

A critical role of the explorative relational capability to enhance business performance: Empirical study in the Indonesia fashion industry

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Abstract

A recent study proposes the concept of explorative relational capability (ERC) and examines ERC's importance in improving business performance. This study used 218 respondents. The research respondents were owners or managers of SMEs in the furniture industry. The analysis used is structural equation modeling. After developing the concept of explorative relational capability, this study examines its effects on product innovation, advantages of new value creation, and business performance. The results show that ERC can improve product innovation, the advantages of new value creation, and business performance in the fashion industry. Other results show that ERC can mediate the gap between entrepreneurial orientation-business performance. This research contribution is aimed at a resource-based view (RBV). Companies must have resources that can provide new solutions, develop new perspectives, and create creative ideas to drive maximum business performance.

Keywords

entrepreneurial orientation; explorative relational capability; product innovation; advantages of new value creation; business performance

INTRODUCTION

An entrepreneur is an economic actor and is one of the driving factors in economic development (Filion, 2021; Schumpeter, 1934). As an economic actor, an entrepreneur must provide economic benefits (Bredvold & Skalen, 2016; R. A. Hunt, Lerner, Johnson, Badal, & Freeman, 2022). Filion (2021) explained that entrepreneurial activity is vital for the economy, especially for creating jobs and prosperity. However, in addition to the economy, entrepreneurs also act as fresh ideas (Manne, 2014), innovators, economic resource coordinators, and managing financial capital (Hebert & Link, 2009). Verheul, Wennekers, Audretsch, and Thurik (2002) explained that entrepreneurial abilities and attitudes are critical elements of the social and demographic environment in increasing entrepreneurship supply.

An entrepreneur must be able to build relationships. Managers in various companies identify that relational capital is essential factor to increase companies income (Silvio, Antonio, Federica, & Alessandra, 2016). Gulati, Nohria, and

Zaheer (2000) explained that the company's relationship in the network would improve configuring new value capabilities. Quality networks will influence relations between actors in the network, getting stronger. Strong relations will make it easier for every actor to share, share knowledge, or share other resources. Möller and Torronen (2003) reveal that relational capability is an asset that the company has in creating value, where its function is to reduce transaction costs and technology adoption. The value will be created if there is an interaction between customers and enterers in an efficient relationship bond. Based on Wu and Cavusgil (2006), companies' specific relationships in a network will create shared value. Payne and Frow (2005) also believe that shared value creation is obtained when a company develops relational capabilities in the network. Harmonious interactions must be created to create value (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996).

Relational capital is defined as the formal and informal relationships of organizations with external parties where mutual understanding and information

exchange between organizations and external parties occur (Fadaei, 2013; Zahoor & Gerged, 2021). Relational capital is also called customer capital. Managers argue that customer capital is a main factor to increase company profitability (Bianchi Martini, Corvino, Doni, & Rigolini, 2016; Zahoor & Gerged, 2021). Customer satisfaction, repeat business, welfare finance, and price sensitivity can be used as customer capital indicators. The idea that customer capital is separate from human and structural capital shows the center's importance for the reputable organization. Customer relations is different from other relationships both inside and outside the organization. Relational capital means the value of the company's relationship with its customers (Fadaei, 2013). This value reflects customer trust in the company or the product (Chen, Cheng, & Hwang, 2005). Welbourne (2008) identifies relational capital as an intangible asset based on developing, maintaining, and maintaining high-quality relationships with organizations, individuals, or groups that influence the business.

Relational capital focuses on trust, the interaction between partners, and facilitates collaboration with partners in inter-organizational relationships (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). Trust is embedded in relationships and is a fundamental basis for long-term relationships between partners. Trust occurs when one party has confidence that partners have integrity and reliability (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Granovetter (1985) notes that economic actions are embedded in interactions and social relations, including channels of information, knowledge, and the flow of resources (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998).

The research gap in this research is the inconsistency of research results between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance. Some studies explain that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive effect on business performance (Ardayan, 2016; Hafeez, Chaudhry, Siddiqui, & Rehman, 2011; Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015; Keh, Nguyen, & Ng, 2007; Li, Huang, & Tsai, 2009; Roxas & Chadee, 2013; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Zhang & Zhang, 2012), positive but not significant effect (Baker & Sinkula, 2009; Sciascia, D'Oria, Bruni, & Larraneta, 2014; Soininen, Martikainen, Puumalainen, & Kylaheiko,

2012), and significant negative effect (Ardayan, Rahmawan, & Isstianto, 2016). This study proposes the concept of explorative relational capability and examines the importance of improving business performance. There are several steps. In the first step, We propose an explorative relational capability concept to solve the research gap problems. In the second step, This study builds explorative relational capability models in order to improve performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Resources-based view

The resource-based view (RBV) starts from Wernerfelt (1984) opinion. The company is expected to have critical resources, which are a competitive advantage for the company. Competitive advantage makes companies have superior performance (Harjoto, Hoepner, & Li, 2022; S. D. Hunt & Morgan, 1995). Barney (1991) explains that competitive advantage (in the long run) comes from resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Andersén (2010) and Yuen, Wang, Ma, Lee, and Li (2019) explains that companies do not compete through the products or services but their resources and resource development.

Capabilities include individual or group skills and organizational routines and interactions through which all company resources are coordinated. Companies must possess several key capabilities to achieve a competitive advantage, including branding, reputation/ positioning, ability to work together, and technical know-how (Azeem, Ahmed, Haider, & Sajjad, 2021; Cuthbertson & Furseth, 2022; Rua & Santos, 2022).

Based on the study conducted by Teece (2007), the concept of dynamic capability is crucial for the company. Dynamic capabilities are an essential part of the resources-based view (Teece, 2007; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Consensus has been reached between researchers regarding the importance of companies' dynamic capabilities (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece et al., 1997). Exogenous environmental factors, such as technological innovation and market shifts,

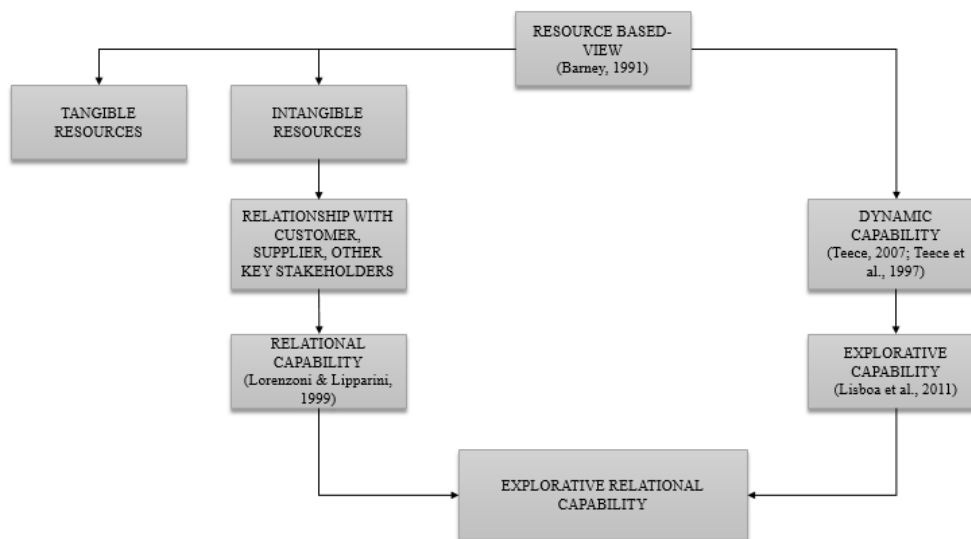


Figure 1.
Development of the concept of explorative relational capabilities

continue to change its competitive landscape. The company's long-term competitive advantage is rooted in developing dynamic capabilities to overcome external changes that deliberately reconfigure internal resources and company capabilities (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece et al., 1997).

There are many definitions of dynamic abilities. Dynamic capability is defined as the company's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure competencies internally and externally in a rapidly changing environment. Helfat et al. (2007) define dynamic capability as a company's capacity to create and modify its resources. Teece (2007) explains that dynamic capabilities can be divided into capacities to sense and feel opportunities and threats, capture opportunities, and maintain competitiveness by increasing, combining, protecting, and, if necessary, reconfiguring intangible and tangible company assets.

Dynamic capability produces two main activities, namely exploration and exploitation. March (1991) explains the difference between exploration and exploitation. Exploration is an activity carried out by developing new knowledge, whereas exploitation is an activity carried out by developing existing knowledge about markets, products, and technology. The company seeks to develop ideas, ideas, and solutions to find novelties that impact its innovation performance in exploration. New variants are added to the product (March, 1991; Yalcinkaya, Galantone, &

Griffith, 2007), resulting in creative and innovative products. Exploitation activities use existing knowledge and are usually routine activities carried out by companies (Yalcinkaya et al., 2007). Exploitation uses existing technology and resources (Levinthal & March, 1993). Several studies also explain that companies can jointly exploit and explore (Ancona, Okhuysen, & Perlow, 2001; Katila & Ahuja, 2002).

One of the firm's resources is a relationship with customers, suppliers, or other key stakeholders (part of intangible resources) (Lev, 2001). Relationships developed with external parties, such as customers and strategic partners, have also proven to be a vital source of knowledge and capability (Kale, Singh, & Perlmutter, 2000) and have the potential to increase innovation. As a result, companies are judged to depend on their relationships' quality and quantity (Powell, 1996). There is evidence that companies are involved in relationships with other actors who can provide resources and support for production, technology development, and marketing activities (Narulo & Hagedoorn, 1999). Relations between companies often show a cooperative and competitive attitude (Branderburger & Nalebuff, 1996). These two attitudes often make partnerships not work as expected. Park and Ungson (2001) explain that the alliance is critical due to errors in managing relationships.

Companies must be willing to cooperate with other companies, both customers, suppliers, or competitors, and with other

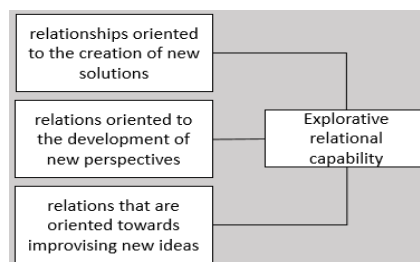


Figure 2.
The dimension of explorative relational capability

non-commercial knowledge-producing organizations (Coombs & Metcalfe, 2000). This underlines the importance of relational capabilities - capabilities that are considered fundamental in improving relationships both from customers' and suppliers' perspectives. Relational capabilities have played a critical role in increasing sales volume or profits, gaining access to new markets, developing innovation (Ritter & Gemunden, 2003), and in creating shared values in relationships (Dyer & Hatch, 2006; Dyer & Singh, 1998).

We propose an explorative relational capability, which is a combination of relational capability and explorative capability. Explorative relational capabilities are built from a resource-based view. Explorative relational capability is the company's ability to build relationships and provide mutual value to create new knowledge and value for each partner. We develop indicators of explorative relational capabilities, including relationships oriented to creating new solutions, relations oriented to the development of new perspectives, and relations oriented towards improvising new ideas. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the pictures of developing an explorative relational capability concept.

Entrepreneurial orientation and explorative relational capability

Entrepreneurial orientation is important factor to develop small medium enterprise capabilities to build sustainable relationship with their partners and stakeholders (Monteiro, Soares, & Rua, 2017, 2019). Ramachandran and Ramnarayan (1993) state that one of the company's creation and growth process drivers is to use interpersonal networks. Networking makes the company strive to increase its resources to take risks and are proactive in

building network capabilities, which are related capabilities (latent network or relationship capability). This relational capability will enable companies to anticipate market opportunities and be quicker in recognizing competitors' movements. Randmaa (2011) states that companies with a proactive nature try to integrate the capabilities, behavior patterns, and skills possessed by partner companies by generating relations between organizations.

H1: The greater entrepreneurship orientation, the greater the explorative relational capability.

Explorative relational capability and product innovation

The ability to build relationship can create business networks and opportunities for product innovation (Farida, 2021). Theoharakis, Sajtos, and Hooley (2009) examined the relationship ability of 480 companies listed in the US Standard Industry Classification. One of the results of this study shows that the ability to establish relationships will improve innovation. Ferrer, Hyland, and Bretherton (2009) examined the types of supplier relational abilities in developing continuous innovation improvements that resulted in better business results. This study is an exploratory study using qualitative data where data is collected using interviews (Australian cargo industry as a context). Even in short-term, long-term relationships, the company can obtain improved behavioral skills and practices that increase their operating effectiveness and the efficiency of supply chain relationships.

The company focuses on relational capabilities where building relationships is critical in uncertain conditions. Relational

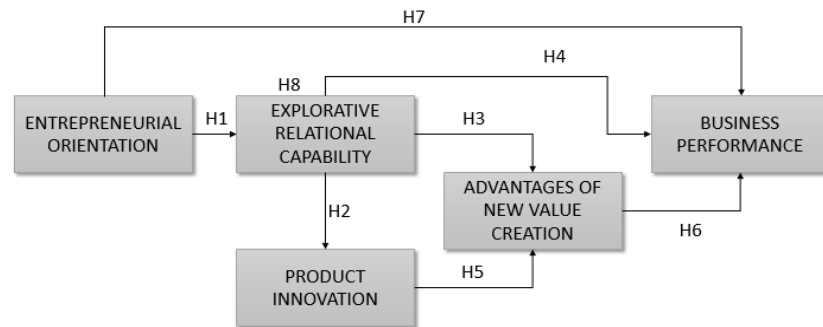


Figure 3.
Conceptual framework

capabilities will enhance innovation and co-creation as well as build new competencies and risk-sharing activities. If company have a better ability to build relationship with their partners, the company can have more opportunities to develop and innovate their product (Farida, 2021). Small companies usually have difficulty developing relational capabilities compared to large companies. This is because large companies are more innovative than small companies in establishing relationships (Acs and Audretsch, 1988).

H2: the greater explorative relational capability, the greater product innovation.

Explorative relational capability and advantages of new value creation

The company ability to build relationship with costumers and ability to know customer needs, has a positive effect on customer value creation, and as an indicator of a company competitiveness (Sánchez-Gutiérrez, Cabanelas, Lampón, & González-Alvarado, 2018). Gulati et al. (2000) explained that the company's relationship in the network would improve configuring new value capabilities. Quality networks will influence relations between actors in the network, the more vital. Strong relations will make it easier for every actor to share, share knowledge, or share other resources. Möller and Torronen (2003) say that relational capability is an asset that a company has in creating value, where its function is to reduce transaction costs and technology adoption. The value will be created if there is an interaction between customers and enterers in an efficient relationship bond. In the research conducted by Wu and Cavusgil (2006), it

was concluded that the company's specific relations in a network would be able to create shared value. Payne and Frow (2005) also believe that shared value creation is obtained when a company develops relational capabilities in the network. Harmonious interactions must be created to create value (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996).

H3: the greater explorative relational capability, the greater advantages of new value creation.

Explorative relational capability and business performance

The company ability to build relationship with costumers and ability to know customer needs, has a positive impact on business performance and company competitiveness (Sánchez-Gutiérrez, Cabanelas, Lampón, & González-Alvarado, 2018). Relationships will exist when one party needs the other, intending to increase each party's market position (Webster, 1992). To improve this market position, each party should provide smart solutions and fresh ideas to achieve the stated goals. The explorative relational capability enables a person to find problems precisely. This happens because each party will share their vision, operational routines, knowledge transfer (Rodrigues-Diaz & Espino-Rodrigues, 2006), and their resources. The ability to find problems will have an impact on the choice of solutions. The ability to build relationships by providing various smart solutions will impact the resolution of every problem. This will have an impact on business performance. Smirnova, Naude, Henneberg, Mouzas, and Kouchtch (2011) stated that relational capability is critical in improving business performance. We argue

that explorative relational capability is a type of capability that is very important to improve business performance.

H4: the greater explorative relational capability, the greater business performance.

Product innovation and advantages of new value creation

Changes and products change radically are considered very important for long-term business growth (Hart, Tzokas, & Saren, 1999). Product innovation maintains and grows competitive positions is indisputable. The product has been updated and is entirely new to be used to maintain a strong market presence. In most industries, the success of developing and commercializing new products is an essential determinant of a company's sustainable competitive advantage (Mu, Peng, & Tan, 2007). The company's ability to develop and innovate products has an impact on superiority value of product in customer perception (Saputra, Kristyassari, Farida, & Ardyan, 2020). New product development, process improvement, technology adoption, diffusion, and innovation will significantly impact company performance (Calantone et al., 2002). Atuahene-Gima (1996) provides empirical evidence of a positive relationship between innovation, market success, and performance. Product innovation can increase the creation of new value for its customers.

H5: the greater product innovation, the greater advantages of new value creation.

Advantages of new value creation and business performance

The company's ability to create value for their consumers will be the main factor that affect consumer preference to choose a product or service, so that, the company's ability to create value will greatly impact on company's business performance (Aryanto & Setiawan, 2018). Companies strive to develop value creation capabilities (Jayaraman & Luo, 2007). Companies must be able to create value and convey that value to their customers. Companies that can create new value for their

customers have one of the company's advantages to win the competition (Khalifa, 2004). Berghman, Matthyssens, and Vandenbempt (2006) explained that the capacity for new value creation is largely determined by the capacity to absorb knowledge, while Slater (1997) explains it as continuous learning about customers. Companies with advantages in creating value will impact improving their performance (Lähtinen & Toppinen, 2008; Romero, Lafont, Tafur, & Eguren, 2016; Sullivan, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012).

H6: the greater advantages of new value creation, the greater business performance.

Entrepreneurial orientation and business performance

Entrepreneurial orientation can improve business performance (Ardyan, 2016; Hafeez et al., 2011; Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015; Keh et al., 2007; Li et al., 2009; Roxas & Chadee, 2013; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Zhang & Zhang, 2012). Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) researching companies in Sweden. The analysis used in this study is a tiered regression. Our findings show that knowledge-based resources (applicable to discovery and exploitation of opportunities) are positively related to company performance, and EOs enhance this relationship. Hafeez et al. (2011) examined entrepreneurial orientation in educational institutions in Pakistan. The results show that entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation are closely related to company performance. Gligor, Gölgeci, Newman, and Bozkurt (2021).

H7: the greater entrepreneurial orientation, the greater business performance.

Explorative relational capability as mediating between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance

Some researchers explain that entrepreneurial orientation cannot significantly improve business performance (Baker & Sinkula, 2009; Sciascia et al., 2014; Soininen et al., 2012). The solution offered is to provide mediation on the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on business performance. This study proposes an

Table 1.
Factor loading values, AVE, and composite reliability

Variable and Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
Entrepreneurial Orientation		0.507	0.755
Innovativeness	0.714		
Proactiveness	0.709		
Risk-taking	0.792		
Explorative Relational Capability		0.501	0.750
Relations oriented to the creation of new solutions	0.768		
Relations oriented to the development of new perspectives	0.695		
Relations that are oriented towards improvising new ideas	0.698		
Advantages Of New Value Creation		0.674	0.892
Many new benefits are offered more than competitors	0.832		
The process of value creation is more efficient compared to competitors	0.873		
Business develop novelty more than competitors	0.766		
Business creates more complementary products than competitors	0.843		
Product Innovation		0.723	0.912
Producing a unique product	0.737		
Developing new products	0.913		
Creating a new variation on the product	0.772		
Creating a new design product	0.953		
Business Performance		0.748	0.922
Our sales development has been better than our competitors	0.902		
Our profitability development has been better than our competitors	0.872		
Our store is financially more successful than our competitors	0.885		
Our market share better than last year	0.802		

explorative relational capability as a moderating variable between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance. Some researchers explain that networks and relationships are a consequence of the entrepreneurial process (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Larson, 1992; Larson & Starr, 1993). Building relationships with customers requires proactiveness, managing risk, and innovation. Proactivity implies that the company is very customer-focused. Proactive makes the company have the initiative to approach, build and manage relationships with its customers. Building a relationship has its risks. An entrepreneur must be able to manage risk in order to create long-term relationships with his customers. An entrepreneur must also promote innovation so that customers are satisfied. Innovation will provide creative solutions when problems occur. Productivity, managing risk, and innovativeness are dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation expected to increase explorative relational capability. The increased explorative relational capability will have an impact on improving business performance.

H8: explorative relational capability can mediate the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on business performance

METHODS

Sample

A survey was conducted on the owner or manager of a fashion business in Central Java, Indonesia. Questionnaires were distributed in several cities: Solo, Karanganyar, Sragen, Klaten, Sukoharjo, Kudus, Pekalongan, and Rembang. We distributed questionnaires to 400 respondents, but only 218 could be used for data analysis (the response rate was 54.5%). Most respondents were female (154 respondents or 70.64%) and aged between 25 and 35 (96 respondents or 44.04%).

Measures

Indicators of entrepreneurial orientation adopt from Wiklund (1999): innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. We propose explorative relational capability indicators, namely: relationships oriented to the

Table 2.
Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Result	Supported/ Not Supported
H1: Entrepreneurial Orientation → Explorative Relational Capability	$\beta = 0.478$; $p < 0.001$	Supported
H2: Explorative Relational Capability → Product Innovation	$\beta = 0.744$; $p < 0.001$	Supported
H3: Explorative Relational Capability → Advantages Of New Value Creation	$\beta = 0.306$; $p < 0.001$	Supported
H4: Explorative Relational Capability → Business Performance	$\beta = 0.578$; $p < 0.001$	Supported
H5: Product Innovation → Advantages Of New Value Creation	$\beta = 0.184$; $p < 0.010$	Supported
H6: Advantages Of New Value Creation → Business Performance	$\beta = 0.450$; $p = 0.001$	Supported
H7: Entrepreneurial Orientation → Business Performance	$\beta = 0.094$; $p = 0.415$	Not supported
H8: Entrepreneurial Orientation → Explorative Relational Capability → Business Performance	Sobeltest= 3.162; $p = 0.00016$	Supported

creation of new solutions, relations oriented to the development of new perspectives, and relations that are oriented towards improvising new ideas. Product innovation indicators were adapted from Liao, Wang, Chuang, Shih, and Liu (2010) and Sugiyarti and Ardyan (2017), namely: producing a unique product, developing a new product, creating a new variation in creating a new design product. We propose indicators of the advantages of value creation because many new benefits are offered more than competitors. The process of value creation is more efficient than competitors. The business develops novelty more than competitors, and businesses create more complementary products than competitors. Indicators of business performance include our sales development has been better than our competitors, and our profitability development has been better than our competitors, our store is financially more successful than our competitors, our market share is better than last year (Carey, 2015; Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015). This study uses a seven-point scale for the items of all these variables.

RESULTS

Validity and reliability testing

Validity testing is used to test whether the instrument developed can present the variables. Validity testing in this study uses factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE). The loading factor is used to explain how much the correlation between the indicator and its latent variable. This research indicates that the factor loading value is within the acceptable threshold above 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, &

Anderson, 2010). The required AVE value is above 0.5 (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of this study indicate that all AVE values are above 0.5. This indicates that the measurement model is valid.

Reliability is used to test the consistency of respondents' answers. Reliability in this study uses composite reliability. Reliability composite value must be above 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). All constructs used already have values above 0.7 (entrepreneurial orientation = 0.755; explorative relational capability = 0.750; Advantages relational capability = 0.892; Product innovation = 0.912; business performance = 0.922), so the items have internal consistency.

Model fit and hypotheses testing

There are several measures used to test the goodness of fit. Significance value χ^2 should not be significant, but in this research, the value is significant. Although the value is significant, it is still understandable. This is because samples above 200 χ^2 statistics are not considered essential to measure the goodness of fit (Shahab, Chengang, Arbizu, & Haider, 2019). This study's CMIN / df value is below 5 (CMIN / DF = 1.550), so the model is already fit. The values of GFI (0.910), NFI (0.923), CFI (0.971), TLI (0.965), IFI (0.971), and RMSEA (0.050) are by the established requirements.

There are eight hypotheses proposed in this study, and only one hypothesis is rejected. This study indicates that entrepreneurial orientation positive and significant effects on explorative relational capability ($\beta = 0.478$; $p < 0.001$), so H1 is

accepted. Explorative relational capability has a positive and significant effect on product innovation ($\beta = 0.744$; $\rho < 0.001$), advantages of new value creation ($\beta = 0.306$; $\rho < 0.001$), and business performance ($\beta = 0.578$; $\rho < 0.001$), so H2, H3, and H4 are accepted. Innovative products can increase the advantages of new value creation ($\beta = 0.184$; $\rho < 0.010$) so that H5 is accepted. Other research results explain that the advantages of new value creation have a positive and significant effect on business performance ($\beta = 0.450$; $\rho = 0.001$), so we accept H6. One hypothesis was rejected (H7) because entrepreneurial orientation could not significantly improve business performance ($\beta = 0.094$; $\rho = 0.415$). This study's last hypothesis is accepted (H8) because explorative relational capability can mediate entrepreneurial orientation and business performance. Table 2 describes the results of hypothesis testing.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

ERC is one of the essential concepts in this study. Powell (1996) and Sánchez-Gutiérrez et al. (2018) reveals companies are often valued depending on their relationship quality and quantity. They build relationships but forget the essence of building relationships. In the context of social exchange theory, mutually beneficial transactions have the potential to produce high-quality relationships, although they will only occur under certain conditions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory explains how a person or company has the motivation to interact by considering profit and loss (Emerson, 1976). In context, this research is not just about making profit and loss but giving solutions to each problem faced by each related party.

ERC is different from relational capability, as explained in previous studies. ERC can build relationships that will produce solutions, perspectives, and new ideas and sufficient to increase innovation, advantages of new value creation, and business performance. This study indicates that ERC can significantly increase product innovation, advantages of new value creation, and business performance. Fierce competition conditions make companies no longer focus on products or services but

provide customized solutions (Lightfoot & Gebauer, 2011). Longitudinal relations is one of the customized solution features (Tuli, Kohli, & Bharadwaj, 2007). Customer relationships need to be "collaborative" and potentially represent new ways of fundamentally interacting with customers (Salonen, 2011). Raddats and Burton (2014) propose two types of relationships between the company and its vendors, namely: single-vendor solution providers (providing solutions related to products and services) and multi-vendor solution providers (integrating products from various vendors). Relational will impact the achievement of performance and customer value creation (Storbacka, 2011).

Collaboration must have a learning process and facilitate knowledge sharing (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Powell, 1996). Relational will facilitate the transfer of creative ideas to other parties through knowledge-sharing activities. Interpersonal relationships provide the benefits of the diversity of information and perspectives between parties (Ferreira, Coelho, & Moutinho, 2018) to provide input to companies related to product innovation.

This research found that entrepreneurial orientation was not able to enhance business performance. As explained at the beginning of the paper, we found a research gap related to entrepreneurial orientation and business performance. So we propose the ERC variable to bridge the problem. This research can prove ERC's critical role in mediating the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on business performance. Entrepreneurial orientation must produce ERC because it will have a significant impact on improving business performance.

Explorative relational capability can improve business performance. We know the concept of relational capital, which is very important in resource-based theory. Relational capital is the potential possessed by the organization because of the existence of intangible assets. These assets consist of embedded knowledge in governments, customers, and suppliers (Bontis, 2002). Mayo (2001) reveals that relational capital can be explained through customer contracts, loyalty, relationships, distribution networks, market share, satisfaction, reputation, and image. External traits cannot be quickly developed or

codified. Relational capital means establishing, maintaining, and developing an organization's external relationships with customers, suppliers, and business partners (Chang, 2012). Relational capital will improve business performance (Zeglat & Zigan, 2014).

According to the respondent characteristics, the majority of respondents are female business owners (or so-called women entrepreneurs). According to the literature, women and men have a significant divide in business (Ladge, Eddleston, & Sugiyama, 2019). Several studies demonstrate that women contribute less to corporate growth or success than males (Eddleston, Ladge, Mitteness, & Balachandra, 2016; Jennings & Brush, 2013). This is demonstrated by the findings of this study, which demonstrate that entrepreneurial approach cannot considerably enhance business success. One characteristic of women is a lack of confidence in their talents (Kirkwood, 2009), hence women are more likely than men to avoid taking risks.

In developing countries, women's entrepreneurship plays a vital role (Minniti, 2010). Women perform the same tasks as men, including playing a larger part in their communities, utilizing technology, and managing finances (Rafiki & Nasution, 2019).. All genders must be able to run a business, build partnerships, and eliminate hurdles in commercial (business) activity (Chatterjee, Shepherd, & Wincent, 2022). Foley and Harmel (2008) discovered that men are more inclined to attribute power to organizational positions or formal authority, whereas women attribute power to personal attributes such as charisma, interpersonal skills (relationships), hard effort, and personal contacts. Women share power and knowledge in a more participative manner, which encourages greater engagement and self-inclusion in group identities. In many instances, women are able to compete with male businesspeople and achieve greater commercial success than males in a variety of large and small enterprises across the globe. Women are typically more approachable than men. As a result of this relationship, many new ideas, approaches, and/or solutions can emerge. The idea of explorative relational competence aligns with the features of gender-based respondents: women

entrepreneurs with explorative relational capability can boost product innovation, value generation advantages, and company performance.

This research contributes to the resources based theory. Explorative relational capability is one of the resources that can cross company boundaries. This ability connects one party to another, where the results will affect innovation, excellence in creating new products, and business performance. The resource-based theory perspective holds that company performance is a function of how well managers build their organizations through valuable, scarce, imitated, and non-substituted resources. (Barney, 1991). At present, the challenge is weighty. Companies must have resources that can provide new solutions, viewpoints of solving difficult, and creative ideas that will encourage maximum performance achievement. The RBV theory arises when market conditions are not as dynamic as today. Dynamic conditions require resources that can respond quickly and precisely.

This research also contributes to managerially. Companies must develop various training programs that can improve explorative relational capability. The training developed is focused on building relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders who must be able to (1) provide new solutions for their partners, (2) broaden their perspective, (3) provide new ideas that have a significant impact on business performance.

Future directions

This study also recommends some directions for potential future research. First, this research is more inclined to examine the level of SMEs. The research model can be applied to large companies or the supply chain. This concept (explorative relational capability) is also recommended in the B to B context. Second, future research is suggested to use a moderator that influences explorative relational capability on business performance. The use of mediation can also be done, where innovation products or advantages of new value creation can be used as mediation.

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