Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies

ISSN (print): 2644-0490, ISSN (online): 2644-0504

Volume 08 Issue 10 October 2025

Article DOI: 10.47191/jefms/v8-i10-31, Impact Factor: 8.317

Page No: 6873- 6880

The Influence of Social Capital on Competitive Advantage through Market Orientation in SMEs

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the role of marketing orientation in mediating social capital to increase the competitive advantage of SMEs. Many studies have found that SME social capital can increase competitive advantage. Does this effect also apply if the relationship between these two variables is mediated by marketing orientation? This research was conducted in Malang Raya, East Java, Indonesia on SMEs who are followers of the Facebook account:UMKM Malang Raya until January 2025, as many as 36.778 followes, with a sample of 100 SMEs. Research analysis using Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The results of the study are: social capital directly affects marketing orientation but not on competitive advantage. Marketing orientation has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage. Indirectly, social capital has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage through marketing orientation. These results indicate that the role of the marketing orientation variable is important in increasing the influence of social capital on competitive advantage as a mediating variable. In this research the influence of social capital variable only increasing competitive advantage if via marketing orientation variable.

KEYWORDS: Social Capital, Marketing Orientation, Competitive Advantage, UMKM, Malang Raya

I. INTRODUCTION

Porter (2001) states that competitive advantage is the superiority of skills and resources based on customer perceptions and market share. Companies that emphasize the importance of the market certainly have a strong competitive advantage (Bharadwaj, Varadarajan, and Fahy, 1993). Furthermore, market orientation is an organizational culture that is effective and efficient in developing the behaviors needed to create superior value for buyers and superior performance for the company (Wahyono, 2002). Social capital is a set of informal values or norms shared by all group members that enable cooperation among them (Fukuyama, 2002). Companies also need to continuously improve their competitive advantage in order to create higher value and benefits for products or services. Essentially, consumers buy the value or benefits of the product or service itself. Therefore, if consumers obtain higher value or benefits than those offered by competitors, the company has a competitive advantage.Malang Raya is a region in the province of East Java, Indonesia, which consists of: Malang City, Batu City, and Malang Regency. In this region there are many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are members of various business communities, one of which is the Malang Raya Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises community which has a Facebook account called UMKM Malang Raya which is also the subject of this research. SMEs in the Malang Raya region have great potential to support regional economic growth. However, to achieve that, SMEs need guidance so that their competitive advantages can develop and contribute to local economic growth. It is hoped that the use of social capital and market-oriented marketing activities can increase the competitive advantage of SMEs in Malang Raya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Research Review

Several previous studies have found that social capital influences market orientation (Yasin, 2020). Other studies have also found that social capital influences competitive advantage (Zaini et al., 2023; Chepsergon et al., 2021; Badriyah, 2017; Aldaibat, 2017; Pratono et al., 2016; Putri and Yuniawan, 2016; Chuang et al., 2016). This research is useful for entrepreneurs in identifying their social capital and leveraging it to increase the value of their resources. Furthermore, other previous studies have found that market orientation influences competitive advantage (Pradja et al., 2024, Suharti et al., 2024, Afif et al., 2023, Ginting, 2022, Puspaningrum, 2020, Rahmadi et al., 2020, Lestari et al., 2019, Udriyah et al., 2019, Puspaningrum, 2017, Handoyo, 2015). This

research is useful for entrepreneurs in identifying market orientation variables, which include a deeper emphasis on consumers, competitors, and interfunctional company coordination, so they can maximize their use to increase competitive advantage.
Based on the results of these previous studies, a direct influence between market orientation and social capital on competitive advantage is evident. The role of market orientation and social capital in enhancing competitive advantage needs to be further explored in SMEs in the Greater Malang area.

B. Market Orientation

Market orientation is a strategic approach that places customers at the center of business activities, to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in meeting their needs (Khan et al., 2023). Furthermore, Craven and Piecry (2013) stated that market orientation is a perspective that places consumers as the focus of attention in company activities. Meanwhile, according to Tjiptono et al. (2008), market orientation is a business culture that is able to effectively and efficiently create employee behavior in such a way that supports efforts to create superior value for customers. Market orientation develops in various conceptual frameworks with an emphasis on the importance of understanding current and future customer demand (Osuagwu, 2019). Market orientation has two dimensions: Customer Orientation which focuses on identifying and fulfilling customer needs and Competitor Orientation which includes monitoring and responding to competitor strategies (Krisprimandoyo, 2020). Narver and Slater (1990) define market orientation as an organizational culture that is most effective in creating behaviors that are important for creating superior value for buyers and performance in business. Uncles (2000) further defines market orientation as a process and activity related to creating and satisfying customers by continuously assessing customer needs and desires. Market orientation is a process of generating and disseminating market intelligence with the aim of generating a greater number of buyers. According to Wahyono (2002), market orientation is an effective and efficient organizational culture to create the behaviors needed to create superior value for buyers and superior performance for the company. The impact of this orientation can increase the company's resilience against competitors while increasing customer satisfaction. In addition, market orientation has been proven to be a source of sustainable competitive advantage amidst increasingly fierce competition. Market orientation consists of three behavioral components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination (Narver and Slater, 1990)

C. Social Capital

Social capital is the ability of people to work together to achieve common goals in various groups (Suharto, 2008). Furthermore, social capital is a series of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that enable cooperation between them. (Fukuyama, 2002, Villena et al., 2011; Weber & Weber, 2011; Wincent et al., 2014). Social capital is a vehicle for social life that includes: networks, norms, and trust of the parties involved to act together to achieve common goals (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, Ferdinand (2005) states that social capital is an organizational network built on the basis of shared norms with a system of values and understanding that can strengthen long-term cooperation and social cohesion. Furthermore, Ferdinand (2005) stated that social capital includes 5 indicators: 1) relationship networks, 2) social networks, 3) social cohesion, 4) trust and 5) social norms, which are possessed by the desire to be able to increase market capabilities in line with increasing resources.

D. Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage can be achieved if customers obtain consistent differences in the most important attributes of the company's products compared to competitors' products, where these differences are a direct impact of the gap or capabilities between the company and its competitors (Prakosa, 2005). Competitive advantage is a benefit strategy from companies that collaborate to create more effective advantages over their competitors in the market (Porter, 2001). This strategy must be designed to realize continuous advantages so that the company can dominate both existing and new markets. The success of a competitive advantage strategy can be achieved by identifying the company's assets, both tangible and intangible, that demonstrate the company's uniqueness. David (2011) and Kotler and Keller (2016) suggest that competitive advantage is a condition or ability of a company to do something that its competitors cannot do, or have something that its competitors want. Based on the views of Kotler & Keller (2016), competitive advantage can be achieved through the following strategic approaches: Cost Leadership by offering products at lower costs and prices than competitors, Product Differentiation by offering uniqueness or added value that other products do not have. And the Focus Advantage is focusing the strategy on certain market segments that competitors pay less attention to.

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises of all business owners or entrepreneurs who follow facebook account of UMKM Malang Raya , which had 36.778 follower on of January 2025. Using the Slovin formula (Sulianto, 2018), the sample size for this investigation was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Nd^2}$$

Note:

n = minimum sample sizeN = population size

d = error tolerance (sampling error)

Thus, if the error tolerance = 10%, the number of samples = 99,74947 people rounded up = 100 people

B. Data analysis

Partial Least Squares (PLS) was utilized to analyze the data in this study. Partial Least Squares is a prediction technique that can handle a large number of independent variables, even if they are multicollinear, (Ghozali, 2006). The path analysis model in PLS is composed of three groups of relationships: (1) the inner model, (2) the outer model, and (3) the weight relation.

C. Research Concept Framework

The conceptual framework of this research begins with the idea that social capital can enhance competitive advantage and influence it indirectly through marketing orientation.

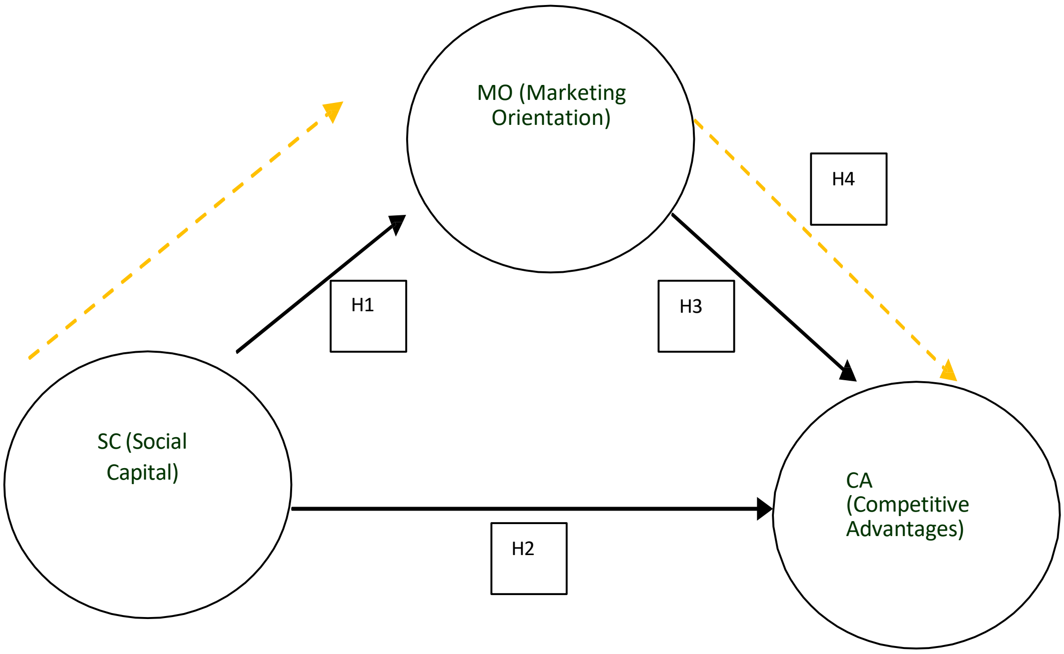

Figure 1: Research Concept Framework

D. Validity and Realibility Test

An indicator is considered valid if its convergent validity has a minimum outer loading value of 0.7 (Sulianto, 2028). PLS was used to evaluate three variables and eleven indicators in this study. All indicators in this study were valid based on this parameter because their loading factor values were greater than 0.7 . (See Figure 3).

IV. RESULT

This study was carried out by distributing Google Forms surveys to the follower of Facebook account of Usaha Mikro Kecil Menengah (UMKM) Malang Raya. 168 persons completed and returned the questionnaire during the collection period. To avoid incomplete questions, the accepted Google forms were reviewed one by one, and 152 copies with complete questionnaires were obtained. Based on the demands of the sample, only 100 respondents were chosen for this study. The study's findings are as follows:

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A. Research Result Framework

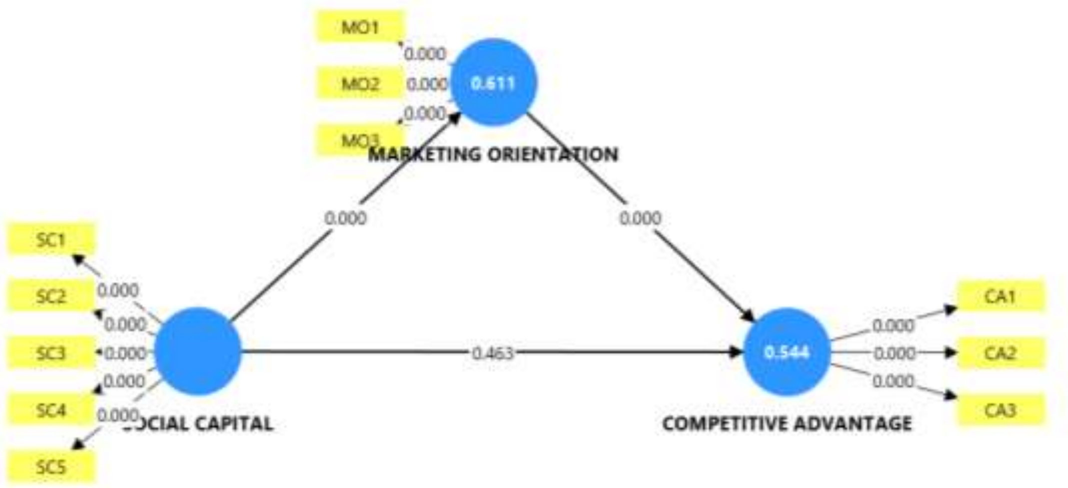

Figure 2: Research Result Framework (p-value)

Source: Primary data processed 2025

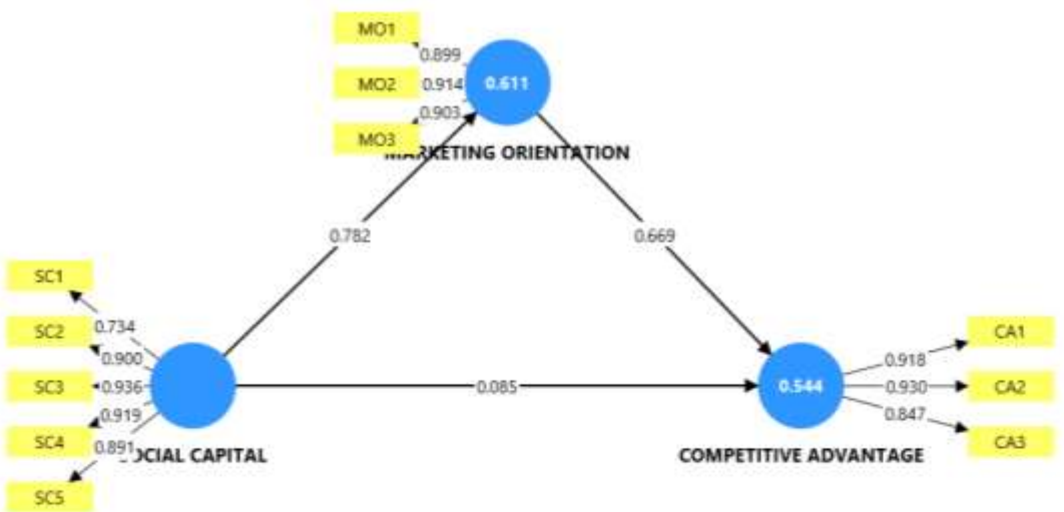

Figure 3: Research Result Framework (path coeff and outer loading)

Source: Primary data processed 2025

B. Direct and Indirect Effect

The values in the path coefficient, t-statistics, and P-value columns for testing the direct effect hypothesis between variables are shown in Table 1. The results reveal that two of the correlations are significant and accepted namely hypothesis 1 (H1) and hypothesis 3 (H3), and hypothesis 2 (H2) is not significant and not accepted.

Table 1: Testing Result of Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Correlation	Path Coeff.	t – Stat.	P-Value	Remark	
H1	SC - MO	0,782	15,779	0.000	Sig	Acc
H2	SC - CA	0.085	0,735	0.463	NotSig	Not Acc
H3	MO - CA	0,669	6,684	0.000	Sig	Acc

Source: Primary data processed 2025

Table 2 displays the path coefficient values, t-statistics, and P-values for evaluating the hypothesis of the indirect effect of social capital on competitive advantage via marketing orientation. The findings indicate that this association is significant.

Table 2: Testing Result of Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Variable			*Path Coeff.*	*t – Stat.*	*P- Value*	Remark	Character.
	Exogen	Mediator	Endogen.					
H4	SC	MO	CA	0,523	5,578	0.000	*Sig*	*Mediation*

Source: Primary data processed 2025

Table 3 shows the values of total effect after using marketing orientation as mediator variable between social capital and competitive advantage

Table 3: Testing Result of Total Effect

Correlation	Path Coeff.	t – Stat.	P-Value	Rem.	
Marketing Orientation - Competitive advantage	0,669	6,484	0.000	Sig	Acc
Social Capital - Competitive Advantage	0.608	6,838	0.000	Sig	Acc
Social Capital - Marketing Performance	0,782	15,779	0.000	Sig	Acc

Source: Primary data processed 2025

V. DISCUSSION

A. Research Hypothesis Testing

***Hypothesis testing 1:* The effect of social capital on marketing orientation**

Testing hypothesis 1 (H1) reveals that social capital has a significant influence on the marketing orientation of SMEs in Greater Malang, with a coefficient value of 0.782, a t-statistic value of 15,779, and a p-value of 0.000 (Table 1). This t- statistic exceeds the t-table value of 1.66088. These studies demonstrate that social capital has a considerable beneficial influence on marketing orientation, as measured by indices such as relationship networks, social networks, social cohesiveness, trust, and social norms.

Based on the findings of this study, the marketing orientation carried out by SME entrepreneurs by providing services to consumers, monitoring competitor strategies and conducting internal company coordination can be improved by building social capital. Building a wider network of relationships to improve the company and make the company better known while offering more business opportunities is a way of developing social capital. Similarly, if SME entrepreneurs expand their social network by: participating in activities between entrepreneurs, staying in touch with each other between entrepreneurs, strengthening solidarity and cooperation between entrepreneurs to strengthen social relations, or implementing social norms that apply among the SME entrepreneur community by running and implementing: business is run in accordance with appropriate social norms, agreed shared values, and mutually agreed rules. All of these activities can help entrepreneurs to obtain increased marketing orientation variables..

The findings of the Malang Raya SMEs' research is consistent with Yasin (2020), who discovered that social capital has a strong beneficial effect on marketing orientation. This finding indicate that the development of social capital, which comprises relationship networks, social networks, social cohesiveness, trust, and social norms, can help SMEs boost their marketing orientation by giving attention to customer, competitor and coordination of interfunctional in SMEs.

Hypothesis testing 2: The effect of social capital on competitive advantage

According to the findings of hypothesis 2 (H2) testing, social capital has no significant beneficial influence on marketing performance. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.083, a t-statistic value of 0,735 (smaller than the t-table value of 1.66088), and a p-value of 0.463 (Table 1). According to the study's findings, SMEs in Malang Raya cannot improve their competitive advantage by strengthening their connection networks, social networks, social cohesion, trust, and social norms..

This study's findings are not consistent with the findings of Zaini et al. (2023), Chepsergon et al. (2021), Badriyah (2017), Aldaiba (2017) Pratono et al. (2016), Putri and Yuniawan (2016) and Chuang et al. (2016], which show that social capital has effect on competitive advantage. This study's findings indicate that within the scope of SMEs in the Greater Malang area, the utilization of social capital, consisting of networks, social networks, social cohesion, trust, and social norms, does not provide SMEs with a competitive advantage. This is because the use of social capital does not automatically result in SMEs having high-quality, affordable, and unique products.The result of this study is inconsistent with the opinion of Yani et al. (2020), who stated that social capital is invaluable in facilitating various value creation initiatives, including competitive advantage, knowledge, and improved business performance.

Hypothesis testing 3: The effect of marketing orientation on competitive advantage

Testing hypothesis 3 (H3) reveals that marketing orientaion has a strong positive influence on competitive advantage, with a coefficient value of 0.669 and a t-statistic value of 6,684, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.66088 and p-value of 0.000 (Table 1). These findings indicate that if UKM entrepreneurs in Malang Raya have a marketing orientation in the form of customer service, monitoring competitor strategies and carrying out interfunctional coordination (Narver and Slater, 1990) to increase their competitive advantage

These findings are congruent with those of (Pradja et al. (2024), Suharti et al.(2024), Afif et al (2023), Ginting (202), Puspaningrum(202), Rahmadi et al. (2020), Lestari et al.(2019), Udriyah et al.(2019), Puspaningrum (2017), Handoyo (2015), who discovered that marketing orientation had a significant effect on SME competitive advantage. As a result of the findings, the marketing orientation variable can be used to improve the competitive advantage of SMEs. The results of this study is consistent with the opinion of Narver and Slater (1990), who stated that market orientation is the most effective and efficient corporate culture in creating the behaviors necessary to create superior value for customers, creating continuous superior performance in business.

Hypothesis testing 4: The effect of social capital on competitive advantage through marketing orientation

Testing hypothesis 4 (H4) reveals that social capital has a strong positive influence on competitive advantage through marketing orientation, with a coefficient value of 0.523 and a t-statistic value of 5,578, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.66088 and p-value of 0.000 (Table 2). These findings indicate that if UKM entrepreneurs in Malang Raya have a marketing orientation in the form of customer service, monitoring competitor strategies and carrying out interfunctional coordination (Narver and Slater, 1990), they can mediate social capital variabel to increase stimulate competitive advantage

These findings are congruent with those of Yasin (2020) that social capital has a strong beneficial effect on marketing orientatio. Also consistent with Pradja et al. (2024), Suharti et al.(2024), Afif et al (2023), Ginting (202), Puspaningrum(202), Rahmadi et al. (2020), Lestari et al.(2019), Udriyah et al.(2019), Puspaningrum (2017), Handoyo (2015),who discovered that marketing orientation had a significant effect on SME competitive advantage.

The finding of this study is also compatible with the views of Wahyono (2002), who stated that market orientation has been proven to be a source of sustainable competitive advantage amidst increasingly fierce competition. Companies with a competitive advantage consistently possess the ability to understand changes in market structure and choose effective marketing strategies (Porter, 2001)

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates the significance of the marketing orientation variable in boosting competitive advantage as asocial capital mediator. Previously, social capital had no effect on competitive advantage; however, when marketing orientation is included as a mediator variable, the association between social capital and competitive advantage becomes positive and significant.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The research team expressed gratitude to the Director and Deputy Director 1 of the State Polytechnic of Malang for providing research funding to the team via P2M in the form of a DIPA Applied Research grant.

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