Human Intellectual Capital, Organizational Resources and Product Innovation Performance: A Perspective of Resource Based View Theory

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between human intellectual capital (HIC), organizational resources (OR), and product innovation performance (PIP) within the framework of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing survey data collected from a sample of Small Medium Enterprise (SME) in Malaysia. The research instrument consists of validated scales to measure HIC, OR, and PIP. Multiple regression analysis is employed to assess the strength and significance of the relationships among the variables. Preliminary findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between HIC and PIP. Specifically, firms that possess higher levels of HIC, including Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) are more likely to achieve improved product innovation outcomes. Additionally, the study reveals that OR, such as organizational culture and structure increase PIP of SMEs. This study contributes to the existing literature on the RBV theory by providing empirical evidence on the importance of HIC and OR in driving PIP.

Keywords: Human intellectual capital, organizational resources, product innovation performance, resource-based view theory, firm performa

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Introduction

Product that has been newly introduced or improved is known as product innovation, and its performance is critical to the success of firms in competitive markets. Nowadays, an extensive literature has emerged on the topic of product innovation performance (PIP), whereby PIP is a multidimensional construct that various encompasses aspects of product's performance, such as profitability and brand reputation (Sidek & Rosli, 2021). The literature on PIP has identified several factors that influence its outcomes and these factors can be categorized both inner and outer factors into (Cotora, 2007). In most literature, inner factors refer to the characteristics of the firm and its innovation process that affect PIP. These include aspects, for example organizational culture, technology adoption, and product development rapidity. External factors consist of the market and industry conditions that affect product innovation performance, such as customer necessities, rivalry, controlling environment, and marketplace demand. Researchers have used various methods, including surveys, case studies, experiments, and econometric models to study the relationship of organizational resources and performance.

PIP involved multidimensional whereby the literature on PIP has identified several key concepts, theories, and empirical findings that shed light on the factors that influence its outcomes. In today's rapidly environment, changing business companies are increasingly realizing the importance of intangible resources in driving PIP. This study was supported by the Resource Based-View Theory (RBV) as internal valuable resources and capabilities that enabling a firm to provide a sustained competitive advantage by preventing competitors from replicating them (Poazi, Tamunosiki-Amadi & Fems, 2017). In addition, previous study by Hult et.al (2004) found that a firm's research and development (R&D) as well as its marketing capabilities, were positively related to its PIP. This was similar with a study by Lin et al.

(2008) who found that a firm's technological capabilities and knowledge resources were positively related to its PIP. Overall, by identifying and leveraging the RBV, a firm can enhance its PIP and achieve sustained competitive advantage.

Literature Review

Intangible Resources and Product Innovation Performance

Non-physical and non-financial resources of the organization also known as intangible resources and are broadly (Lev, 2001). The term intellectual capital is also applied to the definition (Edvinsson Malone, 1997). Companies improve its financial performance with effective identification and management of intellectual capital (Kristandl & Bontis, 2007). Researchers also found that there is a need to take into account the value of intangible resources with product innovation in order to understand more completely the relationship to PIP. In this case, RBV provides a framework to highlight and predict the fundamentals of organisation performance and competitive advantage (Utami & Alamanos, 2022). RBV theoretically predicts intangible resources as the important factors for firm success (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Conner, 2002; Hall, 1993; Michalisin et al., 1997).

Intangibles resources are able to support a greater level and scope of activity than are since they bring together more frequently the requirements necessary for producing sustainable advantage; valuable, rare and difficult to imitate and replace by competitors (Barney, 1991; Hitt et al., 2001) Strategic management research which includes theoretical and empirical

studies also being done to understand of how firms' resources and capabilities lead to performance (Molloy and Barney, 2015; Morris et al., 2017). In addition, human intellectual capital (HIC) is also considered a valuable intangible resource for organizations to develop innovation capabilities, while product innovation is a key driver of firms' competitiveness. Nevertheless, organizational resources (OR) also being found play an important role in facilitating product innovation. Thus, the following literature review will aim to examine the relationship among HIC, OR and PIP.

Human Intellectual Capital and Product Innovation Performance

HIC effected higher performance as it leads to the development of a skilled workforce and engages in firm's that lead to competitive behaviour advantage (Wright et al., 2003). As proposed by Foss et al. (2006), human resources and resource learning are key contributors to a firm's evolving bundle of productive resource services and it has been described as person-level influences on innovation activities that require other distinct resources such as intellectual abilities, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation and environment (Sternberg, 1999).

As a result, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) can be theorised as a form of HIC whereby it includes entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and abilities individuals within an organization. In addition, EO has been widely renowned as a key driver of firm performance and competitive advantage (Wiklund Shepherd, 2005). EO is as a form of HIC, which refers to the skills, and abilities of individuals (Bontis, 1998; Kraaijenbrink, Spender & Groen, 2010). Furthermore, HIC can facilitate, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge, and enhance organizational learning and innovation (Bontis, Dragonetti, Jacobsen, & Roos, 1999).

Studies by Fred & Francis (2005) have examined the relationship between EO and HIC. Similarly, other researcher, Hmieleski and Carr (2008) found that EO was positively associated to the HIC of top management line-ups. On the other hand, other studies have focused on the antecedents and outcomes of EO as a form of HIC. For instance, study by Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, and Frese (2009) shows that the human capital of entrepreneurs is positively related to their EO. Whereas, Lee, Lim, and Lim (2003) and Massa and Testa (2008) found that EO is positively related to firm innovation and performance. HIC is also an essential resource for firms to achieve their strategic objectives, including product innovation. PIP is a crucial outcome for firms as it can lead to competitive advantages, increased profitability, and market share (Wang et. al, 2022).

In this literature review, we will examine the relationship between HIC and PIP in several studies. One study by Joo and Park (2016) found HIC positively affects PIP and found that firms with higher levels of HIC had a higher level of PIP. This study also supported by articles in Neil et. al (2001) and Handbook of Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology. Another study by Wang (2014) and Fornes et al. (2018) found that HIC significantly influenced PIP. The study also found that knowledge management practices and organizational learning were significant mediators in the relationship between HIC and PIP (Attia & Essam. Furthermore, a study by Chen et al. (2018) found that HIC had a positive impact on organizational PIP with innovation capability as mediator. This finding also being supported by research findings by Khodaei et, al (2021). Finally, a study by Triguero-Sánchez et al. (2019) revealed that intellectual capital had a significant impact on both exploratory and exploitative innovation performance.

In conclusion, several studies have established the positive relationship HIC and PIP (Samad, 2020). All of these studies suggested that research on HIC and PIP have significant implications for managers and policymakers, indicating the importance of HIC in enhancing PIP. Therefore,

H1: The higher the human intellectual capital, the higher the product innovation performance

Organizational Resources and Product Innovation Performance

Scholars found that the presence of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce leads to higher levels of product innovation (Bakker et al., 2013) and empowerment are employee positively related to PIP (Youndt, Subramaniam & Scott, 2004; Jansen et al., 2012). In term of financial resources, studies have found that firms with superior financial resources are more likely to engross in product innovation activities (Zahra, 1993; Braun et al., 2012). Furthermore, firms that leverage financial resources through partnerships, alliances, and collaborations with other firms are also more likely to achieve levels of PIP greater (Miller & Friesen, 1978; Cohen et al., 2010).

In non-financial aspect, technological resources also play a critical role in facilitating product innovation. Scholars have found that firms that invest in advanced technologies and infrastructure are more likely to achieve higher levels of PIP (Kotabe et al., 2013). Additionally, firms that retain technological capabilities and knowledge are expected to introduce new and innovative products (Laursen & Salter, 2014). Other element of organizational resources is knowledge

management. It refers to the processes and strategies used by firms to create, share, and utilize knowledge. Scholars have effective that knowledge management practices are positively related to PIP (Nonaka & Toyama, 2002). Furthermore. firms that knowledge management systems, such as databases and knowledge sharing platforms, are more likely to achieve higher levels of PIP (Gupta et al., 2002). Organizational culture (OC) considered a crucial part in supporting PIP. Most researchers, however, see OC particularly as cognitive including beliefs which determine the thoughts, feelings, and actions organization (Michalski & Martinez, 2008). Employees have been shown to behave and respond differently because of the underlying cross-cultural differences in organizational values and attitudes (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Neuijen, & Ohavy, 1990; Tayeb, 1994). Scholars have found that a strong innovative culture is positively related to PIP (Kuemmerle, 1999). Furthermore, firms that promote a culture of research, risktaking, and creativity are more likely to introduce new and innovative products (Jassawalla and Sashittal, 2002).

Other than OC, researchers also found that organizational structure (OS) as important aspect that affects the innovation performance of a firm. A study by Chen et. al (2018) examined the effect of OS on PIP in Chinese firms. The authors found that a flatter OS, with fewer hierarchical levels and more decentralization of decision-making is positively associated with PIP. Similarly, a study by Ahn et al. (2019) in South

Korea found that a decentralized OS positively affects PIP. The authors suggest that decentralization allows for greater communication and information sharing, leading to increased innovation. Another study by Mello et. al (2019), who studied the relationship between OS and

innovation performance in Brazilian firms found that, a modular OS, which allows for greater flexibility and coordination different across functions departments, positively affects innovation performance. Similarly, a study by Patalas-Maliszewska et. al (2019) in Poland found that a hierarchical OS is positively related with innovation performance. The authors suggest that a hierarchical structure provides clear goals and directions, leading to greater focus and efficiency in innovation activities. This has been supported by Axtell et.al (2000),who found that employee perceptions on individual, group and organizational factors had an impact on innovation.

In summary, the relationship between OS and PIP is complex and may differ across firms and countries. The majority of studies suggest that a flatter, more decentralized OS is associated with higher PIP. This may be due to greater communication, information sharing, and flexibility decision-making. in Nevertheless, the results of the studies reviewed in this literature review indicate that organizations should consider their specific context when designing their OS to PIP. Therefore, considering all of the above literature regarding OC and OS and PIP, the most integral part of the innovation process (Evans & Saxton, 2004; Kotelnikov, 2001), this study proposed to test the effect of OR on PIP that leads to the following hypotheses,

H2: The higher the organizational resources, the higher the product innovation performance.

Resource Based View Theory

Resource Based View theory (RBV) originated in the middle of year 1980s and suggests that a firm's resources and capabilities are the main drivers of its competitive improvement (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). According to the

theory, firms that keep unique resources are expected to achieve viable competitive advantage. This theory suggests that a firm's success is not merely reliant on factors such external as conditions, but also on internal resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). In recent years, researchers have focused on knowledge, innovation, reputation, and organizational culture, which important in today's knowledge-based economy (Audretsch & Thurik, 2001). Thus, in this literature review, we will explore the RBV theory and its application to intangible resources from an entrepreneurial perspective. RBV found to be applicable as previous research mostly focus on strategic setting as a critical component to gaining competitive advantage and higher performance (Barney, 2001; Ferreira & Azevedo, 2007). The first published papers in entrepreneurship identify five types of resources in the context of the RBV which are human, social, physical, organizational and financial resources (Greene & Brown, 1997). Technological resources were recognised in following research as an important element for economic national (Venkataraman, 2004). Recently, firms' resources have been considered in six strategic resources which are physical and non-physical namely reputational. organizational, financial. human intellectual and technological (Amit &

Furthermore, research has revealed that a firm's knowledge and innovation capabilities can allow it to develop new products and services that are hard for competitors to imitate (Rumelt, 1984; Barney, 1991 & Grant, 1991). Similarly, a firm's reputation can offer competitive by persuading advantage consumer loyalty and inviting talented employees (Barney, 1991; Locket, Thompson & Morgenstern, 2009). Studies have also

Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Puente

& Rabbino, 2003).

shown that a firm's OC such as, a robust culture that emphasizes innovation can empower a firm to develop new products and services speedily than its competitors (Grant, 1991; Kocak, Carsrud & Oflazoglu, 2017)). Similarly, a culture that highlights customer service can lead customer reliability and satisfaction (Barney, 1991; Christoph & Kavadias, 2008).

The RBV also highlights the intangible resources as a unique resource (Barney, 1986, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984), stresses that not all resources hold the potential to provide the firm with a constant competitive advantage (Clulow, 2007). Previous literature on the RBV has frequently attentive on resources as a steady concept that can be recognised at a point in time and will undergo over time (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2003). When referring to the RBV, most researchers focus on strategic setting, bestowing resources and capabilities as important to gaining a sustained competitive advantage and greater performance (Ferreira & Azevedo, 2007). The present study represented the function of entrepreneurship in RBV by emphasising the importance of EO as a HIC. As Casson's (2004) arguments, the RBV focuses on the importance of human resources, as reflected in the competencies and capabilities in the performance of the firm (Teece et al., 1997).

Higher performance is usually based on evolving a competitively diverse set of resources and organising them in a well-conceived approach (Collis & Montgomery, 1994; Fahy, 2000). Strategists who embrace the RBV also point out that competitive advantage comes from aligning skills and reasons in organizational systems, structures and processes that achieve capabilities at the

organizational level (Salaman et al., 2005; Teece et al., 1997). Thus, firms with a package of resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) can implement value-creating methods that are not can simply replicated by other firms (Barney, 1991). However, it is quite tough to find a resource which pleases the entire VRIN standard (Barney, 1991) except in an exploitative type of firms.

In recent years, a number of quantitative studies have been available to link the gap between the **RBV** theory organizational practice, and there are also vigorous studies that deliberate the effect of resources on firms. Most characteristics of the RBV and firms' competitiveness are directly applicable to the continuing argument on the impact of firm-specific resources to the overall performance of smaller firms (Matlay, 2005). Nowadays, researchers have begun to identify the cost of integrating entrepreneurship strategic management study (Alvarez and Barney, 2004; Hitt, Ireland, Camp and Sexton, 2001).

In conclusion, Intangible resources such as human intellectual, knowledge, innovation, and organizational culture are gradually important in today's economy and can offer a firm with a sustainable competitive advantage (Grant, 1996) by focusing on evolving and leveraging its intangible resources.

Thus, based on the theory, the study developed a theoretical framework as follows:

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework on the Relationship between SME's Intangible Resources and Product Innovation Performance.



Research Methodology

The target population of this study is Small Medium Enterprise (SME) in Malaysia which are categorized as manufacturing (including agro-based) enterprises which having fewer than 150 employees. The study tested the measurement scale by focusing on several industries in the manufacturing sector base on the following details:

- 1. Manufacturing SMEs that mostly involved in innovation activities.
- 2. Manufacturing sector that has qualified manufacturing technology elevation and an increasing level of product innovation in recent years.
- **3.** Population that is adequately huge to meet sample size requirement.

Determination of sample grounded from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Roscoe (1975), who propose a rule of thumb that sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate formost research. The unit of analysis for this study were at organizational level and the owner has been the key respondent to represent their business. This study selected a sample of 362 manufacturing **SMEs** using the proportionate stratified random sampling method whereby we used the same sampling fraction within the strata. In this method, all elements in the population are measured and each element has an equal chance of being selected as the subject (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). This study was based on the questionnaire developed by Heidt (2008), Alegre et al. (2006), Galbreath (2004) and Weerawardena (2001), and follows the methods of scale development for a business research study by Cooper & Schindler (2003). The response rate is 32.8%, which is considered high (Castelli, 2007; Hashim & Ahmad, 2008; Holt, 2007).

Analysis and Aindings

In this study, a value of 0.5 has been chosen as a guideline for identifying significant factor loadings for 108 respondents (Bagozzi & Phillips, 1991; Hair et al., 2006). The following result in Table 1 shows that all the PIP items fall into only two factors contain of financial and nonfinancial indicator for PIP. A reliability analysis of the six (6) items of the PIP was undertaken and found to be reliable (Julienti & Ahmad, 2010). Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of 0.818 and 0.773 emerge for PIP variables (financial and nonfinancial) which can be considered high. It is not surprising that the reliability is high since financial nonfinancial and indicators commonly used as performance assessment measurements in most research and are found to be reliable with Cronbach'a Alpha Coefficients between 0.7 and 0.8 (Cooper, 1984; Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1987;

Gemunden & Heydebreck, 1992; Hise & O'Neal, 1990; Hollenstein, 1996; Els et,al, 2016)).

Table 1. Factor and Reliability Analysis for Product Innovation Performance

	Factor				
PIP Items	Loadings Financial	Non-financial			
Regularly of change of PI	0.864	0.249			
New product introduction	0.817	0.285			
Market response	0.355	0.741			
Profitability	0.382	0.794			
Success in gaining market share	0.683	0.281			
Improved sales growth	0.179	0.861			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	0.836				
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	269.210				
df.	15	15			
Sig.	0.000				
Eigenvalues	3.4960.792				
% of variance	58.3%13.2%				
Cumulative variance	71.5%				
α	0.8180.773				

Note: Factor loadings over 0.50 appear in bold

Table 2 shows the total variance explained for intangible resources items at three phases. In the position to the eigenvalues, three factors are removed because they have eigenvalues larger than one (1). If three factors were extracted, then 72.8% of the variance would be explained. The rotation of the factor structure for intangible resources has explained that there are three factors that should be retained. In conclusion,

this analysis appears to expose that the preliminary questionnaire on intangible resources, in reality, is composed of two subscales; HIC and OR. A reliability analysis of intangible resources was also being commenced and found to be reliable (Table 2). Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of 0.893, 0.877 and 0.852 emerged from the analysis, which can be considered high.

Table 2. Factor and Reliability Analysis for Intangible Resources

	Factor Loadings				
Intangible Resources	Human Intellectual	Organizational	Risk		
EO-innovativeness1	0.769	0.376	-0.011		
EO-innovativeness2	0.845	0.156	0.142		
EO-proactiveness2	0.752	0.247	0.356		
EO-risk seeking1	0.349	0.229	0.795		
EO-risk seeking2	0.147	0.234	0.875		
organizational culture	0.327	0.655	0.336		
organizational structure	0.208	0.811	0.000		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	0.881				
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	823.486				
df.	66				
Sig.	0.000				
Eigenvalues	6.513	1.201 1.0	25		
% of variance	54.3%	10% 8.5	%		
Cumulative variance	72.8%				
α	0.893	0.877 0.8	52		

Note: Factor loadings over 0.50 appear in bold

As an outcome of multiple regression analysis (Table 3), the findings displays that the higher the intangible resources, the higher the PIP which shows that intangible

resources are making substantial influence to the model.

Table 3. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Product Innovation Performance and Intangible Resources (N= 108).

Variable	В	SE B	β	Sig		
Human Intellectual	.381	.128	.324	.004		
Organizational Resources	.246	.111	.231	.030		
R square	0.438					
Adjusted <i>R</i> square Sig. <i>F</i> change Durbin Watson F value	0.416 0.000 1.765 20.063**					

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

In summary, a significant model arose whereby F(103) = 20.063, p < 0.05; Adjusted R

square = 0.42). Significant variables are shown below

Predictor VariableBetapHuman intellectual0.324p = 0.004 (Accepted H1)Organizational resources0.231p = 0.030 (Accepted H2)

The findings demonstrate that the hypothesis is confirmed. The contribution of intangible resources does influence PIP and shows high association with PIP. The RBV also points to intangible resources as the main drivers of the sustainability of performance. Intangible resources in this current research have been classified as HI and OR.

Discussion

Unlike tangible resources, intangible resources are theorized to have greater impact on PIP due to their VRIN characteristics. Present research finding shows that both HI and OR contributed to the variance of PIP (Covin & Slevin, 1991). The prominence of a firm's internal resources is generally documented in the business literature on strategy (Apintalisayon, 2008; Bueno, 2010). Previous literature has determinedly claimed on the significance of internal resources, especially intangible resources influential factors of business competitiveness (Hall 1989 & 1993: Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín. 2005). Moreover, based on the previous research findings, the RBV's expectation about the role of intangibles in SMEs has created better PIP (Villalonga, 2004) and had more innovative capability increasing its new product innovation (Zerenler, Burak & Sezgin, 2008).

HIC in the present research comprise the elements of EO. As a resource, EO impacts on product innovation by allowing SME owners to assess sufficiently and to admit the intrinsic relational and performance risk. Entrepreneurial driven aspects such as EO provide a cultural basis for organizational knowledge which empowers an organization to attain

advanced level of performance an and enhanced customer value (Liu, Luo, & Shi, 2002). This has been supported by the work of Salavou and Lioukas (2003) and García-Villaverde, Ruiz-Ortega and Canales (2013), who found that there is positive effect of EO on product innovativeness for proactive, innovativeness and risk-taking components. In addition, SME owner with EO has been confirmed for being more inclined to take business-related risks and to favour innovation for competitive advantage (Covin & Slevin, 1989). In addition, SMEs' business tactics are normally reliant on the intangible strategies managing skills. enthusiasms of their owner managers Intangible (Blaug & Lekhi, 2009). resources, such as the employee's education and investment in information technology and new product development are also found to be significant for lasting innovation performance (Olson, Walker & Ruekert, 1995; Milbergs et al., 2004; Wang & Ahmed (2007). SMEs with strong intangible resources together with well-conceived product innovation strategies can improve their market valuation and their PIP.

Besides HIC, the PIP of SMEs is also dependent on OR. Appropriate OR are needed in the PIP to make decisions continually, to follow through a problem and to bring up new issues. Proper organizational policies help workers understand their parts in the innovation process and their shared responsibility for successful product innovation. Previous research has claimed that productinnovation is due to the determinations of owners who used their legislative decision-making and position to attain resources (Krishnan & Ulrich, 2001), such as the technology to be adopted in the product, the assembly

location, and the team involved in the PIP. Moreover, dynamic organizational capabilities, such as excellent management systems and operation procedures, and the processes of knowledge management, drive firms' value creation activities, which have a positive effect on their innovation skills (Marsh & Stock, 2003).

Conclusion

different Different SMEs will make choices and adopt different methods concerning the product concept, architecture, configuration, procurement and distribution arrangements. Iintangible resources tend to provide long-term competitive advantage because of their relative inimitability. Intangible resources are also the key ingredient in the construction of competencies and PIP improvement in Malaysian SMEs. The elements of intangible resources such as HIC and OR found to be relevant as the important factors to improve better PIP in Malaysia SMEs. Intangible resources tend to provide long-term competitive advantage because of relative inimitability. Intangible their resources are the key ingredient in the construction of competencies and PIP Malaysian improvement in SMEs. Considerate the involvement of intangible resources and the earnings from those resources, enables SME owners to invest strategically in the development of those resources and thereby improve their PIP (Mackay et. al, 2020)

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