



# A Systematic Literature Review: Determinants of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

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**Abstract.** The objective of this research is to examine the development of Sustainable Competitive Advantage from both theoretical and practical perspectives, as well as the factors that influence it. A Systematic Literature Review approach was employed in this study, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. 17 articles that met the criteria were selected for analysis. The findings suggest that the current research on Sustainable Competitive Advantage is centered around four variables, namely technological innovation, knowledge management, dynamic capability, and organizational agility. However, the study revealed inconsistencies in the results, as some studies indicate a significant impact of these variables on Sustainable Competitive Advantage, while others show no significant effect. The research on Sustainable Competitive Advantage has been conducted in various environments, including business and natural environments. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in the business environment, and this study aims to fill that gap by serving as a reference for future research in the business environment, which is constantly evolving and innovating.

**Keywords:** Determinant Variable · Sustainable Competitive Advantage · Systematic Literature Review · PRISMA

## 1 Introduction

The industrial revolution 5.0 requires companies to be able to create new value through the power of technology development [1], that is all digital precisely and quickly. The shift from manual systems to digitalization has resulted in the use of information technology being significant in all industries. The transition from manual processes to digitalization has made information technology crucial across all sectors. This has led to an unstable, ever-changing, intricate, and unpredictable business landscape that organizations now confront, fostering intensely competitive markets and presenting a significant challenge to their longevity [2]. Xiao and Yu [3], It is emphasized that businesses must continuously strive to stay informed and comprehend market trends, customer desires, and rapidly and accurately monitor shifts in the business climate in order to remain competitive and ultimately attain a lasting competitive edge.

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The primary objective of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, initially introduced, is to achieve a Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA). By Wernerfelt [4], in the piece titled “A Resource-based View of the Firm,” the theory highlights the importance of businesses concentrating on formulating strategies centered around their resources, rather than solely on products. Furthermore, Barney [5] in the research titled “Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage,” it is described that a corporation’s resources can enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness. According to Barney and Clark [6], In addition to having an organization, a corporation needs to hold and control valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources and competencies to establish sustainable competitive advantage (O).

According to Nonaka [7], the sole enduring competitive edge lies in knowledge, leading researchers to develop the concept of a knowledge-based advantage [8]. This suggests that knowledge should be recognized and integrated into an organization to create a competitive edge, particularly in a business landscape characterized by considerable technological shifts and ambiguity [9].

Konlechner et al. [10] it is asserted that a well-established and respected organization demonstrates its ability to adapt to environmental changes or even proactively promote change and progress, whereas companies that fail to adapt will falter. This is in line with the survey described in Senge’s study from 1994 [11], which found that 1/3 of the top 500 companies listed in Fortune magazine in 1970 had vanished within a decade. The problem was that these businesses had lost their primary function as the environment changed. Companies must keep launching new products based on their strong technological innovation capabilities if they want to establish a lasting competitive advantage [12].

According to Economy.okezone.com, Arsjad Rasjid, the Chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and B20 Indonesia, disclosed that global shifts have occurred due to technological disruptions. Approximately 52% of businesses went under or were acquired as they failed to adapt to the digitalization movement [13]. Bankruptcy due to digitalization can not only happen to small companies, many giant companies are also experiencing this.

Toys R Us is a good example of a large company going out of business as a result of the rise of digitalization. The business made headlines in September 2017 when it sought bankruptcy protection. The toy shop at the time had over 700 locations in the US and the UK, demonstrating the size of its sales network. Unfortunately, the company had to close hundreds of stores because American e-commerce behemoths like Amazon and Walmart outpaced it. Toys R Us failed to capitalize on the online shopping trend driven by e-commerce. Had the company transitioned to online retail sooner, it might not have had to let go of 33,000 employees without providing severance pay [14].

From the aforementioned account, it becomes evident that in order to thrive in a fast-paced, constantly evolving business landscape, organizations need to possess a keen awareness of market trends and a strong capacity for innovation. Xiao and Yu [3] it is underlined that the simple use of external or internal resources cannot secure a company’s lasting competitive advantage in the modern economic environment, which is characterized by severe rivalry, information, rapidly changing client needs, and open

and internet-driven marketing channels. Therefore, additional contributing factors are necessary to foster a lasting competitive edge for the organization.

Previous studies revealed contradictions in the connection between knowledge management and sustainable competitive advantage. The research of Shehabat [15] and Ginting [16] resulted in a significant positive relationship. While the results of research from Kim et al. [17] are not significant. The research gap in this study lies in the disparities in findings regarding the determinants that influence sustainable competitive advantage, an area that has not been extensively explored. In this investigation, the introduction offers a concise overview of the background, while the literature review presents the theoretical framework utilized. The research methodology section details the sources of information, study selection, data collection process, and data items. The results and discussion segment provides insights into the study's findings, and finally, the conclusion elucidates the deductions drawn from the research.

RQ: What are the determinants of Sustainable Competitive Advantage that can be identified through empirical research?

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) is the goal that Resource Based View (RBV) theory wants to explain. Barney [5] in his work "Firm Resource and Sustained Competitive Advantage" describes the business's resources to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the company's operations. According to Barney and Clark [6], the main proposition if a company wants to attain a Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA), it necessity obtain and control valuable, infrequent, unique, and non-substitutable (VRIN) assets and competences, and have an organization (O).

SCA denotes to market objectives, which allow a company to win more market share or higher profit margins when competing with other businesses in the same customer group [18]. From an external perspective, the business' practical upper hand is molded by changes in the outside climate, yet top to bottom, the organization's feasible upper hand is likewise upheld by inside advancement [3]. It relies upon the innovation and information basic item quality and creation costs, which keeps contenders from duplicating them [19].

Sustainable competitive advantage must be run with a dynamic process and using a strategic view. Porter [20] suggests that companies need a strategy known as a generic strategy. This strategy consists of 3 kinds, namely a comprehensive cost advantage strategy, a differentiation strategy, and a focus strategy, which is a fundamental way for companies to achieve profitability above the industry average to have a sustainable competitive advantage [21]. However, globalization, intangibles, and interconnectivity pose new obstacles for businesses today [22, 23].

This requires that companies implement additional strategic plans and are well aware of the shifting nature of competition [24], if they want to establish a long-term competitive advantage for businesses, they must be willing to tolerate a disruptive business environment and create new competitive advantages [25].

## 2.2 Systematic Literature Review

The term “Systematic Literature Review” (SLR) refers to the research methodology that includes the objectives of the study, the procedure for gathering the literature, the inclusion and exclusion of research, data extraction, and synthesis [26], with specific topics. Any research project is thought to begin with a literature review [27]. A literature review helps researchers to frame questions and acquire reasonable answers [28]. Conducting a literature review of existing questions in the subject of research [29]. Moreover, the answers to those research questions can contribute to the development of the discipline, specific theory and research [30]. For the purpose of Systematic Literature Review, researchers and academics frequently employ the systematic literature review study method. This is on the grounds that the Deliberate Writing Survey technique can keep away from inclination and emotional comprehension of the examination [31].

## 3 Methodology

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria are used in the systematic literature review. The following stages make up this approach, according to Moher et al. [32]:

- Determine the eligibility criteria
- Defining the source of information
- Study selection
- Data collection process
- Selection of data items
- Eligibility criteria

### 3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Original, peer-reviewed writing is only done in English. This study uses either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) to determine the determinant variable of Sustainable Competitive Advantage in the business environment in 2019–2022. These keywords were chosen to get search results that represent the broad and current scope of Sustainable Competitive Advantage. The total search results were 176 journals and from the selection process, 17 journal articles were obtained.

### 3.2 Information Sources

A top online database called Publish or Perish (PoP) was used for the information search, and sources from SCOPUS were used. Additionally, this study did not include articles that were not fully accessible.

### 3.3 Study Selection

The study selection process consisted of the following three stages:

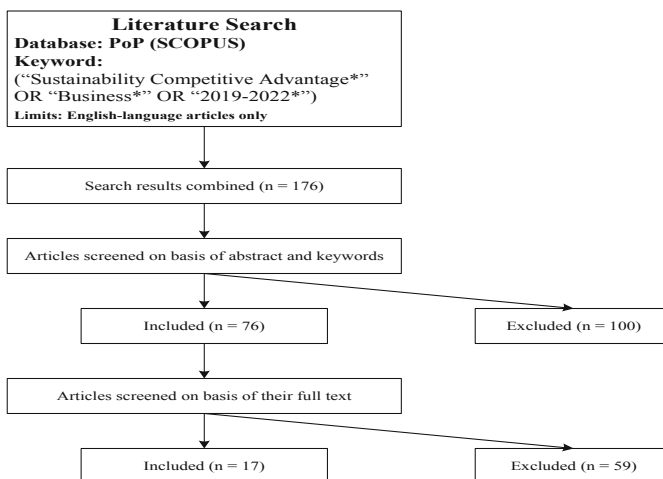
- Use search keywords that match the research objectives, namely determining the Sustainable Competitive Advantage. The search keywords entered were: (“Sustainable Competitive Advantage” OR “business”). The year that was chosen was a year (“2019 – 2022”).
- Search for relevant articles and choose them based on eligibility criteria.
- Reading all articles in accordance with the eligibility requirements, then exploring and choosing all those articles.

### 3.4 Data Collection Process

The following information was manually gathered using content analysis-based data extraction: the type of article, journal name, year of publication, topic, title, research methodology, respondents/research data, variables related to the determinants of Sustainable Competitive Advantage, and research results in the form of the influence of the determinant variables against Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

### 3.5 Data Items

The information extracted from every article includes the publication year, authors, sample size, research goals, variables, Sustainable Competitive Advantage determinants, and findings related to the impact of these determinants on Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Figure 1 provides a complete overview of the steps involved in conducting the Systematic Literature Review.



**Fig. 1.** Prisma flow diagram.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Research Results

Search results in the Publish or Perish (Pop) database on SCOPUS sources using keywords (“Sustainable Competitive Advantage\*” OR “Business\*” OR “2019–2022\*”) yielded 176 articles written in English. The publications were then examined and chosen while taking abstracts and keywords into consideration, yielding 76 articles. In the following round, 59 articles were dropped after thoroughly reading them. Finally, based on this process, 17 articles remain which can be analyzed further.

### 4.2 Systematization of Determinants

The 17 selected articles were subjected to a further analysis of the determinants of Sustainable Competitive Advantage, with additional criteria that included:

- Sustainable Competitive Advantage was used as the dependent variable.
- Sustainable Competitive Advantage was measured or calculated in various forms such as indicators or items.

Only determinants studied in at least 3 articles were included as independent variables, while those studied in 1–2 articles were excluded.

Using the aforementioned criteria, Table 1 summarizes the determinants, references, findings, and conclusions related to Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

**Table 1.** Determinants of sustainable competitive advantage.

No	Variable determinant	Previous research	Result	Conclusion
1	Technological innovation	Xiao and Yu [3] Chege and Wang [33] Zhang et al. [34]	Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+)	Positive trend
2	Knowledge management	Mahdi and Nassar [35] Alfawaire [36] Kim et al. [17] Shehabat [15] Ginting [16] Mahdi [37]	Significant (+) Significant (+) UnSig. (-) Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+)	Inconsistent
3	Dynamic capability	Yuan and Ferreira [38] Prabowo et al. [39] Liu and Yang [40] Khouroh et al. [41] Maçada et al. [42]	Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+)	Positive trend
4	Organizational agility	Salimi and Nazarian [43] Nurcholis [2] Lovely et al. [44]	Significant (+) Significant (+) Significant (+)	Positive trend

### 4.3 Variable Determinants

**Technological Innovation.** The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory developed by Barney [5] is used to investigate the impact of technological innovation on long-term competitive advantage. This theory explains how a company's Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) can be achieved. Acquiring and controlling precious, unique, inimitable, non-substitutable, and organizational resources and competencies is required for SCA [5]. Over the past 20 years, numerous researchers in strategic management science have studied technology innovation, business models, and business model innovations as an extension of the phenomenon of business turbulence that has evolved in the framework of competitive advantage and resource-based view [45–48].

The preceding definition argues that organizations seeking a long-term competitive advantage must focus on technological innovation. This is the reason for Xiao and Yu [3], to conduct research entitled “Achieving Sustainable Competitive Advantage Through Intellectual Capital and Corporate Character: The Mediating Role of Innovation”. Empirical results show that the impact of technological innovation on obtaining and keeping a sustainable competitive advantage. According to Chege and Wang [33] and Zhang et al. [34], there is a considerable association between technological innovation and sustainable competitive advantage. The research of Xiou and Yu [3] is also supported by Chege and Wang [33] and Zhang et al. [34].

**Knowledge Management.** According to the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), the primary resources behind new value creation, heterogeneity, and competitive advantage are knowledge and skills in strategy [5, 49, 50]. Due to their difficulty in imitation, knowledge resources are crucial to ensuring that the company's competitive advantage can be sustained [50]. According to Nonaka [51], since they are often rare, socially complicated, and essentially unique, knowledge is the only source of sustainable competitive advantage [25].

The statement above is following the results of research conducted by Mahdi and Nassar [35], Alfawaire [36], Shehabat [15], Ginting [16] and Mahdi et al. [37] which reveals that knowledge management has a significant impact on sustainable competitive advantage. However, these results reject the research conducted by Kim et al. [17]. It was highlighted that knowledge management has no substantial impact on sustainable competitive advantage.

**Dynamic Capability.** Organizations need to possess the capability of adaptability to react effectively to external environmental changes. These changes could be brought about by factors such as globalization, advancements in information technology, and new regulations that can have an impact on the business environment [25]. Environment changes that happen quickly can affect the relevance of a business's strategy and its ability to achieve a competitive advantage. These changes create an environment of turbulence, which is characterized by dynamic and complex changes that are fast, unpredictable, and create a sense of uncertainty [52, 53].

In order to adapt to these changes, businesses must be able to build, grow, or adjust its resource base. The ability of the company to upgrade its expertise is known as dynamic capability and achieve new forms of competitive advantage through its resources [54]. Recent research studies by Yuan and Fernando [38], Prabowo et al. [39], Liu and Yang

[40], Khourouh et al. [41], and Maçada et al. [42] support the importance of dynamic capability in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. These studies demonstrate the strong connection between dynamic capability and sustainable competitive advantage.

**Organizational Agility.** Organizational Agility is very important for the technology industry because changes in the organizational environment are inevitable in this industry. Technology will develop from time to time, this is due to digitalization which will eventually change supply and demand. Therefore, organizational agility-dependent organizations' flexibility and responsiveness play a significant role in determining whether they succeed or fail in this business [55]. For firms that face intense competition and ongoing changes in the business environment, organizational agility is regarded as a key competence [56]. A digital firm that develops the agility needed to continuously gather, monitor, and process signals from the environment as it changes. Furthermore, sustainable competitive advantage can be enhanced by organizational agility, it entails taking creative actions and acting quickly to alter procedures in order to take advantage of market opportunities [57].

Salimi and Nazarian [43] are interested in conducting research that aims to study the effect of organizational agility on sustainable competitive advantage in sports organizations. The findings indicate that sustainable competitive advantage is considerably influenced by organizational agility. Nurcholis [2] demonstrated the same point by studying Batik SMEs in Indonesia and analyzing the data using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results show that organizational agility has a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage. Lovely et al. [44] also stated that organizational agility positively and significantly affects sustainable competitive advantage in MSMEs in the Indonesian fashion industry that has used e-commerce platforms.

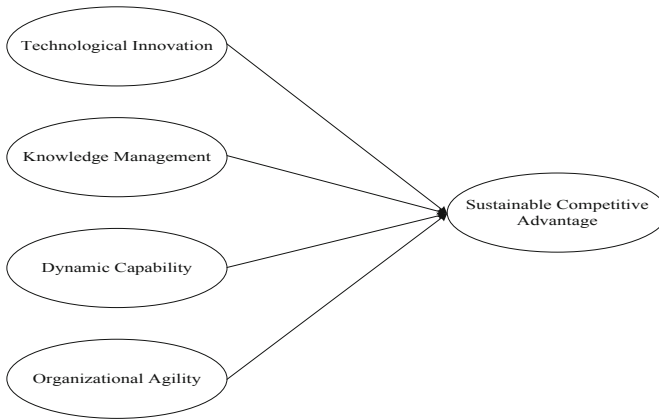
#### 4.4 Discussion

There are 4 determinants of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable according to the 17 publications that were chosen for this study and are given in Table 1, namely technological innovation, knowledge management, dynamic capability, and organizational agility. The 4 (four) determinants are shown in Fig. 2.

The search for sustainable competitive advantage results in the determinant of the technological innovation variable. Technology innovation is a dynamic, integrated process based on systems, science, and technology [58]. The existence of globalization has caused companies to switch to technological practices and focus on innovative activities [59]. Discussions about technological innovation have been born by scholars in strategic management science as an extension of emerging phenomena in the context of competitive advantage and resource-based view [45–48]. According to Xiao and Yu [3], for businesses to establish and keep a sustainable competitive advantage, technological innovation is necessary. This is because, in an uncertain business environment, technological innovation allows companies to become industry leaders and seize market advantages easily [34].

The second determinant is knowledge management, which according to Khan and Quadri [60] is a management system that is sourced from the knowledge presented by the company and intelligence assets that function to improve the characteristics of the





**Fig. 2.** Variable determinants sustainable competitive advantage.

company's performance. Santoro et al. [61] state that knowledge management helps in managing knowledge for exploratory and exploitative processes, which in turn is very important for developing new products and services. The results of the literature identification conducted by Shehabat [15] also demonstrates that there is a positive association between knowledge management and sustainable competitive advantage, which will eventually boost organizational performance. Because they are hard to duplicate and the foundation for sustainable differentiation, knowledge resources are crucial to ensuring that businesses have a durable competitive advantage [62].

The third factor is dynamic capability, which Grant [49] defines as routine business operations and strategies in which managers change their resource base to acquire and release resources as well as integrate and recombine them to produce new added value. In industries where cutting-edge information is required for effective strategy and performance, dynamic capability is vital and includes knowledge creation procedures where managers and others develop new ideas within the firm [63]. To maintain a sustained competitive advantage in a dynamic and complex external environment, businesses must develop and apply dynamic skills [64].

The fourth determinant is organizational agility which plays an important role in realizing Sustainable Competitive Advantage [2, 43, 44]. According to Lenz et al. [65], organizational agility is the capability of an organization or company in anticipating environmental changes that are responded to effectively and efficiently. Given that change is inescapable in the technology sector, organizational agility is crucial. The development of new technologies will always exist as a result of digitalization which will ultimately change supply and demand.

According to Iarnien and Viena Indien [55], organizational agility is a key factor in determining whether a business succeeds or fails in its industry. For firms that face intense competition and ongoing changes in the business environment, organizational agility is seen as a critical ability [56]. To capture market opportunities and increase their sustainable competitive edge, technology businesses develop the agility to continuously

gather, evaluate, and process evolving environmental signals. They also develop the ability to make creative decisions and fast adjust processes [57].

The four determinants acquired from 17 selected papers (prior research) have a relationship with results that are inconsistent, and this study adds new information based on the discussion above. Inconsistent results are shown in the determinants of knowledge management based on previous research. Meanwhile, the results of research on technological innovation, dynamic capability, and organizational agility tend to show positive results, but studies that concentrate on these drivers are still uncommon.

## 5 Conclusion

The consequences of this study feature that, notwithstanding an unstable business climate, quickly changing client wants, and progressively savage business rivalry, organizations are expected to have the option to make new worth through the force of innovative turn of events. Therefore, in order to achieve a long-term competitive advantage, supporting factors are required. The motivation behind this deliberate writing survey is to concentrate on the determinant factors connected with supportable upper hand in the business climate. 176 articles were collected, but after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 17 articles could be selected and identified. Based on the identification results, 4 determinant variables of sustainable competitive advantage have been successfully accommodated, namely technological innovation, knowledge management, dynamic capability, and organizational agility. There are discrepancies in the findings of the chosen articles, with some pointing to a substantial relationship between factors and corporate sustainability and others suggesting the exact opposite (no significant correlation). It is necessary for future researchers to delve deeper into this inconsistency.

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