

Uncovering The Relationships Between Strategic Capability, Strategic Flexibility, And Performance

Ayundha Evanthi^{1*}, Ratih Mukti Azhar²

^{1,2}Department of Management, Faculty of Economic and Business, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author:

Email: ayundha.evanthi.mnj@upnjatim.ac.id

Abstract.

Strategic flexibility and strategic capability are seen as strategic activities carried out by companies to compete and adapt to the business environment to achieve the expected performance. The objectives of this research are: (1) examine strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance by emphasizing their relationships, dimensions and roles of context (2) identify the relationship between strategic flexibility, strategic capability and performance that can be used for future theory development. This research uses bibliometric analysis to map how strategic flexibility, strategic capability and performance intended from several previous journals using VOSviewer. This research concludes that implementing strategic flexibility and strategic capability will result in effective relationships and good firm performance although strategic flexibility is not directly related to the strategic capability. Performance mediates the influence between strategic flexibility and strategic capability. The strategic flexibility is influenced by product innovation, absorptive capacity, and dynamic capability, in the other hand, strategic capability is influenced by network capability. The implication of this research are following researches can add literatures and new theories on the strategic flexibility and strategic capability so that research and discussion on this object can continue to grow.

Keywords: Strategic Flexibility, Strategic Capability, and Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Concept of strategic flexibility is very essential lately which the strategic flexibility has been examined by previous studies in strategic management, economy, organizational theory and marketing. The strategic flexibility is a vital instrument which offers capability to the organization in order to be able to change a fast production rate, develop new products, and give fast response to competitive threat [1]. Whereas, [2] has stated that the strategic flexibility is defined as a set of capabilities that enables the organization leading or responding the changes and also enables the organization reacting environmental change and enables the organization leading the changes when it operates in this current fast-paced strict competitive marketplace. Pérez et al. (2013) has said that the strategic flexibility reflects organizational capability to respond continuously to unexpected changes and adjust to the expected consequences from any predictable changes. Moreover, the strategic flexibility is depended on resource flexibility and organization flexibility to implement the resources for organizational alternative activities [3]. The strategic flexibility is essential to allow for a rapid adaptation to a changing environment [4]. The relation between strategic flexibility and organizational performance is indicated when the organization is in a fast moving industry or must respond to the conditions of environmental uncertainty. The organization develops strategic flexibility to face opportunity and fast moving and emerging market discontinuity which might affect significantly to the organizational performance. The strategic flexibility turns more significant to create a competitive position and realize performance improvement for the organization. [5] have studied the effects of strategic flexibility on performance which are moderated by competition intensity and environmental uncertainty.

The strategic flexibility enables organization to respond competitor's action through the active implementation of new strategies and launch technological innovation or more fast and efficient business model [5]. [6] has conducted a research on strategic flexibility, environmental uncertainty, platform design, and organizational performance which the higher level of environmental uncertainty, the more the organization aims to switch into platform product design and also the higher level of platform design, the higher level of market performance in either short-term or long-term, also the strategic flexibility positively mediates the relation between platform design and performance. [7] has mentioned that the strategic flexibility can affect positively to organizational performance through moderation factor of sustainability

strategy. Meanwhile, [8] has examined the relation between strategic flexibility, absorptive capacity, entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance. The problems are relating to organizational issues with industry, for instance incentive, agency theory, transaction cost theory, authority, delegation, and decentralization are being discussed by the experts [9].

The organizational resources – including asset and skill – represent the source from origin of sustainable competitive advantage. The strategy experts should explore formula, transform those resources into strategic capability which would enhance strategic achievement. The strategic capability as a complex set of skills and knowledge accumulation that allow the organization taking advantage of resources and coordinating activities effectively (Parnell, 2018). The opinion of strategic capability is highly related to view-based resources with perspective which emphasizes on the development of competitive advantage that cannot be easily imitated by the competitors [10]. [11] in their study have identified seven strategic capabilities appear in different phase of solution development and deployment: (1) fleet management capability, (2) technological advance capability, (3) merger and acquisition capability, (4) value calculation capability, (5) project management capability, (6) supplier chain management capability, and (7) value of co-creation capability, in order to improve financial performance of organization. The strategic capability is more frequently associated with indicators of financial achievement, while dynamic capability is more frequently associated with non-financial organizational performance size. [12] have examined the role of moderation of internal collaboration on the effects of strategic capability to organizational performance. Despite decades of research conducted across various streams of strategic flexibility and strategic capability literatures in the scope of resource-based view, little is known about the relation between strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance. Therefore, this research is aimed to identify the relation between strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Flexibility

Strategic flexibility is defined as a set of capabilities that a company has to lead or respond to changing circumstances and can lead market changes under competitive and dynamic conditions [2]. Strategic flexibility is very important to enable rapid adaptation to changing conditions [4]. Strategic flexibility is an important tool that gives organizations the ability to change production levels quickly, develop new products and respond quickly to competitive threats [1]. The concept of strategic flexibility has become important recently that strategic flexibility has been considered by previous research in strategic management, economics, organizational theory and marketing. Strategic flexibility depends on the flexibility of the company's resources and flexibility in applying these resources to the company's alternative actions [1]. Companies with strategic ambidextrous demonstrate a commitment to a product-market strategy that allows effective realization of the chosen strategy through the concentration of managerial attention and company resources and strategic flexibility that allows adaptation of the planned product-market strategy based on feedback received or abandoned then followed by choices and new strategic thrusts [4].

Meanwhile, [1] examined the relationship between dynamic capabilities including HR capabilities, innovative capabilities, technology capabilities, and research & development capabilities to strategic flexibility. Meanwhile, [3] stated in their research that strategic flexibility and managerial social network affect the company's strategic orientation. Strategic flexibility reflects the company's ability to respond sustainably to unexpected changes and adapt to the expected consequences of predictable changes [13]. Strategic flexibility allows companies to respond to competitors' actions through agile implementation of new strategies and launch technological innovations or business models more quickly and efficiently [5]. [14] examined the relationship between strategic flexibility, change recipient and sense making to explore the process of developing strategic flexibility that aims to build competence. Individual experience can develop into a collective process that affects the possibility of forming strategic flexibility within the company [14].

Strategic Capability

Strategic capabilities as a complex set of skills and knowledge accumulation that enable organizations to utilize resources and coordinate activities effectively [10]. The idea of strategic capability is related to resources based view with a perspective emphasizing on developing a competitive advantage that cannot be imitated by competitors [9]. [15] examine the relationship between strategic capabilities, environmental uncertainty and competitiveness and introduce a framework for strategic capability architectures and investigate how network capabilities emerge among other capability configurations in industrial firms. In order to understand the nature of a firm's strategic capabilities, it is critically important to understand that its conceptual architecture is complicated by the complex systems inherent in the organization's capability set.

There are two different types of strategic capabilities that can be identified: 1) related to resources (capabilities, organizational capital, managerial systems, combinative capabilities) and 2) related to activities that deploy resources [15]. Huikkola & Kohtamäki (2017) in their research identify seven strategic capabilities that occur in different phases of solution development and deployment (1) fleet management capabilities (2) technology development capabilities (3) merger and acquisition capabilities (4) value computing capabilities (5) project management capabilities (6) supplier network management capabilities and (7) value co-creation capabilities, to improve the company's financial performance. Meanwhile, [10] examines the relationship between strategic capabilities, environmental uncertainty and Nonmarket & Market Strategies (NMS) where NMS is related to high marketing capability, high competitive uncertainty and high technology uncertainty. Meanwhile, [16] mention in their research that a concentration strategy that does not depend on marketing capacity and market linkage is the most demanded for the intensity of competition.

Performance

The relationship between strategic flexibility and firm performance is indicated when the firm is in a fast-moving industry or has to respond to conditions of environmental uncertainty. Research results from Combe et al. (2012) state that management cognition affects strategic flexibility and performance with strategic options as a mediator and environmental uncertainty as a moderator when companies formulate their response to changes and existing competition. Strategic flexibility is increasingly important in creating a competitive position and in realizing improved performance for the company. [17] in his research mentions that network-building HR practices have a positive effect on firm performance and strategic flexibility plays a fully mediating role between them and environmental uncertainty moderates the relationship between network-building HR practices for TMT and strategic flexibility while it has no moderating effect. in the relationship between strategic flexibility and firm performance. Companies develop strategic flexibility to deal with fast-moving and emerging market opportunities and discontinuities that may have a significant impact on the company's performance.

[5] examined the effect of strategic flexibility on firm performance moderated by the intensity of competition and environmental uncertainty. Strategic flexibility is considered as an important source of competitive advantage for companies in a volatile environment but agreement on the relationship between strategic flexibility and company performance has not been fully achieved. Dynamic capabilities show that strategic flexibility is more efficient in improving company performance in a competitive environment. Gorodutse et al. (2021) have asserted that the strategic flexibility has positive effects on organizational performance through sustainability strategy as a moderation factor. [8] identified the relation of strategic flexibility, absorptive capacity, and entrepreneurial orientation to the organizational performance. On the other hand, [18] has mentioned in his research that the strategic flexibility and strategic orientation affect innovation performance of an organization. The research result from Combe et al. (2012) has stated that the cognitive management affects strategic flexibility and performance through strategic options as a moderator factor, also environmental uncertainty plays as a moderator when the organization formulates their response to the existing changes and competitions.

III. METHODS

Bibliometric analysis or methods are sometimes referred to as scientometrics as part of the research evaluation methodology, and from the various literature that has been produced, it is possible to carry out bibliometric analysis using a separate method (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015). The bibliometric method is a method of measuring the literature using a statistical approach so that it includes the application of quantitative analysis. [15] has said that the interpretation of some researches was definitely subjective, but the level of transparency could lessen bias rather than narrative literature review. As the prefix, to see how the mapping is related to strategic flexibility, strategic capability and performance, we are looking for journals related to those variables. We entered several keywords that are closely related to strategic flexibility including strategic capability and performance through Publish or Perish 8 application. We include related keywords both in the title and in the discussion of the research, both in the introduction, discussion, and conclusion. The online database used in this research is the database of scientific articles indexed in Scopus. The search for literature reviews, especially journals and articles, was carried out without limiting the time of publication and used keywords including "strategic flexibility", "strategic capability" and "performance" which were identified based on the relevance of journal content and topic linkages through Scopus.

After the journals and articles are collected, a number of articles that have been obtained are grouped based on the relevance of the topic regarding strategic flexibility, strategic capability and performance. Although searches for journals and articles are not limited to the year they were published, journals and articles with the latest year's edition will be prioritized as the most recent studies. Next, we will sort the journals that have been obtained by sorting the author's name along with the year with Microsoft Excel help, which can make it easier to detect duplication of filtered journals, conduct article review and do an in-depth inspection through analysis of exception criteria. The results of bibliometric analysis can be visualized using several program applications such as Bibexcel, Pajek, Gephi and VOSviewer. In this research using the VOSviewer bibliometric application. This application can display publication maps in a variety of ways and functions that are more detailed, can present and present specific information about bibliometric graphic maps (Rachmawati et al., 2018). It was found that 31 journals were relevant and in accordance with the topic of discussion, which was then analyzed using the Vosviewer. Then the journals that have been grouped will be analyzed for their explanations and compared their relationships according to the results obtained on the Vosviewer.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

During observation process and literature review, it was clearly found that a number of measurement constructions in this study would chart a conclusive map about the relation between strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance. Moreover, the literature review only referred a figure which strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance that have been learned could affect each other directly and through other constructions. The first point which was expected to identify a combination of strategic flexibility, strategic capability, and performance that was complement for each other referred that those three points were different and supporting each other with the same way. The possibility that one variable might precede the other variables in development sequence (sequential) or one variable was required to continue effects from the other (mediation) or to change those effects (moderation). The result of systematic literature review of this research could be seen on Table 1.

Table 1. Investigated Variables per Article

No	Year	Author	Investigated Variable
1	2011	Parnell	Strategic Capability, Competitive Strategy, Organizational Performance
2	2012	Combe et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Management Cognition, Organizational Resource, Strategic Options, Environmental Uncertainty
3	2012	Kouropalatis et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Commitment to Market Product, Strategic Ambidextrous, Organizational Performance

4	2014	Lin et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Network-Building HR practices for TMT, Organizational Performance, Environmental Uncertainty
5	2013	Singh et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Dynamic Capability
6	2013	Pérez et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Strategic Orientation, Managerial Social Network
7	2013	Guo & Cao	Strategic Flexibility, Competition Intensity, Environmental Uncertainty, Organizational Performance
8	2014	Guiette & Vandenbempt,	Strategic Flexibility, Change Recipient Sense Making
9	2014	Thomas	Strategic Flexibility, Environmental Uncertainty, Platform Design, Organizational Performance
10	2014	Vesalainen & Hakala	Strategic Capability, Environmental Uncertainty, Competition
11	2014	Pérez et al.	Strategic Flexibility, Social Networks, Organizational Climate, Environmental Uncertainty,
12	2015	Change et al.	Strategic Flexibility, Organizational Learning, Marketing Strategic Change, Organizational Performance
13	2015	Yousaf & Majid	Strategic Flexibility, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Organizational Network, Organizational Performance
14	2011	Wei et al.	Strategic Flexibility, Bottom Up Learning, Strategic Change
15	2017	Huikkola & Kohtamäki	Strategic Capability, Organizational Performance
16	2017	Ahmadi et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Structure Design, Environmental Uncertainty
17	2017	Xiu et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Innovative HR Practices, Organizational Performance
18	2017	Seyhan et al	Strategic Capability, Internal Cooperation, Organizational Performance
19	2017	Wang et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Organizational Unlearning
20	2018	Parnell	Strategic Capability, Environmental Uncertainty, Nonmarket & Market Strategies
21	2018	Beraha et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Product Innovation Performance
22	2018	Zgarni	Strategic Capability, Competition Intensity, Competitive Strategic Choice
23	2018	Chaudhary	Strategic Flexibility, Absorptive Capacity, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Organizational Performance
24	2019	Sumiati	Strategic Flexibility, Market Orientation, Innovation Performance
25	2019	Hess & Flatten	Strategic Flexibility, Strategic Change, Environmental Uncertainty
26	2019	Miroshnychenko et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, Absorptive Capacity, Innovation Performance
27	2020	Rialti et al.,	Strategic Flexibility, BDA Capabilities, Ambidexterity, Knowledge Management, Innovation Performance
28	2020	Gorondutse et al.	Strategic Flexibility, Sustainability Strategy, Organizational Performance
29	2020	Pudjiarti & Putranti	Strategic Flexibility, Organizational Learning, Organizational Performance
30	2020	Han & Zhang,	Strategic Flexibility, Strategic Orientation, Innovation Performance
31	2020	Yang & Gan	Strategic Flexibility, HR Flexibility, Cooperative Goals, Dynamic Capability

The strategic flexibility appeared in 25 articles, while strategic capability appeared in 6 articles. The organizational performance appeared in 14 articles, while innovation performance appeared in 5 articles that would be synthesized into a literature review. If it was reviewed according to combination measure of minimum two variables, it showed the strategic flexibility and organizational performance in 10 articles, strategic capability and organizational performance in 4 articles, strategic flexibility and innovation performance in 5 articles. Next, if it was reviewed according to combination measure of minimum three variables, it showed the strategic flexibility, environmental uncertainty, and organizational performance in 3 articles, strategic flexibility, competition intensity, and organizational performance in 2 articles, strategic flexibility, absorptive capacity, and organizational performance and innovation in 2 articles, and strategic capability, dynamic capability, and organizational performance in 1 article. Based on the result of 31 articles. The authors screened using VOS Viewers to identify the relationship between Strategic Capability, Strategic Flexibility and Performance.

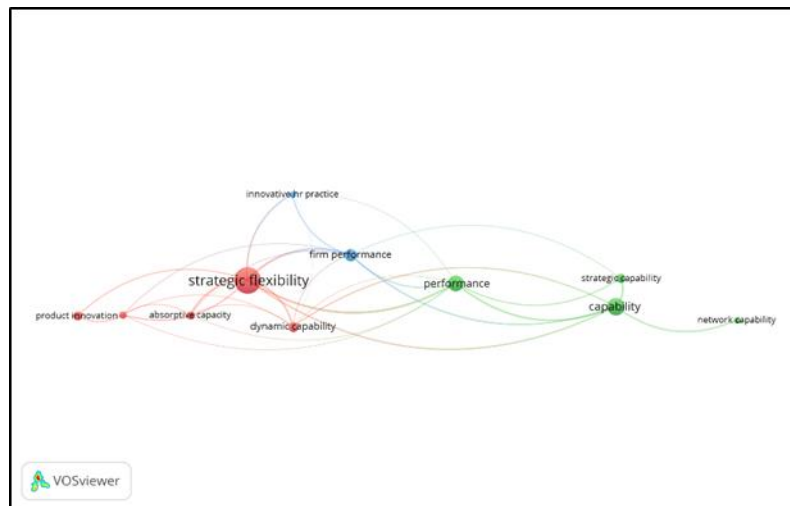


Fig 1.The Relationships between Strategic Capability, Strategic Flexibility, and Performance with networking visualization.

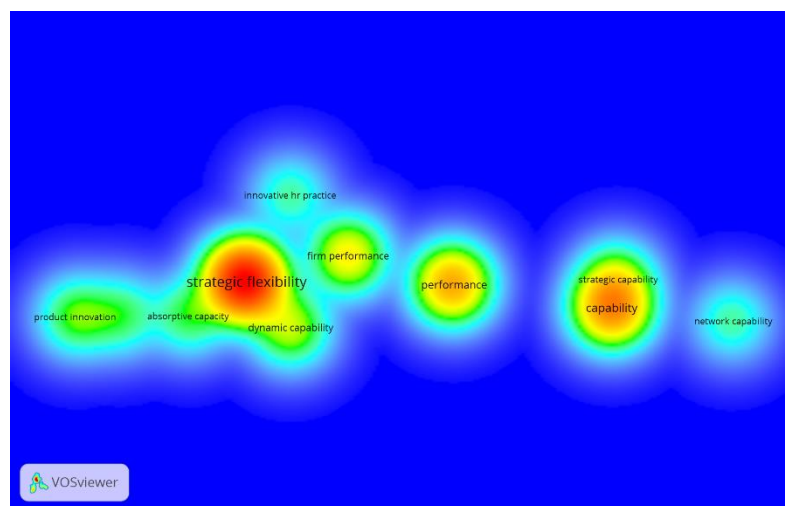


Fig 2.The Relationships between Strategic Capability, Strategic Flexibility, and Performance with density visualization

DISCUSSION

Relationship between Strategic Flexibility and Performance

The result showed that Strategic Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on Performance. The strategic flexibility is related to product innovation, absorptive capacity and dynamic capability. [1] stated that strategic flexibility is a vital instrument which offers capability to the organization in order to be able to change a fast production rate, develop new products, and give fast response to competitive threat. The strategic flexibility is essential to allow for a rapid adaptation to a changing environment [4]. These results are similar to the results of research conducted by [5] stated that there is effects of strategic flexibility on performance. These result also similar to the results of research of [7] that the strategic flexibility can affect positively to organizational performance through moderation factor of sustainability strategy. The strategic flexibility turns more significant to create a competitive position and realize performance improvement for the organization.

Relationship between Strategic Capability and Performance

The result showed that Strategic Capability has a positive and significant effect on Performance. A positive Strategic Capability has an impact on performance. The idea of strategic capability is related to resources based view with a perspective emphasizing on developing a competitive advantage that cannot be imitated by competitors [9]. Strategic capabilities as a complex set of skills and knowledge accumulation that

enable organizations to utilize resources and coordinate activities effectively [10]. These results are similar to the results of research conducted by Huikkola & Kohtamäki (2017) which identify seven strategic capabilities that occur in different phases of solution development and deployment (1) fleet management capabilities (2) technology development capabilities (3) merger and acquisition capabilities (4) value computing capabilities (5) project management capabilities (6) supplier network management capabilities and (7) value co-creation capabilities, to improve the company's financial performance. These result also similar to the results of research of Seyhan et al. (2017) that examined the effects of strategic capability to organizational performance.

Relationship between Strategic Flexibility and Strategic Capability through Performance

The result showed that strategic flexibility is not directly related to the strategic capability. The mediation of Performance to the effect of Strategic Flexibility on Strategic Capability is significant. It means that if the strategic flexibility improves, performances also improves. Performance mediates the influence between strategic flexibility and strategic capability. So that if the organization applies strategic flexibility to improve performance, it will influence the decision to then apply strategic capability after seeing the results of the performance and vice versa. These results are similar to the results of research conducted by Chaudhary (2019) that identified the relation of strategic flexibility, absorptive capacity, and entrepreneurial orientation to the organizational performance.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

Strategic flexibility affects firm performance that implementing strategic flexibility will result in effective relationships and good firm performance. The organization developed strategic flexibility in order to cope with a fast-paced marketplace opportunities and discontinuity that might affect significantly to the organizational performance. The result of research also showed that the strategic flexibility is influenced by product innovation, absorptive capacity, and dynamic capability. Strategic flexibility enabled the organization responding to competitor's action through implementation of new nimble strategy and launching technological innovation or more fast and efficient business model. Another result of this research showed that strategic capability affects firm performance that organization must transform organizational resources into strategic capability.

However, there is no direct influence between strategic flexibility and strategic capability. Performance mediates the influence between strategic flexibility and strategic capability. So that if the organization applies strategic flexibility to improve performance, it will influence the decision to then apply strategic capability after seeing the results of the performance and vice versa. Several factors can be considered for researchers who will refine the study further because this study certainly has shortcomings that need improvement in future studies. Of course, the limited number of respondents is still lacking in describing the actual situation. Research objects need to be added to get more comprehensive results. The recommendations for future research are following researches also can add literatures and new theories on the strategic flexibility and strategic capability so that research and discussion on this object can continue to grow and conduct analysis or review concerning to the relation between strategic capability and product innovation, absorptive capacity and dynamic capability.

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