

The Mediating Role of Organizational Behavior of MSMEs in the Influence of Proactivity on Competitive Advantage (An Empirical Study of Quail Farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village)

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Abstract

The purpose of the Study: To examine and analyze the mediating role of organizational behavior of MSMEs in the influence of proactivity on competitive advantage (An Empirical Study of Quail Farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village, Sanankulon District, Blitar Regency). Method Design and Sample: This quantitative study, based on the research problems and objectives, employs an explanatory research approach with a survey method. Data were collected from 60 quail farmers who served as the research sample. The data collection used a random sampling technique among quail farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village, Sanankulon District, Blitar Regency. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach with SmartPLS software. Results: Proactivity was found to have a significant influence on competitive advantage, as supported by the findings of this study. An increase in proactivity leads to an increase in competitive advantage. Proactivity also significantly influences organizational behavior; the higher the level of proactivity, the stronger the organizational behavior. Additionally, organizational behavior significantly affects competitive advantage, indicating that improved organizational behavior leads to higher competitive advantage. Proactivity influences competitive advantage through organizational behavior, as evidenced by the Specific Indirect Effect analysis, which shows a p-value of less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$) for the indirect effect. Therefore, companies should enhance both proactivity and organizational behavior to strengthen their competitive advantage. Companies can promote positive organizational behavior and develop appropriate strategies to foster proactivity and enhance competitive advantage.

Keywords: Organizational Behavior; Proactivity; Competitive Advantage

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of adapting to the new normal during the Covid-19 pandemic, companies must be able to innovate to achieve competitive advantage (Mugoni, Nyagadza, and Hove 2023). One of the sectors that can play a significant role in this situation is the creative industry. The creative industry is characterized by individual creativity, skills, and innovation in producing innovative products that offer uniqueness to their users. Moreover, it is expected to contribute to improving welfare and creating employment opportunities, which have been declining during the pandemic (Wang et al. 2024).

One approach to remaining competitive in the market is by improving the quality of human resources through skill enhancement and promoting knowledge of entrepreneurial orientation as a key strategy (Al-Mamary and Alshallaqi 2022). Competitive advantage is the core of a company's performance in a competitive market (Groves, Margolis, and Gibson 2024). Competitive advantage is crucial and often referred to as the heart of a company's performance in a competitive market; it builds the capability to carry out activities more effectively than competitors (Musigire 2016).

Competitive advantage is a vital component of a company's performance in a competitive market and arises from the numerous distinct activities carried out by the company in designing, producing, marketing, delivering, and supporting its products (Lestari, Astuti, and Ridwan 2019). For small businesses, having only a competitive advantage is not enough (Marinagi, Trivellas, and Sakas 2014). Small businesses also need to produce products that meet criteria for high competitiveness, including: first, products that are consistently available; second, products that have good and uniform quality; and third, the need to offer a variety of products that align with market needs and demands (Sakas et al. 2023).

Competitive advantage indicates that a company performs better than its competitors in the same domain (Cheng and Chang 2010). Creativity in the form of product innovation must be carried out continuously in accordance with consumer needs. The success of the creative industry in developing market-oriented products is expected to create competitive advantage through creativity and innovation (Yakin and Suhaeni 2020). The changing business environment drives intense competition among companies in the global market. This motivates companies to adopt innovation strategies to succeed in the global market competition (Duong Vu Xuan Quynh and Nguyen Hoang Huy 2018).

Proactive work behavior refers to active actions and future-oriented initiatives aimed at making changes and improving the current situation before problems arise (Gong and Kanwal 2025). Proactive entrepreneurs have the ability to recognize opportunities and act on them, demonstrating initiative and persistence in advocating for meaningful changes in their work environment (Dai et al. 2024). Proactive work behavior impacts competitive advantage, where entrepreneurs exhibiting proactive work behavior tend to be active in their tasks, confidently expressing opinions, offering suggestions to supervisors and colleagues, and taking the initiative to act in order to solve problems. The study from (Morissan 2018) then the study from (Amin, Rusmita, and Wilian 2022) and (Santoso and Slamet 2019) stated that, partially, proactive behavior contributes to competitive success in the business world.

An entrepreneur is always faced with decision-making activities, where the decisions made are inevitably accompanied by the possibility of risks arising. Therefore, the courage to take risks becomes one of the important characteristics of entrepreneurship for the success and sustainability of a business. According to the research by (Utama, Widjaja, and Lego 2020) the importance of entrepreneurial orientation in recognizing opportunities to create value from both products and non-products within a company is highlighted, as well as the role of innovative capacity in effectively leveraging these opportunities. According to the research conducted by (Santoso and Slamet 2019), the findings emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial orientation in recognizing opportunities to create value from both products and non-products within a company, as well as the role of innovative capacity in effectively leveraging these opportunities.

Based on the results of the survey and interviews conducted initially with the Quail Farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village, Sanankulon District, Blitar Regency, it was found that 70% of the MSME owners had diversified their products to develop their business, and 60% were willing to take risks. However, the sales volume of these MSMEs still experiences a decline when competitors from the eastern region harvest on a larger scale and disrupt the market by setting lower prices. Therefore, it can be concluded that, although the Quail Farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village, Sanankulon District, Blitar Regency, have exhibited proactive behavior through risk-taking, they have not yet gained a competitive advantage over existing competitors.

METHODS

This study aims to obtain empirical evidence and develop theories on organizational behavior, proactivity, and competitive advantage. Given the research problems and objectives to be achieved, this study employs an explanatory research approach with a survey method (Haryanti 2019). The research subjects are the Quail Farming MSMEs in Bendowulung Village, Sanankulon District, Blitar Regency. The questionnaire was developed based on the research variables, namely organizational behavior, proactivity, risk-taking courage, and competitive advantage. The population in this study consists of 60 farmers. The object of this research is the 60 quail farmers who serve as respondents. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach with SmartPLS software. PLS is a structural equation modeling (SEM) method based on components or variance.

In the analysis using PLS, there are two main steps: assessing the Outer Model or measurement model. There are three criteria for evaluating the outer model, namely Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability (Ghozali and Latan 2015) and assessing the Inner Model or Structural Model. The testing of the inner model or structural model is conducted to examine the relationships between constructs, the significance values, and the R-square of the research model (Sofyani 2013). In evaluating the model with PLS, the process begins with examining the R-square for each dependent latent variable. Changes in the R-square values can be used to assess the influence of specific independent latent variables on the dependent latent variables, determining whether they have a substantive effect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of Data Quality Testing (Outer Model)

There are three criteria in the use of data analysis techniques with SmartPLS to assess the outer model, namely Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed based on the correlation between the item scores/component scores estimated using the PLS software. An individual reflective indicator is considered high if it has a correlation of more than 0.70 with the construct being measured. In this study, a loading factor threshold of 0.70 will be used. Based on the table below, it can be seen that all outer loading results are > 0.60, meaning all research items meet the criteria. The outer loading results are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Outer Loadings

Indicators	Research Model
Competitive Advantage (Y)	
Y2	0.767
Y3	0.689
Y4	0.708
Y5	0.820
Y6	0.878
Y7	0.643
Y8	0.869
Y2	0.805
Proactivity (X)	
X1	0.921
X2	0.914
X3	0.893
Organizational Behavior (Z)	
Z1	0.888
Z2	0.872
Z3	0.902

Source of Data: Primary Data processed (2025)

Based on the results of processing using SmartPLS, as shown in Table 1, the outer model values or correlations between constructs and variables have met convergent validity. The estimation results of the outer loading test using PLS indicate that all items are valid. This is because the factor loading values are all greater than 0.6.

b. Evaluating Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The criteria for validity and reliability can also be assessed from the reliability value of a construct and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct. A construct is considered to have high reliability if its value is 0.70, and the AVE is above 0.50 (Ghozali 2011). Table 2 presents the Composite Reliability and AVE values for all variables as follows:

Table 2 Outer Model, AVE, Composite Reliability

Variabel	AVE	Composite Reliability	Description
Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.603	0.923	Reliable
Proactivity (X)	0.827	0.935	Reliable
Organizational Behavior (Z)	0.787	0.917	Reliable

Source of Data: Primary Data processed (2025)

Based on Table 2, all constructs meet the reliability criteria. This is indicated by the composite reliability values above 0.70 and the AVE values above 0.50, as per the established criteria.

2. Results of Model Feasibility Testing (Inner Model)

The testing of the inner model or structural model is conducted to examine the relationships between constructs, the significance values, and the R-square of the research model (Widarjono 2015). The structural model is evaluated using the R-square for dependent constructs, t-test values, and the significance of the structural path parameter coefficients. In evaluating the model with PLS, the process begins by examining the R-square for each latent dependent variable. Table 3 presents the R-square estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3 R-Square Score Result

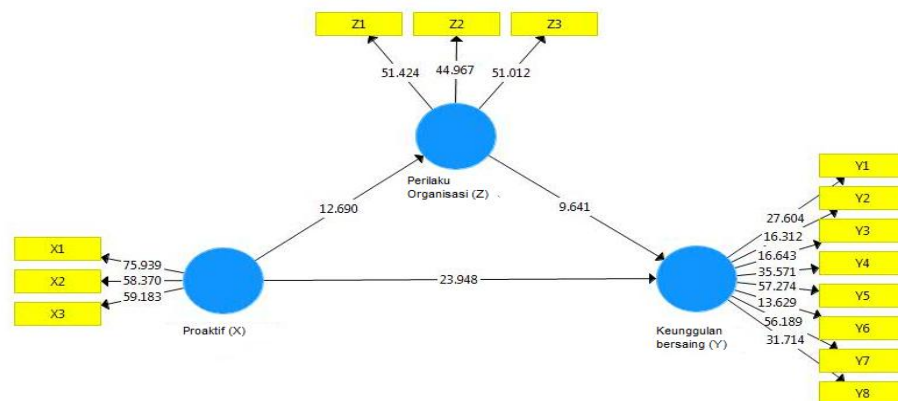
Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.856	0.855
Organizational Behavior (Z)	0.337	0.334

Source of Data: Primary Data processed (2025)

Based on the output above, it shows that the R-square value for Competitive Advantage is 0.856. This means that the variability of the Competitive Advantage construct can be explained by the variability of the Proactive and Organizational Behavior constructs by 85.6%, while the remaining variability is explained by other variables outside the model being studied. Additionally, the output shows that the R-square value for Organizational Behavior is 0.337. This means that the variability of the Organizational Behavior construct can be explained by the variability of the Proactive construct by 33.7%, while the remaining variability is explained by other variables outside the model being studied. The larger the R-square value, the greater the independent variables' ability to explain the dependent variable, thus indicating a better structural model.

3. Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the estimated parameters provides valuable information about the relationships between the research variables. The basis used to test the hypothesis is the value found in the output result for inner weight. Table 4 provides the output estimation for testing the structural model. In SmartPLS, statistical testing of each hypothesized relationship is conducted using simulation. In this case, the bootstrap method is applied to the sample. The bootstrapping test is also intended to minimize issues with data non-normality in the research. The results of the bootstrapping test from the SmartPLS analysis are as follows:



The significance level in hypothesis testing is measured using the path coefficient parameter (Haryono 2017). This test examines the estimated path coefficients and the t-statistic values with significance at $\alpha=5\%$. If the t-statistic value is higher than the t-table value, which is 1.984 for a one-tailed hypothesis, the hypothesis is accepted. The following are the path coefficient values in testing the main hypotheses of this study.

Table 4 Path Coefficient Score Result

	Original	Sample	Standard	T	Statistics	P
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	Sample (O)	Mean (M)	Deviation (STDEV)	(O/STDEV)	Values
Proactivity (X) -> Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.709	0.709	0.030	23.948	0.000
Proactivity (X) -> Organizational Behavior (Z)	0.580	0.580	0.046	12.690	0.000
Organizational Behavior (Z) -> Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.312	0.312	0.032	9.641	0.000

Source of Data: Primary Data processed (2025)

1. Proactivity has an effect on Competitive Advantage

Proactivity has an effect on Competitive Advantage. This is evidenced by the output of the Path Coefficient, where the calculated t value > t table (23.948 > 1.96) or the P-value < 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), thus the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. The coefficient value (Original sample column) is positive at 0.709, indicating a positive effect, meaning that as Proactivity increases, Competitive Advantage also increases.

2. Proactivity has an impact on Organizational Behavior

Proactivity has an impact on Organizational Behavior. This is evidenced by the output of the Path Coefficient, where the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (12.690 > 1.96) or the p-value is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), thus rejecting the null hypothesis (Ho). The coefficient value (Original sample column) is positive at 0.580, indicating a positive influence, meaning that as proactivity increases, Organizational Behavior also improves.

3. Organizational behavior has an impact on competitive advantage.

Organizational behavior has an impact on competitive advantage. This is evident from the output Path Coefficient, where the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (9.641 > 1.96) or the P value is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), thus the null hypothesis is rejected. The coefficient value (Original sample column) is positive at 0.312, meaning that as organizational behavior increases, competitive advantage also increases.

4. Results of Mediation Testing

The influence analysis is conducted to examine the strength of the relationship between variables, including both direct, indirect, and total effects. The direct effect refers to the coefficient of all coefficient paths with one-end arrows.

Table 7 Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Proactivity (X) -> Organizational Behavior (Z) -> Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.181	0.181	0.024	7.459	0.000

Source of Data: Primary Data processed (2025)

Based on the output above, proactivity influences competitive advantage through organizational behavior. Proactivity affects competitive advantage through organizational behavior. This is based on the analysis of the Specific Indirect Effect, where the P-value for the indirect effect of proactivity on competitive advantage through organizational behavior is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). This indicates that proactivity can enhance competitive advantage by improving positive organizational behavior.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that proactivity has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage. This result indicates that organizations with higher levels of proactivity are better able to identify market opportunities, anticipate environmental changes, and develop strategic responses that strengthen their competitive position. These findings are consistent with Alshanty and Emeagwali (2021), who found that proactive organizational capabilities contribute significantly to sustainable competitive advantage by enhancing responsiveness to changing market conditions.

Furthermore, the results reveal that proactivity positively influences organizational behavior. This finding suggests that proactive organizations tend to foster adaptive, innovative, and collaborative behaviors among their members. Such organizations are more likely to encourage initiative-taking, problem-solving, and continuous improvement, which ultimately enhance overall organizational effectiveness. This result supports the findings of Li et al. (2022), who reported that proactive behavior plays a critical role in shaping positive organizational behavior and improving employee engagement. Similarly, Kim and Park (2023) emphasized that proactive organizational cultures promote flexibility and adaptability in dynamic business environments.

Proactivity reflects the entrepreneur's willingness to dominate competitors through a combination of aggressive and proactive actions, such as introducing new products and services that surpass competition and engaging in activities to anticipate future demand, creating change, and shaping the environment. Proactivity is the entrepreneur's ability to identify and seek new business opportunities by involving the development, introduction, and improvement of products or services offered, as well as striving to anticipate future demand changes. This proactive attitude plays a crucial role and will have a positive impact on business performance, both for newly established companies and those that have already grown. In an increasingly complex market competition, business actors are required to identify and meet the needs and wants of consumers to ensure their products remain acceptable in society. Entrepreneurs must have the ability to seek business opportunities not limited to the existing local market, but also need to consider a broader market scope. The more proactive business actors are in seeking new opportunities, the more the company's business performance will improve. Entrepreneurs must also anticipate changes in future consumer demand and develop strategic actions to achieve business goals.

The results of this study align with the findings from the research conducted by (Morissan 2018) and according to (Amin et al. 2022) and (Santoso and Slamet 2019) it is stated that proactively oriented attitudes make a partial contribution to competitive success in the business world.

The study also confirms that organizational behavior positively affects competitive advantage. This finding implies that organizations with effective behavioral practices, such as collaboration, innovation, adaptability, and employee commitment, are more capable of achieving superior performance and sustaining their competitive position. The result is in line with Alrowwad et al. (2022), who found that positive organizational behavior enhances organizational capabilities and contributes directly to competitive outcomes. Likewise, Nguyen et al. (2023) demonstrated that organizational behavior is a critical determinant of competitive advantage, particularly in highly competitive and rapidly changing markets.

If entrepreneurs possess a proactive nature in business activities, supported by the courage to take risks and the ability to identify business opportunities, they will be able to enhance their competitive advantage through innovation or by serving market segments that others have overlooked. This result aligns with the research conducted by Kanten and Ulker (2012) which found that perceived proactive personality can lead to organizational behavior. Furthermore, this study is supported by (Wardi, Susanto, and Abdullah 2017), who stated in their research that proactivity has a simultaneous impact on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Crant (2000) describes the concept of personal initiative as involving an active approach and taking the lead in working. In addition, proactive individuals actively create environmental changes, while less proactive individuals take a more reactive approach to their work.

The results of this study are supported by the research of Bortolotti, Boscari, and Xiao (2024) which shows that organizational behavior has an impact on competitive advantage. This suggests that a hierarchical culture facilitates the development of capabilities from external reactive environmental practices, which in turn leads to competitive advantage. Additionally, a study by Zheng et al. (2025) indicates that proactive personality refers to an individual's willingness to engage in behaviors that influence their environment. This is because proactive individuals are more likely to engage in discovering new business opportunities that can lead to innovative outcomes and competitive advantage (Groves et al. 2024).

Another important finding of this study is that organizational behavior significantly mediates the relationship between proactivity and competitive advantage. This suggests that proactive initiatives alone may not be sufficient to generate competitive advantage unless they are translated into effective organizational behaviors. In other words, organizational behavior serves as a strategic mechanism through which proactivity influences competitive outcomes. This finding

extends previous studies that primarily focused on the direct relationship between proactivity and organizational performance. It is also supported by Ahmed et al. (2024), who highlighted the mediating role of organizational factors in transforming strategic orientations into sustainable competitive advantages.

Although the findings are generally consistent with previous studies, differences in the magnitude of the relationships may exist due to variations in research contexts, organizational characteristics, industry sectors, and methodological approaches. Differences in organizational size, market conditions, and cultural environments may also influence how proactivity and organizational behavior contribute to competitive advantage.

The primary novelty of this study lies in examining organizational behavior as a mediating variable in the relationship between proactivity and competitive advantage. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the direct impact of proactivity on organizational performance or competitive advantage. However, this study demonstrates that organizational behavior serves as an important explanatory mechanism through which proactivity translates into competitive advantage.

Moreover, this study provides empirical evidence that organizational behavior is not merely an organizational outcome but also a strategic pathway that strengthens the impact of proactivity on competitive advantage. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature on strategic management and organizational behavior by offering a more comprehensive framework for understanding how proactive organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on proactivity, organizational behavior, and competitive advantage by providing empirical evidence of the mediating role of organizational behavior. The findings enrich existing theoretical perspectives by explaining the process through which proactive organizational actions lead to superior competitive outcomes. For managers and organizational leaders, the findings highlight the importance of fostering a proactive culture that encourages innovation, initiative-taking, adaptability, and collaboration. Organizations should invest in leadership development, employee empowerment, and organizational learning practices to strengthen organizational behavior and ultimately enhance competitive advantage. Policymakers and organizational stakeholders may use these findings to design human resource development programs aimed at improving proactive capabilities and positive organizational behaviors. Such initiatives can support long-term organizational competitiveness and sustainability.

Future studies are encouraged to examine this model in different industrial sectors and geographical contexts to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also incorporate additional variables, such as innovation capability, organizational culture, transformational leadership, knowledge management, or digital capability, as mediating or moderating variables. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to better understand the dynamic relationships among proactivity, organizational behavior, and competitive advantage over time.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study indicate that proactivity influences competitive advantage, as supported in this research. This is because an increase in proactivity leads to an increase in competitive advantage. Proactivity also affects organizational behavior, as supported in this study. This is because an increase in proactivity results in an increase in organizational behavior. Organizational behavior influences competitive advantage, as supported in this research. This is because an increase in organizational behavior leads to an increase in competitive advantage. Proactivity influences competitive advantage through organizational behavior. This is based on the Specific Indirect Effect analysis, where the P-value for the indirect effect of proactivity on competitive advantage through organizational behavior is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$).

The results of this study have implications that companies must enhance proactive capabilities and organizational behavior to improve competitive advantage. Companies can promote positive organizational behavior and develop appropriate strategies to enhance proactivity and competitive advantage. Furthermore, the findings of this study can also serve as a foundation for developing theories and models on proactivity, organizational behavior, and competitive advantage. In this way, companies can improve performance and develop an organizational culture that supports competitive advantage.

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