



## The mediating role of HR practices to enhance the innovative capabilities of SMEs

Siti Nur Azizah<sup>1</sup>, Feby Evelyn<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Magister of Management, Putra Bangsa University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Bachelor Degree in Management, Putra Bangsa University, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the influence of organizational culture on innovative capabilities with human resource practices as a mediator. This quantitative descriptive research took the population of SME employees in Kebumen with the criteria of being a medium-sized business. Usually research on HR practices is carried out in large companies, but this research was carried out in SMEs that manage a minimum of 6-19 employees. The research results show that organizational culture does not influence innovative ability. However, HR practices that use the AMO concept have an impact on innovative capabilities. HR practices mediate the influence of organizational culture on innovative capabilities. This shows that through HR practices characterized by ability, motivation and opportunity, innovative capabilities can be increased. SME owners can benefit from good HR practice activities in their organization

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#### Corresponding Author:

Siti Nur Azizah,  
Magister Management,  
University of Putra bangsa,  
Jl Ronggowarsito 18 Pejagoan Kebumen Indonesia.  
Email: [sitnuraziz@yahoo.com](mailto:sitnuraziz@yahoo.com)

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern organizations require the organizational ability to innovate which is an important component of competitiveness (A. Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; Lin & Sanders, 2017). (Hamel, 2012) reinforces this idea by saying that innovation determines our existence, prosperity, happiness and future. In addition, we can see increasing agreement in the management and academic literature on the concept of innovation as a broad topic covering various aspects, such as process, product, service and organizational innovation. HR practices fall into this category (Boon et al., 2019). Strategic management is a very important field for finding understanding about things that can significantly contribute to building innovative organizations (Colakoglu et al., 2019). The management literature suggests three conceptual directions or analytical foci to improve our understanding of the mechanisms that drive firms' innovation capabilities. The concept of innovation as a similar process is the main focus. The practical implications expected from this research are the existence of an appropriate organizational culture and HR practices that are appropriate for SMEs so that they can increase innovation capabilities which will determine their sustainability.

A conceptual model proposed by enterprise resource theory as a way to create something unique, valuable, and difficult to imitate and embed in an organization (Wright & Ulrich, 2017) . The second is the idea that innovation is part of a broader organizational system, consisting of cultural, technological, social and personal elements that influence organizational creativity and innovation (Engelsberger et al., 2022) . The third focus of this paper is human resource management (HRM), specifically the role of HR practices (HRP) (Ceylan, 2013; Jiang et al., 2012) . HRM can play a major role in facilitating innovative organizations and societies" (Sparrow & Makram, 2015) . Over time, research on HRM models has uncovered a number of dominant conceptual options, including configurational, universalistic, and contingency models, as well as fit types HRM (Kim et al., 2018) . The search to explain the relative influence of specific HR actions compared to the overall HR actions implemented in an organization has become the subject of recent discussions (Darwish et al., 2016) . Considering HRM at the strategic organizational level as well relevant for evaluating its relationship with organizational culture (Dutch, 2013; Sackmann, 2011) . SMEs and HR practices are still a research gap because HR practices in SMEs still operate with traditional concepts.

Innovation is conceptualized in various ways, for example Gault (2018) defined innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly changed product or process. A product is a good or service. Processes include production or delivery processes, organization and marketing. In line with that, other experts underline the existence of two main types of innovation: production (products and services) and organizational processes (Colakoglu et al., 2019; Matthew, 2014) . More innovative organizations have a deeply embedded innovation culture (Davila et al., 2013; McLean, 2005; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016) , which helps them leverage value creation and value capture, or as noted by (Shipton et al. , 2006) , this involves a two-stage process, namely exploration and exploitation. In addition, an innovation-oriented culture requires a variety of influencing factors, identified by (Rank et al., 2004) including, among others, people, organizational structure, and organizational climate and culture. In addition to "harder" interventions such as organizational design and management processes, this approach challenges organizations to pay attention to "softer" factors, which include the organization's belief system reflected in the organization's typical activities as well as the types of behavior performed, perceived, desired (Büschgens et al., 2013; Giorgi et al., 2015; Hult et al., 2004) .

Examples of norms displayed by managers in relation to innovation are acceptance of failure, freedom to try new approaches, rewards and recognition, clear direction and goals (De Winne & Sels, 2010; Khazanchi et al., 2007; Kleemann et al., 2008; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016) . Therefore, we suspect that:

H1. An effective organizational culture, which consists of a combination of these four characteristics, has a positive influence on the organization's perceived innovative capabilities.

There is extensive debate about the relationship between culture and management practices as a whole, with particular emphasis on HRM (Giorgi et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2011) . According to (Carroll, 2011) , there are three developing perspectives: culture influences HR practices, culture influences the implementation of HR practices, and the best performance occurs when HR matches culture. (Stone-Romero & Rosopa, 2008) ) argue that the culture (such as ideology and values) of the dominant group within an organization greatly influences HRM processes and practices at every stage of the process—pre-hire, selection, and post-recruitment. According to (Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004) , HR is often associated with OC. In fact, to achieve HR goals, management of the organization's value system (culture) and the implementation of various HR practices to meet different cultural orientations are necessary (Jackson, 2014; Kosiorek & Szczepańska, 2016) . Organizations that want to produce and maintain a good culture must consider their HRM policies and practices. This needs to be done to ensure that

they support the culture they want and fit their business strategy (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Ferris et al., 1998; J. Zheng et al., 2019) . Findings have shown that a large number of organizations have established statements of their management philosophy—such as a cultural orientation that serves as a guiding framework.

According to recent research on the OC-HRM relationship, culture is critical to strategy execution, long-term competitive advantage, and Company performance) (Schneider et al., 2013) . (Mathur, 2015) argues that HR practices are important for creating and maintaining organizational culture. These practices provide examples for different types of practices, such as rewards that clarify the behaviors and outcomes that are valued in an organization or staffing based on cues about who is hired and promoted. In addition, according to Cheung- (Holbeche, 2015) , the responsibility of HR experts is to help employees understand the cultural patterns in their workplace and determine whether these patterns fit their goals.

H2. There is a positive influence of HR practices on the organization's innovative capabilities

Research questions that require clarification refer to discussions about the types of HR practices that will be used as well as whether these practices will affect the performance (outcomes) of the organization individually or as a collection (bundle). It is broadly defined and used equally in the field of innovation. actions and procedures (A. Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; A.C. Bos-Nehles & Veenendaal, 2019; Colakoglu et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019) .

Calls for future research have recently emerged. Assessing how effectively the use of human resources is based on the perceptions of organizational members (Chowhan, 2016; Heavey et al., 2013; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005) . The AMO framework of Appelbaum et al. (2000) provided the basis for a stronger conceptualization of high-performance HR practices (Obeidat et al., 2016). The AMO model proposes three dimensions of practices that enhance employees' abilities, motivation, and opportunities (Jiang et al., 2013). Therefore, many researchers are interested in studying high-performance HR practices following Appelbaum et al.'s AMO model. (2000) in determining which HR practices to include in their study (Obeidat et al. , 2016). In particular, since the “A” dimension refers to the employee's ability to work, HR practices in personnel selection and training are of concern because they contribute to improving such capabilities (Appelbaum et al., 2000). The “M” dimension, in turn, is related to motivation; HR appraisal practices, internal promotions, salary incentives or payments are relevant because they can increase employees' desire to work (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Finally, the “O” dimension of AMO refers to opportunities for work and HR practices that contribute to this include participation, teamwork, or job design, as they provide employees with autonomy to make decisions related to their position, to work together, and share. feedback about work goals and has the opportunity to influence business decisions (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Due to the size of SMEs and lack of resources, there is debate regarding the actual likelihood of these companies adopting the AMO model in high-performance work systems, but small employers' associations have stated that their members do so (Wu et al., 2014), and several authors have found the proof. For example, Kroon et al. (2013) found high-performance work systems in SMEs, and although the number of practices implemented was smaller compared to large companies, the systems included a coherent set of practices. According to previous research, we hypothesize:

H3: HR practices mediate the influence of organizational culture on the organization's innovative capabilities

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Independent surveys are used to collect data to determine whether employee perceptions regarding organizational culture, HR practices, are able to increase innovative capabilities. For this purpose, questionnaire invitations were distributed both online and offline to SME employees with a minimum number of 20 employees. All variables are assessed using a five-point Likert type scale, which ranges from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). This quantitative descriptive research uses a total of 100 respondents who will be asked to fill in their perceptions on 3 variables using existing measurements. Practice HR perform tall in SMEs Which addressed on model AMO (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Indicators used to assess innovation capabilities (Buschgens et al., 2013). Evaluation culture This based on theory Which define four characteristic culture the main importance for effectiveness organization, especially engagement, consistency, capability adapt and mission (Denison and Mishra, 1995). Test regression models and hypotheses with SPSS. First, a questionnaire test is carried out in the form of validity as follows:

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig (2 Tailed)	Information
Organizational culture	Q1	0.646	0,000	Valid
	Q2	0.648	0,000	Valid
	Q3	0.596	0,000	Valid
	Q4	0.738	0,000	Valid
	Q5	0.451	0,000	Valid
	Q6	0.444	0,000	Valid
	Q7	0.485	0,000	Valid
	Q8	0.636	0,000	Valid
	Q9	0.732	0,000	Valid
	Q10	0.649	0,000	Valid
	Q11	0.705	0,000	Valid
HR Practices	Q12	0.545	0,000	Valid
	Q13	0.606	0,000	Valid
	Q14	0.756	0,000	Valid
	Q15	0.783	0,000	Valid
	Q16	0.791	0,000	Valid
	Q16	0.640	0,000	Valid
	Q17	0.588	0,000	Valid
	Q18	0.669	0,000	Valid
	Q19	0.686	0,000	Valid
	Q20	0.738	0,000	Valid
	Q21	0.744	0,000	Valid
	Q22	0.666	0,000	Valid
	Q23	0.690	0,000	Valid
	Q24	0.725	0,000	Valid
	Q25	0.708	0,000	Valid
Innovation	Q26	0.699	0,000	Valid
	Q27	0.839	0,000	Valid
	Q28	0.881	0,000	Valid
	Q29	0.897	0,000	Valid
	Q30	0.854	0,000	Valid
	Q31	0.892	0,000	Valid
	Q32	0.820	0,000	Valid

Source: Diata processed by SPSS 25

The table above shows that all the arrangement items have good validity as indicated by the calculated r value > r table, namely 0.444 to 0.897.

The next step is to carry out a reliability test to measure a questionnaire that has variable indicators. The method used to view reliable data is the Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) method. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient used in this study was > 0.6. The following are the results of the reliability test which can be seen in Table 2

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Information
1	Organizational culture	0.836	11	Reliable
2	HR Practices	0.927	16	Reliable
3	Innovation	0.932	6	Reliable

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the three research variables have a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60, so it can be said that the three variables in this study are reliable.

Next, a normality test was carried out using the Kolmogrov Smirnov test.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		Unstandardized Residuals	
N		150	
Normal Parameters <sup>a, b</sup>	Mean	0.000000	
	Std. Deviation	2.78451007	
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.052	
	Positive	0.052	
	Negative	-0.041	
Statistical Tests		0.052	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0,200	

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

Table 3 shows the significance value obtained at  $0.200 > 0.05$ . Based on these values, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. Next, a multicollinearity test will be carried out to find out whether the regression model found any correlation between the independent variables or independent variables. The multicollinearity test can be done by looking at the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and Tolerance values.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Collinearity Statistics		
	Tolerance	VIF	
1	Organizational culture	0.672	1,488
	HR Practices	0.672	1,488

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the Tolerance value of the independent variable is 0.672 which is greater than 0.1, while the VIF value of the independent variable is 1.488 which is smaller than 10 so that the data is declared free from multicollinearity. The heteroscedasticity test was carried out using the Glejser test as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

(Abs_Res)	Sig.
Organizational culture	0.847
HR Practices	0.058

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

Based on the results of the Glejser test, the significance value is  $> 0.05$ , so there is no heteroscedasticity in the data.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive data shows that the majority of respondents are male (76%), with education level dominated by high school graduates (65%). Length of time running a business is

dominated by 5-10 years (56%). Meanwhile, the trade business sector (70%) dominated respondents.

Table 6. Description of Respondents

Description	Amount	Percentage
Gender		
Man	76	76%
Woman	24	24%
Level of education		
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	65	65%
D3	20	20%
Bachelor	15	15%
Long time working		
1-4 years	35	35%
5-10 years	56	56%
> 10 years	9	9%
Business fields		
Multi-business cooperative	70	70%
Trading	22	22%
Services (Construction, Building)	8	8%

The hypothesis test is shown in the table below

Table 7. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
1			
(Constant)	4,838	2,291	
Organizational culture	-0.045	0.060	-0.056
HR Practices	0.333	0.036	0.696

Table 8. Hypothesis Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	4,838	2,291		2,112	0.036
Organizational culture	-0.045	0.060	-0.056	-0.746	0.457
HR Practices	0.333	0.036	0.696	9,268	0,000

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

H1 is rejected. The results of the t test show that the calculated t value < t table with a sig value of 0.457. This shows that hypothesis 1 is rejected. This means that the cultural values with the four characteristics of organizational culture - mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency that exist in SMEs have not been able to become the most important elements in managing innovation. It can be said that the SME sector is still weak in management culture as wrong one process which push innovation.

According to this model, a group consisting of engagement and adaptability combinations indicates an organization's capacity for flexibility and change. Very similar to the results of a meta-analysis conducted by (Büschgens et al., 2013) based on the Competitive Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2022), where the four types of culture derive from the same two core dimensions found in the Denison Model: focus on flexibility versus control and internal versus external focus. Adhocratic cultures, which focus on flexibility and are externally oriented, are expected to influence innovation the most. Hierarchical cultures, on the other hand, hinder innovation because of their emphasis on control, stability, and internal orientation. There are no clear conclusions about the other two types of culture (market and clan), and empirical research produces different results. However, there are arguments indicating that this culture is related to innovation (Lau & Ngo, 2004; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016).

H2 is accepted. The SPSS calculation results show the calculated t value is  $9.268 > t$  statistic and the sig value is 0.000 which shows that HR practices have a positive effect on organizational innovation. These findings indicate staffing—recruitment and selection; performance management (appraisal); training and development; compensation and rewards; job design; employee engagement; and appropriate working relationships (Jiang et al., 2012; Lepak et al., 2006; Lin & Sanders, 2017) in SMEs will improve in capabilities. Although there have been recent attempts to produce taxonomies, such as those carried out by (Posthuma et al., 2013), a more difficult task is to reach agreement on a definitive list of best HR practices. One clear trend in the field is research on high-performance work systems as a combination of cooperative and mutually reinforcing human resource practices designed to improve employee performance. Through efforts to increase each person's abilities, motivation and opportunities, which has a positive impact on quality and productivity (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Boon et al., 2019).

This finding is in line with (Combs et al., 2006) finding that the impact of HR practices as motivating human resource management practices can be very conducive to innovation performance when adopted, not in isolation, but as a system of mutually reinforcing practices". These findings also support (Foss et al., 2011), (Galbraith, 1982), one of the first authors to address the issue of which HR practices are relevant to innovating SMEs, suggesting that the human resources policies of innovating organizations should take into account aspects of reward, selection, and employee development. In existing research, it is often assumed that the parts of an HR system influence outcomes in the same way; for example, when an additive approach is used to measure an HR system, each part is assumed to have the same impact on the outcome under investigation. While this may indicate how HR systems work, scholars have recently challenged this idea and argued that many HR practices can influence the same outcomes in different ways (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Jiang et al., 2012; Posthuma et al., 2013).

Table 9. F test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	918,229	2	459.115	58,419	0,000
Residual	1155.271	147	7,859		
Total	2073,500	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Innovation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Culture, HR Practices

Source: Data processed by SPSS 25

H3 is accepted. There is an influence of organizational culture and HR practices on innovation, Table 9 shows the Ftable value at the 0.05 significance level at  $df_1 = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$  and  $df_2 = nk = 150 - 3 = 147$  is 3.06. The results of simultaneous hypothesis testing obtained a value of Fcount (918.229)  $>$  Ftable (3.06) with a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .

These findings suggest that a universalistic or best practice approach, meaning that a set of HR practices is often associated with high performance; These results support previous findings (Pfeffer, 1998) which maintain that HR practices are very important in organizational strategy; and the configuration approach, which is based on the idea that HR practices can enhance innovation. The aim of this paper is not to discuss the merits of each approach specifically. However, it is important to note that, in the strategic management literature, the resource-based theory view of the firm posits that when a firm's HRM system is valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable, then the firm gains a competitive advantage. This value creation refers to the development of SD practices. SMEs are unique in implementing HR practices which

prioritize aspects of ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) which are able to mediate the influence of organizational culture on innovative capabilities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the results of appropriate HR practices in SMEs are the key to increasing innovative capabilities. Innovative ability is an important aspect for all businesses to survive and be liked by customers so they can excel. In accordance with the Resource Based View theory which is the theoretical basis surrounding this research, HR practices become something unique, rare and difficult to imitate, which will produce HR who have innovative abilities. Innovation is part of a broader organizational system, which consists of cultural, technological, social and personal elements that influence organizational creativity and innovation (Laursen and Foss, 2014). Because size SMEs and lack of source power, adopted the AMO model in its high-performance work system, but the small employers' association has stated that its members did so (Wu et al., 2014), and several authors have found the proof.

The results of this research provide a practical contribution that SMEs will be able to increase innovative capabilities if they carry out appropriate HR practices based on AMO (ability, motivation and opportunity). This includes staffing, recruitment and selection; performance management (appraisal); training and development; compensation and rewards; job design; employee engagement; and employment relations (Lin and Sanders, 2017).

However, organizational culture, as one of the most important elements in managing innovation, cannot be a factor that increases this capability. Whereas organizational culture is concerned with increasing understanding between employees and regulating their behavior towards innovation initiatives.

Management culture is weak process which most ignored in push innovation. It should be cultural organization can give framework reference comprehensive and help align behavior employee with objective innovation organization. Example norm Which is displayed by manager in connection with innovation is reception failure, freedom try approach new, award and confession, direction and goals, as well as engagement and adaptability combined demonstrate an organization's capacity for flexibility and change. These values need to be developed by SMEs

We propose to change the culture, owner managers can use many tools, such as selecting the right employees , building manager capabilities, and creating reward systems. (Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2004) conducted an empirical study using a competing values framework to show that there is a relevant relationship between organizational culture and human resource practices. This suggests that various approaches to managing organizations and people can stem from culture, such as human culture. A relationship model that emphasizes efficiency, measurable goals, and equality of opportunity; or focus on rational goals that emphasize workforce planning, equality and opportunity. And this can be implemented in SMEs with their own uniqueness

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