

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, AND SMEs' PERFORMANCE: MEDIATION-MODERATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: The article investigates the impact of knowledge sharing on company performance with a competitive advantage as a mediating variable and entrepreneurial orientation as a moderating variable. This research uses an RBV theory to determine company performance. Knowledge sharing behavior and entrepreneurial organizations can increase competitive advantage and performance. PLS-SEM technique is employed to analyze the data from 126 Small and Medium Enterprises in the food and beverage entrepreneurs in East Java. This research indicates that knowledge sharing has a favorable and substantial influence on competitive advantage and firm performance. Knowledge sharing positively and significantly affects competitive advantage and performance directly and indirectly. Entrepreneurial orientation does not serve as a moderator.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage; Entrepreneurial Orientation; Knowledge Sharing; Performance; SMEs

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations face environmental change conditions: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), and they require quick and measurable action to adjust to the requirements of the environment. Organizations in a complex and uncertain business environment must always be aware of the importance of information, skills, and experience to take on and take advantage of opportunities (Qandah et al., 2020). Organizations must increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities compared to other resources to respond quickly to environmental changes to work more efficiently than their competitors. Knowledge is an essential organizational resource that significantly affects the organization's competitive advantage (Ni et al., 1996; Nonaka et al., 2018). The knowledge-based view (KBV) states that knowledge is an intangible resource that contributes more to company performance than tangible resources (Wang et al., 2014).

Knowledge-Based View (KBV) states that an organization's ability to create value must use to develop, apply and transfer knowledge (Martelo-Landroguez & Cepeda-Carrión, 2016). Organizational knowledge is a core resource that is difficult to imitate, so it impacts the organization's superior performance (Muhammed & Zaim, 2020). In general, the knowledge management process involves knowledge production, exchange, usage, or application that improves the organization's competitiveness. As an essential component of knowledge management, knowledge sharing may serve as a solid foundation for establishing organizational strategies. (Issa & Haddad, 2008; Ni et al., 2018).

Knowledge sharing is the social interaction of individuals in an organization that allows sharing of data, information, and knowledge. The shared resources are not easy to imitate, replace, valuable and scarce, allowing the emergence of new resources (Juan et al., 2018). Organizations that successfully transfer or share knowledge can improve their financial performance, enabling them to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage to stay accepted and survive in the market (Jalal & Toulson, 2018). Organizations that can transfer knowledge faster than competitors will be a significant source of competitive advantage (Farooq, 2018; Iqbal et al., 2019)

Knowledge sharing allows employees who have no experience or new employees to access and improve their work and performance to improve organizational performance. Knowledge sharing will enable employees' work to be more accessible. There is an exchange of relevant information according to experience, best practices, and insights to make business processes more efficient (Wang et al., 2014). The study results (Abker et al., 2019)) show that knowledge sharing has a significant effect on competitive advantage, while the acquisition of knowledge does not affect competitive advantage. Intellectual capital mediates the impact of knowledge sharing on firm success, while explicit knowledge sharing has a more significant influence on financial performance than

operational performance (Wang et al., 2014). Tacit knowledge sharing contributes better to operational performance than financial performance.

Farooq (2018) and Abker et al. (2019) suggest that knowledge sharing can impact superior performance if knowledge sharing enables companies to increase their competitive advantage. In addition, knowledge sharing can increase proactive, innovative, and courageous behavior in facing risks and impact superior organizational performance. Knowledge sharing affects organizational performance with a competitive advantage and entrepreneurial orientation as mediating variables.

Previous studies from Rohim and Budhiasa (2019), Iqbal et al. (2019), and Abker et al. (2019) found that knowledge-sharing behavior has an impact on team member performance. A conducive learning environment can encourage the commitment of each individual to work and collaborate with other members of the organization (Kofman & Senge, 1993a, 1993b). Companies with a culture of sharing information are more proactive, risk-tolerant, and innovative than their competitors, helping them to expand their knowledge capacity and capture opportunities faster (Zhao et al., 2011). Knowledge sharing allows employees to understand their work better because colleagues have additional knowledge. Knowledge sharing also allows employees to do something different because they have good knowledge, are proactive in acting, and dare to take risks to increase organizational performance.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a continuous collaborative process that enables the transfer of knowledge of organizational members to business processes by using efficient communication channels to gain new experiences in the context of learning, new perspectives on a process, and knowledge discovery (Oyemomi et al., 2016; Oyemomi et al., 2019)). Knowledge sharing is exchanging information and experiences between employees, different organizational units, and organizations to gain valuable experiences now and in the future (Eidizadeh et al., 2017). Efficient knowledge sharing among corporate members reduces the cost of producing knowledge, ensures sharing of best work practices within the organization, and enables the organization to solve its problems. According to the findings (Wang & Wang, 2012), explicit knowledge sharing has a more significant influence on financial performance, but tacit knowledge sharing impacts operational performance.

Swanson et al. (2020) describe knowledge sharing with six indicators; first, colleagues providing constructive feedback during the test work. Second, old employees guide new employees. Third, the training of new colleagues is well coordinated. Fourth, more experienced work colleagues provide constructive input on the work of less experienced co-workers. Fifth, knowing whom to contact for specific questions. Sixth, by setting an example for younger colleagues, more experienced colleagues will help them. Knowledge sharing

positively impacts competitive advantage, while knowledge acquisition does not affect competitive advantage (Abker et al., 2019).

The company's fundamental competencies that constantly seek to outperform its competitors and retain a different position than the key competitors are called competitive advantage. A firm achieves competitive advantage by adopting a strategy that generates value and derives lasting benefits, and competitors cannot imitate its process. (Lei, Le, & Nguyen, 2017). Companies that can face current competitors, new competitors, the bargaining power of competitors and suppliers, and the ability to compete with substituted products have competitive advantages (Porter, 2015; Porter, 1985). Wingwon (2012) measures the competitive advantage with four items: market share growth, asset growth in the last three years, general competitiveness, and lower product costs than competitors.

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation describes the company's decision-making process, which helps companies take action (Lumpkin et al., 2011; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2011). Entrepreneurial orientation is a series of activities and creative processes accompanied by entrepreneurial behavior that empowers companies to penetrate new markets (Naheed et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial orientation helps explore new markets and create new goods or services to improve company performance. Entrepreneurial orientation consists of five activities: proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Kadarusman et al., 2019; Simon & Covin, 2009; Zahra, 2018)), competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Lumpkin et al., 2011)

Firm Performance

Firm performance is the result obtained because the company implements a strategy. Performance measures can be in the form of financial and non-financial performance. According to (Kraus et al., 2012), there is no significant difference between the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and company performance, using both financial and non-financial data. The measurement of organizational performance using second-order has three dimensions: efficiency, growth, and profit. Because companies often seek to improve several performance goals, the size of company success uses a multidimensional construct. (Zhao et al., 2011) describe or measure performance with five relative performance dimensions to competitors in terms of market share, sales volume, reputation, operating profit, and asset size over five years.

Knowledge Sharing and Firm Performance

Sharing knowledge means sharing information and experiences between employees within a work unit and across units and organizations to improve organizational members' practical and managerial abilities. Company performance is the result of strategy implementation and is the company's

primary target. The research done by (Imamoglu et al., 2019; Kadarusman & Bunyamin, 2021; Oyemomi et al., 2019) stated that knowledge is vital in improving organizational performance. Sharing knowledge has an impact on increasing relationships between employees so that overall it can increase organizational knowledge and capabilities, thereby increasing organizational efficiency, which leads to better corporate performance the first hypothesis in this study is:

H1: Knowledge sharing affects company performance

Knowledge Sharing and Competitive Advantage

Knowledge sharing can increase process efficiency and reduce production costs to improve the ability to compete with the influx of new competitors and face the bargaining power of suppliers. In addition, knowledge sharing can increase competitive advantage in various business properties to apply considerable knowledge as a lever of competitive advantage. The knowledge-based view states that knowledge is a unique resource, difficult to imitate by competitors, and not easily transferred. The results study's done by (Eidizadeh et al., 2017)) show that knowledge sharing has a positive impact on competitive advantage. Based on this, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2: Knowledge sharing can increase the company's competitive advantage.

Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance

Organizations with competitive advantages can overcome their competitors and increase efficiency, improving organizational performance. Competitive advantage is implementing strategies that competitors do not currently carry out, enabling cost efficiency, capturing market opportunities, and avoiding competitors' threats (Tuan & Yoshi, 2010). In addition, companies with a competitive advantage allowing them to perform better than competitors' innovations, have better-worth products, and are more rewarding than competitors; customers feel that their products have higher value and benefits (Wingwon, 2012). Competitive advantage is a critical component in improving company performance, so the third hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H3: Competitive advantage has a significant effect on company performance

Knowledge sharing is part of a unique intangible resource, not easily transferred and replaced to increase company efficiency (Migdadi, 2020). Competitive advantage is the company's implementation strategy, which can improve company performance through cost efficiency, the ability to face competitors, the bargaining power of suppliers and customers, and the ability to compete with substitute products. Increased knowledge sharing among organization members, between units, and between organizations can boost competitive advantage and improve company performance. Based on these ideas, the fourth hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H4: Competitive advantage acts as a mediating variable for the influence between knowledge sharing and firm performance

Entrepreneurial orientation is the attitude and behavior of the company to get a new opportunity only by combining internal resources, thus becoming a unique resource, and is not easily imitated by competitors (Karami & Tang, 2019; Rauch et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial orientation as part of a strategy with proactive, innovative, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy behavior that can support knowledge sharing and company performance. Based on this, the fifth hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H5: Entrepreneurial orientation moderates the effect of knowledge sharing on firm performance

Based on the background of the problem, and the development of theories and hypotheses, this research proposes the following research models:

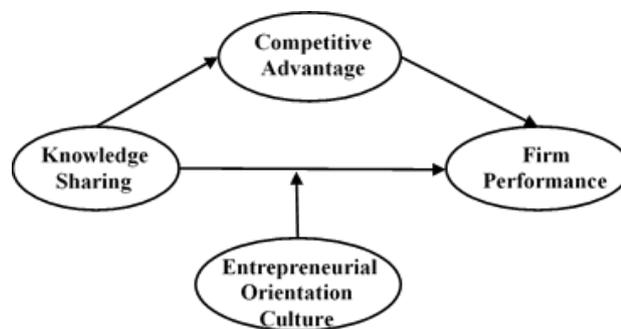


Figure 1: Research Model

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from 126 respondents willing to fill out 150 questionnaires distributed to SMEs engaged in the food and beverage industry. The discussion uses the outer and inner model tests. The research was conducted in the creative sector in the food and beverage sector in East Java. The research variable is an unobserved variable that uses a reflective indicator measurement with a Likert scale. The research variables consisted of 4 variables: knowledge sharing, competitive advantage, entrepreneurial orientation, and firm performance. Knowledge sharing is measured by six indicators, four indicators of firm performance, competitive advantage five indicators, and entrepreneurial orientation with five indicators.

This study uses WarpPls 6.0 to analyze the data. The data processing results using the outer and inner models tests. The validity test uses the outer model test with convergent and discriminant validity measurements. Conduct a convergent validity test by comparing the loading factor between latent variables and their indicators. The indicator is declared as valid if the loading factor is > 0.7 or the loading factor value is > 0.6 but the Average Variance Extracted value is > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017; Latan & Noonan, 2017). The discriminant validity testing assesses variables that are significantly different, as measured by cross-loading, Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the scales of this research.

Table 1. Variable Operationalization

Variable	Indicator
Knowledge sharing (KS) (Swanson et al., 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Colleagues provide constructive feedback during work time. 2. Experienced workers guide new inexperienced employees. 3. The training of new colleagues is well coordinated. 4. Experienced colleagues provide constructive feedback. 5. I know who to contact in my group if I have a specific question. 6. By setting an example for younger colleagues, more experienced colleagues will help them.
Firm performance (FP) (Zhao et al., 2011)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Market share growth, 2. sales volume 3. market reputation, 4. profit,
Competitive advantage (CA) (M. E. Porter, 1985)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ability to face current competitors 2. ability to meet new competitors 3. ability to meet suppliers' bargaining power 4. ability to meet consumers' bargaining power 5. ability to meet substituted goods
Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Zahra, 2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. innovativeness 2. proactiveness 3. risk-taking 4. competitive aggressiveness 5. autonomy

Cross loading is done by comparing the loading factor of the item to the variable, which must be greater than the item with other variables. Fornell-Larcker Criterion is a test tool that compares AVE roots with the correlation between latent variables in one model, stated to be valid if the AVE root value is greater than the correlation of each latent variable in the model (Hair et al., 2017). A reliability test is done to evaluate the reliability of test equipment, which is done by assessing composite reliability and Cronbach alpha. Composite reliability values > 0.7 and Cronbach alpha > 0.5 are reliable (Hair et al., 2017).

The inner model test is used to test the model's suitability, the quality of the model, and the hypothesis. We are testing the suitability of the model quality using Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-square (ARS), Average Adjusted R-square (AARs), Average block VIF (AVIF), Average full collinearity VIF (AVIF). The hypothesis will be judged according to the 5% error term.

RESULTS

Outer model

The outer model is used to assess the validity and reliability of the test, using WarpPls 6.0 are presented in table 2 and 3 as follows:

Table 2: Data Validity and Reliability

	Loading factor and cross-loading				Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
	KS	FP	CA	EO		
Knowledge sharing (KS)					0.85	0.79
KS_1	0.69	(0.49)	(0.05)	0.32		
KS_2	0.79	(0.02)	0.07	(0.13)		
KS_3	0.70	0.20	0.38	(0.43)		
KS_4	0.63	0.22	0.01	(0.15)		
KS_5	0.71	(0.27)	(0.33)	0.55		
KS_6	0.69	0.39	(0.09)	(0.17)		
Firm Performance (FP)					0.89	0.83
FP_1	(0.10)	0.87	0.00	(0.06)		
FP_2	(0.16)	0.89	(0.01)	0.07		
FP_3	0.05	0.85	0.33	(0.07)		
FP_4	0.30	0.63	(0.43)	0.09		
Competitive Advantage (CA)					0.84	0.76
CA_1	0.00	(0.31)	0.79	(0.19)		
CA_2	(0.00)	(0.15)	0.81	(0.15)		
CA_3	0.11	(0.05)	0.65	(0.24)		
CA_4	(0.14)	0.08	0.71	0.45		
CA_5	0.05	0.55	0.62	0.17		
Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)					0.88	0.83
EO_1	0.19	(0.23)	0.14	0.82		
EO_2	0.29	(0.30)	0.14	0.82		
EO_3	(0.26)	0.15	0.22	0.76		
EO_4	(0.02)	0.16	(0.31)	0.73		
EO_5	(0.26)	0.30	(0.25)	0.69		

Table 3: AVE Root and Coefficient Correlation

	KS	FP	CA	EO	AVE
KS	0.701				0.500
FP	0.438	0.816			0.665
CA	0.411	0.721	0.718		0.515
EO	0.449	0.705	0.746	0.768	0.590

The analysis results in Tables 2 and 3 show that the loading factor value of each variable indicator is mostly > 0.7 , and some are less than 0.7 and > 0.6 . Still, the average value of all variables is > 0.5 , so according to the criteria of convergent validity. The loading value of each indicator against the variable is greater than the loading value of each indicator on the other variables so that it meets the cross-loading criteria and is valid from the discriminant validity test. The Fornell-Larcker criteria test has completed the discriminant validity criteria

because the AVE root value is greater than the correlation coefficient between variables in one model.

Inner Model

The inner model test is done by testing the model and hypothesis. The results of data analysis for model testing are presented in Figure 1 as well as table 3 and 4, as follows:

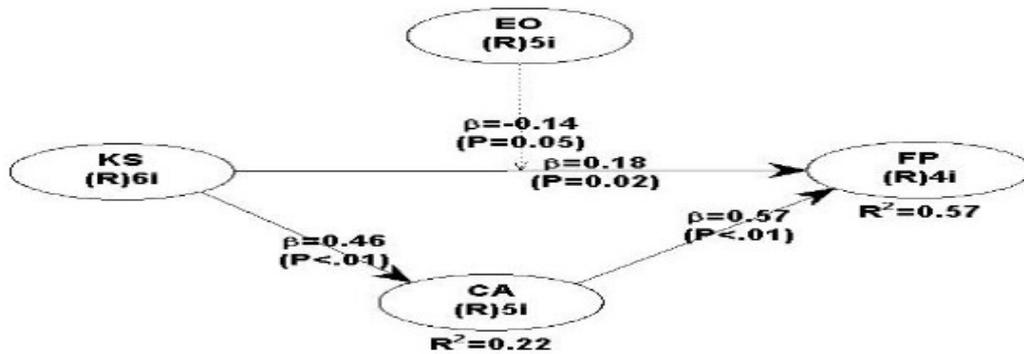


Figure 2: path coefficient

Table 4: Model Fit and Quality Indication

Model Fit	Fit Criteria	Result	Result
Average Path coefficient (APC)	P < 0.05	0.341 (p<0.001)	Good
Average R-square (ARS)	P < 0.05	0.393 (p<0.001)	Good
Average Adjusted R-square (AARS)	P < 0.05	0.385 (p<0.001)	Good
Average block VIF (AVIF)	Accepted if ≤ 5 , ideal ≤ 3	1.447	Ideal
Average full collinearity VIF (AVIF)	Accepted if ≤ 5 , ideal ≤ 3.3	2.159	Ideal
Tenenhous GoF	Small $> = 0.1$, Medium $> = 0.25$, large $> = 0.36$	0.456	Ideal

Table 5: Coefficient correlation

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Information
KS \rightarrow FP	0.184	0.017	Significant
KS \rightarrow CA	0.464	<0.001	Significant
CA \rightarrow FP	0.575	<0.001	Significant
KS \rightarrow CA \rightarrow FP	0.267	<0.001	Significant
EO * KS	-0.141	0.053	Not significant

Note: KS = Knowledge sharing, FP = Firm Performance, CA = Competitive Advantage, EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation

Table 4 shows that all the criteria for the suitability and quality of the model are met so that the model is feasible and then can use to test the hypothesis. In table 5, the correlation coefficient between knowledge sharing and firm performance is 0.184 with a p-value = 0.017, more diminutive than 0.05, so it can conclude that the influence of the two positive variables is significant. The effect of knowledge sharing with a competitive advantage is 0.464 with $p < 0.001$ less than 0.005, so it can conclude that the impact of the two variables is significant.

The effect of competitive advantage on firm performance is 0.575 with a p-value < 0.001 , which is smaller than 0.05, so it can conclude that the impact of the two variables is significant.

Competitive advantage as a mediating variable in the relationship between knowledge sharing and firm performance shows a coefficient value of 0.267 with a p-value < 0.001 , which means that competitive advantage is a variable that mediates the effect of knowledge sharing on firm performance with partiality mediation. The role of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) as a moderating variable shows the value of the EO*KS coefficient of -0.141 with a value of $p = 0.053$ greater than 0.05, so entrepreneurial orientation is not a moderating variable.

DISCUSSIONS

The first hypothesis, the influence between knowledge sharing and firm performance, has a positive and significant effect. Increased knowledge sharing within the organization tends to increase company performance. An organization that facilitates the sharing of knowledge to its members related to the implementation of the business process can improve the experience and expertise of members of the organization to improve their skills, enhancing organizational performance. In addition, experienced members of the organization can guide new members, so knowledge transfer occurs between organization members. Knowledge sharing allows members who have no experience or are younger not to feel awkward or embarrassed if they have to ask their seniors. Overall, increasing knowledge sharing can improve organizational performance because all members can learn and have a dialogue between members.

The exchange of information between organizational members allows members of the organization to be competent, which results in improved service quality, shorter production cycles, effective interdepartmental communication, and effective relationships with other partners. All of these benefits lead to improved organizational performance. The results of this study are in line with (Wang & Wang, 2012), which state that sharing tacit and explicit knowledge impacts company performance. Knowledge sharing can reduce production costs, accelerate project completion, faster development, better team performance, and improve enterprise innovation capacity and performance, including sales growth and revenue increase.

The second hypothesis, knowledge sharing, affects competitive advantage. Companies that are successful in implementing knowledge sharing tend to be able to increase their competitive advantage. Implementing knowledge sharing is suitable for organizations to adapt more quickly to the developing environment, maintain a competitive edge, face competitors better, and adapt to the bargaining power of consumers and suppliers. Good knowledge sharing also makes organizations excel in technology and new products to face the changing preferences of the consumers. Good knowledge sharing will be an advantage for the company because, as an intangible asset, an increase in

employees sharing knowledge with fellow members of the organization so that these values are difficult to imitate by competitors.

The ability becomes even among fellow members of the organization due to the success of knowledge sharing to contribute to organizational excellence. The results of this study are in line with research (Muhammed & Zaim, 2020), which states that the involvement of corporate members in sharing knowledge with colleagues has a positive effect on innovation performance and organizational financial performance.

The findings demonstrate that team member engagement in knowledge sharing behavior and leadership support have a favorable influence on organizational knowledge management success, which can improve organizational innovation performance and, as a result, financial performance. The resource-based view states that an organization's knowledge-based resources are a leveraging factor for competitive advantage because they are unique, valuable, and not easily transferred and imitated according to the nature of knowledge.

The third hypothesis is that competitive advantage significantly affects firm performance. Companies that can collaborate with suppliers, consumers, and new competitors can achieve superior performance due to exchanging knowledge to share benefits for product development and operational processes. Organizations facing new entrants and current competition tend to maintain or even increase market share, market reputation, and company sales. The increasing capability in the face of the bargaining power of both the suppliers and consumers can improve the company's competitive advantage. The expanding bargaining power of consumers due to the emergence of comparative products can cause consumers to switch to competitors and allows consumers to have price bargaining power so that the company's profitability decreases. Increased bargaining power of suppliers can result in increased production costs for the company. If the company wants to maintain its profitability, it must increase its prices and decrease sales.

The fourth hypothesis is that competitive advantage is a mediating influence between knowledge sharing and firm performance. Knowledge sharing is a process of exchanging knowledge that can increase the parties' knowledge, competence, and experience. Expanding the expertise and competence of organizational members can increase the company's competitive advantage by increasing the innovation of the members of the organization, which can further improve the reputation, market share, and sales of the company. Knowledge sharing can also enhance the ability to face the influx of newcomers or new competitors and the bargaining power of suppliers and consumers because of the increased capacity of member organizations both from operational and managerial sides.

The fifth hypothesis, knowledge sharing on firm performance, is moderated by entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurial orientation is not a moderating variable for the influence of knowledge sharing on company

performance. Increased entrepreneurial behavior can weaken the effect of knowledge sharing on company performance.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDIES

The results showed that increasing the company's ability to manage knowledge sharing could increase the company's competitive advantage and performance. The company's competitive advantage is reflected in the company's ability to face new competitors and deal with the bargaining power of suppliers and consumers, which tends to improve company performance. Entrepreneurial orientation is not a variable that moderates the influence between knowledge sharing and company performance. Knowledge sharing is an essential part of companies that want to improve their performance. The increased ability of company members from both operational and managerial sides to exchange information can improve overall company performance.

Subsequent research can further examine the role of entrepreneurial orientation in different research takes. The revision in term of the data quality, expansion of respondents, and potential other measurements of the entrepreneurial orientation as this construct may come from several previous studies. Future studies may benefit from the potentiality of cross-regional discussions, as different locus may alter the variable interactions. Thus, the demographic differences could serve as a future ground in the knowledge discussions.

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