

LINKING OF CUSTOMER AND COMPETITOR ORIENTATION ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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LINKING OF CUSTOMER AND COMPETITOR ORIENTATION ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study was to prove empirically the relationship of Customer and competitor orientation and product innovation and business performance within the scope of Batik Small and Medium Enterprises. Sample of the study consisted of 210 managers or owners of Batik SMEs in Central Java area. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling. The result of hypothesis testing showed that Customer and competitor orientation has positive effect on business performance and product innovation. Product innovation significantly affected business performance.

Key words: customer and competitor orientation, product innovation, business performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

A company makes investments to build relationships with customers in which trust is focus of the relationships (Morgan and Hunt 1994) and it is able to improve financial performance (Reichheld 1996). These investments make the company make massive expenditures on programs of relationship marketing. Although the relationship marketing provides advantages, some disadvantages can also be found. The company must spend various costs that are often

counter-productive with the results. Counterproductive relationship marketing will result in negative reactions from customers (Cao and Gruca 2005).

Innovation can be considered as important for companies to stay competitive (Darroch and McNaughton 2002). To be a successful company, the main task of the company is to determine perceptions, needs and desires of market to be able to create products with superior value. This superior value is highly subjective and only in the minds of customers. The company needs to study consumer perceptions about its products. In this case, organization can be seen as organism processing information in which it operates in a complex and dynamic context in using the information to reduce uncertainty in the decision-making process of innovation (Lievens and Moenaert 2000). To do so, organizations must continually scan new opportunities in order to be able to satisfy customers and being innovative in providing solutions to their market needs (Veerawardana 2003). It means that a company that is able to manage knowledge effectively, from both internal and external sources, can use that information for purpose of decision making (Shoham et al. 2005).

Market orientation is an important part in improving innovation and performance (Jenny 2005; Vaccaro et al. 2010; Wang and Wang 2012). Verhees and Meulenber (2005) found that market orientation is useful in selecting a wide range of attractive products; also improve market intelligence of customer which is positively related to performance of small companies. This is supported by Blankson et al. (2006) who found that small firms emphasized competitiveness and satisfaction of customer needs (Farida et al. 2016). Pelham (1999) argued that a strong market orientation culture can provide a "significant source of competitive advantage" for small firms.

Batik Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) is one of Indonesian SMEs and, today, it is one of strategic industries as a driver of Indonesian economy. Opportunity of developing batik SMEs has been increasingly gaining momentum after UNESCO determined batik as a world cultural heritage in 2009. The recognition by UNESCO has, at least, made attractiveness of batik SMEs more real in the eyes of the world and also strategic to the existence of batik in Indonesia. On the other hand, it also becomes a power for Indonesian batik industry to penetrate domestic market and even international market.

A challenge faced batik SMEs is regeneration of human resources (HR). Generally, the existing batik producers are relatively older people, so special effort is needed to arouse interest of young people to go into batik business. In terms of technology, entrepreneurs of batik industry have been generally not making improvements in their production systems and techniques to be more productive to make higher quality products yet. The use of natural dyes is another issue in production techniques, because it has been not guarantying stable results. Problem of silk availability as raw material is also found, because availability of the raw material cannot meet market demand and generally it is still imported. In terms of marketing, challenges come from competitor countries, including batik imported from China controls 30% of domestic market share. Related to the issue of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), it is suspected that traditional batik motifs are often imitated by craftsmen from other countries. Therefore, a comprehensive and holistic approach from upstream to downstream is needed to guarantee synergy of various subsystems in order to create economic value added of batik for people.

Batik SMEs also faces increasingly tight competition along with the increasingly open domestic market. Phenomenon of free trade with China has made Chinese products to inundate Indonesia, including batik products. Central Bureau of Statistics released data in 2013 indicating that almost 56.3 tons of Chinese batik, worth Rp 14.5 billion, had been

imported to Indonesia, either in the form of apparel or cloth with relatively cheap prices. This condition makes batik products of Indonesian to face serious competition. It is estimated that the Chinese batik will dominate market share with cheap prices and attractive motifs. The batik from China is a printed and machined batik, not a handmade batik. Therefore, Indonesian batik entrepreneurs should be able to improve their creativity and maintain traditional motifs and to meet market demand well, in order to grow healthy competition and mutual benefit. Purpose of the present study is to prove empirically relationship of market orientation, product innovation and business performance within the scope of Batik SMEs.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

2.1. Relationship of Customer and Competitor Orientation and Business Performance

In the last two decades, various studies have been researching the concept of market orientation (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Jyoti and Sharma 2012; Voola et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2012; Narver et al. 2004)). From these studies, several approaches in the market orientation literature are found. The first approach states that market orientation is a perspective of cultural-based behavior. Narver and Slater (1990) defines market orientation as an organizational culture to create superior benefits and values for customer as a top priority, and to build behavioral norms supporting the organization and responsive to market information. There are three components to measure market orientation: consumer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination within a company. The second approach says that market orientation is a marketing activity. Market orientation as a market intelligence seeking information about current and future needs of customers and exogenous factors affecting those needs (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Three elements are found in this approach: generating market intelligence, spreading market intelligence and responsiveness. Response to information of market will be faster and more effective if an organization has sufficient knowledge about the market. The third approach explains market orientation as decision making and managerial (Shapiro 1988).

Narver et al. (2004) and Bodlaj and Rojsek (2010) market orientation can divided into 2 behaviors, namely responsive market orientation and proactive market orientation. Responsive market orientation refers to a set of skills and procedures for generating, disseminating, and using current market intelligence related to current customers and their stated needs (Narver et al. 2004; Atuahene-Gima et al. 2005; Tsai et al. 2008), whereas proactive orientation is concerned with understanding and satisfying latent needs of consumers (a need a consumer is not knowing yet) (Narver et al., 2004). To meet the latent needs of customers, a proactive-market-oriented company explores knowledge and new markets significantly away from their existing experiences (Tsai et al. 2008). Martin-Consuegra et al. (2008) explains that the concept of responsive market orientation is empirically similar to basic concept of market orientation proposed by Day (1994). Jaworski et al. (2000) distinguishes market driven and market driving. Purpose of market driven is to understand and to react to preferences and behavior of players in a particular market structure. In contrast, the shape of market driving implies impact of a company on the market structure and/or behavior of market participants in order to improve competitive position of the business.

The results of ³ their study did not support previous studies that market-oriented organizations need to develop a better understanding of weaknesses of competitors and using that knowledge to develop and implement strategies to create better customer value and customer satisfaction. Different results were also found in Kohli and J. Jaworski (1990) study

describing antecedent model and consequences of market orientation. Results of their research indicated role of senior manager policy, dynamics of inter-departmental collaboration and organizational system as an antecedent of market orientation, and followed by employee response, customer response, and company performance as consequences of the market orientation.

Based on the description, following hypothesis can be proposed.

H1: Customer and competitor orientation positively affects business performance

2.2. Relationship of Customer and Competitor Orientation and Product Innovation

In the past, designs of new products were dominated by certain companies and industries, but market competition of the present era has changed (Abecassis-Moedas 2006). In the past, market environment was more likely to be stable (Garud et al. 2008) so that product design and new product development techniques did not change very quickly. Today, product life cycle is perceived as faster than ever before. In fact, utilization and adoption of information technology also affects business performance (Nuryakin and Retnawati 2016).

Innovative products are important in industries where consumers gain more benefits such as from new features, design and function (Khin et al. 2010). Competitive companies are no longer to offer similar products or just compete with traditional reasons such as price and quality. Primarily for technical companies, the inevitable trend is to differentiate their product offerings by using innovation to gain competitive advantage over competitors. Effort that is necessary to do by a company to keep its products still in the market is to build a business relational (Retnawati and Nuryakin 2016).

Khin et al. (2010) explains that innovation is related to strategy and resources. In the strategy approach, innovation is something that differentiating itself from competitors (Porter 1985). Lynn and Akgun (1998) states that the innovation strategy is divided into three: a customer driven strategy, a process driven strategy, and a pioneer driven strategy. In other paper, Lynn et al. (1998) argued that strategic innovation can be differentiated into process-based, speed-based, market-based, learning-based, and qualitative-based strategies. Akman and Yilmaz (2008) stated that the innovation strategy can be divided into 6 strategies, including aggressiveness, analysis, defensive, futuristic, proactive, and responsive.

A company is innovative if it is successfully implementing creative ideas into its products/services (Amabile et al. 1996). According to Khin et al. (2010) products are innovative when consumers gain new benefits from new designs, functions and features.

Janssen et al. (2015) describes innovation into two words, namely novelty and newness. Innovation means that something new is applied to process, product, and idea (West 1990). Damanpour (1991) and Souto (2015) explain that innovation can be seen as radical innovation and. Radical innovation tends to make innovation in a large scale while incremental innovation makes small-scale innovations.

Consequently, incremental innovation has lower risk and cost than radical innovation. The two types of innovations, radical and incremental, in the context of organizational learning are activities creating knowledge. Radical innovation requires creation of knowledge to make a fundamental change representing a revolutionary change in technology of a product (Herrmann et al. 2007). In contrast, incremental innovation is concerned with creation of

knowledge for small improvements or simple adjustments in current product technology (Un 2010).

Based on the description above, a hypothesis can be formulated as follow.

H2: Customer and competitor orientation affects product innovation.

2.3. Relationship of Product Innovation and Business Performance ¹

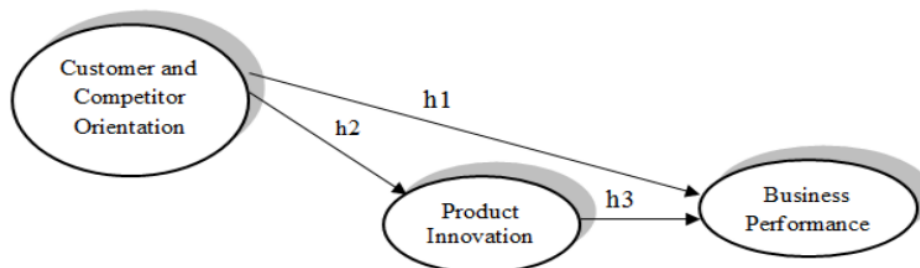
Business performance is a result of market success or when a market position is achieved (Day and Wensley 1988) and fundamentally changes over time (Rust et al. 2004). Therefore, the measurement of business performance should be able to explain the overall business performance of a company either in this period or ¹ the future. More explicit, the concept of business performance as a whole is incorporating financial and non-financial measures with which they will help marketers to fully understand consequences of their strategy (Varadarajan and Clark 1994). Thus, we include both financial entities and market business performance in this study.

The term "business performance" is used as a performan¹ of a company used to establish both market aspect and financial aspect of its business performance. Financial business performance literally refers to financial measures, such as the fit of profit margin and return on investment, while business performance of market implies actions such as market share and sales volume. Every company should look for more¹ sales profits than growth. For example, PIMS study found a very positive relationship between market share and ROI measures (Buzzell and Gale 1987). Similar results were achieved in many other studies (Hooley et al. 2005; Srivastava et al. 1998). Furthermore, Hooley et al. (2005) argue that a superior business market performance is likely to result in superior financial business performance. Meanwhile, according to sales growth, an increased product demand, higher sales value and wider market coverage may be resulted (Nuryakin et al. 2017).

Based on the description, a hypothesis can be formulated as follow.

H3: Product innovation has an effect on business performance.

Based on the results of the above research can be developed an empirical research model as follows.



² **Figure 1** Conceptual Model of Customer and Competitor Orientation on Product Innovation and Business Performance

3. MEASUREMENT

Customer and competitor orientation can be interpreted as a highly effective and efficient organizational value to produce a culture needed to create superior value for consumers

(Kohli and J. Jaworski 1990). Instrument in this research is measured by using Likert scale with score of 1 to 7. Score 1 describes a 'strongly disagree' answer, and score 7 represents 'strongly agree' answer.

Product innovation is a way to build and develop products continually that can be achieved through introduction of new technologies, new applications in new forms of organization (Low et al., 2007). Instrument in this research is measured by using Likert scale with score of 1 to 7. Score 1 describes a 'strongly disagree' answer, and score 7 represents 'strongly agree' answer.

Business Performance is output achieved by a company resulting from its operational activities, including achievement of corporate goals both internal and external achievements (Lin and Peng 2008). Instrument in this research is measured by using Likert scale with score of 1 to 7. Score 1 describes a 'strongly disagree' answer, and score 7 represents 'strongly agree' answer.

3.1. Validity and Reliability Measurement

Empirical model testing of the present study uses a statistical approach of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) assisted by AMOS 21 software with the same step, namely to test parameters yielded by goodness of fit and test directly hypotheses of the research about causality relationship developed in model.

The instrument (item questionnaire) test of the study uses confirmatory factor analysis to examine relationship of constructs with its indicator (validity questionnaire). Below, results of confirmatory factor analysis and cronbach alpha (Cronbach's α).

Table 1 Scale item for measures

Reflective scale names and items (measured on 1 – 7 point Likert Scale indicating the extent to which respondent agrees with following statements)	Standardized factor loading
Customer and competitor Orientation	
Competitor orientation	0.723
Customer orientation	0.763
Internal orientation	0.765
Inter-functional coordination	0.747
Product Innovation	
Innovation of produk making	0.779
Innovation of production technology use	0.757
Innovation of production activities.	0.809
Innovation of production material	0.770
Business Performance	0.769
Growth of sales	0.803
Increased profit.	0.759
Growth of asset	0.735
Growth of market	

4. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Results of statistical test by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis in full model can be seen in Figure 2. Table 1 describes assumptions of the test result in the development of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Scores of test indicates that a goodness of fit criteria is met such as Chi-Square of 58.825. Probability value of 0.211, TLI value of 0.916, GFI value of 0.939, AGFI value of 0.907 and RMSEA value of 0.031 shows that the values in accordance with the specified cut-off. This indicates that the research model is accepted and meets the specified criteria (standards).

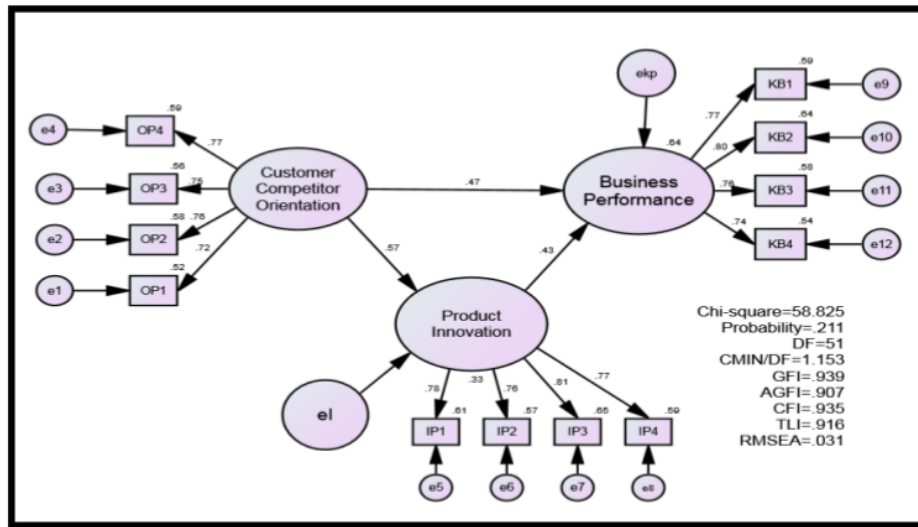


Figure 2 Full Model Relationship of Customer and Competitor Orientation, Product Innovation and Business Performance

Based on results of statistical tests in Table 1, values of standardized path coefficients of the relationship between market orientation, product innovation and business performance can be explained. Then, results of this study are also shown in Table 1 and to form the 3 hypotheses.

Table 2 Results of Coefficient Test for relationship pathway of Customer and competitor orientation, Product Innovation and Business Performance

Hypothesis	Standardized path coefficients	t value	Prob .	Result
H1 Customer and competitor orientation → Business performance	0.527	4.308	0.000	Significant
H2 Customer and competitor orientation → Innovation	0.479	4.533	0.000	Significant
H3 Innovation → Business performance	0.581	4.164	0.000	Significant

Note: *Significant at $p \leq 0.05$; if $(t) \geq 1.96$

Discussion of the relationship of each variable can be explained as follows.

Customer and competitor orientation has a significant effect on business performance. Table 2 showed results of the structural model of the relationship between market orientation and business performance as indicated by value ($t = 4.308 > 1.96$) with significance value ($0.000 < 0.05$). So, the hypothesis proposing a positive effect of the market orientation on business performance is proved. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Customer and competitor orientation has a significant effect on product innovation. Table 2 showed results of the structural model of relationship between market orientation and product innovation as indicated by value ($t = 4.533 > 1.96$) with significance value ($0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis proposing market orientation affects positively product innovation is proved. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Product innovation has a significant effect on business performance. Table 2 showed results of the structural model of relationship between product innovation and business performance as indicated by the value ($t = 4.164 > 1.96$) with significance value ($0.000 < 0.05$). So the hypothesis proposing a positive effect of innovation on business performance is proved. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study proved that market orientation has a significant effect on business performance. The results of this study contradict the study of Smirnova et al., (2011) with a finding that the market orientation with an orientation dimension on competitors affects the business performance. Results of the present study support research findings of Wang and Feng 2012 that customer orientation has a positive effect on company's performance.

The present study also proved that Customer and competitor orientation has a significant and positive effect on product innovation. Results of this study are in line with findings of Bodlaj (2003)'s study that a significant relationship exists between market (proactive and responsive) orientation and innovation that is characterized by the success of new product sales. Meanwhile, the results of similar study conducted by Jensen and Harmsen (2001) found an important factor of the innovation performance of a corporate characterized by successful development of new product.

Findings of the present study also indicated that product innovation has a significant effect on business performance. The finding supports previous study of Eshlaghy and Maatofi (2011) who found an important role of innovation in making a positive contribution to performance of a company. The study of Eshlaghy and Maatofi (2011) is also in line with findings of the present study which concluded important role of innovation to contribute positively to the performance of the company.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Results of the present study are an empirical examination of relationship of market orientation, business performance and product innovation. This study was conducted in the scope of Batik SMEs in Central Java by using purposive sampling technique. For future research, representativeness of sample in each region of Central Java Province should be considered, so that the research can be conducted by using proportional sampling method based on the distribution area of Batik SMEs in Central Java.

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