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The Role of Absorptive Capacity and Organizational Innovation in Culinary Business

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Abstract: The growth of micro and small businesses in the culinary sector in Jakarta and Tangerang is quite significant. Changes in the way to market the products and payment systems that force an entrepreneur to switch to e-commerce and digital payment systems have made many entrepreneurs not ready or able to adapt quickly. For this reason, this study wants to examine the influence of organizational culture and absorptive capacity on organizational performance mediated by organizational innovation in micro and small business actors in the culinary field in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. This study indicates that the mediating role of organizational innovation in the relationship of organizational culture and absorptive capacity on organizational performance is not supported by micro and small business actors in the culinary field in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. However, the direct effect of organizational learning on organizational innovation and organizational performance is proven to be supported in this study. Meanwhile, the influence of absorptive capacity on organizational performance is not supported, either directly or indirectly. The ability to adapt by identifying and assimilating new information to produce innovations that can improve company performance is still very low. However, the entrepreneur's awareness of the importance of speed in adapting to changes in companies and markets is good enough.

Keywords: organizational culture, absorptive capacity, organizational innovation, organizational performance, strategic flexibility, micro and small enterprises.

吸收能力和组织创新在烹饪业务中的作用

摘要：雅加达和丹格朗烹饪行业的微型和小型企业的增长非常显著。迫使企业家转向电子商务和数字支付系统的产品和支付系统营销方式的变化使许多企业家没有准备好或无法快速适应。因此，本研究希望通过雅加达和丹格朗地区烹饪领域的微型和小型企业参与者的组织创新来检验组织文化和吸收能力对组织绩效的影响。研究表明，雅加达和丹格朗地区烹饪领域的微型和小型企业参与者不支持组织创新在组织文化和吸收能力对组织绩效的关系中的中介作用。然而，本研究证明了组织学习对组织创新和组织绩效的直接影响。同时，吸收能力对组织绩效的影响没有得到直接或间接的支持。通过识别和吸收新信息来产生可以提高公司绩效的创新的适应能力仍然很低。但是，企业家对于速度在适应公司 and 市场变化中的重要性的认识已经足够好了。

关键词：组织文化、吸收能力、组织创新、组织绩效、战略灵活性、小微企业。

1. Background

Current business competition is not limited by the space that separates business actors and consumers from which part of the world. All business lines are connected by information technology, resulting in

changes in market structures that force business actors to adapt [1]. The same applies to owners of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises shows that in 2018 there were around 64

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million registered micro-, small and medium enterprises (99%) and employed around 117 million workers (97%). A large number of SME entrepreneurs in Indonesia is inversely proportional to the contribution of the economy. SMEs only contributed 42%, while medium and large enterprises contributed 57%.

In the Jakarta and Tangerang areas, around 1.1 million SME actors are registered. Of these, 381,324 registered micro and small businesses in the culinary sector. More than 63% of business actors experienced a decrease in turnover, and only 3% of business operators maintained their business. Market movement from offline to online is one of the biggest contributors to SMEs' failure to maintain their business. It is known that around 8.5% of micro and small business actors can use computers, and only about 16% use the internet. The introduction and use of internet technology in developing your own business cannot guarantee that the business will develop. E-commerce accommodates all business actors from micro to large in Indonesia. For this reason, micro and small business actors need to be given knowledge and training to get to know the business competition in the electronic market. Currently, the government, assisted by the private sector, is trying to digitize MSEs. Until now, only 14% of MSEs are ready to enter the digital platform.

Several factors slow down the development of MSEs in Indonesia, such as a lack of knowledge resources, especially the use of information technology to obtain new information, market developments, or changes in consumer desires. Knowledge is a prerequisite for generating innovation so that companies can produce long-term competitive advantages through innovations made by them [2]. Similar research has also been carried out on frozen food businesses in Thailand [3]. In general, innovation is shown in the form of changes that the company introduces to the market, be it products or services [4]. The company's ability to introduce new products or services that can meet market needs [5], [6] by using new technology to commercialize it reflects its ability to innovate. In general, MSEs carry out a closed innovation process using their resources and focus more on internal research and development, with boundaries within the company [7]. As a result, company knowledge can only be developed and applied on a home industry scale while the transfer of knowledge between companies is relatively limited.

The ability to absorb new information in terms of the use of technology, especially due to educational background and the desire to receive new information for MSEs in Indonesia, is still very low. This is supported by a survey conducted by the Katadata Insight Center, which mentions several obstacles to going global, such as not being able to use and utilize the internet (34%). There is also a lack of knowledge in

running a business online (23.8%). Some say that workers who work in companies are not ready to go digital (19.9%), and the rest rely more on inadequate infrastructure, lack of funds, and are still comfortable selling offline. When business actors are faced with pandemic conditions like today, MSEs are forced to sell on e-commerce to survive. In fact, from the results of a survey conducted by the International for Labor Organization (ILO), almost 70% of MSEs in Indonesia have closed due to their inability to survive and adapt to changes in how to sell online.

To innovate and be competitive in the market, one of the variables that have been studied is organizational learning. According to this perspective, organizational innovation will grow stronger if supported by organizational culture [8]. Organizational innovation supported by strong organizational learning will produce good organizational performance in companies [9, 49]. In addition, Zerwas [10] emphasizes the importance of knowledge for company activities during its learning process towards company growth. Zerwas stated that the company's resources and the resulting productivity are functions of knowledge. This view affects the relevance of the absorption of new knowledge and information because absorptive capacity is the company's ability to recognize the value of new external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial purposes [10]. Therefore, absorptive capacity is very important to develop and improve the company's knowledge base, which can become the company's resource strength to produce innovation [11], [12]. The ability to innovate based on company absorptive capacity will also create good organizational performance [7, 50]. In addition, the ability to be flexible and quick in making decisions to compete in the market is a key factor. In general, the ability to be flexible and speed in decision-making can be measured in large companies. However, in the case of MSEs, this has not been done. Therefore, the strategic flexibility variable that affects the relationship between organizational innovation on organizational performance is a new contribution in this study.

2. Organizational Culture

Culture is one of the unique characteristics of humans, based on the ability to consciously look at oneself and others from each other's point of view. This reflexive capacity of man is what makes culture possible. Developing a mutually acceptable meaning of how to perceive, categorize, and think about what is happening around us is necessary to avoid the catastrophic anxiety that will result from reacting to everything as if it were a new phenomenon [13]. Schein [14] defines organizational learning as a pattern or habit found or developed by certain groups in the learning process to adapt and deal with problems in an integrated manner in external and internal factors and have been tested to work well enough to be considered

valid. Then it is taught to new members as a correct way to see, think, and feel connected to the problem. Zandi et al. [15] support this understanding by looking at organizational culture as a pattern and perspective of companies seeing and solving problems to achieve goals and maintain the company over time. Efendi [16] emphasizes that continuous learning and improvement is a culture where people are incentivized to share knowledge with colleagues and take advantage of learning from others rather than hoarding information and reinventing new knowledge. It is a culture committed to improving itself and the businesses it serves. According to Fitriati [4], knowledge management is basically about sharing knowledge, highlighting trust, openness, and collaboration to build the foundation for sharing. Chercione and Esposito [17] confirm that knowledge creation is associated with cultural factors such as collaboration, trust, and learning, the most creative group when its members collaborate.

3. Absorptive Capacity

The concept of absorptive capacity was first introduced and applied at the company level by Cohen and Levinthal [48]. Zerwas [10] defines absorptive capacity as the company's ability to recognize the value of new external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial purposes. Zahra and George [18] view absorptive capacity as a series of organizational routines and processes in which companies acquire, assimilate, transform, and exploit knowledge to produce dynamic organizational capabilities. This theory assumes that absorbing new knowledge can help companies be more innovative and flexible and achieve higher performance levels. The theory also assumes that companies with a higher ability to absorb new knowledge will have a competitive advantage [10]. A company's technical knowledge tends to come from four sources. Namely, first, the company carries out its research and development. Second, the company acquires new knowledge from its manufacturing operations. Third, the company borrows new knowledge from the company. Fourth, companies buy new knowledge through purchasing new equipment, hiring new knowledgeable people, or paying consultants to train individuals to use new methods [18]. Most company innovations come from borrowing ideas from others, not through discovery [19]. However, the company must know how the new borrowed knowledge can be applied for the process to be successful. Two factors will affect a company's incentives to acquire new knowledge: the quantity of knowledge available to absorb and exploit and the costs incurred in absorbing that new knowledge. Some types of new knowledge and skills are more expensive to assimilate than others. Therefore, companies will tend to absorb new knowledge when it costs little and less likely to do so if it is expensive. The more competitors

benefit from absorbing and using new knowledge, the less the company will be motivated to increase the absorption of new knowledge.

4. Organizational Innovation

Many studies claim that absorptive capacity is formed from knowledge. According to Cohen & Levinthal [48], companies that invest in R&D not only pursue innovation in production processes but also develop and maintain the absorptive capacity to assimilate, transform and exploit external knowledge [19] to generate long-term competitive advantage [20]. Companies must innovate processes and products and shift from a traditional closed innovation model to an open innovation model. In a closed innovation model, companies generate, develop, and commercialize their knowledge and ideas, and in an open innovation model, knowledge and ideas flow in and out of the company [20]. Currently, the term innovation means open-ended nature, given the demands of rapidly changing markets, and companies can no longer survive relying on internal strength alone. The term open innovation was coined by Henry William Chesbrough to describe the old paradigm shift, namely closed innovation, in which companies are very independent in terms of creating knowledge and introducing it to the market in the form of new products and services because they cannot ensure the quality, availability, and capability of other people's ideas [21] as well as accelerating internal innovation and expanding markets [22]. Rigby & Zook [21] offer four reasons why companies are increasingly following the principle of open innovation. First, importing new ideas is a good way to multiply innovation capabilities, which means that companies can potentially offer more and better output by accessing external inputs. This is because if people have many ideas to choose from, the cost, quality, and speed of innovation increase. Second, exporting ideas is a good way to raise money because ideas have a market value that can be exploited through sales, licensing, etc. Third, exporting ideas means measuring the real value of innovation to determine whether the R&D investment can pay off. Selling an idea developed internally to the market can be a yardstick for companies to capitalize on the idea. Fourth, exporting and importing ideas, helping companies clarify what they are doing, and market knowledge helps companies find positions that are stronger and weaker than thought. An open innovation model is an approach for overcoming challenges and can be complementary to the steps needed to solve the basic problems of innovation, how to build, and how to run a company openly to explore new ideas and support promising ideas [20]. Managing open innovation enhances concepts that can support collaboration, management, and absorption of new knowledge.

5. Organizational Performance

Research on strategic management and entrepreneurship gets more attention on organizational performance [20], [23]. Newbert [24] defines organizational performance as the economic value obtained from the commercialization carried out by companies. Measuring organizational performance in companies is a challenge, given the availability of data and guidelines about the performance to be measured [25]. Richard et al. [24] stated that the size of organizational performance is highly context-dependent. Research in different contexts with different theories has different measures. In addition, the problem of subjective measures for organizational performance is also widely discussed. Although objective financial data is preferred in measuring organizational performance, Huber et al. [21] argue that subjective measures can be a viable substitute if objective data are not available. Experts conclude that subjective performance measures reflect a firm's actual performance. In the context of SMEs, subjective measurement of organizational performance for research is a more feasible choice compared to objective accounting data [26]. This is due to problems with the availability and accuracy of the accounting data maintained by the SME. It is recommended to obtain information about performance relative to competitors or industry averages [20], [23]. This review suggests a measure of organizational performance to include multidimensional and subjective involvement in the company. Organizational performance emphasizes the economic value generated by the company, a competitive advantage that shows the creation of economic value [24]. Although Yao-Ping [27] states that studies in strategic management do not differentiate competitive advantage from organizational performance, Sharif et al. [28] argue that differences are important from a resource-based view.

6. Flexibility Strategy

The flexibility strategy is the company's ability to identify quick changes within the company and the surrounding environment, immediately deciding which resources to use in response to these changes. [29], [30]. Organizations need to develop flexibility at the strategic level to deal with external pressures caused by frequent changes in customer expectations, changing market trends, and the actions of competitors. Bag et al. [31] states that flexibility strategy is divided into flexibility over resources and flexibility over coordination, which means that companies have flexibility over access to resources and flexibly empower these resources in various uses. Resource flexibility can be characterized by three dimensions of resource use potential. First, alternative use sources that can be applied. Second, the costs and processes of moving from one resource use to another. Third, the time needed to shift the use of one resource to another [31]. Resource flexibility is determined by the inherent

nature of resources, whereas coordination flexibility reflects the company's ability to apply these resources [32]. Coordination flexibility has three main dimensions. First, it defines the use of company resources that will be applied. Second, identify and compile a resource chain that can be applied in the targeted use by a company; and third, disseminating resources through company systems and processes that implement available resources for targeted uses [31]. Martínez-Sánchez et al. [33] show that strategically flexible companies are usually in a good position to anticipate market demands and respond to them by developing innovative products and services. However, although strategic flexibility has begun to be glimpsed by researchers [29], [32], [33], the function of strategic flexibility when commercializing organizational innovation products has not been critically examined, leaving significant research gaps.

7. Hypothesis and Measurement

In general, there has been a lot of literature that states that organizational innovation requires organizational learning that can increase creativity and innovative behavior in employees [16], [34], [35]. According to this perspective, organizational innovation will have no equality if supported by innovative organizational learning [8]. Other empirical research has also provided evidence of a significant relationship between culture and organizational innovation [12], [21]. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: There is an influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation.

Liao et al. [19] suggest that absorptive capacity can increase organizational innovation capabilities. Not surprisingly, many absorptive capacity studies using organizational innovation as its major impact [12], [21] also state that internal development does not guarantee a sustainable competitive advantage due to the increasing movement of knowledge workers and the difficulty of controlling intangible resources for companies. So, companies certainly need to absorb knowledge and information from external sources of absorptive capacity [36], [37], [38]. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H2: There is an effect of absorptive capacity on organizational innovation.

According to Sadri & Lees [23] and Yarbrough et al. [39], a positive organizational culture and its implementation are good enough to make ordinary employees become high-performing ones. Organizational culture has an active role and direct influence on the organizational performance of an organization [13], [40]. Gorondutse & Hilman [23] also found that organizations with a supportive culture recorded superior performance. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H3: There is an influence of organizational culture on organizational performance.

Absorptive capacity applies information obtained externally for commercial purposes and helps generate competitive advantage [18], [36], the results of which can be seen in organizational performance. Although this relationship has been demonstrated in previous studies [41], several studies have applied a multidimensional approach, making it possible to analyze each dimension of absorptive capacity [19]. There is not much information about the effects of absorptive capacity associated with small and medium enterprises or newly established companies [18], [19], [37]. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H4: There is an effect of absorptive capacity on organizational performance.

Organizational innovation is considered an important strategic tool for all companies in today's business environment characterized by intense competition [20], [32]. Some academics argue that the tight business environment and fast competition in which businesses operate require companies to continue to innovate to create new competitive values that will improve performance [9]. In the literature, product innovation is one of the forms of innovation that attracts the most attention [42], which is directly related to organizational performance [4], [43]. This shows that organizational innovation can increase organizational performance measures, both financial and non-financial [4], [43], [44]. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H5: There is an influence of organizational innovation on organizational performance.

The indirect effect of culture on performance through organizational innovation can be predicted because - depending on the value it drives - culture can encourage or limit organizational innovation activities. In line with this, the fact that some types of culture can indirectly affect performance through organizational innovation because it encourages or limits it is debatable [12]. Organizational performance with a proactive culture that stimulates risk-taking activities, creativity, and fault tolerance is superior to performance in companies that do not. This is because such companies can develop organizational innovation that is more differentiated, better, and faster than competitors. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H6: There is an influence of organizational culture on organizational performance mediated by organizational innovation.

Absorptive capacity facilitates the development of new cognitive schemes and modification of existing company practices. Through these changes, companies are better able to pursue new product developments and product line expansion [45], [46], which, in turn, can improve organizational performance and contribute to

the achievement of competitive advantage [18], [36]. Thus, the processing and assimilation of new knowledge, without the introduction and effective commercialization of certain organizational innovation outputs, cannot produce tangible performance results for the company over time [21]. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H7: There is an effect of absorptive capacity on organizational performance mediated by organizational innovation.

During the product commercialization process, organizational innovation must be utilized in conjunction with other resources [47]. Thus, company resources play an important role in benefiting from organizational innovation. When the flexibility of resource utilization is low, companies cannot use existing resources to support the commercialization of organizational innovation due to tight resource allocations. With increased resource flexibility, existing resources can be used more easily for new purposes. The time and costs spent finding new resources and switching from one use to another are reduced. Thus, it can help companies to commercialize organizational innovation quickly [31]. For this reason, flexible resources tend to be valuable and have strong implications for the commercialization of organizational innovation. Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows:

H8: There is the influence of organizational innovation on organizational performance, moderated by a flexibility strategy.

Research respondents were 224 micro and small business actors in the culinary sector in Jakarta and Tangerang. The criteria used in this study are that they have been carrying out culinary business activities for at least two years, located in the Jakarta and Tangerang areas, with at least two employees.

Table 1 Original sample, P-values, and result (Processed by researcher, 2020)

	Original Sample (O)	P Values	Result
OC ^a ->OI ^b	0.592	0.000	Supported
AC ^c ->OI	0.266	0.000	Supported
OC ->OP ^d	0.421	0.000	Supported
AC -> OP	0.069	0.256	Not Supported
OI ->OP	0.032	0.745	Not Supported
OC ->OI ->OP	0.019	0.748	Not Supported
AC ->OI ->OP	0.009	0.752	Not Supported
SF ^e ->OP	0.197	0.000	Supported

^a Organizational Culture

^b Organizational Innovation

^c Absorptive Capacity

^d Organizational Performance

^e Strategic Flexibility

8. Conclusion

The results in this study a direct relationship between organizational learning variables and absorptive capacity on organizational innovation is accepted. The results of this study are in line with

previous studies [8], [12]. Although previous research was conducted on large companies, the same results were obtained when the respondents were SME players in the culinary field. This shows the awareness of SME actors to learn new things so as not to miss information on market changes and awareness of the importance of a sustainable learning culture to equip their knowledge to produce innovation. However, when viewed from the indirect relationship between organizational learning and absorptive capacity on organizational performance, the results of this study are different from previous studies. The existence of organizational innovation as a mediator variable in an indirect relationship weakens this relationship. Low organizational innovation has an impact on weak organizational performance in culinary SMEs. This is in line with the information conveyed by the Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani who stated the low productivity factor for Indonesian SME players. This productivity factor shows the country's level of innovation that contributes to the government's economic growth. SMEs in Indonesia absorb a large amount of capital and labor but do not produce value-added products or new products. The low organizational innovation in SMEs, which impacts the low organizational performance of the company, can be strengthened by the ability of companies to adapt and make decisions quickly about the use of their resources to market changes and changes in consumer demand. This is indicated by the results of this study which show the positive influence of the moderator variable on strategic flexibility on the relationship of organizational innovation and organizational performance.

9. Implication

Micro and small business actors are a one-man show. Micro and small businesses are the same as the business owners themselves. Financial capacity and knowledge, including the working culture of a micro- and small business, reflect the business actors. Therefore, business actors who are willing to be open to new knowledge will make their business better by making innovations. This includes the ability to adapt to explore existing resources into new opportunities such as the use of technology. For supporting the development of business actors' capabilities, business actors are also required to build relationships and networks with competitors. It is no longer the time for business actors to show their abilities among other business actors. Business actors' own financial capacity and knowledge are very limited even though they have been running their business for a long time. Associating, communicating, and discussing with other business actors will provide new insights into the industry being undertaken, especially new information about new products and how to market them. Collaboration between micro and small business actors

will form new mutually beneficial strengths, which will improve their respective companies' performance.

10. Limitation and Future Research

The variables in this study were limited to organizational learning, absorptive capacity, organizational innovation, organizational performance, and strategic flexibility. Then the object of research is limited to micro- and small businesses in the culinary field, which are limited to the Jakarta and Tangerang areas. For this reason, further research is expected to include criteria for business actors from other fields, such as a minimum business that has been running for seven years and is owned by business actors of a certain gender. Subsequent research can also include entrepreneurship and transformational leadership variables to see the impact of individuals on organizational innovation and strategic flexibility and be carried out outside Jakarta and Tangerang.

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