Trust as a Mediator between Export Commitment and Competitive Advantage on Export SME Performance

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Abstract: Research was carried out to create sustainability of SMEs in the export sector through superior topics in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship with the sub-sector of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, abbreviated as UMKM. Important characteristics analytically and experimentally. This research examines the role of Trust as a mediator between Export Commitment and competitive advantage on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises conducting export businesses in Indonesia. The main phenomenon in this research is the involvement of MSMEs in the supply chain, which is still very minimal, only reaching 6.3 percent in the global value chain in Southeast Asia, far behind Malaysia (46.2%), Thailand (29.6%), the Philippines (20.1%) and Vietnam 21.4%. For national exports, SMEs in Indonesia have only reached 14 percent, far from the government's target of 17 percent. In accordance with the Mercubuana University Research Master Plan for the period 2021 – 2024. The research begins with measuring the Level of Technology Readiness at level 3 with proof-of-concept criteria. Proof of concept, this research has a research objective and developing concepts, especially those related to competitive advantage, commitment and trust, which can improve the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in the export sector in Indonesia. The research method that uses a quantitative approach with the SEM-PLS data analysis method is considered appropriate. The choice of the SEM- PLS method, because this research is predictive, will of course be able to represent the research model better. This research used 84 respondents from 88 returned questionnaires. The research results of export commitment and trust on the performance of export SMEs have a positive and insignificant effect, competitive advantage on the performance of export SMEs has a significant positive effect.

Keyword: Competitive Advantage, Commitment, Trust, SMEs Export Performance

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the developing countries with the largest population in Southeast Asia with a population reaching 273.523 million people. The Worldometers report noted that the population in Southeast Asia reached 668.61 million people as of January 31 2023. This figure

is equivalent to 8.34% of the total world population currently reaching 8.01 million people. It is recorded that Indonesia dominates the population in this region, namely 273.52 million people. This means that 40.9% of the population in Southeast Asia comes from Indonesia. The Philippines ranks second in Southeast Asia with a population of 109.58 million people. Then, Vietnam and Thailand have a population of 97.33 million people and 69.79 million people respectively. On the other hand, the country with the smallest population in Southeast Asia is Brunei Darussalam. The number is only 437.47 thousand people.
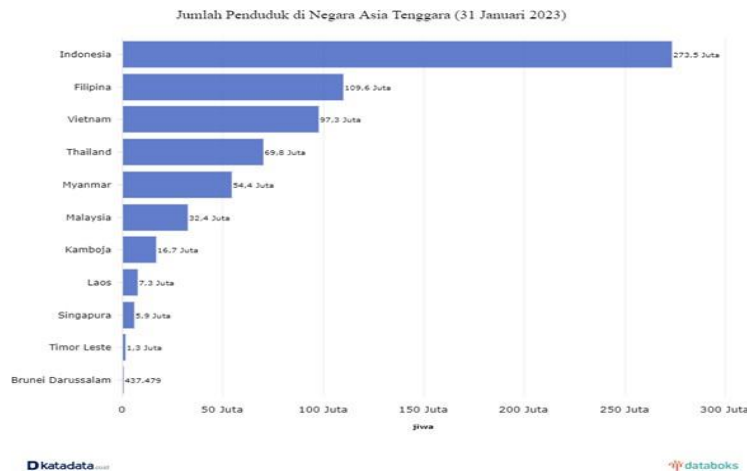
Source: databoks.katadata.co.id
Figure 1. Population of Countries in the Southeast Asia Region

High population growth in developing countries can cause problems. Some of the problems that can arise as a result of this are the increasing number of the workforce which causes competition to get jobs to become higher. According to a report from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in February 2023 the number of unemployed people in Indonesia reached 7.99 million people, a decrease of around 410 thousand people compared to February 2022. Based on this data, it shows that the unemployment rate has decreased from last year. However, if you look at the level of education, more and more university graduates are becoming unemployed. The Indonesian Minister of Manpower (Menaker), Ida Fauziyah, said that around 12 percent of unemployment in Indonesia is currently dominated by undergraduate and diploma graduates. Of course, this is not a matter of pride for Indonesia, considering that this level of education is relatively high compared to other levels of education.

Educated human resources are one indicator that makes a country more advanced. The importance of entrepreneurship for the welfare of a nation is no longer in doubt. Entrepreneurship will become one of the driving forces of the national economy, so increasing the number of entrepreneurs in a country, including Indonesia, is the key to a prosperous nation. In the realm of education, the problem concerns how to develop an educational praxis that not only produces skilled people in terms of intellectual behavior, but also an educational praxis that is inspirational- pragmatic.

Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs (MenKopUKM) Teten Masduki said that the entrepreneurship ratio is a prerequisite for Indonesia to become a developed country by 2045, so that Indonesia must have a ratio of entrepreneurs, businessmen and entrepreneurs of at least 4 percent of the population. Currently, Indonesia has only reached an entrepreneurship ratio of 3.47 percent. When compared with Singapore, which has a population of 5 million, entrepreneurs have reached 8.6 percent of the total population. Meanwhile, Malaysia and Thailand are above 4 percent, even in developed countries the average is 10-12 percent. The

Minister of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises emphasized that in 2045 at the age of 100, Indonesia will become the world's four largest economic powers after America, China and India. Currently, the entire development process currently being carried out by the Government is being prepared as a road to Advanced Indonesia in 2045. Exports are a trade activity that can move a country's economy (Boso et al., 2012).

The increasing number of Small and Medium Enterprises entering the international market strengthens a country's position in the international arena (J. Barney, 1991). Management strategy for global expansion has now become a shared vision among business organizations around the world, which basically increases sales volume to increase company revenue (Wheelen et al., 2017). more than 64 million MSMEs contribute 97 percent of employment and contribute 60 percent to national GDP. For national exports, MSMEs have only reached 14 percent, while large businesses, which only account for 0.01 percent, are able to contribute up to 86 percent.

This figure shows that the role of MSMEs is quite significant in the national economy but it is still low in terms of exports, (https://setkab.go.id/politik-bangun-koperasi-dan-umkm-besar-rantai-pasok-global/). Apart from that, the involvement of MSMEs in the supply chain is still very minimal, only reaching 6.3 percent in the global value chain in Southeast Asia, far behind Malaysia (46.2%), Thailand (29.6%), Philippines (20.1%) and Vietnam 21.4%). According to (Obashi & Kimura, 2016) countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore have better global score performance compared to Indonesia even though Indonesia has a fairly large population. However, in reality, when a country produces goods that reach consumers, they contribute to the Global Value Chain.

The concept of global supply chains in several studies has in turn provided increased competitive advantage (Mann et al., 2006) and (Gereffi et al., 2005), with the entry of Small and Medium Enterprises in a country having an impact on increasing competitive advantage in terms of human resources, goods and services, as well as easy access to knowledge, especially related to international markets. For several developing countries, the global value chain context means that there are many producers from other countries making goods or services in the destination country, this can increase the number of workers absorbed and increase the productivity performance of the destination country (Pol Antras, 2004). The marketing ability of a company which in turn is able to improve their export performance is called the theory of competitive advantage, this theory has a tendency for a company to be able to create products that have raw materials or low costs and are different from similar products on the market, both of which cause Competitive advantage theory is able to improve the performance of a company on a global scale.

Dynamic Capability Theory states that there needs to be a reconfiguration of resources in order to be able to compete with global companies, especially in dynamic markets (Teece et al., 1997). Because to be able to compete in the target country market, a product must be able to be sold at a low price so that able to compete with local products from the destination country (Porters, 1991). Viewed from an organizational behavior perspective, export commitment is a company's internal resources including human resources that support the company's exports to be managed smoothly (Cavusgil & Zou, 1994). Profitable behavior, structured internal mechanisms, increasing sustainable resources, until in the end it has been proven to be positively capable of increasing export performance (Faroque et al., 2021; Weerawardena et al., 2007). The essence of business communication that runs smoothly is trust (Solberg & Nes, 2002). In building good export value, trust between producers in the country of origin and suppliers in the destination country needs to be maintained as well as possible, especially in terms of knowledge. Long-term relationships are honest, sincere and fair and are able to transfer knowledge in turn creating good business continuity. Increasing sales results, internal human resources, development of types of products exported, and market perspective are called export performance (Purwanto et al., 2018).

Table 1. Research Gap Research

No	Author	Variable	Result	
1.	Faroque et al (2021)	Impact Comitment → Export performance	Significant	
2.	Rashid et al (2003)		Significant	
3.	Navaro et.(2010)		Significant	
4	Birnbau dan somers (1998)		Insignificant	
6.	Navaro et al (2010)	Impact Competitive advantage → Export performance	Significant	
7.	Purwanto et al (2010)		Significant	Inkonsistency
8.	Barney (1991)		Significant	
9.	Morgan dan Anna Kaleka (2017)		Insignificant	
10	Ismail et al (2017)	Impact Trust → Export performance	Significant	
11	Jose Bloemer, Mark Pluymaekers , Armand Odekerken (2013)		Insignifikan	

Based on the urgency of the export problem that must be resolved so that the Export Performance of SMEs in Indonesia is able to compete with neighboring countries and the research gap which has been presented in table 2, therefore there is a need for in-depth research on the influence of export commitment, competitive advantage mediated by trust on the performance of SMEs exporting in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research design uses a quantitative approach. Primary data is observed through targeted and measurable questions regarding attitudes, behavior and certain opinions (Sekaran Uma, 2013; Taherdoost, 2018). Measurements were carried out using a 5-point Likert scale where Hair Jr et al (2021) suggested that when using a 5-point Likert scale it should be in the categories: (1) disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. The minimum sample size used in this research refers to (Hair Jr et al., 2021) is six times the largest number of formative indicators used to measure one construct, so the minimum sample size for this research is 96 samples. However, only 88 respondents filled out the questionnaire and only 84 questionnaires could have their data processed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Respondent's Profile

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondent Profiles

Profile	Total	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	57	68%
Female	27	32%
Total	**84**	**100%**
Age:		
< 20 Years	16	19%
20 – 30 Years	22	26%
31 – 40 Years	36	43%
41 – 50 Years	9	11%
> 50 years	1	1%
Total	**84%**	**100%**
Education:		
Senior High School	12	14%
Diploma Degree	20	24%
Bachelor Degree	35	42%

Profile	Total	Percentage
Master Degree	10	12%
Doctoral Degree	4	5%
Others	3	3%
Total	**84%**	**100%**
Position:		
Director	51	61%
Other Executive	25	30%
Employee	8	9%
Total	**84%**	**100%**
Number of employees:		
< 10 Employee	18	22%
10 – 20 Employee	37	40%
21 – 50 Employee	11	14%
> 50 Employee	20	24%
Total	**84%**	**100%**
Company Experience:		
< 8 Years	40	48%
8 – 20 Years	16	19%
> 20 Years	28	33%
Total	**84%**	**100%**

The sex of the men who filled out the questionnaire was (68%) while the rest were women (32%), this indicates that men are more dominant in running businesses in the export sector. Ages 31 – 40 years dominate the export industry. This indicates that on average those surveyed are more mature in terms of their export business and have sufficient market knowledge. Undergraduate education (S1) is superior to other education because exporters have strength in terms of theory in college and have quite good language communication skills. The position of Main Director dominates this because the organizational structure of MSMEs is relatively simpler and also the Main Director has more interest in issues related to exports than other employees. Company age >8 years dominates this because in the export sector the ability to know market information, buyer information and the company's internal position (finance, technology, human resources and operations) is the initial stage for a company when they want to enter the export market.

PLS-SEM Analysis

After analyzing the respondent profile, the next stage is evaluating the Outer Model measurement model such as Convergent validity (factor loading & Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Dicriminant Validity (fornell-lacker Criteration, Cross loading and HTMT), Internal Consistency Reability (Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reability).

Early Models
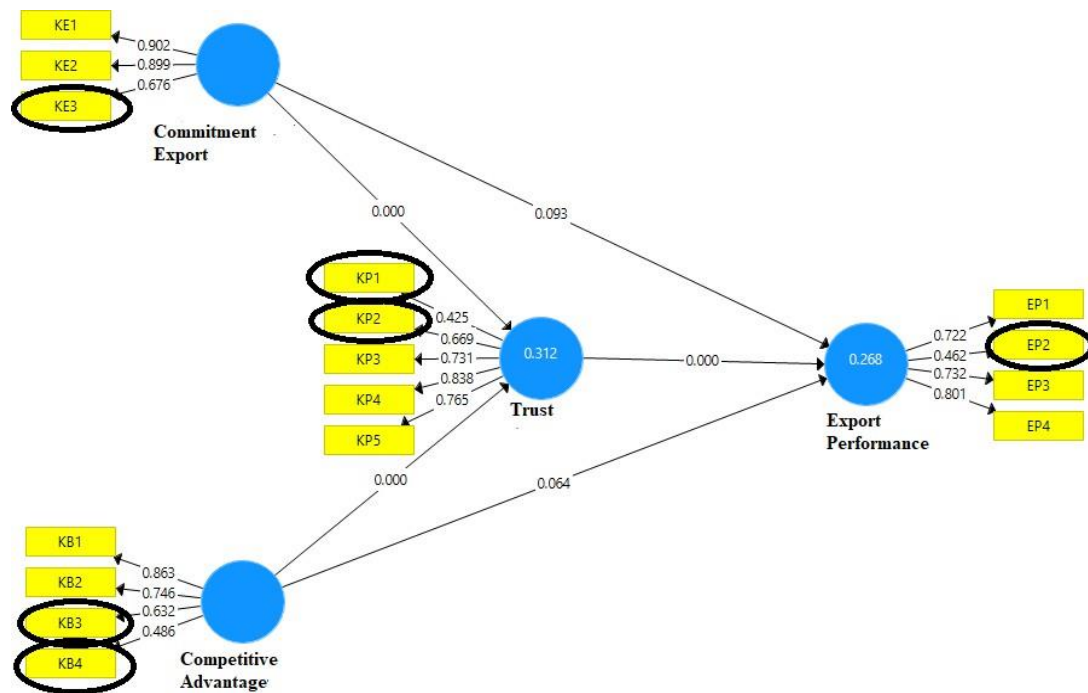
Source: SmartPLS data processing
Figure 1. First Iteration

Model After Reestimation
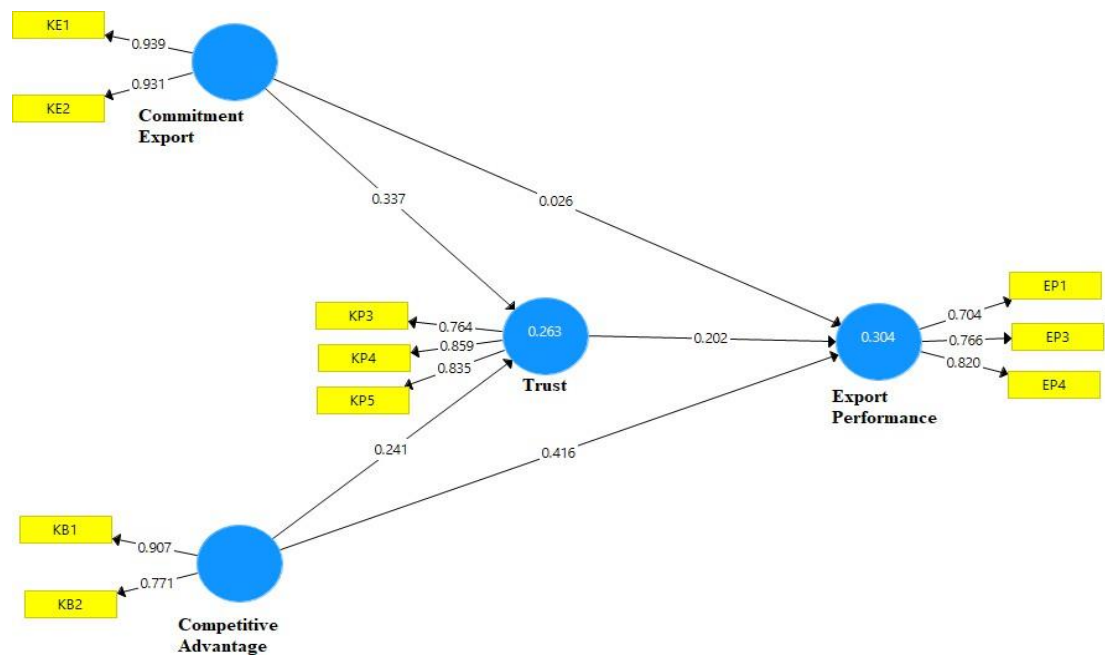
Source: SmartPLS data processing
Figure 2. Modification First Iteration

After modifications were made in the first iteration. overall OUterloading is already greater than 0.7. Then all items are valid. This means that based on the reliability assessment indicators, it is in accordance with the test criteria and is at a good level. Because the outer

model value is above 0.7, the model has good validity. According to assumptions (Wong, 2013). seen in figure 2 and table 3

Table 3. Result *Outer Loading*

	Trust	Competitive Advantage	Export Performance	Commitment Export
EP1			0,704	
EP3			0,766	
EP4			0,820	
KB1		0,907		
KB2		0,771		
KE1				0,939
KE2				0,931
KP3	0,764			
KP4	0,859			
KP5	0,835			

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Table 4. *Cronbach Alpha, Composite Rability dan AVE*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Trust	0,771	0,860	0,673
Competitive Advantage	0,603	0,829	0,709
Export Performance	0,649	0,808	0,585
Commitment Export	0,855	0,933	0,874

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on the results of the Convergent Validity test, all items (indicators) > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50, meaning that the instruments (indicators) used to measure each latent construct have good capabilities and the indicators are diverse/varied., then the internal consistency test results reliability obtained a CA & CR value >0.60. This means that all constructs used in developing the research model are at the level of good test criteria

Table 5. HTMT

Construct	Trust	Competitive Advantage	Export Performance	Commitment Export
Trust				
Competitive Advantage	0,573			
Export Performance	0,495	0,778		
Commitment Export	0,570	0,728	0,470	

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on table 5 and stated by the research model, it has met discriminant validity (good test), because the correlation between all research constructs is <0.90.

Table 6. Fornell Larcker Criterion

Construct	Trust	Competitive Advantage	Export Performance	Commitment Export
Trust	0,820			
Competitive Advantage	0,430	0,842		
Export Performance	0,393	0,518	0,765	
Commitment Export	0,472	0,562	0,355	0,935

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on Table 6 above, all AVE square root values for each construct are greater than the correlation value between the construct and other constructs in the model, so the model is said to have good discriminant validity values and has met the good test criteria.

Table 7. *Discriminant Validity* Cross Loading

Construct	Trust	Competitive Advantage	Export Performance	Commitment Export
EP1	0,273	0,311	0,704	0,249
EP3	0,325	0,369	0,766	0,228
EP4	0,306	0,486	0,820	0,319
KB1	0,412	0,907	0,521	0,614
KB2	0,300	0,77	0,322	0,275
KE1	0,452	0,596	0,343	0,939
KE2	0,431	0,449	0,318	0,931
KP3	0,764	0,256	0,194	0,362
KP4	0,859	0,275	0,195	0,379
KP5	0,835	0,462	0,480	0,410

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on Table 7 above, each construct of Export Commitment, Competitive Advantage, Trust and Export Performance has met the discriminant validity criteria because the correlation of the construct items studied is greater than the other construct items.

Table 8. VIF

Construct	VIF
EP1	1,236
EP3	1,283
EP4	1,286
KB1	1,229
KB2	1,229
KE1	2,266
KE2	2,266
KP3	2,177
KP4	2,595
KP5	1,354

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on the results in the table 8, it can be concluded that the VIF value of all constructs is < 5, so that the model does not have multicollinearity between constructs in the model that was built and the model that was built meets the criteria for a good testing level.

Table 9. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Trust	0,261	0,245
Export Performance	0,304	0,278

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Trust construct (R2 = 0.261, weak) and Export Performance construct (R2 = 0.303, weak). This means that Export Commitment & Competitive Advantage in explaining Trust is 26.1% (weak), and Export Commitment, Competitive Advantage and trust explain 30.4% of export performance. There are 59.6% other variables outside the variables studied that are able to explain export performance.

Table 10. *Effect Size* (F^2)

Construct	Trust	Competitive Advantage	Export performance	Commitment Export
Trust			0,043	
Competitive Advantage	0,054		0,162	
Export Performance				
Commitment Export	0,105		0,001	

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on table 10, it can be concluded that the influence of Trust on export performance is obtained by a value (f2= 0.043, small). The influence of Competitive Advantage on Trust obtained a value of (f2= 0.054, small). The influence of Competitive Advantage on Export Performance obtained a value of (f2= 0.162, Medium). The effect of export commitment on trust was obtained by a value of (f2= 0.105, small, while the effect of export commitment on export performance was obtained by a value of (f2= 0.001, no effect).

Table 11. *Cross-Validated Redundancy* (Q^2)

Construct	SSSo	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Trust	252.000	218.251	0,134
Competitive Advantage	168.000	168.000	
Export Performance	252.000	214.333	0,149
Commitment Export	168.000	168.000	

Source: SmartPLS data processing

Based on table 11, it can be said that the evaluation of the research model using the Q2 test shows the value (Q2 Trust = 0.134 > 0) and value (Q2 Export Performance = 0.149 > 0), meaning that the research model built has fulfilled the relevant model predictions or the research model is acceptable for adopted/developed in further research models,

Table 12. Hypothesis Test Results

Relationship	β	t	P	Proven?
H1, KE → EP	0,026	0,190	0,849	Rejected
H2, KB → EP	0,416	4,057	0,000	Accepted
H3, KP → EP	0,202	1,383	0,167	Rejected
H4, KE → KP →EP	0,068	0,846	0,214	Rejected
H5, KB → KP → EP	0,049	1,244	0,398	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS data processing

From the results of the research model, both direct and indirect effects will be interpreted as follows:

1) The effect of Export Commitment on Export Performance is positive and not significant (β = 0.026; t = 0.190 < 1.96; p = 0.849 > 0.05), meaning the first hypothesis (H1) is Rejected

2) The effect of Competitive Advantage on Export performance is positive and not significant (β = 0.416; t = 4,057 > 1.96; p = 0.000 < 0.05), meaning the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

3) The effect of trust on export performance is positive and not significant (β = 0.202; t = 1,383 < 1.96; p = 0.167 > 0.05), meaning the third hypothesis (H3) is rejected

4) Mediation of Trust between Export Commitment and SME Export Performance is positive and not significant (β = 0.068; t = 0.846 < 1.96; p = 0.214 > 0.05), meaning the fourth hypothesis (H4) is rejected

5) Mediation of Trust between competitive advantage and SME Export Performance is positive and not significant (β = 0.049; t = 1.244 < 1.96; p = 0.398 > 0.05), meaning

the fifth hypothesis (H5) is a Rejected

Discussion

The discussion of the research model studied is how it influences the performance of Export SMEs, this provides knowledge that **"Hypothesis (H1)"** explains the relationship between Export Commitment (KE) has a positive but not significant effect on the Performance of Export SMEs, this means the adequacy of financial resources, human resources and technology and new market development do not significantly improve export performance, this is confirmed in research (Somers & Birnbaum, 1998) and (Ismail et al., 2017). In their journal they argue that organizational commitment (both affective and continuity) is not related to a company's performance. This is in contrast to "**Hypothesis (H2)"** explaining the relationship between Competitive Advantage (KB) has a positive and significant influence on SME Export Performance. This means that products that have unique value, are rare, difficult to imitate and have high quality are able to improve SME Performance. This export is in line with the results of research published by (Navarro et al., 2010; Purwanto et al., 2018), **"Hypothesis (H3)"** explains that the relationship between Trust (KP) has a positive but not significant effect on the performance of export SMEs. This means that honesty cannot improve export performance. The need to protect the company's unique and confidential resources in order to be able to compete in the export arena. This is in line with research (Bloemer et al., 2013). **"Hypothesis (H4)"** which states mediation of Trust between Export Commitment and Export SME Performance is rejected and **"Hypothesis (H5)"** which states mediation of Trust between Export competitive advantage and Export SME Performance is rejected because the researcher provides a view of the relationship between trust and competitive advantage and commitment to export performance is still relatively consistent with research (Bloemer et al., 2013). inter-organizational relationships on small business export success. Despite reflecting a promising future with this growing research trend, understanding of inter-organizational relationships based on trust is still limited especially in the context of international business and developing countries.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that commitment and competitive advantage originate from the resource based view (RBV) proposed by Barney. To improve the export performance of SMEs in Indonesia, it is necessary to create a product that is unique, rarely found, difficult to imitate and has good quality so that it can compete with the dynamic export market. In relation to exports, other aspects need to be considered such as market intelligence, collaboration between export actors in the country of origin and export partners in the destination country (Lee, 2007) and the role of government in improving export performance (Seringhaus F.H. Rolf, 1986).

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