

The Influence of Learning Orientation and Human Capital on Absorptive Capacity in SMEs Rattan Cirebon

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine how human capital and learning orientation affect absorptive capacity. This study used a quantitative research design. The small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that deal with rattan in Cirebon City are the study's demographic. Thirty-six companies provided 146 individuals for the samples. In this study, non-probability sampling is employed in conjunction with data withdrawal procedures and questionnaires with a Likert scale for measuring purposes. Multiple regression analysis with SPSS 26 is the data analysis method employed. The findings demonstrated that learning orientation and human capital characteristics had a favorable and significant impact on absorptive ability.

Keywords:

Learning Orientation;
Human Capital;
Absorptive Capacity;
SMEs Rattan

INTRODUCTION

Large data sets, quick product innovation cycles, and waning consumer interest all contribute to heightened market competitiveness in the context of the digital economy's development, endangering the competitive edge of businesses (Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002). To meet new markets and demographics, an organization or entrepreneur must adapt its business by absorbing new knowledge, such as by adhering to trends (Huang & Wang, 2011). The demands of the global market and shifts in consumer behavior are posing serious challenges to the rattan sector.

Every business actor, including those in the rattan sector, needs to be prepared for the increasingly intense business competition that exists in the age of free trade and worldwide competition. Amidst intense rivalry and discerning consumers, business entities need to have the ability to launch novel items that set themselves apart from their rivals.

The rattan business is just one of several industries that will inevitably undergo transformation due to shifting consumer preferences and global conditions. There is plenty of room for Indonesia to grow and lead the furniture market. Around 80% of the world's rattan raw materials are produced in Indonesia, making it the largest rattan raw material producer in the world. The rest is produced by foreign countries. After China (20.72%) and Italy (17.71%), Indonesia currently occupies the third position (7.68%) in world rattan trade.

The rattan sector provides significant advantages to Indonesia's national economy. One of the largest cities in Indonesia for rattan craftsmen is Cirebon. Cirebon Regency has a long history of exporting processed rattan. This triggered the interest and involvement of many entrepreneurs in the rattan sector. Exports of rattan furniture sector in Cirebon Regency have increased, with a projected value of USD 85.99 million in 2022. This shows that there are important inputs for the regional economy.

Human resources are one of the most crucial components for the majority of businesses, although they frequently receive less attention than other elements like

capital, money, and technology. Many corporate leaders are unaware that the company's human resources actually generate the majority of its revenues because business operations are typically seen from a business perspective. Business executives don't think of their organization as a unit with special skills and knowledge or a unique combination of assets that can set its goods and services apart from those of competitors (Adiputra, Arifianti, Luthfi, & Siddiq, 2024).

Rattan is a non-timber raw material originating from Indonesia which has become the main source of income for forest communities and local governments. In running a rattan business, there is an aspect that is quite important to pay attention to, especially in the rattan industry, namely in its processing. Of course, to process rattan raw materials, you must go through various processes starting from scratch until it can become rattan that is ready to be sold. From the processing process, of course, requires quite a lot of human resources to help manage the rattan. The rattan processing process is also not that easy and requires proficient skills, especially in taking raw materials in the forest, of course, requires a lot of consideration. Compared to exports of agricultural products such as rubber, coffee, and palm oil, rattan is the most popular non-timber product in Indonesia. However, as a forest product, rattan has the highest economic value in Indonesia.

For Indonesia's economy to grow, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector is crucial. In the current globalized period of increased competition, SMEs focused on rattan production must be able to meet the demands of their customers by offering quality products. It is critical to acknowledge the importance that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play in propelling the local economy.

Rattan SMEs need to be prepared for the changing nature of the market. To attract and gain widespread acceptance from the community at large, this calls for innovation in contemporary industrial processes. In order to improve business operations and obtain a competitive edge, rattan SMEs must possess the absorptive capacity—the ability to gather, absorb, and use outside knowledge—(Normalasari & Priyono, 2018). The ability of an organization to recognize and comprehend new information, combine it with previously learned information, and use it to develop new goods, services, and procedures is referred to as its "absorptive capacity" (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

Companies must be able to learn in order to create a learning culture, which is a source of distinctive, uncommon, and challenging to replicate competitive advantage known as Learning Orientation. This ability to learn comes before concentrating on absorptive capacity. According to Sinkula, Baker, and Noordewier (1997), learning orientation is the process of bringing information and specific market knowledge into an organization so that all departments can use it to perform better.

Learning orientation is also a process of how to deal with information that is currently owned, interpret, evaluate and finally send to accept or reject the existence of information (Kadarusman & Mauludin, 2020). Open-mindedness, shared vision, and a commitment to learning are the cornerstones of learning orientation. According to him, an organization's learning orientation demonstrates how much it engages with both its internal and external surroundings. For example, a commitment to learning implies that all employees must be devoted to achieving company goals. The workforce in the company needs to be encouraged to come up with fresh and creative ideas that can improve organizational performance. Another quality is open-mindedness, which requires constant assessment of the organization's operations.

Since there is currently a high degree of devolution of knowledge, this requires the immediate adoption of new ideas. and lastly, the organization's goals and vision are communicated to all departments as part of a shared vision (Sinkula et al., 1997)(Wang, 2008).

It is anticipated that new ideas and efforts will arise in the context of an established knowledge base and a learning orientation (Kumar, Jeihoony, Jabarzadeh, & Garza-Reyes, 2019). This has to do with the ability to absorb knowledge or information from the outside world or from sources outside the company. It is quite easy for rattan SMEs to enhance their capacity to take in, process, and use new information if they have a strong learning attitude. Learning orientation and absorptive capacity were found to be positively and significantly correlated by Gutiérrez, Bustinza, and Molina (2012).

In addition to learning orientation, companies must also focus on improving, developing the performance of an employee through their knowledge, abilities, experience, and intellectual improvement so that the output produced by an organization can have value and quality called Human capital (Yuniarsih et al., 2022). The knowledge possessed by human capital makes them creative, so that the knowledge they have can be transferred into the products they create or share with others (Djatola Djampagau, Salim, ., & Wijayanti, 2018). This shows that the level of qualified human resources has a better absorptive capacity to absorb external knowledge. They may be faster at recognizing the value of new knowledge and more effective at integrating it into their company's strategy and operations (Masatoshi, 2017). The company's ability to manage human resources as an important asset is necessary to achieve competitive advantage (Sudibyo, 2017).

Even if human resources (HR) play a critical part in the company's development, businesspeople do not seem to embrace the concept of human capital for HR. Human resources are a form of capital that can grow with time, the dynamics of the economic world, and scientific advancements. When compared to other production variables in a company's competitive strategy, human resources have the following advantages: the capacity for creativity and entrepreneurship; distinctive traits; specialized knowledge; a range of services; and the capacity for productivity that may be expanded as needed (Mathis, 2003).

Companies are required to look for new opportunities through product and market development. The key to the success of an organization is closely related to the role of individuals in carrying out their work and carrying out their responsibilities, not only lies in technological factors. In facing various changes in the business environment both internally and externally, HR managers can carry out HR management processes that can develop human capital in the Company.

Organizations with high human capital tend to have better absorption capacity. Pradana & Wahyuddin (2020) assert that there is a favorable and significant impact on the relationship between absorptive ability and human capital.

In the context of Rattan SMEs in Cirebon, learning orientation and human capital development relate to absorptive capacity, meaning that a strong learning orientation will promote investments in HRD, which will raise the organization's capacity to assimilate and apply new knowledge. This will be the key to success in the face of industry, technology, and market changes in the long run.

Rattan SMEs can increase their capacity in absorbing, processing, and using new knowledge for product innovation by developing a strong learning orientation. In

addition, skilled human resources are essential to increase the absorption capacity of rattan SMEs as they can optimize contemporary production procedures that are attractive to domestic and foreign customers.

Therefore, a detailed discussion of how the influence of human capital and learning orientation on the absorptive capacity of rattan SMEs in Cirebon Regency will be presented in this study. A deeper understanding of these variables is expected to provide useful insights for the growth of small and medium-sized rattan industries in the region.

METHOD

1. Type of Research

Quantitative research methodologies were employed in this study's investigation. Because the goal of the study is to ascertain how learning orientation and human capital affect absorptive capacity, researchers choose this method. Both primary and secondary data were employed in this study's data collection. The distribution of questionnaires to the field and the outcomes of the tests conducted provided the core data for this investigation. On the other hand, secondary data are those that researchers do not directly gather.

2. Population, sample, and sampling technique

Rattan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Cirebon City comprise the study's population. This study was carried out in phases by examining at several Cirebon City rattan businesses. The samples received were 147 and 146 were declared valid (1 incomplete questionnaire was rejected). So the sample of this study was 146 people taken from 32 companies. Because the population of the studied object isn't known non-probability sampling is the sampling technique employed (Jr et al., 2018) and there are certain criteria chosen namely top management and some staff that make individuals in the population do not have the same opportunities.

3. Research site

The rattan Small and Enterprises (SMEs) in Cirebon City served as the research site. The research was carried out in January and February of 2024.

4. Data analysis technique

Data collection techniques using questionnaires with a measurement scale of research instruments using Likert scales filled directly by respondents. The five Likert ratings on the questionnaire are 1 for "strongly disagree" and 5 for "strongly agree". The research instruments used take from previous research belonging to Rangus & Slavec (2017), Wang (2008), and the data analysis technique used is multiple linear regression analysis. The tool used to test the hypothesis is SPSS 26.

5. Research Model

In this research model shows that there are two independent variables, namely the learning orientation variable (X1), the human capital variable (X2) and one dependent variable, namely the absorptive capacity variable (Y).

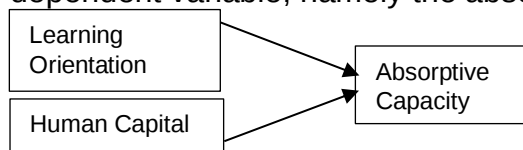


Figure 1. Research Model

Source : (Ahmed, Guozhu, Mubarik, Khan, & Khan, 2020; Gutiérrez, Bustinza, & Molina, 2012; Pradana & Wahyuddin, 2020; (Yang, Zheng, Xie, & Tian, 2022)

6. Hypotheses

Based on the framework of thinking, the following research hypotheses can be formulated, namely: H1: It is thought that there is a significant influence between learning orientation and absorptive capacity.; H2: It is suspected that there is a significant influence between human capital and absorptive capacity.; H3: It is suspected that there is a significant influence between learning orientation and human capital on absorptive capacity

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data processing, the characteristics of respondents are displayed in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Description	Total	Percent(%)
Gender	Male	92	63
	Female	54	37
Age	< 20 years	1	0,7
	20-29 years	38	26
	30-39 years	31	21,2
	40-49 years	52	35,6
	> 50 years	24	16,4
Education	< SMA	6	4,1
	SMA	64	43,8
	D3	6	4,1
	S1	67	45,9
	S2	3	2,1
Department	Leader	31	21,2
	Staff	115	78,8
Period of work	< 1 year	6	4,1
	1-5 years	70	47,9
	6-10 years	40	27,4
	11-15 years	18	12,3
	> 16 years	12	8,2

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

Based on the table on the characteristics of respondents above, the respondents to be the subject of this study consisted of 92, or 63%, of all respondents, while women were 54, or 37%, of the total respondents. Therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of the study's respondents are male and that their ages range from 40 to 49. In terms of education, the majority have a bachelor's degree at the S1 (Strata 1) level, and the majority of the post-respondents are employees with a work experience of 1-5 years. To determine the accuracy of the instrument in measuring the variables studied, the researchers tested the validity of the learning orientation (X1), human capital (X2), and absorptive capacity (Y) variables in the table below:

Table 2. Result of Validity Test

Variable	Item	r count	r table	Result
Learning Orientation (X1)	1	0,647	0,162	V
	2	0,609		V
	3	0,767		V
	4	0,776		V
	5	0,669		V
	6	0,725		V
	7	0,796		V
	8	0,711		V
	9	0,749		V
	10	0,568		V
	11	0,447		V
Human Capital (X2)	1	0,842	0,162	V
	2	0,765		V
	3	0,906		V
	4	0,849		V
	5	0,849		V
Absorptive Capacity (Y)	1	0,709	0,162	V
	2	0,820		V
	3	0,659		V
	4	0,646		V
	5	0,642		V
	6	0,666		V
	7	0,656		V
	8	0,725		V
	9	0,794		V
	10	0,713		V
	11	0,749		V
	12	0,717		V
	13	0,715		V
	14	0,746		V

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

The instruments for the learning orientation, human capital, and absorptive capacity variables are known to be valid based on the results of the validity testing because their calculated r values are all greater than 0.162 and have a calculated r value that is greater than the r table.

The researcher tested the reliability of the instrument to ensure consistency of findings, and the results are displayed in the table below:

Table 3. Result of Reability Test

Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Result
Learning Orientation (X1)	0,877	Reliable
Human Capital (X2)	0,892	Reliable
Absorptive Capacity (Y)	0,924	Reliable

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

The values of the Cronbach's Alpha variables for learning orientation, human capital, and absorptive capacity are 0.877, 0.892, and 0.924, respectively, according to the reliability test results above. These values indicate that all study variables are reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.06.

Based on the validity and reliability testing, it can be concluded that the question items are valid and reliable so that the instrument is suitable for research.

Based on the results of data processing obtained, the model summary table in the table below can be used to determine the extent of the influence of learning orientation and human capital on absorptive capacity and whether there is autocorrelation in this study :

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	R Change	Square	Durbin-Watson
1	.824 a	.680	.675	410,188	.680		1,931

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human Capital, Learning Orientation

b. Dependent Variable: Absorptive Capacity

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

With a correlation coefficient value of 0.824, the findings of the table analysis above demonstrate the significant association between learning orientation to absorptive capacity and human capital factors. This demonstrates that the level of absorptive capacity possessed by rattan SMEs increases with increased levels of human capital and learning orientation. Furthermore, the analysis's findings demonstrated that learning orientation and human capital characteristics had a 68% impact on absorptive ability. That is, the variables of learning orientation and human capital in this research model account for 68% of the variation in absorptive capacity. The remaining 32% was impacted by extraneous variables not accounted for in the model.

In addition, Durbin-Watson values were used in this study to test the assumption of autocorrelation. The results of the autocorrelation test showed that the regression model of learning orientation (X1), human capital (X2), and absorption capacity (Y) obtained a Durbin Watson value of 1.931, a dU value of 1.7394, and a d value of 1.931. The result is an autocorrelation value between $1.7394 < 1.931 < 2.2606$. This shows that $dU < d < (4 - dU)$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression equation used in this study does not have an autocorrelation problem.

To find out the significance of the influence of learning orientation and human capital on absorptive capacity simultaneously, it can be seen in the ANOVA table below :

Table 5. Anova

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5,104,179	2	2,552,090	151,680	.000 ^a
	Residual	2,406,040	143	16,825		
	Total	7,510,219	145			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human Capital, Learning Orientation

b. Dependent Variable: Absorptive Capacity

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

A significance value of Sig 0.00 < 0.05 is obtained, indicating that it is less than the significance level of 0.05, according to the ANOVA table above. This demonstrates how human capital and learning orientation have a big impact on absorptive capacity.

To determine the significance of the influence of learning orientation and human capital variables on absorptive capacity and whether there are symptoms of multicollinearity in this research, you can see the table below:

Table 6. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	9,573	2,744		3,488	,001		
1 Learning Orientation	,917	,077	,736	11,857	,000	,581	1,720
Human Capital	,318	,155	,128	2,056	,042	,581	1,720

a. Dependent Variable: Absorptive Capacity

Source: Data processed by SPSS 26, 2024

The analysis in the above table reveals that the human capital variable has a sig value of 0.042 and the learning orientation variable has a sig value of 0.000, indicating that the sig value of both variables is less than 0.05. As a result, it is possible to reject the research hypothesis (H1) and adopt the alternative hypothesis (H2). This demonstrates that learning orientation and human capital have a favorable impact on rattan SMEs' ability to absorb information.

In addition, examination of the tolerance values and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) was done. This result is less than 10 because the VIF value is 1.720. Given that the tolerance value is 0.581, it is greater than 0.1. These two numbers indicate that the employed regression model does not exhibit any multicollinearity symptoms.

The study's findings indicate that learning orientation and human capital have a big impact on rattan SMEs' ability to absorb information. The decision-making process for boosting the absorptive ability of rattan SMEs can be based on these findings.

Discussion

1. Relationship between Learning Orientation and Absorptive Capacity

The findings of the study demonstrate that learning orientation significantly and favorably affects absorptive capacity. This indicates that SMEs in the rattan industry have a greater capacity to assimilate and utilize new information the more learning-oriented they are. By increasing absorptive capacity, rattan SMEs can increase product and process innovation, as well as their competitiveness. The results of this study support the findings of Gutiérrez et al., (2012) and Kharabsheh et al., (2015) which also shows a significant influence between learning orientation and absorptive capacity.

In several studies, the influence of learning orientation on absorptive capacity is often carried out in developed countries, as shown in the findings Gutiérrez et al., (2012) do it in Eropa and Yang et al., (2022) carried out in China. But in this research

we provide data from the perspective of developing countries, namely Indonesia, especially rattan SMEs in Cirebon City.

2. Relationship between Human Capital and Absorptive Capacity

Human capital is known to have a positive and significant influence based on the research outcomes. This implies that an organization's capacity to assimilate and apply new information increases with its human capital. The findings of previous research that examined at how human capital affects absorptive ability are incorporated into this research. One of them is Soo, Tian, Teo, & Cordery (2017) which shows that Human Capital has a positive impact on a company's absorptive capacity, which in turn improves innovation performance.

The findings of this study diverge from those of a study put forth by Pradana & Wahyuddin (2020) which suggested that the scope of SMEs differs from that of the multinational industry and that human capital appears to have no role as a mediator in the relationship between absorptive capacity and innovation. In other words, the human capital of small and medium-sized businesses does not directly affect their ability to absorb and innovate. The study's findings address research shortcomings identified by Pradana & Wahyuddin (2020) where in the research model did not allow for the demonstration of a direct correlation between the absorptive capacity variable and the role of the human capital variable within the context of small and medium-sized businesses.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents are male (63%), with the largest age group being 40-49 years (35.6%). Most respondents have a bachelor's degree (45.9%) and work as staff members (78.8%) with a work tenure of 1-5 years (47.9%). The validity and reliability tests confirm that the instruments used to measure learning orientation, human capital, and absorptive capacity are both valid and reliable.

The analysis demonstrates a significant positive relationship between learning orientation and human capital with absorptive capacity, indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.824. These two variables account for 68% of the variance in absorptive capacity, while the remaining 32% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. The regression model does not show any issues with autocorrelation or multicollinearity, ensuring the robustness of the results.

Furthermore, the ANOVA analysis confirms that learning orientation and human capital significantly influence absorptive capacity, with a significance level below 0.05. These findings align with previous studies by Gutiérrez et al. (2012) and Kharabsheh et al. (2015) regarding the positive impact of learning orientation, and by Soo et al. (2017) regarding human capital. However, this study provides new insights by focusing on SMEs in a developing country, specifically rattan SMEs in Cirebon, Indonesia. This highlights the crucial role of enhancing learning orientation and human capital to boost the absorptive capacity and competitiveness of SMEs in this sector.

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