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**THE MODERATING ROLE OF DYNAMIC CAPABILITY  
BETWEEN STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS AND FIRM  
PERFORMANCE IN MALAYSIA AGRO BASED SME**

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**UUM**  
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**DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

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**THE MODERATING ROLE OF DYNAMIC CAPABILITY BETWEEN  
STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS AND FIRM PERFORMANCE  
IN MALAYSIA AGRO BASED SME**

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Thesis submitted to  
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## ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menilai orientasi strategic dan prestasi firma berasaskan pertanian dalam Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS). Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada PKS kerana kepentingan PKS sebagai penyumbang kepada Keluaran Dalam negara Kasar (KDNK) bagi ekonomi Malaysia dan peratusan tinggi guna tenaga dalam pasaran buruh. PKS asas tani menghadapi cabaran besar seperti populasi golongan tua yang tinggi; kekurangan aktiviti inovasi, pengetahuan sains, dan penggunaan teknologi serta kekurangan strategi berorientasikan pasaran meskipun menghadapi persaingan yang besar daripada Negara serantau. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi jurang teori dan kefahaman dengan mengkaji peranan penyederhana keupayaan dinamik (DC) dan hubungan antara orientasi keusahawanan (EO), orientasi pembelajaran (LO) dan orientasi pasaran (MO), sebagai pembolehubah bebas dan prestasi firma PKS asas tani, sebagai pembolehubah bersandar. Berlandaskan Pandangan Berasaskan Sumber (RBV), hipotesis kajian ini mempunyai hubungan positif di antara orientasi strategik dan prestasi firma. Metodologi kajian ini melibatkan analisis deskriptif, multivariate dan analisis regresi berhierarki daripada populasi dalam kalangan PKS asas tani. Hasil kajian empirical melalui analisis kuantitatif keratan rentas terhadap 396 PKS asas tani di Malaysia menunjukkan bahawa EO dan MO mempunyai hubungan positif dengan prestasi firma, kecuali LO. Keupayaan dinamik mempunyai kesan penyederhana ke atas EO; dan MO secara individu, kecuali LO. Tambahan pula keupayaan dinamik mempunyai kesan penyederhana separa ke atas orientasi strategik, sebagai ikatan sumber tidak ketara terhadap prestasi firma. Kajian ini mendalami pengetahuan teori masa kini terhadap keupayaan dinamik, dengan memahami peranan penyederhana yang mempengaruhi orientasi strategik untuk meningkatkan prestasi firma. Selain itu, dapatan kajian turut member implikasi pengurusan iaitu bagaimana keupayaan dinamik memainkan peranan strategik, meliputi penerokaan dan eksploitasi melalui inovasi yang dapat meningkatkan prestasi firma PKS asas tani. Akhir sekali, kajian ini mengenalpasti beberapa batasan dan cadangan untuk penyelidikan lanjut

**Kata kunci:** Orientasi keusahawanan, orientasi pembelajaran dan orientasi pasaran, keupayaan dinamik, Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana Asas tani.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to assess the strategic orientations and firm performance in agro- based small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The research focused on SMEs because of their importance in GDP contribution to the Malaysian economy and the high percentage of employment in the labor market. Agro -based SMEs are facing challenges such as the largely aging population; lack of innovation activities, scientific knowledge and application technology as well as less market driven strategies although faced with a large degree of competition from regional countries. The present study aimed to fill the gap between theory and understanding, by investigating the moderating role of dynamic capability (DC) between the relationship of entrepreneurial (EO), learning (LO) and market orientations (MO), as independent variables and agro- based SME firm performance, as the dependent variable. Building on the resourced- based view (RBV), this study theoretically hypothesised a positive relationship between strategic orientations and firm performance. The research methodology included a descriptive analysis, and multivariate and hierarchical regression analysis of the population in the agro- based SMEs. The empirical findings from the cross-sectional quantitative survey of 396 agro- based SME firms in Malaysia revealed that EO and MO were positively related to firm performance, except LO. Dynamic capability had a moderating effect on EO; and MO individually, except LO. Furthermore, dynamic capability had a partial moderating effect on strategic orientations, as a bundle of firm intangible resources on firm performance. This study extends the present theoretical knowledge of dynamic capability, by understanding its moderating role, which influences strategic orientations leading to firm performance. Besides this, the findings of this study provide managerial implications on how dynamic capability playing a strategic role, in outward exploration and inward exploitation through innovation, could improve agro- based SME firm performance. Finally this study identifies a few limitations and recommends further research opportunities

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Orientation, Learning Orientation, Market Orientation, Dynamic Capability and agro- based SME.

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Chow Yeong Kang,

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CHAPTER	TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
TITLE PAGE		
CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION		
PERMISSION TO USE		i
ABSTRAK		ii
ABSTRACT		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iv
TABLE OF CONTENT		v
LIST OF TABLES		xi
LIST OF FIGURES		xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATION		xiv
<b>CHAPTER ONE:</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background of Study	1
1.2	National Agricultural Policy	4
1.3	Problem Statement	5
1.3.1	Practical Challenges	6
1.3.2	Theoretical Issues	7
1.4	Research Questions	10
1.5	Research Objectives	11
1.6	Significance of Study	12
1.6.1	Theoretical Motivation	13
1.6.2	Practical Motivation	14
1.7	Scope of research	17



1.7.1	Research Design	17
1.7.2	Sample and Population	18
1.7.3	Unit Analysis	18
1.8	Research Hypothesis	19
1.9	Definition of Key Research Variables	20
1.10	Organization of Thesis	23
<b>CHAPTER TWO:</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1	Introduction	24
2.2	Outcome of Critical Review	27
2.2.1	Recent Empirical Studies	27
2.2.2	Summary of Research Gaps	30
2.2.3	Conceptualization of Research Variables	36
2.3	Theoretical Review: Resources Based View	37
2.3.1	Sustainable Competitive Advantage	38
2.3.2	Core Competency	40
2.4	Knowledge Based View	41
2.4.1	Learning Orientation Creates Intellectual Capital	43
2.4.2	Learning Orientation Creates Sustainable Competitiveness	46
2.5	Strategic Management Perspective	48
2.5.1	Dynamic Capabilities	48
2.5.2	Exploration Capability: Discovering New Opportunities	51
2.5.3	Exploitation Capability: Enhancing Firm Performance	52
2.6	Agro based SME in Malaysia	54
2.6.1	Emerging Challenges and Opportunities	54
2.6.2	Performance Issues of Agro Based SME	57

<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>64</b>
3.1	Introduction	64
3.2	Development of Theoretical Framework	64
3.2.1	Firm Performance as Dependent Variable	64
3.2.2	Strategic Orientations as Independent Variables	65
3.2.3	Dynamic Capabilities as Moderator	69
3.3	Development of Research Hypothesis	72
3.3.1	Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	72
3.3.2	Learning Orientation (LO)	76
3.3.3	Marketing Orientation (MO)	77
3.3.4	Dynamic Capabilities (DC)	83
3.4	Research Design	88
3.5	Population and Sampling Frame	90
3.5.1	Population Selection Criteria	90
3.5.2	Sampling Frame	91
3.6	Operational Definition and Measurement of Variables	95
3.6.1	Independent Variables	95
3.6.2	Moderating Variable	98
3.6.3	Dependent Variable	99
3.7	Research Instrument and Data Collection	101
3.8	Data Analysis	103
3.8.1	Goodness of Measure	104
3.8.2	Non Response Bias	105
3.8.3	Validity and Reliability Analysis	106
3.8.4	Regression Analysis	109

3.9	Pilot Study	111
3.9.1	Content Validity	111
3.9.2	Results of Pilot Study	112
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:</b>	<b>RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>115</b>
4.1	Introduction	115
4.2	Response Rate	116
4.3	Non Response Bias	117
4.4	Demographic Profile	120
4.4.1	Gender of Respondents	120
4.4.2	Position Level in Organization	121
4.4.3	Sales Turnover	122
4.4.4	Category of Product	123
4.5	Data Screening Procedures	124
4.5.1	Missing Values	124
4.5.2	Exploratory Factor Analysis	126
4.5.3	Factor Analysis of Strategic Orientations	127
4.5.4	Factor Analysis of Dynamic Capabilities	130
4.5.5	Factor Analysis of Firm Performance	132
4.5.6	Reliability Test	133
4.5.7	Normality Test	134
4.5.8	Multivariate Outliers	137
4.5.9	Homocedasticity	138
4.5.10	Independence Residual	139
4.5.11	Multicollinearity Result	140

4.5.12	Linearity	141
4.5.13	Correlation Analysis	143
4.6	Inferential Statistic on Hypothesis Testing	145
4.6.1	Multiple Regression Analysis	145
4.6.2	Hierarchical Regression Analysis	149
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>		<b>157</b>
5.1	Introduction	157
5.2	Research Findings	157
5.3	Results Discussion	159
5.3.1	Entrepreneurial Orientation	159
5.3.2	Market Orientation:	162
5.3.3	Learning Orientation	167
5.3.4	Dynamic Capabilities	171
5.4	Research Contribution	177
5.4.1	Theoretical Contribution	177
5.4.2	Practical Contribution	180
5.4.3	Managerial Implication	183
5.4.3.1	SME Embarks Management for Change	183
5.4.3.2	SME Embraces for Skills Development	185
5.4.3.3	SME Networking Strategic Partnership	187
5.5	Limitations of Study	190
5.5.1	Non Generalizability	190
5.5.2	Non Objective Response	191
5.5.3	Cross Sectional Study	191

5.6	Suggestion for Future Study	193
5.7	Conclusion	194
<b>REFERENCES</b>		197-221
<b>APPENDIXES</b>		223-297
Appendix A1	Summary of Literature Review	222-224
Appendix B1	Questionnaire	225-230
Appendix B2	Reliability Test (Pilot test)	231-242
Appendix B3	Principal Component Analysis (Pilot test)	243-252
Appendix C1	Descriptive Statistic- Frequencies	253-272
Appendix C2	Correlation Matrix- Firm Performance	273-276
Appendix C3	Multiple Regression	277-284
Appendix C4	Hierarchical Regression	285-297



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Table 1.1	Definition of SME	22
Table 2.1	Relevant Variables and Literature	28
Table 2.2	Number of Establishment using Method of Technology	54
Table 2.3	Categories of Worker in Agriculture Sectors	55
Table 2.4	Comparisons of Tariff Lines under AFTA	56
Table 2.5	Productivity Level and Growth	57
Table 3.1	Malaysian SMEs by Business Sector	92
Table 3.2	Malaysian SMEs by Agricultural Sub-sector	92
Table 3.3	Target Population of Agro based SMEs	93
Table 3.4	Pretesting the Questionnaire (Content Validity)	112
Table 4.1	Summary of Response Rates	116
Table 4.2	Results of Chi-square Test for Early and Late Group	118
Table 4.3	Independent Samples Test – SME Firm Performance Variables for early respondents vs. late respondents	119
Table 4.4	Gender of Respondent	120
Table 4.5	Position level in SME firms	121
Table 4.6	Sales Turnover (Per Year)	122
Table 4.7	Category of Product	123
Table 4.8	Result of Missing Data	125
Table 4.9	Factor Analysis -EO	127
Table 4.10	Factor Analysis -LO	128
Table 4.11	Factor Analysis -MO	129
Table 4.12	Factor Analysis -EIC	130
Table 4.13	Factor Analysis -ELC	131
Table 4.14	Factor Analysis-FP	132



## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Table 4.15	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficients for the main constructs	133
Table 4.16	Result of Normality test	135
Table 4.17	Test of Influential Outliers	138
Table 4.18	Test of Independent of residuals	140
Table 4.19	Tolerance and VIF for each independent variable	140
Table 4.20	Result of Correlation Analysis	142
Table 4.21	The Strength of Relationship	142
Table 4.22	Regression Result between Entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance	146
Table 4.23	Regression Result between Learning orientation and Firm Performance	146
Table 4.24	Regression Result between Market orientation and Firm Performance	147
Table 4.25	Mean Rating Score	149
Table 4.26	Descriptive Statistics after dynamic capabilities divided by three groups	149
Table 4.27	Effects DC towards relationships between EO and FP	150
Table 4.28	Effects DC towards relationships between LO and FP	151
Table 4.29	Effects DC towards relationships between MO and FP	153
Table 4.30	Effects of Dynamic Capabilities between EO; LO; MO and Firm Performance	155
Table 5.1	Summary of Results	158

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Figure 2.1	Process Flow of Critical Literature Review	25
Figure 2.2	Conceptualization of Overall Research Variables	36
Figure 2.3	Attributes to be a sustainable competitive advantage	39
Figure 2.4	Core Competency Paradigm	40
Figure 2.5	National Innovation Model	43
Figure 2.6	Foundations of dynamic capabilities and business performance,	50
Figure 2.7	Productivity Performance of Agriculture Sectors	58
Figure 2.8	Added Value Growth in Manufacturing Sub sectors	59
Figure 2.9	Balanced Approach of Market and Technology Driven Innovation Model	61
Figure 3.1	Theoretical Model of Strategic Orientations in Relation to Firm Performance moderated by Entrepreneurial dynamic capabilities	71
Figure 3.2	Research Process for Strategic Orientations, Dynamic Capabilities and Firm Performance	89
Figure 3.3	Formula for Determining Sample Size	94
Figure 4.1	Normal Q-Q Plot for firm performance	136
Figure 4.2	Normal Q-Q Plot for entrepreneurial orientation	136
Figure 4.3	Normal Q-Q Plot for learning orientation	136
Figure 4.4	Normal Q-Q Plot for market orientation	137
Figure 4.5	Scatterplots of studentized residuals against the predicted values	139
Figure 4.6	Moderation Graph for EO and Firm Performance	151
Figure 4.7	Moderation graph for MO and Firm performance	154
Figure 5.1	Environmental Force	164
Figure 5.2	Level of Knowledge	170
Figure 5.3	Dynamic Capabilities	175

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)
CEPT	Common Effective Preferential Tariff
COMP	Competitor Orientation
COST	Cost Orientation
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CUST	Customer Orientation
DC	Dynamic Capability
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOF	Department of Fisheries
DOS	Department of Statistic
DVS	Department of Veterinary Services
EO	Entrepreneurial Orientation
ETP	Economic Transformation Program
FAMA	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
FDA	Fisheries Development Authority
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOA	Farmers Organization Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Program
KBV	Knowledge Based View
KM	Knowledge Management
LO	Learning Orientation
MADA	MUDA Agriculture Development Authority
MAFAS	Malaysian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme
MAHTAS	Malaysian Heat Treatment Accreditation Scheme
MAQIS	Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services
MARDI	Malaysia Agricultural Research & Development Institute
MO	Market Orientation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture and Agro Based Industry
MPC	Malaysia Productivity Corporation
MPCA	Malaysian Phytosanitary Certification Assurance Scheme
NAP3	Third National Agricultural Policy
NDP	New Development Policy
OPP3	Third Outline Perspective Plan
R&D	Research and Development
RBV	Resource Based View
ROA	Return of Asset
ROS	Return of Sales
SALM (GAP)	Skim Amalan Ladang Malaysia
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SOM	Skim Organic Malaysia
SPBT	Plant Material Verification Scheme
WTO	World Trade Organization

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

#### Importance of Agriculture

Agricultural economists have long been investigated and convinced the agricultural sector contribution to the overall economic growth. It has been empirically supported that this sector is strategically important for agriculture-dependent emerging economies, such as Southeast Asia, supplemented by their rich natural resources and cheap production cost (Rahman, 1998). In the past, agriculture has been associated with production of basic food crops. Today, many have acknowledged that the agriculture sectors are strategically important and the roles of agriculture sectors will always relevant to both developed and developing countries globally (Dethier & Effenberger, 2011).

At present day, automated processing; farm yields distribution & harvest delivery; product branding, marketing, and pricing strategies all are considered as value chain of current agriculture economic. Hence, agriculture is beyond basic farming or downstream cultivating crops, indeed agriculture plays a critical role in social economic and it is the backbone of economic system of a country, such as Thailand; Vietnam; Indonesia as well as Malaysia. Agriculture sector is essential to human survival and eco-system sustainability (Murad et al., 2008). These sectors improve living standards, by providing work opportunities; raw material for various industries, including bio-pharmaceutical sectors, food security, important to socio-economic development of many agriculture-dependent developing countries (Wahab, 2011).

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