

Resource-Based View Factors Driving SME Growth: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Resource-Based View (RBV) variables on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth, identifying key growth drivers and addressing literature gaps concerning their influence on SME competitiveness. A systematic literature review was conducted on studies published between 2020 and 2024, employing a structured methodology that incorporated a comprehensive search strategy, rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, and thorough quality assessment of selected studies. The findings identify three core RBV variables—human capital, technological resources, and organizational capabilities—that influence SME growth by enhancing financial performance, fostering innovation, and strengthening market competitiveness. The review highlights research gaps, particularly the need for longitudinal studies and standardized RBV variable definitions. For practical implications, SMEs should prioritize investments in skill development, technology adoption, and strategic resource management. Future research directions should emphasize longitudinal investigations and the integration of external factors with RBV variables to enhance understanding of their growth impact.

Keywords: Human Capital, Technological Resources, Organizational Capabilities, Competitive Advantage, Innovation

1. Introduction

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) constitute a fundamental pillar of the global economy, functioning as primary drivers of economic growth and innovation across diverse industrial sectors. These organizations, characterized by their limited workforce size and moderate annual revenue, make substantial contributions to employment generation, economic diversification, and social stability [1]. The significance of SMEs has become increasingly prominent, particularly in response to global economic challenges and dynamic market transformations [2]. Recognized for their operational agility, adaptive capabilities, and innovative potential [3], SMEs effectively serve

specialized market segments, addressing distinct consumer needs that often escape the attention of larger corporations [4]. Furthermore, these enterprises play an instrumental role in fostering entrepreneurship, catalyzing local economic development, and enhancing the resilience of national economies [5]. World Bank data indicates that SMEs represent approximately 90% of global business entities and account for over 50% of worldwide employment, underscoring their integral role in the international economic framework [6].

Notwithstanding their economic importance, SMEs encounter substantial obstacles in maintaining sustainable growth and competitive advantage [7]. Resource constraints, limited access to financial capital, and heightened sensitivity to market volatility represent primary impediments to their development [8]. Within this context, understanding the determinants of SME growth becomes paramount for policy architects, business strategists, and academic researchers, particularly through the theoretical lens of the Resource-Based View (RBV).

The RBV framework demonstrates particular relevance to SME growth through multiple dimensions. Primarily, it provides an analytical framework for examining how SMEs, despite resource limitations, can develop and maintain competitive advantages [11]. Additionally, it facilitates the identification of crucial resources and capabilities most conducive to SME success and expansion [12]. Furthermore, this theoretical framework offers strategic guidance for resource allocation and development to maximize growth potential [13].

Empirical investigations, including [11], have examined various RBV variables and their influence on SME growth. These variables encompass human capital, organizational capabilities, technological resources, and network relationships [14]. For instance, empirical evidence [15] demonstrates that SMEs' capacity to leverage human capital and develop dynamic capabilities significantly influences their growth trajectory and performance in volatile environments. Similarly, research [16] has established the critical role of technological resources and innovation capabilities in driving SME growth within the context of digital transformation.

As the global business landscape undergoes continuous transformation, influenced by technological advancement, evolving consumer behavior patterns, and environmental considerations, the application of RBV to SME growth maintains increasing relevance [17]. Through systematic examination of RBV variables' contributions to SME growth, researchers and practitioners can develop more comprehensive frameworks for understanding how these enterprises can leverage internal resources to facilitate growth and contribute to economic resilience worldwide.

This systematic literature review aims to comprehensively examine the current state of knowledge regarding the influence of Resource-Based View variables on SME growth. The review's significance stems from recognizing SMEs' fundamental role in driving economic growth and innovation within the evolving global business landscape. Recent investigations have illuminated the complex, multifaceted nature of SME growth, emphasizing the necessity for more nuanced perspectives on success factors [18]. While RBV has gained widespread application in strategic management research, its specific application to SME growth presents opportunities for further investigation. Contemporary technological advancements and market dynamics, particularly in the

post-pandemic context [19], have potentially reconfigured the relative importance of various resources for SME growth.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) represents a fundamental theoretical framework in strategic management that conceptualizes firm-specific resources and capabilities as the primary determinants of competitive advantage and organizational performance. Initially conceptualized by Wernerfelt [10], RBV proposes that sustainable competitive advantage emerges from the possession of resources characterized by four critical attributes: value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN). These organizational resources encompass both tangible elements, such as financial capital and physical infrastructure, and intangible assets, including intellectual property and reputational capital [9].

The theoretical underpinnings of RBV rest upon two fundamental premises: Resource Heterogeneity, which posits that organizations possess disparate resource configurations leading to performance differentials, and Resource Immobility, which suggests that certain strategic resources resist inter-firm transfer, thereby impeding competitive replication [9, 20]. Within the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) context, RBV demonstrates particular salience by emphasizing the strategic importance of identifying and leveraging internal organizational strengths—a critical consideration for entities operating under resource constraints. Given that SMEs typically lack economies of scale and face substantial financial limitations, their internal resource configurations assume heightened significance in facilitating organizational growth [21].

Within the RBV framework, several critical resources and capabilities demonstrate consistent association with SME growth trajectories. Financial capital accessibility emerges as a fundamental determinant, enabling operational funding, growth opportunity exploitation, and risk mitigation. Empirical evidence suggests that SMEs with robust financial foundations demonstrate enhanced propensity for expansion and innovation [21]. Human capital, manifested through employee competencies, knowledge repositories, and specialized expertise, contributes substantially to organizational performance. SMEs that prioritize workforce development through systematic training initiatives typically exhibit superior productivity and innovation metrics [22].

Technological resource deployment serves as another crucial determinant, enhancing operational efficiency, product quality optimization, and market expansion capabilities. For SMEs specifically, the integration of advanced technological infrastructure, including information systems and digital platforms, can catalyze significant growth trajectories [23]. Anand et al. [24] emphasize the strategic importance of both tacit and explicit knowledge as critical organizational resources, suggesting that firms capable of unique knowledge possession or rapid information assimilation can establish distinctive market positions. Furthermore, Fachrunnisa et al. [25] highlight the significance of organizational capabilities—specifically, the systematic processes and structural frameworks that

facilitate effective resource management, innovation generation, and market adaptation. SMEs possessing robust organizational capabilities typically demonstrate enhanced agility and superior adaptive responses compared to larger organizational entities.

2.2 RBV in the Context of SMEs

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) exhibit distinctive organizational characteristics that render the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework particularly germane to their strategic analysis. In contrast to large-scale enterprises, SMEs typically operate under substantial resource constraints, which circumscribe their capacity to compete primarily through economies of scale or financial dominance [26]. Consequently, these organizations must emphasize the optimization and strategic deployment of their internal resources and capabilities [27].

The inherent organizational agility and operational flexibility characteristic of SMEs facilitate rapid resource reconfiguration—a competitive advantage explicitly recognized within the RBV theoretical framework [28]. Hoque et al. [29] demonstrate that SMEs exhibit enhanced responsiveness to market dynamics, effectively leveraging their human capital and knowledge repositories to develop specialized products and services that address specific market segments. Moreover, their relatively compact organizational structure frequently enables the cultivation of intimate customer relationships, yielding profound market insights that constitute a valuable intangible resource [29]. Nevertheless, constraints in financial capital accessibility and limited exposure to cutting-edge technological innovations present significant impediments to sustained organizational growth, underscoring the critical importance of strategic resource management [30].

Within this context, RBV provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for elucidating how SMEs can achieve sustainable growth trajectories through the effective leveraging of their distinctive resource configurations, with particular emphasis on the development and maintenance of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources, even when confronted with external environmental constraints [31].

3. Research Design

The implementation of a systematic literature review (SLR) necessitates a rigorous and methodologically sound approach to ensure both the reliability and validity of research outcomes. This comprehensive review endeavors to systematically examine the interrelationship between Resource-Based View (RBV) variables and their impact on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories. The methodological framework encompasses a detailed articulation of the review protocol, including systematic search strategies, clearly defined inclusion and exclusion parameters, standardized data extraction procedures, and analytical synthesis methodologies.

Through strict adherence to established systematic review protocols and methodological guidelines, this investigation aims to provide a thorough and empirically grounded understanding of the mechanisms through which RBV factors influence SME growth patterns across diverse industrial sectors and contextual environments. The systematic nature of this review facilitates the identification of patterns, relationships, and potential gaps in the existing body of knowledge, while simultaneously

maintaining methodological transparency and analytical rigor.

3.1 Search Strategy

To establish a comprehensive and methodologically robust systematic review examining the influence of Resource-Based View (RBV) variables on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories, a systematically structured search protocol was implemented. The search architecture incorporated multiple electronic bibliographic databases, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, and complementary academic resources to ensure extensive coverage across diverse disciplinary domains. The following section delineates the fundamental components of the systematic search methodology employed in this investigation.

3.2 Databases Used

The systematic identification and retrieval of pertinent literature necessitated the utilization of multiple scholarly databases, selected primarily for their comprehensive coverage of management science, business administration, and entrepreneurship research, with particular emphasis on Resource-Based View (RBV) theoretical frameworks and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth dynamics. The following databases constituted the primary sources for literature acquisition:

Scopus, representing one of the most extensive abstract and citation repositories in academic scholarship, provides comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature across multiple disciplines, with particular strength in business and management domains [32]. This platform facilitated the identification of scholarly works addressing strategic management paradigms, organizational growth trajectories, and resource-based theoretical frameworks. Web of Science (WoS), distinguished by its collection of high-impact publications and sophisticated citation analysis capabilities [33], served as a crucial resource for accessing premier research contributions in business management and entrepreneurship studies.

Google Scholar's academic search infrastructure enabled access to a diverse array of scholarly materials, including academic manuscripts, doctoral dissertations, scholarly monographs, and conference proceedings not indexed in traditional academic databases. ProQuest's comprehensive database architecture, particularly its ABI/INFORM Global subdivision, proved instrumental in accessing dissertations, business analytics reports, and empirical case studies focusing on SME growth dynamics and RBV applications. Additionally, Emerald Insight's specialized repository was consulted for its extensive collection of management and business scholarship, with specific attention to SME operational dynamics and resource-based theoretical frameworks.

3.3 Journals Searched

To complement the comprehensive database search protocol, targeted examination was conducted of specific scholarly journals renowned for their substantive contributions to Resource-Based View (RBV) theoretical development and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth research. The selected peer-reviewed publications encompassed premier journals in the field, including: Strategic Management Journal; Journal of Business Research; Journal of Small Business Management; International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research; Journal of

Entrepreneurship and Public Policy; Journal of Business Venturing; Small Business Economics; Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice; International Small Business Journal etc.

These scholarly publications were specifically selected based on their established reputation for publishing rigorous empirical research and theoretical developments in strategic management, entrepreneurship, and organizational growth dynamics, with particular emphasis on RBV frameworks and SME development trajectories.

3.4 Search Terms and Boolean Operators

The identification of relevant scholarly contributions was facilitated through the systematic application of carefully constructed search strings, incorporating key theoretical terms and Boolean operators. The search terminology was methodically developed to reflect both the foundational theoretical framework (Resource-Based View) and the specific research focus on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise growth dynamics. The primary search algorithms employed in this investigation comprised the following combinations:

- "Resource-Based View" OR "RBV" AND "SME growth";
- "SME growth" AND "resources" AND "competitive advantage";
- "Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" AND "RBV";
- "Human capital" OR "technological resources" AND "SME performance";
- "entrepreneurship" AND "RBV";
- "RBV" AND "sustainable competitive advantage" AND "SMEs".

These search parameters were subsequently refined and optimized for each bibliographic database's specific indexing protocols and search architectures to maximize the precision and comprehensiveness of literature retrieval. This systematic approach ensured the capture of relevant scholarly works while minimizing the inclusion of tangential or peripheral research.

3.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The temporal parameters of this systematic review were deliberately constrained to encompass scholarly works published between 2020 and 2024, facilitating the examination of contemporary developments in Resource-Based View (RBV) applications to Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth, particularly within the context of digital transformation initiatives and evolving market dynamics. The inclusion criteria were specifically restricted to peer-reviewed scholarly articles, refereed conference proceedings, academic monographs, and methodologically rigorous doctoral dissertations.

To maintain methodological rigor and ensure the scholarly integrity of the review, several categories of literature were systematically excluded from the analysis, including grey literature, editorial commentaries, and non-peer-reviewed publications. The final corpus of literature comprised 32 empirical investigations, selected from an initial pool of 50 studies published in high-impact academic journals during the preceding triennium. This carefully curated selection of contemporary research provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the current state of scholarly knowledge regarding the intersection of RBV theory and SME growth trajectories.

3.6 Quality Assessment

The quality assessment phase constitutes a fundamental component of systematic literature review methodology, ensuring the incorporation of studies that demonstrate methodological reliability, empirical validity, and substantive contribution to the research objectives. In this systematic analysis examining the influence of Resource-Based View (RBV) variables on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) framework was implemented as the primary quality assessment instrument. The CASP framework represents a widely validated methodological tool for evaluating research rigor, relevance, and scientific trustworthiness within systematic reviews [34].

The implementation of the CASP framework, which encompasses specialized assessment protocols for diverse methodological approaches, utilized both cohort and qualitative study evaluation matrices specifically calibrated for research in SME growth dynamics and strategic management. The framework's comprehensive evaluation protocol comprises ten fundamental assessment criteria that systematically examine research validity, methodological sophistication, result significance, transparency in research design, and the systematic reporting of empirical findings. The assessment criteria encompassed:

- Precision and theoretical grounding of research questions and objectives;
- Methodological appropriateness of study design;
- Systematic approach to participant recruitment;
- Rigor in data collection protocols and analytical procedures;
- Clarity and comprehensiveness in result presentation;
- Adherence to ethical research standards;
- Relevance of findings to RBV-SME growth dynamics.

A standardized quantitative scoring protocol was implemented to systematically evaluate methodological quality, categorizing studies into three distinct tiers:

- High-quality investigations (8-10 points);
- Moderate-quality investigations (5-7 points);
- Low-quality investigations (below 5 points).

To maintain the methodological integrity of the systematic review, studies classified as low-quality were systematically excluded from the final analytical framework, ensuring that the review's conclusions were predicated exclusively on methodologically robust empirical investigations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results and Findings

This section delineates the empirical findings derived from the systematic analysis of literature examining the relationship between Resource-Based View (RBV) variables and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories. The analytical framework is structured in accordance with the three primary research inquiries that guided this investigation. The systematic synthesis of findings encompasses: 1. The identification and analysis of critical RBV variables demonstrating

significant influence on SME growth dynamics. 2. The examination of causal mechanisms through which these variables modulate various dimensions of SME developmental trajectories. 3. The systematic identification of theoretical and empirical gaps within the extant scholarly literature. 4. The following analysis presents a comprehensive synthesis of the empirical evidence, organized thematically to facilitate systematic examination of these research dimensions.

4.1.1 The Key RBV Variables that Influence SME Growth

This thematic analysis examines the fundamental Resource-Based View (RBV) variables that demonstrate significant influence on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories. The theoretical foundation of RBV posits that sustainable competitive advantage emerges from an organization's distinctive portfolio of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and capabilities. This analytical section synthesizes empirical findings from the systematic literature review, elucidating the critical RBV variables consistently identified as primary catalysts of SME growth dynamics.

4.1.1.1 Human Capital

The systematic analysis reveals human capital as a paramount RBV variable influencing SME growth trajectories. This encompasses the collective skills, knowledge repositories, and experiential learning of organizational members, which function as fundamental drivers of business performance and innovation capacity [35, 36, 37, 38, 39]. Several empirical investigations provide robust evidence for this relationship: 1. Digital literacy competencies, as a specialized form of human capital, demonstrate crucial importance in facilitating SME digital transformation initiatives [35]. 2. Employee expertise and professional capabilities exhibit direct correlations with competitive advantage and financial performance metrics in Hungarian family-owned enterprises [39]. 3. Professional competencies and leadership capabilities significantly enhance operational performance in Indonesian Batik MSMEs [37]. 4. Human capital demonstrates substantial influence on innovation capacity and business performance metrics [38]. 5. Human resource development emerges as a critical determinant of sustainable growth trajectories [36].

The centrality of human capital within the RBV framework is substantiated by its demonstrated capacity to enhance both operational efficiency and innovation capabilities, which are fundamental to maintaining competitive advantage and facilitating organizational growth.

4.1.1.2 Technological Resources

The systematic review identifies technological infrastructure and utilization capabilities as significant determinants of SME growth [40, 41, 42, 37, 44]. Key findings include: 1. Technological support systems demonstrate crucial importance in post-pandemic recovery and sustainability initiatives [40]. 2. Innovation capabilities in technological domains significantly enhance Malaysian SME performance metrics [41]. 3. Technological resources function as primary drivers of innovation and growth trajectories [42]. 4. Artificial Intelligence capabilities demonstrate significant impact on e-commerce performance metrics [37]. 5. Technological resources contribute substantially to competitive advantage development [44].

4.1.1.3 Organizational Capabilities

The analysis reveals organizational capabilities as a critical variable in SME growth dynamics. These capabilities encompass: 1. Strategic resource deployment and management competencies [36]. 2. Dynamic capabilities enabling resource reconfiguration in response to market evolution [45]. 3. Operational efficiency and strategic adaptation capabilities.

Secondary Variables

While demonstrating significance, several variables emerged as contextual enablers rather than core drivers: 1. Financial Resources: While crucial for operational sustainability [40, 46, 39], these are typically characterized as enablers rather than primary drivers of competitive advantage. 2. Network Capital: Strategic partnerships and networking capabilities demonstrate variable impact across different contexts [39, 47]. 3. Governmental Support: While identified as significant by some researchers [48, 49], this variable demonstrates less consistent influence across studies.

The empirical evidence substantiates the designation of human capital, technological resources, and organizational capabilities as core RBV variables, based on their consistent identification as significant predictors of SME growth across multiple investigations. These variables demonstrate fundamental importance in 1. Enhancing productivity and innovation capacity; 2. Facilitating market adaptation and operational efficiency; 3. Enabling effective strategic resource utilization.

4.1.2 Core/Key RBV Variables and Their Impact on SME Growth Dimensions.

This section examines the multidimensional impact of core Resource-Based View (RBV) variables on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories. The analysis systematically evaluates how each core variable influences distinct growth dimensions.

4.1.2.1 Human Capital Impact Analysis

The literature consistently demonstrates the multifaceted influence of human capital on SME growth dimensions. Empirical evidence reveals several key pathways of impact: 1. Digital Transformation and Operational Efficiency. Digital literacy competencies significantly catalyze SME digital transformation initiatives, enhancing operational efficiency and market competitiveness [35]. This technological adaptation capability proves particularly crucial in contemporary business environments. 2. Financial Performance and Competitive Advantage. The skilled workforce deployment demonstrates direct correlation with sustained financial performance in family-owned enterprises [39]. Enhanced innovation capacity and product quality improvements directly influence market share expansion and customer satisfaction metrics [37]. Training and experiential learning emerge as fundamental drivers of innovation capacity [38]. Human resource development shows significant positive correlation with financial performance indicators [36]. Strategic human resource management practices, particularly training and development initiatives, demonstrate positive influence on corporate performance [51]. 3. Organizational Performance Enhancement. Organizations demonstrating superior human capital development exhibit: Enhanced decision-making capabilities; Improved resource allocation efficiency; Optimized operational processes [37, 35, 51, 39]; Increased market adaptability and competitive positioning [37, 38, 39].

4.1.2.2 Technological Resources Impact Analysis

Innovation and Competitive Positioning. Technological infrastructure emerges as a critical

determinant of post-pandemic organizational resilience, influencing market share and customer engagement metrics [40]. Innovation capabilities demonstrate direct correlation with product development efficiency and operational optimization [41]. Innovative enterprises exhibit reduced bankruptcy risk, despite potential financial performance variability [35]. Technological resources function as fundamental drivers of innovation capacity [42]. Technology deployment significantly enhances competitive positioning [44].

Market Expansion and Operational Efficiency. Technological resource deployment facilitates: Digital platform expansion and market presence enhancement [44, 40]; Operational streamlining and cost optimization; Profitability enhancement through process innovation [35, 41]; **Organizational Capabilities Impact Analysis.** Strategic Adaptation and Competitive Enhancement including advanced organizational capabilities demonstrate superior market adaptation and resource reconfiguration capacity [36]; Dynamic capabilities significantly contribute to digital transformation initiatives [35]; Strategic resource allocation capabilities show positive correlation with innovation outcomes [50]; and knowledge management capabilities emerge as crucial in competitive market environments [45].

Performance Optimization. Organizational capabilities facilitate the market condition adaptation and competitive positioning enhancement [36]; Opportunity exploitation and threat neutralization Financial stability improvement through efficient resource reconfiguration [45]; Innovation capacity enhancement through process alignment [50, 36].

4.1.2.3 Integrated Impact Analysis

The core RBV variables demonstrate synergistic effects across multiple growth dimensions: 1. Financial Performance, including Enhanced through optimized resource management, improved operational efficiency, and innovation-driven growth [35, 39]. Market Position strengthened through human capital leverage, and enhanced by technological capability deployment [40, 37]. Innovation Capacity, including driven by technological resource utilization, and enhanced through organizational capability deployment [41].

4.2 Gaps in Understanding the RBV-SME Growth Relationship

This section presents a systematic analysis of identified research gaps in the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth relationship literature. The analysis reveals several significant limitations in current research paradigms.

4.2.1 Limited Empirical Validation

A significant limitation emerges in the empirical validation of proposed conceptual frameworks and RBV variables within specific contexts. Hadi et al. [36] identify substantial gaps in empirical testing methodologies, particularly in measuring organizational resource contributions to sustained SME performance. While their research presents a theoretical framework, it lacks empirical validation of the proposed relationship between valuable resources and SME growth trajectories. This empirical deficit constrains comprehensive understanding of resource contribution mechanisms across diverse industrial and regional contexts, necessitating empirically grounded investigations of RBV frameworks in practical SME environments.

4.2.1.1 Contextual Variation Analysis Deficiency

The literature demonstrates significant variation in RBV variable effects across geographical, cultural, and industrial contexts: Dynamic capabilities exhibit differential impacts across European nations, particularly in digital transformation processes [35]. Resource utilization patterns demonstrate significant variation between family-owned businesses (FOBs) and non-family-owned businesses (NFOBs) in Hungary [39]. These findings indicate a critical need for comprehensive cross-regional and cross-sectoral analyses to elucidate contextual variations in RBV variable functionality.

4.2.1.2 External Factor Integration

While RBV theory emphasizes internal resource dynamics, multiple studies identify significant external mediating factors: Government support mechanisms and market conditions; Technological volatility impacts; Financial literacy contextual factors [52]; Environmental influences on absorptive capacity and innovation capabilities [41, 53]; Current research paradigms demonstrate insufficient integration of these external factors, resulting in incomplete understanding of comprehensive SME growth determinants.

4.2.2 Temporal Analysis Limitations

The predominance of cross-sectional methodologies presents significant limitations: Current studies provide static temporal snapshots of RBV-growth relationships. Longitudinal investigations are necessary to evaluate sustained impacts of human capital and technological resources [40, 39]. Cross-sectional approaches fail to capture dynamic resource allocation patterns. Limited understanding of temporal evolution in capability development.

Definitional Inconsistency. Significant variation exists in RBV variable conceptualization across studies: Organizational capabilities emphasis [36] versus digital literacy focus [35]. Absence of standardized variable definitions. Limited comparability across research findings. Fragmented knowledge base development. This definitional heterogeneity necessitates standardization efforts in RBV variable conceptualization within SME contexts.

4.2.3 Interactive Effects Under-exploration

Current literature demonstrates limited investigation of RBV variable interactions: Individual resource analysis predominance [45, 39]. Limited synergistic effect exploration. Insufficient understanding of resource complementarity. Inadequate analysis of combined competitive advantage generation. **Synthesis of Research Gaps.**

The systematic analysis reveals six critical research gaps: Empirical validation deficiency in RBV frameworks. Limited understanding of contextual variations across regions and industries. Insufficient integration of external environmental factors. Predominance of cross-sectional over longitudinal methodologies. Inconsistent RBV variable definitions and conceptualizations. Limited exploration of interactive resource effects.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Theoretical Integration and Empirical Findings

This analysis examines the alignment between Resource-Based View (RBV) theoretical principles and empirical research outcomes. The RBV theoretical framework posits that

organizational growth and competitive advantage derive from unique resources characterized by value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN). These foundational attributes enable Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to establish and maintain sustainable competitive advantages.

4.3.2 Human Capital as Critical RBV Variable

The analysis identifies human capital as a fundamental RBV determinant significantly influencing SME growth trajectories. Human capital resources, encompassing employee skill portfolios, knowledge repositories, professional expertise, and operational competencies, demonstrate crucial importance in innovation facilitation, operational efficiency enhancement, and financial performance optimization. This finding demonstrates strong alignment with RBV theoretical propositions regarding intangible resource inimitability as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates how enhanced human capital resources contribute to decision-making optimization, innovation acceleration, and market competitiveness enhancement [35, 36, 37, 39].

4.3.3 Technological Resource Significance

The analysis reveals technological resources as critical growth determinants, facilitating operational efficiency enhancement, product innovation acceleration, market expansion capabilities, financial performance optimization, and competitive positioning enhancement. This empirical finding strongly supports RBV theoretical frameworks, particularly regarding technological resources' value and inimitability characteristics. Research demonstrates that technologically advanced SMEs exhibit superior market responsiveness capabilities, particularly crucial in dynamic business environments [41, 40].

4.3.4 Organizational Capabilities Impact

Organizational capabilities, defined as systematic competencies in resource management, deployment, and reconfiguration, emerge as fundamental growth determinants. The analysis reveals that enterprises demonstrating robust dynamic capabilities exhibit enhanced market adaptation, effective resource utilization, and sustained competitive advantage. This finding demonstrates strong alignment with RBV theoretical propositions regarding strategic resource management's criticality in competitive market environments [36, 45]. While additional variables including financial resources, network relationships, and governmental support mechanisms demonstrate significance, they receive less consistent emphasis across research contexts.

4.3.5 Research Limitations

The analysis identifies several significant research limitations, primarily the insufficient longitudinal investigations examining temporal RBV variable effects and the absence of standardized RBV variable definitions limiting cross-study comparative analysis [40, 39]. These identified limitations provide critical direction for future research methodology development, SME management practice optimization, and theoretical framework enhancement.

4.4 Implications for SME Growth Strategies

4.4.1 Strategic Implications of RBV Integration

The synthesis of empirical findings with Resource-Based View (RBV) theoretical frameworks yields significant strategic implications for Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectory optimization. The analysis suggests three primary strategic imperatives for sustainable competitive advantage development.

4.4.2 Human Capital Development Imperative

The research findings emphasize the strategic necessity of systematic human capital investment initiatives. Given human capital's centrality to sustainable growth mechanisms and competitive advantage maintenance, SMEs must prioritize comprehensive employee skill development and knowledge enhancement programs. This strategic emphasis on human capital development directly aligns with RBV theoretical propositions regarding intangible resource value creation and competitive advantage sustainability.

4.4.3 Technological Resource Enhancement

The empirical evidence demonstrates the critical importance of strategic technological resource development. Contemporary market dynamics necessitate continuous technological capability enhancement to facilitate innovation acceleration, operational efficiency optimization, and competitive position maintenance. SMEs must implement systematic technological integration strategies to maintain competitive viability in increasingly digitalized market environments. This technological imperative reflects RBV theoretical principles regarding resource value creation and competitive advantage sustainability in dynamic market contexts.

4.4.4 Strategic Resource Management Optimization

The analysis emphasizes the fundamental importance of internal process optimization and strategic resource management enhancement. SMEs must develop sophisticated capabilities in resource allocation, deployment, and reconfiguration to maximize existing resource utility. This strategic focus on internal process optimization enables organizational adaptability and strategic flexibility in rapidly evolving market environments. Such capability development directly supports RBV theoretical propositions regarding the criticality of effective resource orchestration in sustainable competitive advantage development.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Synthesis of Research Findings

This systematic analysis demonstrates the fundamental significance of three primary Resource-Based View (RBV) variables in Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) growth trajectories: human capital development, technological resource optimization, and organizational capability enhancement. The empirical evidence establishes robust relationships between these variables and sustainable competitive advantage development.

5.2 Core Variable Integration

Human capital emerges as a critical determinant of organizational success through its direct enhancement of operational productivity, innovation capacity, and financial performance metrics. The analysis demonstrates that strategic human capital development creates sustainable competitive

advantages through the cultivation of unique, inimitable organizational competencies.

Technological resource deployment, particularly within contemporary digital transformation contexts, enables SMEs to develop and maintain competitive market positions through enhanced innovation capabilities and market responsiveness. This finding assumes particular significance given the accelerating pace of technological evolution in contemporary business environments.

Organizational capabilities function as fundamental enablers of strategic resource orchestration, facilitating dynamic resource reconfiguration and adaptation in response to evolving market conditions. These capabilities emerge as essential mediators in the relationship between resource possession and sustainable competitive advantage development.

5.3 Research Limitations and Future Directions

Despite these substantive contributions to theoretical understanding, significant research gaps persist in the contemporary literature. Particularly notable is the absence of comprehensive longitudinal investigations examining the temporal dynamics of RBV variable effects on organizational performance. Additionally, the lack of standardized RBV variable definitions impedes systematic cross-study comparative analysis.

The resolution of these methodological limitations would significantly enhance understanding of effective resource leverage mechanisms in SME contexts, thereby facilitating more robust theoretical framework development and practical strategy formulation for sustainable growth achievement.

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APPENDIX

CASP Evaluation Table

Ref #	Author(s)	Study Objective	Methodology	CASP Score (1-10)	Comments
1	Civelek et al. (2023)	Examines SMEs' dynamic capabilities and digital transformation.	Ordinal Logistic Regression	8/10	Well-executed statistical analysis, limited cross-regional comparisons.
2	Varga et al. (2024)	Compares family-owned vs. non-family-owned SMEs in Hungary.	Binary Logistic Regression	8/10	Comprehensive but lacks qualitative insights into organizational behavior.
3	Bhuiyan (2023)	Studies post-COVID challenges for SMEs in Bangladesh.	Descriptive analysis	9/10	Relevant, with strong practical implications for policy design.
4	Hadi et al. (2023)	Proposes SME resource measurement models.	Conceptual framework	7/10	Lacks empirical validation, primarily theoretical contributions.
5	Parmitasari (2023)	Explores financial literacy's role in SME sustainability.	Structural Equation Modeling	8/10	Focused and relevant, but limited exploration of external variables.
6	Khalil et al. (2023)	Analyzes HRM perceptions in Bangladeshi SMEs.	PLS-SEM	8/10	Strong methodology but confined to HR practices.
7	Ma'aji et al. (2023)	Investigates determinants of SME success/failure in Cambodia.	Logistic regression	9/10	Comprehensive, yet more attention to qualitative nuances could enhance depth.
8	Chumphong et al. (2020)	Examines RBV and dynamic capabilities in SME performance.	Conceptual framework	8/10	Clear methodology, though limited to theoretical implications.

Ref #	Author(s)	Study Objective	Methodology	CASP Score (1-10)	Comments
9	Rokhman et al. (2023)	Assesses human capital's impact on Batik MSME performance.	Structural Equation Modeling	8/10	Strong findings but constrained by cross-sectional data.
10	Al et al. (2023)	Explores EO, MO, and AC's effects on innovation in SMEs.	PLS-SEM	9/10	Comprehensive model with actionable insights for practitioners.
11	Rihayana et al. (2023)	Studies open innovation through RBV and dynamic capabilities.	Descriptive analysis	7/10	Lacks quantitative backing to support theoretical claims.
12	Ahinful et al. (2023)	Investigates financial performance determinants in Ghanaian SMEs.	Multiple regression analysis	8/10	Well-rounded, though external macroeconomic factors are underexplored.
13	Chumphong et al. (2020)	To investigate RBV and dynamic capabilities in SME performance.	Mixed methods	8/10	Clear methodology but limited in geographic scope.
14	Ayepa et al. (2019)	Examines innovativeness on SME growth in Ghana.	Regression analysis	9/10	Strong statistical analysis but limited sample diversity.
15	Johari et al. (2021)	Develop SME Resilient Index (SMERi) integrating tangible/intangible resources.	PLS-SEM	9/10	Comprehensive with real-world applications, slightly narrow focus.
16	D'Oria et al. (2021)	Reviews resource-based inquiry evolution.	Meta-analytic structural model	8/10	Innovative synthesis, yet generalizations might overlook specifics.
17	Yahaya et al. (2023)	Identifies SME performance drivers.	Systematic review	9/10	Wide-ranging analysis, but lacks longitudinal elements.
18	Yahaya & Nadarajah	Identifies SME	One-sample T-test	9/10	Strong focus on

Ref #	Author(s)	Study Objective	Methodology	CASP Score (1-10)	Comments
	(2023)	performance drivers.			innovation but limited geographical scope.
19	D'Oria et al. (2021)	Reviews resource-based inquiry evolution.	Meta-analytic structural model	8/10	Innovative synthesis but generalizations may overlook contextual details.
20	Dushime (2022)	Explores entrepreneurial innovation's effect on SME performance.	Mixed methods	8/10	Well-rounded approach, but further empirical validation needed.
21	Ma'aji et al. (2023)	Examines determinants of SME success/failure in Cambodia.	Logistic regression	9/10	Comprehensive data collection, yet non-financial variables need deeper exploration.
22	Wall (2021)	Predicts business strategy and innovations' impact on SME performance.	PLS-SEM	8/10	Valuable insights but focuses heavily on manufacturing firms only.
23	Parmitasari (2023)	Analyzes financial literacy's impact on SME sustainability.	Structural Equation Modeling	8/10	Focused analysis but lacks exploration of external factors.
24	Hadi et al. (2023)	Proposes a conceptual model for SME resource measurement.	Conceptual framework	7/10	Clear conceptual insights but lacks empirical validation.
25	Khalil et al. (2023)	Explores HRM perceptions among SMEs in Bangladesh.	PLS-SEM	8/10	Strong methodology but limited to HRM practices.
26	Rihayana et al. (2023)	Analyzes open innovation through RBV and dynamic capabilities.	Descriptive analysis	7/10	Lacks empirical data to support theoretical assertions.
27	Rafiki (2020)	Examines SME growth factors in Saudi Arabia.	Multivariate regression	8/10	Insights valuable but limited to urban contexts in Saudi

Ref #	Author(s)	Study Objective	Methodology	CASP Score (1-10)	Comments
					Arabia.
28	Sehgal & Nanda (2023)	Explores SME internationalization factors.	Regression analysis	8/10	Robust framework but focused on narrow industrial sectors.
29	Lukovszki et al. (2021)	Investigates RBV's influence on innovation in SMEs.	Empirical study	9/10	High-quality analysis with sector-specific recommendations.
30	Sukaatmadja et al. (2021)	Examines RBV in SME marketing and internationalization.	Case studies	8/10	Detailed contextual analysis but lacks broad applicability.
31	Chen et al. (2022)	Studies AI's impact on SME performance using RBV.	Empirical study	9/10	Highly relevant with strong methodological rigor.
32	Johari et al. (2021)	Developing SME Resilient Index (SMERi)	Quantitative, PLS-SEM	9/10	Comprehensive design and practical implications.