & Sari, 2022).

Hypotheses

The ability of an organization to identify, absorb, and use relevant external knowledge to drive business development and sustainability is known as absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 2021). This capacity is important, especially for MSMEs, which must innovate to remain competitive despite often being under-resourced (Anggraeni, 2021). Absorptive capacity improves operational efficiency and competitiveness by enabling MSMEs to access new technologies, adjust to market changes, and capitalize on external opportunities (Zahra & George, 2002). Utami et al., (2023) mentioned that strong absorptive MSMEs capacity is better able to capture external opportunities than those without, according to the research.

H1: High absorptive capacity has a significant positive influence on MSME performance as reflected in increased revenue, market share, and operational efficiency.

Knowledge sharing within an organization to other members aims to improve efficiency and collaboration. Widely disseminated knowledge can engage innovation and offer original answers to company problems (I, Nonaka., & H, 2020). Knowledge sharing in MSMEs facilitates the spread of innovative concepts and industry best practices that can accelerate the achievement of peak performance. Moreover, it has been proven that information sharing can improve competitiveness and productivity by spreading innovative ideas and best practices (Nguyen, T. D., Pham, H. T., & Nguyen, 2023).

H2: Effective knowledge sharing in an organization has a significant positive influence on MSME performance, including increased product innovation, operational efficiency, and market share.

Effective knowledge exchange and high absorptive capacity can help each other in improving company performance. A company that encourages knowledge exchange among its employees and has a strong absorptive capacity will be more creative and adaptable to changes in the market, thus improving its performance (Zahra & George, 2002). High absorptive capacity and a knowledge-sharing culture enhance an organization's ability to innovate sustainably, make decisions faster, and respond better to market changes. According to empirical research, this combination can result in better performance rather than if the two components are used separately (Wang et al., 2024).

H3: High absorptive capacity and effective knowledge sharing have a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, which is reflected in increased revenue, market share, and operational efficiency.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to analyze the influence of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing on business performance of MSMEs in the Seblak food

sector in Bekasi. Primary data were collected through a survey of 100 MSMEs in the Seblak food sector in Bekasi City and a 10-point Likert scale-based questionnaire, which was completed by MSME owners or employees involved in decision-making. The survey used a purposive sampling method to ensure that respondents were relevant to the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

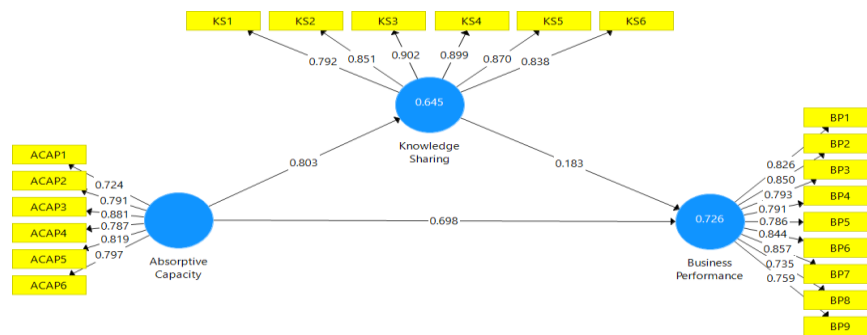


Figure 1. Evaluation of The Lower Order Construct Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Indicator of Outer Loading Reliability

The first step in assessing the outer model involves examining the outer loading of the indicators. A high outer loading indicates a lot of similarity in the construct. The minimum value of outer loading is 0.7 (Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, 2022). The following are the results of testing outer loading which can be seen in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1. Results of Outer Loading Test

	ACAP	BP	KS
ACAP1	0,724		
ACAP2	0,791		
ACAP3	0,881		
ACAP4	0,787		
ACAP5	0,819		
ACAP6	0,797		
BP1		0,826	
BP2		0,850	
BP3		0,793	
BP4		0,791	
BP5		0,786	
BP6		0,844	
BP7		0,857	
BP8		0,735	
BP9		0,759	
KS1			0,792
KS2			0,851
KS3			0,902
KS4			0,899
KS5			0,870

KS6			0,838
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Based on the results of convergent validity testing in the table above, it can be seen that all indicators have an outer loading value ≥ 0.70 . Therefore, all indicators in this study can be declared to have met the criteria.

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Internal Consistency Reliability)

The next test on the outer model is the internal consistency reliability test, which was carried out through the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values. The Cronbach alpha value describes the correlation of indicators on a construct, while composite reliability looks at the difference in outer loading of indicator variables. The accepted Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values must be more than 0.6 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Reliability Test of Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Extracted Average Mean Variance (AVE)
Absorptive Capacity	0,888	0,890	0,915	0,642
Business Performance	0,932	0,934	0,943	0,649
Knowledge Sharing	0,929	0,932	0,944	0,739

Based on the test results in table above, all latent variables meet the reliability test criteria. This is based on the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values of all latent variables with a value > 0.7 . Therefore, all latent variables are declared reliable after meeting all measurement criteria.

Convergent Validity (AVE)

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which a construct is able to measure each of its indicators. Convergent validity testing can be done by evaluating Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to (Hair et al., 2022) when the AVE value is greater than 0.5, the construct is able to explain more than 50% of the indicator variance.

Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value Absorptive Capacity has an AVE value of 0.642, which indicates that this construct is able to explain 64.2% of the variance of its indicators, indicating good convergent validity. Business Performers has an AVE value of 0.649, which means that this construct is able to explain 64.9% of the variance of its indicators, also indicating strong convergent validity. Meanwhile, Knowledge Sharing has an AVE value of 0.739, which indicates that this construct is able to explain 73.9% of the variance of its indicators, representing adequate convergent validity. Overall, all constructs have a fairly good AVE value, with each being greater than 0.5, indicating a good ability to explain the variance of their indicators

Discriminant Validity

Evaluation used to assess how different a construct from other constructs to capture different phenomena can be done with discriminant validity tests. Researchers use several tests used in discriminant validity, such as the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross loading, and heterotrait monotrait ration (HTMT) (Hair et al., 2022).

The first criterion that needs to be considered in discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker criterion. the square root value of the AVE must be greater than the value of its highest relationship

with other constructs, which can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criteria

	ACAP	BP	KS
ACAP	0,801		
BP	0,845	0,806	
KS	0,803	0,744	0,859

Based on the table above, the square root value of AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation with others. This means that this figure has met the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

The next criterion is the cross-loading value. According to this criterion, the outer loading of an indicator on the related construct must be greater than the cross loading on other constructs. The value can be seen in following table:

Table 4. Cross Loading Value

	ACAP	BP	KS
ACAP1	0,724	0,769	0,591
ACAP2	0,791	0,766	0,684
ACAP3	0,881	0,674	0,717
ACAP4	0,787	0,589	0,630
ACAP5	0,819	0,598	0,590
ACAP6	0,797	0,631	0,630
BP1	0,612	0,826	0,523
BP2	0,679	0,850	0,519
BP3	0,556	0,793	0,526
BP4	0,576	0,791	0,560
BP5	0,676	0,786	0,595
BP6	0,679	0,844	0,621
BP7	0,754	0,857	0,581
BP8	0,755	0,735	0,679
BP9	0,757	0,759	0,723

KS1	0,629	0,572	0,792
KS2	0,665	0,609	0,851
KS3	0,748	0,681	0,902
KS4	0,756	0,676	0,899
KS5	0,670	0,637	0,870
KS6	0,664	0,653	0,838

Based on the data above, it can be stated that the value of each outer loading is higher than the cross loading on other constructs. Another important criterion to consider in discriminant validity is the heterotrait monotrait ratio (HTMT). It is the mean of all relationships between indicators across constructs. According to Hair et al. (2022), the maximum value of the HTMT correlation is 0.9. If an HTMT correlation value of more than 0.9 indicates a lack of discriminant validity.

Table 5. Heterotrait Monotrait Ration (HTMT)

	ACAP	BP	KS
ACAP			
BP	0,910		
KS	0,880	0,789	

There are two HTMT correlation values that exceed 0.9, namely in the ACAP-KS (0.880) and BP-KS (0.789) construct pairs. These values do not meet the HTMT criteria and indicates that the discriminant validity test has not been fulfilled as a whole.

At this stage, not all constructs successfully meet the criteria required in the discriminant validity test. This indicates that there is a significant similarity between some constructs, so the constructs are not fully empirically different from each other. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further evaluation of the items to ensure each construct can capture unique phenomena and is not represented by other constructs in the model.

Discussion

The Influence of Absorptive Capacity on Business Performance

Based on the findings of the study, business performance is significantly and favorably affected by absorptive capacity. This result is in line with the research conducted by Zahra, S.A., & George (2002), which states that an organization's capacity to recognize, assimilate, and use outside knowledge can increase innovation, affecting company performance. In addition, Lane (2021) highlights that businesses with strong absorption capacity can build competitive advantage and adjust to changes in the business environment.

However, according to a number of studies, including research conducted by Jansen, J. J. P., Van den Bosch, F. A. J. and Volberda (2006), Absorptive Capacity does not necessarily affect business performance directly. This occurs when absorptive capacity is misused, as in the case of businesses without an organizational framework that facilitates the adoption of innovations. In this

situation, even when knowledge has been stored, the benefits are not necessarily converted into performance outcomes.

The emphasis on the mediating function of knowledge sharing is a key difference between this study and previous research. This study reveals that although Absorptive Capacity directly affects business performance, Knowledge Sharing acts as a stronger mediating factor. This result highlights the importance of controlling internal knowledge after external knowledge assimilation.

The Influence of Knowledge Sharing on Business Performance

The findings of this study indicate that knowledge sharing significantly and positively affects business performance. This reinforces the research findings of I, Nonaka, and H (2020), which state that knowledge sharing within a company facilitates the conversion of individual knowledge into collective knowledge, thereby adding value to the business. According to recent research, companies with a strong knowledge sharing culture usually have better financial and operational performance (Wang, S., & Noe, 2020).

As opposed to research conducted by (Foss, N.J., Minbaeva, D.B., Pedersen, T., & Reinholt, 2019) shows that knowledge sharing does not necessarily improve company performance. In certain cases, misalignment between the type of information exchanged and the needs of the company can result in a waste of resources with negligible gains. Performance can be hindered, for example, by disseminating information that is unrelated or does not advance the company's strategic goals.

This study shows that knowledge sharing is an important component that enhances the correlation between business performance and absorptive capacity. The key difference is that this study offers empirical evidence if the knowledge sharing process affects business performance both directly and indirectly, acting as a mediating factor in the correlation between business performance and absorptive capacity.

The Influence of Absorptive Capacity on Knowledge Sharing

According to this study, knowledge exchange is significantly and positively affected by absorptive capacity. This result is consistent with research conducted by Cohen, W. M., & Levinthal (1990), who claim that absorptive capacity enhances the understanding and assimilation of new information by people and organizations, and therefore promotes internal knowledge exchange. According to more recent research, businesses that successfully assimilate knowledge from outside usually foster a cooperative atmosphere that encourages knowledge exchange among staff members (Lichtenthaler, 2023).

However, not all research supports this correlation. For instance, if a business has sufficient incentives or a supportive organizational culture, absorbability may not necessarily drive knowledge exchange (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2020). Even if absorbability is high, several barriers, such as internal competitiveness or lack of trust between people may make the knowledge exchange process less successful.

The difference of this study is mainly that it emphasizes the strategic function of knowledge sharing due to absorption capacity. These results show that absorption capacity is important to ensuring that the knowledge gained is efficiently spread throughout the organization besides impacting the knowledge absorption process.

The Influence of Absorptive Capacity on Business Performance through Knowledge Sharing

The findings of this study indicate that the correlation between absorptive capacity and business performance is mediated by knowledge sharing. This result is consistent with Camisón and Forés' (2015) research that the way an organization shares and utilizes this knowledge has a significant impact on its ability to transform absorption capacity into business performance. In this situation, information sharing serves as a link between the application of internal value generation

and the absorption of external knowledge.

However, research conducted by Tsai (2022) reveals that in some cases, other factors such as product innovation or process efficiency, rather than knowledge sharing, mediate the impact of Absorption Capacity on Business Performance. This study shows how corporate culture and industry environment can influence how knowledge sharing functions in this relationship.

This study emphasizes how important organized knowledge management to optimize absorptive capacity. The main difference from previous research is the focus on integrating these three variables into one model, which offers a more thorough understanding of how to maximize absorption capacity to improve company performance through Knowledge Sharing.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the important role of Absorptive Capacity in driving Business Performance. The findings demonstrate a significant positive correlation between Absorptive Capacity and business outcomes both directly and through knowledge sharing as a mediating factor. The ability of an organization to recognize, receive, and use outside knowledge is known as “Absorptive Capacity,” and has been shown to be a major factor in innovation and adaptability that improves business competitiveness.

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