# Entrepreneurial Orientation and Brand Orientation on Competitive Advantage: The Mediating Role Innovation Capabilities of Food Truck Entrepreneurs in Thailand

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, innovation capabilities, and competitive advantage. Additionally, the mediating role of innovation capabilities was examined. The study followed a deductive approach based on the quantitative design in investigating the proposed relationships. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The relationships were investigated based on a sample of 176 food truck entrepreneurs using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results showed that model aligns to empirical data (CMIN/DF = 2.407, NNFI = 0.970, CFI = 0.980, SRMR = 0.056, and RMSEA = 0.073). It was also found that entrepreneurial orientation and branding orientation positively affected innovation capabilities and were directly related to competitive advantage. Entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage were influenced by innovation capabilities as a mediator. Innovation capabilities mediated the relationship between brand orientation and competitive advantage. Theoretical contributions made by this study contributed to a clearer understanding of the mediating role of innovation capabilities, a new phenomenon in the context of food trucks. In addition, the outcomes could be advantageous to entrepreneurs by improving the competitiveness of food truck entrepreneurs. The competitive advantage of food trucks could be affected by promoting entrepreneurial and branding orientation.

**Keywords:** 1) Entrepreneurial Orientation 2) Brand Orientation 3) Innovation Capabilities 4) Competitive Advantage 5) Food Truck Entrepreneurs

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## Introduction

The increasingly globalized marketplaces, relentless competition, digital revolution, and an ever-changing market-place are considerable challenges to manufacturing firms and other sectors. As a result, each organization is attempting to adapt to ensure its survival, particularly within the increasingly competitive food and beverage industry. According to the Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce in Thailand, there was a noticeable shift in consumption patterns within the food and beverage industry in 2023 compared to the previous year, 2022. This shift can be attributed to the uncertainty arising from changes in the societal and environmental landscapes, necessitating businesses and consumers to confront unpredictable alterations. To remain viable, businesses must adjust accordingly (Ministry of Commerce, 2023). While the food and beverage industry continue to flourish and evolve, one noteworthy phenomenon is the growth and development of the street food business, which involves selling through mobile food service establishments, popularly known as food trucks (Lubis, 2020, p. 22).

Food trucks have become a trend in the food business industry, gaining popularity in numerous countries worldwide, including Thailand. This popularity arises from their ability to offer flexible services, satisfying the lifestyles of urban dwellers. Moreover, they help cut costs for restaurateurs, consequently adding value to the street food sector (Esparza, Walker and Rossman, 2014, pp. 144-145). According to TBIC Food Truck Thailand data, the number of food trucks in Thailand rose from approximately 2,800 in 2022 to an estimated 3,300 in 2023, a 10-15% increase (Ministry of Commerce, 2023). This upward trend illustrates the growing popularity and potential for further growth in the food truck business, primarily due to its relatively low investment costs. This makes it an attractive choice for small-business entrepreneurs looking to establish businesses. Therefore, food trucks present a novel alternative to food consumption (Wessel, Ziemkiewicz and Sauda, 2016, p. 1638). Food truck entrepreneurs in Thailand need to adapt and align with current circumstances to improve their competitive abilities.

Drawing on a dynamic capability perspective, this study posits that strategically significant resources and organizational capabilities are necessary for maintaining a long-term competitive advantage (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p. 509). Previous studies had highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial orientation as a key factor affecting business performance (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996, p. 135), as well as the role of entrepreneurship as a driving force behind innovation potential (Makhloufi, et al., 2021, p. 1). To build their own business, these individuals must be committed by demonstrating creativity, tolerance for risk or uncertainty, and fostering innovation that exceeds competitors and creates unique market potential. Firms seeking a competitive advantage should exhibit the characteristics of innovative organizations or possess innovation capabilities (Dorf and Byers, 2008, p. 10). It is noteworthy that businesses that fail to innovate are at risk of obsolescence (Okrah,

Nepp and Agbozo, 2018, p. 231).

In focusing on brand orientation, businesses endeavor to foster innovative abilities and protect against duplication by competitors. This strategic emphasis equips companies with the capacity to effectively manage risks, promptly adapt to market fluctuations, and strengthen their competitive advantage. The approach of brand orientation is driven by internal and identify-driven processes for companies to create profitable, powerful, and successful brands in today's competitive environment (Alnawas and Abu Farha, 2020, p. 829). It is widely argued that companies that focus on their brands exhibit higher performance than others (Cardinali, Travaglini and Giovannetti, 2019, p. 1809). For instance, companies focused on brand creation perform better than others by creating customer value. In addition, Rubera and Droge's (2013, p. 448) study confirms that emphasizing brand orientation and brand-building facilitates establishing a positive relationship between brand orientation and innovation capabilities within the organization.

However, despite the large body of research examining the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, innovation capabilities, and competitive advantages (Ferreira and Coelho, 2020, p. 255), more empirical evidence is needed. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the boutique and clothing-oriented (Al Asheq and Hossain, 2019, p. 1), manufacturing industries (Mantok, et al., 2019, p. 641), medium and large firms (Makhloufi, et al., 2021, p. 1) Regrettably, the food truck industry still lacks research on examining these variables and their interrelationships.

Our goal was to use data from food trucks in Thailand to identify the relationship between entrepreneurial approach, brand approach, innovation capability, and competitive advantage. According to TBIC Food Truck Thailand, the Food Truck business has been continuously increasing. In 2023, the growth rate was 10% per year. In 2024, the business will grow by 40% and generate an additional investment of 650 million baht, which will have a positive impact on the economy and generate cash flow from the food business in the country of no less than 5,060 million baht (Banking Finance, 2024). In addition, food trucks play a vital role in boosting the competitiveness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Wijaya and Rahmayanti, 2023, p. 227). Their significance is what makes them a compelling focus for our research.

The findings of this study expanded the theoretical contributions to the current understanding of dynamic capability by providing empirical support for the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, innovation capabilities, and competitive advantage. The results extended the growing body of literature on the determinants of competitive advantage in a more specific manner. The understanding of innovation capabilities' mediating role was enhanced by our findings. Additionally, they provide crucial managerial insights for food truck entrepreneurs who were striving to gain competitive advantages. To enhance their innovation capabilities, entrepreneurs should prioritize

innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking. This includes experimenting with new menu items, investing in technology, and cultivating a strong brand orientation centered on distinctiveness and value, which can help differentiate their offerings and enhance customer recognition.

**Research Objectives**

1. To study the effects of entrepreneurial orientation and brand orientation on innovation capabilities.

2. To study the effects of entrepreneurial orientation and brand orientation on competitive advantage.

3. To study the effects of the innovation capabilities on competitive advantage.

4. To study the mediator effects of innovation capabilities on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage.

5. To study the mediator effects of innovation capabilities on the relationship between brand orientation and competitive advantage.

**Literature Review**

The concept of dynamic capabilities (DCs) is rooted in the resource-based view (RBV) theory of the firm (Barney, 1991, p. 99). This concept explained how organizations could employ internal resources and capabilities to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment. Dynamic capabilities had been defined as the "firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments" (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p. 516). According to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000, p. 1107), dynamic capabilities included organized and strategic routines that enable businesses to acquire novel resource configurations during the emergence, convergence, fragmentation, evolution, and cessation of markets. In the same vein, the resource-based view of the firm centers on the idea that an organization had access to bundles of resources that form the basis for competitive advantage (Barney, 1986, pp. 656-657). It was pointed out that the company's internal resources were valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. While dynamic capabilities extended the resource-based view to dynamic markets (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000, p. 1107; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p. 516). Furthermore, dynamic capabilities go beyond the assumption that sustainable competitive advantage is solely derived from a company's acquisition of such resources (Baía and Ferreira, 2024, p. 190). Therefore, dynamic capabilities were applied to describe the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, innovation capabilities, and competitive advantage.

**Entrepreneurial Orientation and Innovation Capabilities**

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is characterized by innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking to explore new opportunities, enter the market before competitors, and introduce new products (Anderson and Gaddefors, 2015, p. 1). Firms' innovativeness is characterized by their tendency to promote new ideas, newness, experimentation, and new

solutions to achieve a competitive advantage. Proactiveness is characterized by their initiative in seeking new opportunities, a forward-looking view of a firm by the launch of new products and services that hope to be ahead of the competition. A firm's risk-taking is a reflection of their willingness to make business-related changes in uncertain environments (Covin and Slevin, 1989, pp. 856-857; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996, p. 135). In their research, Lumpkin and Dess (1996, p. 135) argued that firms with an entrepreneurial orientation have a higher chance of succeeding than those without such orientation. These are embodied in innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Miller, 1983, p. 770). According to empirical evidence, entrepreneurial orientation is an essential asset for adapting to business changes and achieving success in innovative ways. Meanwhile, Makhloufi, et al. (2021, p. 1) indicate that entrepreneurial orientation is connected positively to innovation capabilities, in alignment with Peljko, et al. (2016, p. 172) findings that entrepreneurship has a positive correlation with innovation capabilities. Therefore, entrepreneurial orientation influences innovation capabilities, as the following hypothesis proposes:

H1: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on innovation capabilities.

**Entrepreneurial Orientation and Competitive Advantage**

Competitive advantage (CA) refers to an organization’s ability to generate superior value over competitors, resulting in customer satisfaction. This is achieved by creating distinct and unique offerings that are hard to replicate and are sought after by customers. Organizations should leverage three key strategic areas; cost leadership, where businesses strive to reduce costs to gain an advantage over competitors; differentiation, where organizations create differences from competitors to meet customer needs, and focus strategy, where organizations target a specific customer segment (Porter, 2005, pp. 3-4). This aligns with Barney (1991, p. 99), who stated that organizations could gain a competitive advantage by leveraging their unique advantages strategically to create value that competitors cannot mimic. Another viewpoint was that a company's differences from its competitors were perceived by consumers (Khan, 2014, p. 297). Lee and Yoo (2021, p. 6) characterized competitive advantage as a firm’s capacity to meet customer expectations with greater efficiency than its competitors. Entrepreneurial orientation was emphasized by Widyanti and Mahfudz (2020, p. 115) as a crucial factor in achieving competitive advantage. An innovative, proactive, and risk-taking approach was crucial for firms that want to outperform their rivals, as suggested by this. Prior studies had found that entrepreneurial orientation had a positive impact on competitive advantage (Ferreira and Coelho, 2020, p. 255). Entrepreneurial orientation played a crucial role in influencing competitive advantages, ultimately leading to business competitiveness and survival, as suggested by the following hypothesis:

H2: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on competitive advantage.

**Brand Orientation and Innovation Capabilities**

According to a study conducted by

Rahman, Hasan and Floyd (2013, p. 225) regarding the influence of brand orientation on the acceptance of innovation, it was determined that brand orientation significantly influences the capability of generating innovation within developing nations and their emerging economic systems. Furthermore, Yin-Wong and Merrilees's (2008, p. 372) research studied the efficiency benefits of brand orientation, finding that focusing on a brand's uniqueness positively impacts innovation. Placing importance on brand creation is a primary marketing driver that results in innovative capabilities and product efficiency. Moreover, the study by Nedergaard and Gyrd-Jones (2013, p. 762) found that the development of sustainable innovation could be aided by a focus on corporate branding. According to a study by Schifeling and Demetry (2021, p. 134), craft authenticity was prioritized in food truck branding by utilizing culinary skills, high-quality ingredients, and small-scale production, creating a relationship between the brand and innovation in terms of different strengths and increasing the opportunity for success in the market. Hence, brand orientation influences innovation capabilities, as the following hypothesis proposes:

H3: Brand orientation has a positive effect on innovation capabilities.

**Brand Orientation and Competitive Advantage**

The principle of brand orientation (BO) is related to the notion that a product or brand is considered a crucial resource within a business due to its capacity to generate value and augment competitive abilities in the marketplace. Thus, the management of a brand goes beyond being just a technical exercise or function-specific activity (Louro and Cunha, 2001, pp. 850-851). It extends to becoming a strategic pursuit that permeates all aspects of a business (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 8). This strategic stance facilitates its incorporation into the company's cultural fabric. In essence, the process of brand creation and maintenance should be a primary strategy, leveraging existing internal resources to boost the brand's or organization's value (Huang and Tsai, 2013, p. 2022).

According to Urde (1994, p. 18), brand orientation is a philosophy that underscores creating, growing, and safeguarding brand identity through ongoing engagement with the target customer segment. The ultimate aim is to craft a sustainable competitive advantage for the organization. A brand is often among an organization's most prized assets (Urde, Baumgarth and Merrilees, 2013, p. 13). According to the study by Bridson and Evans (2004, pp. 404-406), the components of brand orientation consist of four dimensions, namely: 1) Distinctiveness, 2) Functionality, 3) Value-Adding, and 4) Symbolic Recognition.

The study by Gromark and Melin (2011, p. 394) underscored the positive relationship between brand orientation and corporate profitability. Concurrently, Reijonen, et al. (2012, p. 699) indicate the effect of brand orientation on business expansion. Furthermore, Al Asheq and Hossain (2019, p. 1) demonstrate that brand orientation influences the performance of SMEs. In addition, the research of Mokhtar, et al. (2018, p. 167) indicated that strategic brand management played an important role

in the competitive advantage of food truck businesses and could be a guideline for future business development. Therefore, based on the studies above, it is reasonable to suggest that brand orientation impacts competitive advantage, as will be proposed in the forthcoming hypothesis:

H4: Brand orientation has a positive effect on competitive advantage.

**Innovation Capabilities and Competitive Advantage**

Innovation capabilities (IC) refer to an organization's ability to transform ideas and knowledge into the development and creation of novel innovations. Schumpeter, a pioneer in innovation theory, argued that entrepreneurs seek to integrate innovative technologies into their production processes and services to gain competitive advantages. Importantly, innovations do not necessarily arise from entirely new technological discoveries but may result from the combination of existing technologies or knowledge to create novel solutions for the benefit of the organization. Thus, innovation capabilities have become a critical means for organizations to gain a competitive edge and increase revenue (Mulyana, et al., 2020, p. 62). Moreover, according to Alfiero, Giudice and Bonadonna (2017, p. 2462), their findings indicate that leveraging innovation capabilities in the food truck entrepreneurs can provide a significant competitive advantage.

Therefore, innovation capabilities are among the most influential resources that enable organizations to compete at higher levels, both domestically and internationally (Migdadi, 2022, p. 182). According to a study by Rangus and Slavec (2017, p. 195), innovation capabilities are a critical factor leading to competitive advantage and better performance. This is consistent with the study of Wongsansukcharoen's and Thaweepaiboonwong's (2023, p. 1) findings that reveal a significant relationship between innovation capabilities, competitive advantage, and performance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Furthermore, empirical results affirm that developing innovation capabilities benefits organizations and increases business competitiveness (Hwang, Choi and Shin, 2020, p. 1). Thus, innovation capabilities are a crucial driver enabling organizations to competitive advantage, as proposed in the following hypothesis:

H5: Innovation capabilities has a positive effect on competitive advantage.

**Mediating Role of Innovation Capabilities**

Innovation capabilities refers to a firm's ability to integrate key capabilities and resources to stimulate innovation successfully, and it is a key driver of sustainable competitive advantage (Zhou, Gao and Zhao, 2017, p. 375). Innovation capabilities are at the core of a transformation, leading organizations to success. This recognition is driven by innovation's crucial role in providing a competitive advantage in challenging markets, as evidenced by the studies of Ávila (2022, p. 185) who finds that innovation capability mediates the relationship between absorptive capacity and competitive advantage. Wijaya and Rahmayanti (2023, p. 227) found that innovation capabilities can mediate the influence of entrepreneurship orientation on business performance. The study by Ferreira and Coelho (2020, p. 255) has

identified that the ability to establish product branding with innovation capabilities in a mediating role, significantly influences competitive advantage and firm performance.

Additionally, the research by Octavia, Sriayudha and Ali (2020, p. 601) also uncovered that strategically positioning a brand that resonates with consumers and innovation capabilities as a mediator, enhances the firm's competitive advantage. The identical phenomenon concerns the intermediary function performed by innovation capabilities within the correlation between market orientation and organizational performance (Zehir, Köle and Yıldız, 2015, p. 700). However, the current innovation capabilities mediating the effects of entrepreneurial and brand orientation on competitive advantage still need to be determined. Therefore, this study proposes a model to examine how innovation capabilities mediate the impact of entrepreneurial and brand orientation on competitive advantage, as presented in the following hypothesis:

H6: Innovation capabilities mediate the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage.

H7: Innovation capabilities mediate the influence of brand orientation and competitive advantage.

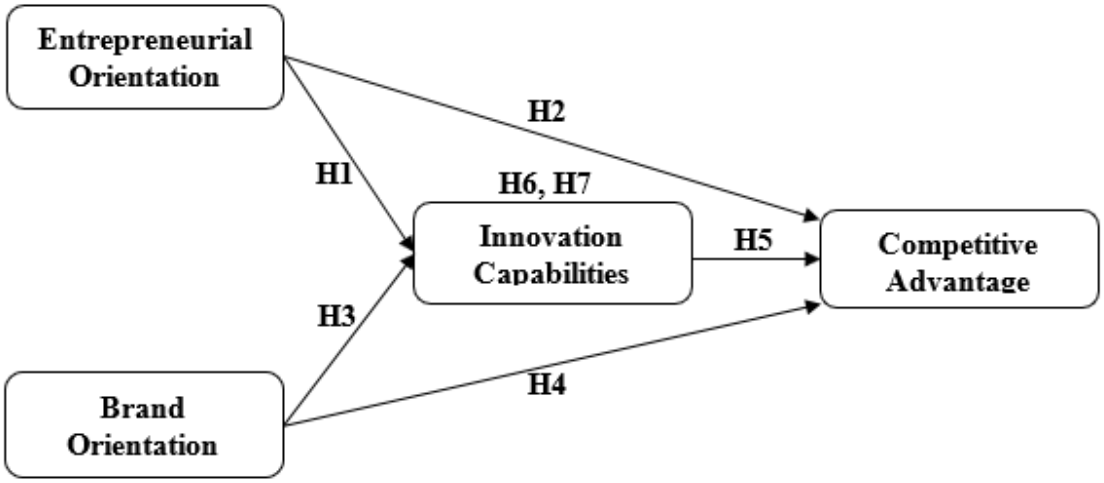


**Figure 1** Research Structure of the Conceptual Framework

## Methods

### Sample and Data Collection

This study used a quantitative approach. The data used in this study were from 174 food truck entrepreneurs from the Food Truck Club (Thailand), a food truck business network organization. The mobile kitchen's interior decoration was what made food trucks unique, as it could serve food to customers in different locations. Food trucks are currently becoming an increasingly popular trend in the food business because they are flexible businesses that perfectly match the lifestyles of city people. These businesses are worth keeping an eye on and have a lot of potential to grow.

The key informants were owners, managers, or those in charge who thoroughly understood all aspects of the business. Data collection was conducted using an online

survey from a member list, consisting of 585 registered individuals in the Food Truck Club (Thailand) database. This database was a reliable source of information with active email addresses. The researcher collected data using the entire list without random sampling, so all responses were voluntary.

Before the online survey, the respondents were contacted by telephone to request their voluntary participation and to assess whether they had the necessary knowledge. In addition, for confidentiality considerations, the respondents were informed that their responses would be kept completely confidential and that no information would be disclosed to any third party without the respondents' permission. A total of 174 surveys were returned, representing 29.74 percent, according to Aaker, Kumar and Day (2001, pp. 234-235). A response rate of 20 percent for the mail survey is considered acceptable. Furthermore, Anderson and Gerbing (1988, pp. 415-416) suggested that a sample size of 150 was sufficient for analysis using structural equation statistics, or even more. Therefore, the sample size of 174 food truck entrepreneurs in this study was considered the sample size for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

**Measurements**

This study relies on existing scales used in prior studies to operationalize and investigate the relationships between constructs proposed in this study. The dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation via a nine-item scale adapted from Miller (1983, p. 770); Covin and Slevin (1989, p. 75), aims to assess three dimensions of firm-level entrepreneurial orientation. The dimensions of brand orientation was measured via a twelve-item scale adapted from Bridson and Evans (2004, pp. 404-406), which aims to assess four dimensions of brand orientation. In addition, measures for innovation capabilities were developed, based on Lin, Chen and Kuan-Shun Chiu (2010, p. 111) five items that were used to measure innovation capabilities. Finally, competitive advantages use the six items adapted from Porter (1980, p. 30). All items are measured on a five-point Likert Scale from one = strongly disagree, to five = strongly agree.

Assessment of research tools from questionnaire created by five experts to determine the index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The results of the investigation found that the value ranges from 0.60 to 1.00, passing an acceptable benchmark of greater than 0.50 (Ritjaroon, 2009, p. 4). Subsequently, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was analyzed, which is a measure of reliability in questionnaires with Likert-scale questions. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient results acceptable of greater than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978, pp. 245-246).

**Common Method Bias**

Given the utilization of a cross-sectional research design and the collection of self-reported data, the potential for encountering Common Methods Bias (CMB) is a concern in this study. To address this issue, the researchers adhered to the recommendations by Podsakoff et al. (2003, pp. 879-880). Specifically, the adoption of diverse measurement anchors and assurance of respondent anonymity were implemented. Furthermore, the assessment of CMB was conducted employing Harman's

single-factor test, as outlined by Podsakoff and Organ (1986, pp. 531-532). The results exhibited that the first component was explained as 41.70% of the total variance, less than 50%. Consequently, these findings show there was no clear evidence of CMB. In addition, the investigation of relationships among constructs and the assessment of the model's predictive capacity were conducted through Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. The appropriateness of the constructs within this study to the model fit was examined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Additionally, the evaluation of the proposed path within the theoretical framework of this study was also carried out through systematic testing procedures.

**Demographic Profiles**

The participant's characteristics of 174 respondents were as follows. The majority (54.6%) of respondents were female. The ages ranged from 30 to 40 years old (46.6 %). The respondents' education level was a bachelor's degree (60.3%). Most respondents were business owners (44.8%). In addition, less than three years was the amount of time spent operating a business (36.8%). The majority of respondents had fewer than three employees (69.0%), and their operating capital was less than THB 100,000 (35.6%).

**Statistical Techniques**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the relationships between constructs and assessed the model's predictive power. Traditional linear modeling methods were inferior to SEM because (1) it revealed relationships among latent structures that are not directly measured, and (2) it accounted for potential errors in the measurements of observed variables (Civelek, 2018, pp. 56-58).

**Results**

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

The criteria of CFA to be considered in reducing an item or construct consisted of insisting that the standardized factor loading should be higher than the 0.40 cut-off (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994, p. 264). However, factor loadings should be greater than 0.5 for better results (Truong and McColl, 2011, p. 558). Any items can be removed if the results are unsatisfactory or inappropriate for the model evaluation and they do not change the meaning of the construct (Jarvis, MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2003, pp. 199-201). Thus, the result of CFA for all variables suggests that this measurement model fits the data. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Comparison of the goodness-of-fit index of the proposed model.

| Goodness-of-fit indices | The cutoff point | Proposed model | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| CMIN/DF ($\chi^2$/df) (170.96/71) | < 5.00 | 2.407 | Good fit |
| NNFI | > 0.90 | .970 | Good fit |
| CFI | > 0.90 | .980 | Good fit |
| SRMR | < 0.80 | .056 | Acceptable |
| RMSEA | < 0.80 | .073 | Acceptable |

**Note:** Cut-off criteria for confirmatory factor analysis (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000, pp. 85-87).

**Measurement Validation**

First, before examining the hypothesized structural model, the data of this study were validated and passed the convergent validity tests through various analyses. As a result, all the constructs reveal the adequate value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Besides, the construct validity of the data in the questionnaire was further examined using Composite Reliability (CR). CR and AVE were calculated after calculating the value of the standardized regression weight. Thus, the value of standardized loading of all indicators ranged from 0.58 to 0.87, showing that all variables had factor loadings of higher than 0.5 (Costello and Osborne, 2005, pp. 1-3) and were highly significant ($p < .001$).

Second, CR ranged from 0.811 to 0.879, above the recommended cut-off value of 0.70 (Hair, et al., 2010, p. 119). The convergent validity was tested by inspecting AVE. The values of AVE ranged from 0.523 to 0.646, which exceeded the suggested 0.50 cut-off value and was consistent with the suggestion of Hair, et al. (2010, p. 662). However, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to analyze the discriminant validity of all latent variables by structure. For the diagonal AVE matrix and the correlation of the latent variable for each passive variable, the value (AVE)2 should be greater than the correlation between the passive variables. The results of this test correlation between the latent variables was deemed to be greater than the results of all of them (Hair, et al., 2010, p. 137). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha for all constructs showed a value of more than 0.7, which falls within the threshold. The Cronbach's alpha results ranged from 0.792 to 0.930. Therefore, the convergent validity and reliability criteria were met in this study, as demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2** Measurement Items, Factor loading, CR, AVE and α values

| Latent | Measurement Items | Code | Loading | CR | AVE | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EO | Leadership in the development of new products. | INNO | 0.74 | 0.818 | 0.601 | 0.852 |
| | Consistently launches new products. | | | | | |
| | Implements significant changes to its products. | | | | | |
| | Strong in immediately responding to competitors. | PROA | 0.85 | | | |
| | Frequently the first to introduce new products. | | | | | |
| | Sets operational goals to surpass competitors. | | | | | |
| | Willing to take clear risks with high-risk products. | RISK | 0.73 | | | |
| | Diverse environments are critical to success. | | | | | |
| | Proactive policy focused on potential opportunities. | | | | | |

| Latent | Measurement Items | Code | Loading | CR | AVE | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BO | Develops a distinctive and unique logo. | DIST | 0.79 | 0.879 | 0.646 | 0.930 |
| | Creates a distinctive and appealing store name. | | | | | |
| | Utilizes unique decor elements to attract customers. | | | | | |
| | Provides comprehensive basic amenities. | FUNC | 0.79 | | | |
| | Facilitates various ordering and payment options. | | | | | |
| | Highlights its signature menu to ensure customer satisfaction. | | | | | |
| | Delivers high-quality dishes across the entire menu. | VALU | 0.76 | | | |
| | Creates a memorable and impressive customer experience. | | | | | |
| | Encourages customer participation in the brand. | | | | | |
| | Owner or staff exhibit a distinctive service identity. | SYMB | 0.87 | | | |
| | Maintains a clear and unique business style. | | | | | |
| | Builds a strong and memorable brand image. | | | | | |
| IC | Implements technological systems that enhance service. | IC1 | Excluded | 0.865 | 0.617 | 0.864 |
| | Adopts innovative cooking techniques. | IC2 | 0.81 | | | |
| | Utilizes unique and secret recipes to enhance quality. | IC3 | 0.67 | | | |
| | Carefully selects rare and high-quality ingredients. | IC4 | 0.80 | | | |
| | Offers a unique menu that differentiates from competitors. | IC5 | 0.85 | | | |

| Latent | Measurement Items | Code | Loading | CR | AVE | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CA | Offers menu that provide value relative to business's costs. | CA1 | 0.64 | 0.811 | 0.523 | 0.792 |
| | Produces high-quality goods while minimizing waste. | CA2 | Excluded | | | |
| | Promotes the production of distinctive products. | CA3 | 0.82 | | | |
| | Establishes a competitive edge through differentiation. | CA4 | 0.82 | | | |
| | Clearly identifies its target customer groups for sales. | CA5 | Excluded | | | |
| | Offers products that meet the specific needs of niche groups. | CA6 | 0.58 | | | |

## Multicollinearity

To confirm a no-multicollinearity problem, Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, variance inflation factor (VIFs), and correlations. There was no evidence of multicollinearity because the absolute value of each correlation was < 0.8 (Hair, et al., 2010, pp. 192-193), and the VIFs were accessed. The results showed that VIFs values of indicators ranged between 1.65 and 5.03. Therefore, all variables the acceptable threshold levels (VIFs < 10) recommended by Hair, et al. (2010, p. 202), which revealed that multicollinearity was not a problem in this study.

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics and correlations matrix

| Variables | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean** | 4.06 | 4.39 | 4.12 | 4.28 |
| **S.D.** | 0.593 | 0.557 | 0.695 | 0.613 |
| **VIF** | 1.65 | 2.78 | 5.03 | - |
| (1) Entrepreneurship Orientation | 1 | | | |
| (2) Brand Orientation | 0.680** | 1 | | |
| (3) Innovation Capabilities | 0.677** | 0.713** | 1 | |
| (4) Competitive Advantage | 0.641** | 0.738** | 0.730** | 1 |

**Note:** ** The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## Structural Model

The results of statistical tests concluded that entrepreneurial orientation directly affected innovation capabilities (β = 0.165; t = 2.001; S.E. = 0.064), and entrepreneurial orientation directly affected competitive advantage (β = 0.293; t = 2.673; S.E. = 0.076). Thus, H1 and H2 were supported. Brand orientation directly affected innovation capabilities (β = 0.740; t = 7.272; S.E. = 0.064) and brand orientation directly affected competitive advantage (β = 0.357; t = 1.970; S.E. = 0.071). Thus, H3 and H4

were supported. Moreover, innovation capabilities had been proven to directly affect competitive advantage (β = 0.304; t = 2.090; S.E. = 0.075). Thus, hypothesis 5 was supported. The results were shown in Figure 2 and Table 4.

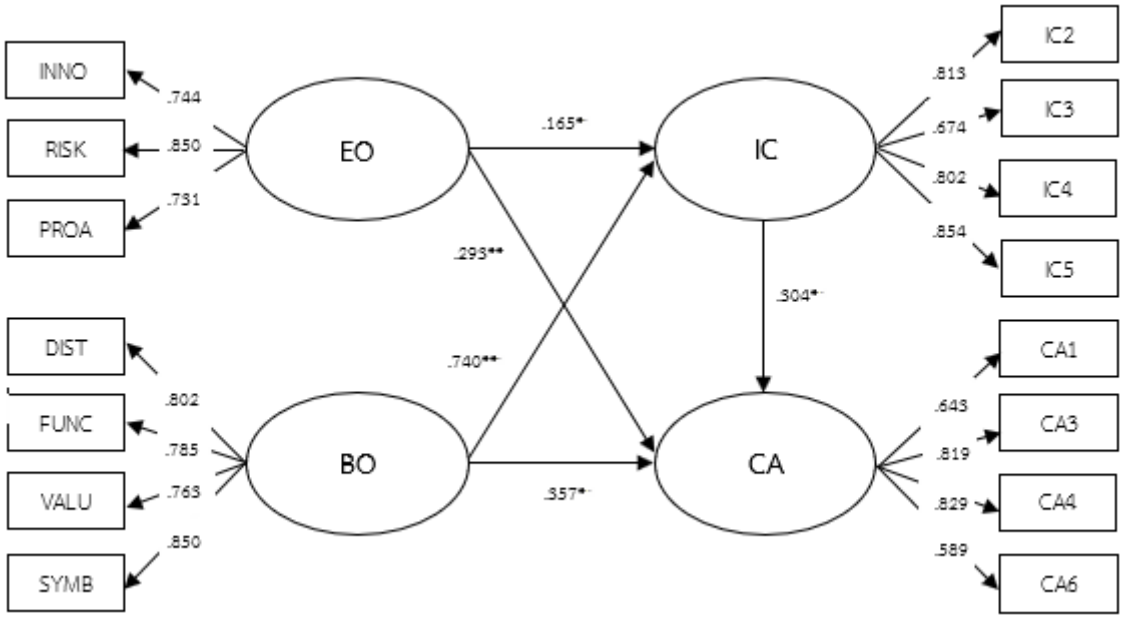


**Figure 2** Structural Model

**Table 4** Hypothesis testing results summary

| Hypothesis | Coefficient (t) | Standard Error (S.E.) | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1: EO → IC | 0.165* (2.001) | 0.064 | Supported |
| H2: EO → CA | 0.293** (2.673) | 0.076 | Supported |
| H3: BO → IC | 0.740** (7.272) | 0.064 | Supported |
| H4: BO → CA | 0.357* (1.970) | 0.071 | Supported |
| H5: IC → CA | 0.304* (2.090) | 0.075 | Supported |

**Note:** * Significant at the 0.05 level. ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

**Table 5** Hypothesis testing for Sobel test

| Hypothesis | Sobel Test statistic | p-value | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H6: EO → IC → CA | 2.037 | 0.041 | Partially supported |
| H7: BO → IC → CA | 2.599 | 0.009 | Partially supported |

In this research study, using the Sobel test (Soper, 2024). The hypothesis testing found that innovation capabilities significantly mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage. The raw coefficient value of 0.220 with standard error of 0.070. Raw coefficient for the association between innovation capabilities and competitive advantage is recorded at 0.190 with standard error of 0.071. Based on these values the test statistic for Sobel test is calculated and produces the 2.037, with an associ-

ated p-value of 0.041. Additionally, the tested found that innovation capabilities significantly mediates the relationship between brand orientation and competitive advantage. The raw coefficient value of 0.950 with standard error of 0.087. Raw coefficient for the association between innovation capabilities and competitive advantage is recorded at 0.190 with standard error of 0.071. The Sobel test statistic for this relationship was 2.599, with an associated p-value of 0.009. These results support the mediation hypotheses of innovation capabilities; namely, innovation capabilities mediate the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage (H6). In addition, innovation capabilities mediate the influence of brand orientation and competitive advantage. (H7).

## Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the positive impact of entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, and innovation capabilities on the competitive advantage of food truck entrepreneurs. This aligns with prior research, such as that by Huang and Tsai (2013, p. 2022), which established that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant bearing on innovation capabilities, particularly in fostering innovation, proactive actions, and risk-taking behaviors. This is further supported by Peljko, et al. (2016, p. 172), who found a positive link between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation capabilities. Moreover, the current study echoes the findings of Ferreira and Coelho (2020, p. 255), which revealed a positive correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage. This underscores that entrepreneurial orientation is a vital resource with its qualities of value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability. These distinctive attributes can enable various businesses, including those in the food truck industry, to innovate and evolve their product offerings, thereby facilitating a competitive edge (Barney, 1991, p. 99).

Additionally, brand orientation significantly impacts innovation capabilities and competitive advantage, congruent with the research conducted by Nedergaard and Gyrd-Jones (2013, p. 762). Their work revealed that corporate branding could facilitate the process of innovative creation, since brand orientation or brand development is a critical marketing strategy for market leadership. It propels organizations towards sustainable innovative capabilities. Similarly, Octavia, Sriayudha and Ali (2020, p. 601) found that product brand positioning directly and positively affects a company's competitive advantage. Besides, Lee, O'Cass and Sok (2017, p. 177) corroborated that establishing a recognizable and distinctive brand is essential in fortifying the brand and its sustainable competitive advantage. In essence, the strategy of product brand positioning aids in reinforcing business distinctiveness and uniqueness, thereby creating a clear competitive edge over rivals. Such factors enhance the competitive advantage of a business.

In addition, the results from this analysis found that innovation capabilities impact competitive advantage. This outcome aligns with prior research that identified innovation capabilities as a distinctive organizational asset

and positively influenced competitive advantage (Ferreira and Coelho, 2020, p. 255; Rangus and Slavec, 2017, p. 195). Thus, innovation emerges as a critical tool for expanding market share and creating a competitive advantage (Gunday, et al., 2011, p. 662). Innovation capabilities encompass the development and initiative to develop new products, enhance existing ones, add value to products, and decrease production costs. Moreover, in the literature on strategic management, innovation is seen as one of the dynamic capabilities that add value and establish a competitive edge for an organization in a rapidly changing and uncertain business environment (Khan, et al., 2020, p. 652).

Finally, the current results supported the mediation hypotheses of innovation capabilities. Specifically, innovation capabilities depend on a mechanism based on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, and competitive advantage. These findings are consistent with other studies (Ávila, 2022, p. 185; Ferreira and Coelho, 2020, p. 255; Wijaya and Rahmayanti, 2023, p. 227) which consider innovation capabilities as a mediating variable. This indicates that entrepreneurial orientation, and brand orientation, lead to innovation capabilities, which, in turn, leads to competitive advantage. Thus, understanding the nature of innovation is a prerequisite of a fertile innovation process.

**Theoretical and Managerial Contributions**

**Theoretical Contribution**

Firstly, the basis of this study is a dynamic capability theory (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p. 509) to understand better how converting capabilities transforms an organization's resources into increasingly adaptable competencies in light of environmental conditions (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000, p. 1107). According to Barney, competitive advantage stems from an organization's strategic resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991, p. 99). Dynamic capabilities essential for a successful business that can adapt to changes in the competitive environment are highlighted by the influence of innovation capabilities on competitive advantage, thereby reflecting the organization's strategic competencies (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p. 509).

Secondly, the findings of this study offer significant theoretical contribution by addressing gaps identified in the existing literature, specifically within the unique context of the food truck business. The results show that entrepreneurial and brand orientation enhance innovation capabilities; and, at the same time, confer a competitive advantage. When organizations recognize that innovativeness is characterized by technological leadership and the initiation of novelty, proactiveness refers to anticipating and meeting future demand, aiming to launch new products ahead of competitors. On the other hand, risk-taking encapsulates the propensity to undertake daring and high-risk activities, as defined by Miller (1983, p. 770). Moreover, brand orientation emphasizes distinctiveness, functionality, value-adding, and symbolic recognition. If an organization successfully establishes a unique and robust brand by leveraging existing internal resources to boost the brand's or the organization's value (Huang and Tsai, 2013, p. 2022), leading to

a competitive advantage.

Finally, the theoretical framework of this study analysis not only investigates the complex relationships among these variables but also highlights the relevance of food trucks. Empirical evidence is emphasized to support these theoretical constructs, which serves as a guide for future research, encouraging scholars to investigate the intricacies of this environment and gather data that can validate, refine, and expand the theoretical framework. Thus, this study not only fills in gaps in current literature but also establishes the foundation for future studies to improve the field.

**Managerial Contribution**

Firstly, they should prioritize innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking to increase their innovation capabilities and secure competitive advantages. Innovativeness entails experimenting with unique menu items, adopting cooking technologies, and incorporating customer feedback for continuous improvement. Proactiveness necessitates staying abreast of market trends, formulating business strategies in advance, and cultivating networks with fellow entrepreneurs. Risk-taking involves investing in new equipment, exploring untapped markets, and implementing novel business ideas.

Secondly, they should emphasize brand orientation, which emphasizes distinctiveness, functionality, value-adding, and symbolic recognition. Designing a unique truck with visually appealing elements and offering innovative menu items can help differentiate the business. Optimizing the truck's interior for operational efficiency and ensuring regular maintenance are crucial for smooth operations. Utilizing high-quality ingredients and providing special menu options add value and cater to diverse customer preferences. Developing a compelling brand narrative and engaging with customers through social media can enhance symbolic recognition. Additionally, participating in community events can strengthen local relationships. These strategies collectively contribute to improved innovation capabilities and sustained competitive advantages.

Thirdly, they should enhance their innovation capabilities to gain a competitive advantage. This can be achieved through several methods, such as implementing mobile orders, QR codes, and contactless payment systems for convenience. Creating fusion menus by blending diverse culinary techniques can attract a wider customer base. Utilizing customer data to optimize menus and operations ensures better alignment with customer preferences.

Fourth, they can augment their competitive advantage by adopting strategic approaches such as cost leadership, which necessitates optimizing operational efficiencies and reducing production costs. Differentiation can be realized by offering unique products or services that more effectively meet customer needs. Thus, this study has important implications for entrepreneurs. It highlights the necessity for entrepreneurs to develop entrepreneurial orientation, brand orientation, and innovation capabilities as a way of achieving sustained competitive advantage.

Finally, food truck government agencies should propose policies to promote com-

petitive advantages through activities that give entrepreneurs a competitive advantage in this highly competitive era, for example, activities to exchange views between successful entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs; symbolic orientation to create a distinctive image that customers will remember, including innovation capabilities; and activities to enhance new experiences for entrepreneurs, meeting new customer groups, listening to opinions and suggestions directly from consumers. This will lead to improved services that directly respond to consumers and expand new markets. These aspects can lead to the creation of further competitive advantages.

**Limitations and Future Recommendations**

Firstly, this quantitative study may overlook the "how" and "why" questions. Thus, qualitative research should be conducted on the same topic using qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies in conjunction with quantitative methods. This would confirm the results and provide more precise insights into the study.

Secondly, this study focuses on Thailand's sample group of food truck businesses. The theories studied in this research may vary across different businesses and countries. Future research should test this conceptual model in other businesses or contexts and include additional variables, such as moderating and controlling variables.

Lastly, the survey data were obtained through questionnaires filled out by the sample group, collecting data from a single source-type or a single type of informant, leading to potential variance issues due to Common Method Variance (CMV) (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986, pp. 531-532). Hence, future studies should mitigate potential problems inherent in such data collection methods, for example, by creating instruments with diverse response methods, adding into the questionnaire marker variables, or questions unrelated to any research variables to help reduce the risk of CMV (Lindell and Whitney, 2001, pp. 114-115).

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