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Title: RESOURCES – PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM) IN MALAYSIA
Supervisor: PROF. DR. HJH. ZURIAH AB RAHMAN (MS)
DR. HALIMAITON BORHAN (CS)
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This study analyses the relationship between firm resources and its performance while examining the mediating roles of enterprise risk management in the firm resources – firm performance relationship within the context of the Resource-based view theory (RBV) and Donabedian theory. A quantitative approach is employed in this study and responses from 223 risk managers among Malaysian listed firms under Malaysian Bourse were analyzed by using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) technique. The results show that intangible resources are directly related to performance, meanwhile through the mediating effect of enterprise risk management (ERM), an indirect relationship was confirmed. However, tangible resources and capabilities show negative results on the relationship with the performance of the firm and further analysis using ERM as mediator yields the same negative results. A positive relationship between ERM and performance of the firm was also obtained. On the basis of the outcome of this study, it shows that intangible resources need to be fully optimized by firms in order to improve their performances. Overall, the findings of this study reveal how firms may gain competitive advantages and eventually be able to sustain their firms’ performances by implementing an integrative model of intangible resources and effective ERM process in their routines and practices.

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Title: ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES IN PROCESSED FOODS SMES IN MALAYSIA
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The premise of this research is that the SMEs in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, are facing difficulties to survive. Recently, some scholars have argued that the SMEs in Malaysia have a lack of competitiveness regarding costs, products and services. Thus, this study aims to provide a better understanding of continuous knowledge sharing by determining; (1) the effects of organisational capabilities on competitive advantage among the food processing SMEs in Malaysia; and (2) the relationship between innovation, networking, financial capabilities, and competitive advantage. Furthermore, this study incorporates knowledge and skills as a moderating variable, renamed as managerial competencies which possibly strengthen the likelihood that strong organisational capabilities may lead to competitive advantages. Therefore, this study also aims to determine the moderating effects of managerial competencies on the relationship between organisational capabilities and competitive advantage. A random sampling technique was applied to collect the data from 2,384 SMEs processing food products in Malaysia. A total of 330 SMEs in the food processing industry had participated in this study. The main instrument for this study is a set of questionnaire which was adopted from previous studies. A structural equation modelling using AMOS was applied in analysing the direct and moderating effect hypotheses. The fitness index statistics confirmed that the overall model fit and all of the paths in the model were statistically significant. The results support the hypothesised effects of the organisational capabilities on the competitive advantage. These valuable findings show that the organisational capabilities explain 93 percent of the variance in competitive advantage. All three constructs of the organisational capabilities (innovation, networking and financial capabilities) individually had significant and positive relationship with the competitive advantage but with a low strength of relationship magnitude. Managerial competencies were also found to moderate the effects of organisational capabilities on the competitive advantage. In brief, this study contributes to the competitive advantage studies through a comprehensive empirical research. Focusing on the scale and scope dimensions, this study highlighted, in particular, the importance of the firm internal resource capabilities as the potential influencers of the SME’s competitive advantage. This study provides useful implications and recommendations for the practitioners and policy makers on how to help Malaysian food processing SMEs increase their competitiveness in penetrating the hypermarkets and further the global market.