
MARDHATILLAH RELATIONAL STABILITY AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION, SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRATION, AND ALLIANCE PERFORMANCE IN INDONESIAN SMES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the necessity of mardhatillah as a basic concept underpinning supplier-buyer relationships driven by effective knowledge dissemination in buyer-supplier relationships, which is necessary to achieve improved SME alliance performance, considering the mediating role of Mardhatillah Relational Stability and Supply Chain. This study uses a quantitative approach through structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques using partial least squares (SmartPLS 4). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire sent to 140 SMEs that are members of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) in the Kedu Regency. Knowledge dissemination (KD) has no influence on alliance performance, but has a significant positive influence on Mardhati Relational Stability and Supply-Chain Integration directly, Mardhati Relational stability mediates the relationship between KD and alliance performance. However, MRS does not mediate the relationship between KD and Supply-Chain. MRS has a significant influence on alliance performance and supply chain integration directly. However, MRS is not mediated by the relationship between Supply-Chain Integration and Alliance Performance. Supply-Chain Integration does not have a direct influence on Alliance Performance and Supply-Chain Integration does not mediate the relationship between KD and Alliance Performance. Implications & Recommendations: For SMEs, the results of this study provide an empirical basis for sharing knowledge aimed at improving the stability of relationships in accordance with the Islamic framework (Mardhatillah) in order to improve Supply-Chain Integration to realize alliance performance in SMEs.

Keywords : Knowledge Dissemination, Supply-Chain Integration, Mardhatillah Relational Stability, Alliance Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management as a means of obtaining strategic resources is a potential strategy to offset the problem of disruption risk gangguan (Modi & Mabert, 2007); (Rebolledo et al., 2008). Knowledge and information sharing focuses on sharing relevant, accurate, complete, and confidential ideas, plans, and procedures with supply chain partners in a timely manner (Elofson & Robinson, 2007) and has been described as one of the seven elements in the conceptualization of supply-chain collaboration (Cao et al., 2010). A well-defined knowledge management process plays an important role in improving logistics and supply chain-related performance (Fugate et al., 2004). Knowledge management consists of various processes including knowledge acquisition, innovation, integration, protection, and dissemination (Abubakar et al., 2019).

This concept is prevalent in Western cultures with developed markets and stable and sustainable institutional environments. However, little is known about how the implementation of knowledge management relates to the performance of producer alliances in their relationships with suppliers in developing economies with predominantly Muslim populations. This is a research gap in the supply-chain management literature.

As relational marketing theory develops, both buyers and suppliers need to emphasize the formation and development of stable reciprocal relationships rather than building hostile relationships with many partners. To achieve relational benefits and competitive advantage, mutual trust is necessary.

However, trust that relies solely on the world is considered incapable of bridging sustainable relationships if it is not based on religious values. Therefore, mardhatillah is needed as a basic concept that underpins the relationship between suppliers and buyers, which is driven by effective knowledge dissemination in buyer-supplier relationships, in order to achieve sustainable performance improvement. Knowledge dissemination encourages relational stability based on Islamic values, as well as supply chain integration in shaping alliance performance. Thus, knowledge dissemination has a positive relationship with alliance performance mediated by Mardhatillah

Relational Stability and Supply Chain Integration.

In buyer-supplier relationships, external integration is necessary and has been shown to have an interactive effect on the relationship between a company's supply chain capabilities and performance, as it compensates for organizational deficiencies in competitive capabilities (Kim, 2013). In the reciprocal process between producers and suppliers, collaborative efforts by both parties can be supported and facilitated by the effective integration of processes, structures, and information technology. Thus, integration has an important positive role and can strengthen the relationship between Knowledge Dissemination and supply-chain integration and Alliance Performance (Anwar et al., 2025). Research (Cheng et al., 2022) states that knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on Alliance Performance. Research (Eslami et al., 2023) states that knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on supply-chain integration.

Trust in reciprocal relationships is beneficial in bringing about greater levels of tacit knowledge acquisition and dissemination between the parties involved (Li et al., 2021) and thus encourages the exchange of information and knowledge beyond the boundaries of the contract (Tanskanen et al., 2017). However, in building trust among parties to achieve relational stability, methods that are not in accordance with Islamic teachings are sometimes used in transactions and interpersonal relationships, such as bribery, *mushana'ah*, and *suht*. Therefore, Islamic values need to be intervened.

Mardhatillah is an attitude adopted by a person in carrying out activities or practices, whether they are *Muamalah* or *Ibadah*, with the sole intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT. This is supported by verses from the Quran and Hadith of the Prophet. Engaging in activities with the sole purpose of seeking Allah SWT's pleasure will provide motivation, willingness to sacrifice, sincere intentions, and fairness towards others, ultimately leading to inner peace in one's life. The author proposes that activities should be carried out with good intentions and always seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT. Mutual trust between both parties will not function well if it is not grounded in the

value of worship to Allah SWT. Relationships without the foundation of worship are merely transactional, focusing solely on material gains. Especially in business relationships, which involve a continuous relationship between suppliers and customers, there needs to be a sense of trust based on the value of togetherness grounded in worship. Therefore, mardhatillah relational stability is a necessity that must be strengthened in relationships between business actors so that business activities will continue in a holistic direction, benefiting both this world and the hereafter, supported by knowledge dissemination. Research (Zhang et al., 2022) states that knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on relational stability.

(Bowersox et al., 1999) emphasize that true supply chain integration includes upstream and downstream actors, while internal integration provides the foundation for both. Internal and external integration can contribute to achieving cost reductions, stockouts, and lead times, and can result in competitive advantage (Giménez & Ventura, 2003). Therefore, companies tend to achieve superior performance when they achieve a high level of both internal and external integration. Internal and external integration are distinct but closely related concepts. Clearly, it is useful to examine both when studying supply chain integration (Rodrigues et al., 2004). However, merely describing these boundaries is not sufficient; the drivers of integration and the essence of

“integration” must be understood for useful theories to emerge. Research (Yeh et al., 2020) states that relational stability has a positive effect on supply-chain integration. Research (Prajogo & Olhager, 2012) states that supply-chain integration has a positive effect on Alliance Performance and Research (Heimeriks & Schreiner, 2010); (YANG et al., 2008) states that relational stability has a positive effect on Alliance Performance. Mardhatillah relational stability is a necessity that must be strengthened in relationships between business actors so that business activities will continue in a holistic direction, benefiting both this world and the hereafter, thereby improving alliance performance.

This study offers the concept of Mardhatillah Relational Stability (MRS) as a solution to the limitations of previous studies on the relationship between knowledge dissemination and alliance performance in cooperative enterprises in Indonesia.

Research Model

Thus, mardhatillah relational stability is expected to strengthen the relationship between knowledge dissemination and alliance performance and also be able to encourage supply-chain integration to achieve sustainable performance. From the above explanation, the following research model was formed:

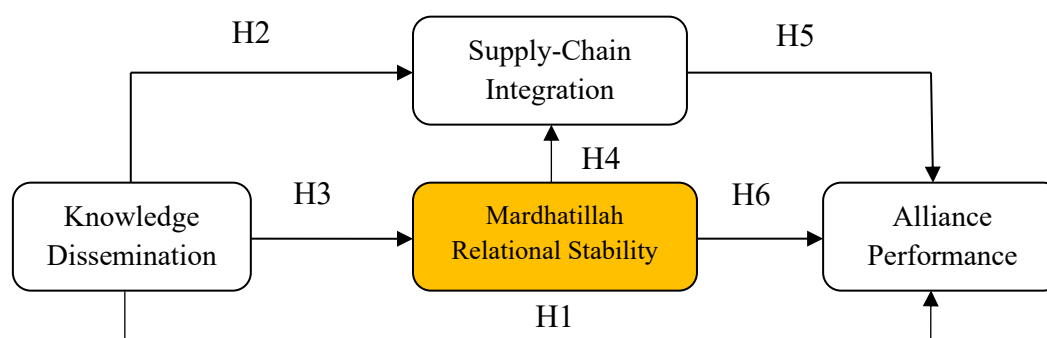


Figure 1. Research Model

The hypotheses presented in this study are as follows:

H1: knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on Alliance Performance.

H2: knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on supply-chain integration.

H3: Knowledge dissemination has a positive effect on mardhatillah relational stability.

H4: Mardhatillah relational stability has a positive effect on supply-chain integration.

H5: Supply-chain integration has a positive effect on Alliance Performance.

H6: Mardhatillah relational stability has a positive effect on Alliance Performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study that examines the relationship between variables. The population in this study is SMEs that are members of Kadin (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) located in the former Kedu Residency, which consists of five districts. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with incidental sampling technique. As the number of samples used in this study is not known with certainty, the formula (Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, 2019) is used, which states that the minimum sample size consists of 5-10 observations multiplied by the number of indicators, 10×14 indicators = 140 respondents, consisting of leaders or owners of SMEs that are members of Kadin in the Kedu Residency.

The research instrument, in the form of a questionnaire, was developed to measure the variables under study using a measurement scale appropriate to the research construct. The measurement of knowledge dissemination was adapted from (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), while supply-chain integration was measured using five items taken from the research by (Choon Tan et al., 2002). Relational stability in supply-chain alliances was adopted from (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and synthesized by Mardhatillah. Alliance performance was then measured using three items adopted from (Zollo et al., 2002). All variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale to ensure a uniform scale width.

Table 1. Variables and Indicators

Variabel	Indikator
<i>Knowledge Dissemination</i> (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We frequently hold interdepartmental meetings to discuss trends in our supply chain. 2. We spend time discussing our future supply chain needs. 3. We regularly share data on participant satisfaction in the supply chain.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. We notify participants when something important happens in the supply chain.
<i>Supply-chain integration</i> (Choon Tan et al., 2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finding new ways to integrate supply chain management activities Reducing response times across the supply chain 2. Improving integration activities across the supply chain 3. Establishing more frequent contact with supply chain members 4. Creating a compatible communication/information system
<i>Mardhatillah relational stability</i> (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and islamic value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities based on individual abilities according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. 2. Activities carried out solely for the pleasure of Allah SWT. 3. Activities that can bring blessings to all parties.
<i>Alliance performance</i> (Zollo et al., 2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are satisfied with the knowledge we have accumulated from participating in the alliance. 2. We have created new opportunities for our company through participation in the alliance. 3. Our initial goals have been fulfilled by participating in the alliance.

Furthermore, the research procedure also considers research ethics by ensuring that each respondent provides informed consent voluntarily and by guaranteeing the confidentiality of personal data and responses, which will be used exclusively for academic purposes. In data analysis, the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method was used because it is superior to the covariance-based SEM method, especially when the research model involves complex latent constructs, data distributions that are not always normal, and relatively moderate sample sizes. The use of SEM-PLS allows researchers to evaluate measurement models and structural models simultaneously, resulting in more comprehensive and relevant findings in

explaining the relationships between variables in this study.

We chose SmartPLS because of its ability to handle non-normally distributed data and explore complex interactions between latent variables, especially regarding mediation effects. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach in this study was conducted through several stages of systematic analysis. First, in the measurement model testing stage, the validity and reliability of the instruments were tested. Convergent validity was assessed based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which must be greater than 0.5, while discriminant validity was evaluated using the cross-loading method and Fornell-Larcker criteria. Reliability testing was conducted using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach Alpha values, with both required to exceed the threshold of 0.7. Second, in the structural model testing stage, the testing covers several important indicators, namely the path coefficient to test the relationship between ethical leadership, organizational support, and innovative behavior of lecturers; the R-square (R^2) value to assess the magnitude of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables; effect size (f^2) to determine the relative contribution of each variable; and significance testing using a t-statistic value above 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 through the bootstrapping method. Furthermore, interaction analysis and mediation tests were conducted to identify whether mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) was able to mediate the relationship between knowledge dissemination and alliance performance, and whether supply-chain integration was able to mediate the relationship between mardhatillah relational stability and alliance performance.

With this comprehensive analysis stage, PLS can provide a complete picture of the model's validity, the strength of the relationships between variables, and the mediation mechanisms that occur in the research context.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model

Convergent Validity

Figure 2 shows the PLS-SEM model that explains how knowledge dissemination, mardhatillah relational stability (MRS), supply-

chain integration, and alliance performance are interrelated. This model is used to test the direct and indirect effects between latent constructs in an organizational context. This model describes knowledge dissemination (KD) as an exogenous variable that directly influences mardhatillah relational stability (MRS), with a path coefficient of 0.248. This shows that knowledge dissemination has a positive impact on mardhatillah relational stability in SMEs. This variable is measured by four indicators (KD1–KD4) with high factor loadings, all > 0.7 , indicating adequate construct validity

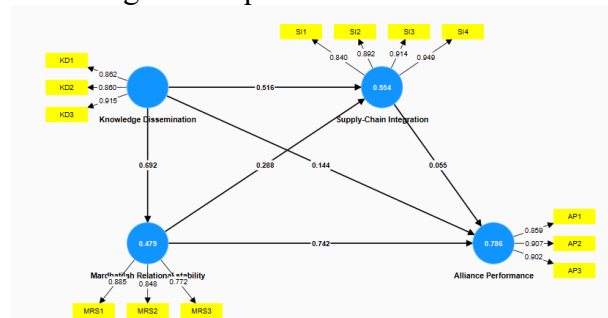


Figure 2. Convergent Validity

Source: Data processed (2026)

Furthermore, knowledge dissemination (KD) directly affects supply-chain integration. The relationship between knowledge dissemination (KD) and alliance performance is mediated by the construct of relational stability (MRS). MRS has a direct impact on AP with a value of 0.742, and its interaction with knowledge dissemination (KD-MRS-AP) contributes 10.764, indicating that this interaction has a relatively large effect. MRS itself is formed by three indicators (MRS1-MRS3) with a loading above 0.7, indicating adequate measurement reliability.

The supply-chain integration (SI) construct is a mediating variable in this model, which directly affects alliance performance (AP) with a coefficient of 0.144. This indicates that the better the supply-chain integration in SMEs, the higher the tendency to show alliance performance. SI is measured by four indicators (SI1–SI4) with strong loadings (≥ 0.72), indicating excellent internal consistency. Finally, alliance performance (AP) is an endogenous variable measured through three indicators (AP1–AP3), with factor loadings ranging from 0.859 to 0.902. The path

coefficient value of 0.055 from SI to AP indicates a strong and significant direct effect.

Discriminant Validity

Table 2. shows the evaluation of construct validity and reliability in the structural model using four main indicators. Cronbach's alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to measure internal reliability, while Average Extracted Variance (AVE) measured the convergent validity of each construct.

Table 2. Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Alliance Performance	0.868	0.871	0.919	0.791
Knowledge Dissemination	0.853	0.859	0.911	0.773
Mardhatillah Relational stability	0.783	0.788	0.874	0.699
Supply-Chain Integration	0.921	0.925	0.944	0.810

This construct has high internal reliability, with a CR value > 0.7 and a CA value approaching 0.9. An AVE value > 0.5 indicates that more than 50% of the indicator's variance is explained by this construct, thus meeting the convergent validity criteria. Alliance performance's reliability is also very good, with CA = 0.868, CR = 0.919, and AVE = 0.791. This indicates that this construct consistently measures its indicators and effectively explains their variance. Knowledge dissemination obtained a CA value of 0.853, CR of 0.911, and AVE of 0.773. MRS showed CA = 0.783, CR = 0.874, and AVE = 0.699. Supply-Chain Integration showed CA = 0.921, CR = 0.944, and AVE = 0.810, which are the highest reliability results among all constructs. The high AVE value indicates that this construct has very strong convergent validity, explaining more than 81% of the variance in its indicators.

Based on the Construct Reliability and Validity table from the data processing using SmartPLS, it can be concluded that all research constructs have a good level of reliability. This is indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values for each variable, which have exceeded the required limits, namely Composite Reliability > 0.70 and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.60 .

Inner Model

Figure 3. shows that the coefficient of determination, goodness of fit, and hypothesis testing are various methods used to assess the effectiveness of the model. Figure 2 illustrates the results of hypothesis testing conducted with PLS bootstrapping.

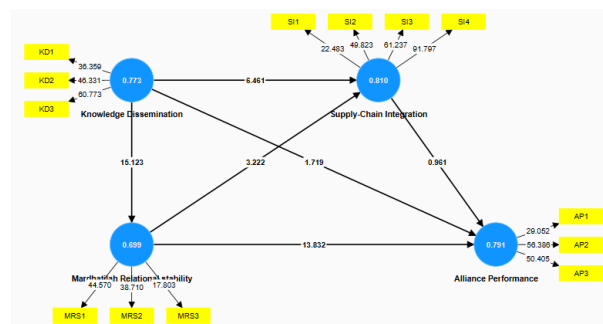


Figure 3. Inner Model Evaluation

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Hypothesis Testing Direct Effects

Table 3 shows the results of the path coefficient analysis and statistical significance between constructs in the PLS-SEM model. The path from perceived knowledge dissemination to perceived relational stability has the largest coefficient ($\beta = 0.692$, $p < 0.001$) with a t-statistic value of 15.123, indicating a highly significant and strong relationship. Furthermore, knowledge dissemination also has a significant effect on supply-chain integration ($\beta = 0.516$, $p < 0.001$), as does perceived relational stability, which significantly predicts supply-chain integration ($\beta = 0.742$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, supply-chain integration shows a significant relationship to alliance performance of ($\beta = 0.055$, $p = 0.008$), and perceived relational stability shows a significant relationship to alliance performance of ($\beta = 0.288$, $p = 0.002$). Statistical tests using smartPLS showed that the paths from KD to AP and from SI to AP were not significant. Furthermore, all paths had t-statistics > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05 ; thus, all relationships in the model were statistically significant.

Table 3. Output Bootstrapping

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
Knowledge Dissemination -> Alliance Performance	0.144	0.145	0.084	1.719	0.088
Knowledge Dissemination -> Mardhatillah Relational stability	0.692	0.691	0.046	15.123	0.000
Knowledge Dissemination -> Supply-Chain Integration	0.516	0.515	0.080	6.461	0.000
Mardhatillah Relational stability -> Alliance Performance	0.742	0.735	0.054	13.832	0.000
Mardhatillah Relational stability -> Supply-Chain Integration	0.288	0.288	0.089	3.222	0.002
Supply-Chain Integration -> Alliance Performance	0.055	0.061	0.058	0.961	0.338

Indirect Effects

The measurement is considered significant if the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% critical value. The parameter coefficient, on the other

hand, indicates the direction of the effect, as evidenced by the positive or negative value of the actual specimen.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
Knowledge Dissemination -> Mardhatillah Relational stability -> Alliance Performance	0.513	0.507	0.048	10.764	0.000
Knowledge Dissemination -> Mardhatillah Relational stability -> Supply-Chain Integration -> Alliance Performance	0.011	0.012	0.013	0.852	0.396
Mardhatillah Relational stability -> Supply-Chain Integration -> Alliance Performance	0.016	0.018	0.019	0.859	0.392
Knowledge Dissemination -> Supply-Chain Integration -> Alliance Performance	0.029	0.032	0.032	0.898	0.371

Table 4. shows the results of the indirect mediation effect test of the knowledge dissemination (KD) construct on alliance performance (AP) through mardhatillah relational stability (MRS), which shows the strongest mediation effect, with a β coefficient of 0.513 and a t statistic of 10.764 ($p < 0.001$), indicating high statistical significance. The mediation path from knowledge dissemination (KD) on alliance performance (AP) through mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) to supply-chain integration (SI) is not significant ($\beta = 0.011$, $t = 0.852$, $p < 0.396$), indicating that mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) and supply-chain integration are not effective in mediating the influence of knowledge dissemination (KD) on alliance performance. The mediating path from mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) to alliance performance (AP) through supply-chain integration (SI) is not significant ($\beta = 0.016$, $t = 0.859$, $p < 0.392$),

indicating that supply-chain integration is not effective in mediating the influence of mardhatillah relational stability on alliance performance. The mediating path from knowledge dissemination (KD) to alliance performance (AP) through supply-chain integration (SI) is not significant ($\beta = 0.029$, $t = 0.898$, $p < 0.371$), indicating that supply-chain integration does not effectively mediate the influence of knowledge dissemination (KD) on alliance performance. These results underscore the important mediating role of mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) in linking organizational factors with SME alliance performance.

5. DISCUSSION

Knowledge management is related to alliance performance and how relational stability and supply chain integration mediate the relationship between knowledge

management and alliance performance. Empirical study results show that relational stability plays a major role in mediating the relationship between knowledge dissemination (KD) and improving SME alliance performance. Knowledge dissemination (KD), which is encouraged by frequent interdepartmental meetings, spending time discussing our future supply chain needs, regularly sharing data on participant satisfaction in the supply chain, and reminding participants when something important happens in the supply chain (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), can further improve alliance performance in SMEs.

From the empirical tests conducted, the direct influence between knowledge dissemination variables on SME alliance performance does not have a significant impact. This result is not in line with research conducted by (Jiang et al., 2024) which states that there is a significant influence between knowledge dissemination and alliance performance, but the relationship between knowledge dissemination and relational stability (MRS) had a very high impact. High levels of activity based on the individual abilities described in the Quran and Sunnah, activities carried out solely to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT, activities that can bring blessings to all parties (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and Islamic values can serve as a bridge in triggering increased SME alliance performance. With the characteristics of increased knowledge accumulated from participating in alliances, creating new opportunities for businesses through participation in alliances, and achieving initial goals fulfilled by participating in SME alliances (Zollo et al., 2002). Knowledge Dissemination also has a very high influence on Supply-Chain Integration from the results of empirical tests conducted.

Mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) can also directly enhance Supply-Chain Integration and significantly improve alliance performance for SMEs. Furthermore, MRS significantly impacts Supply-Chain Integration. Higher MRS leads to higher alliance performance and Supply-Chain Integration. This means that increasing new ways to integrate supply chain management activities, reducing response times across the supply chain, improving integration activities throughout the

supply chain, and establishing more frequent contact with supply chain members can all be driven by Mardhatillah relational stability (MRS). Furthermore, Mardhatillah relational stability (MRS) can significantly improve alliance performance for SMEs. Understanding the level of comfort in buyer-supplier relationships that align with Islamic values is crucial because good deeds can foster stronger alliance performance.

Supply-Chain Integration, however, does not have a direct impact on improving alliance performance for SMEs. This result is not in line with research conducted by (Prajogo & Olhager, 2012) which stated that supply-chain integration has a positive effect on Alliance Performance.

6. CONCLUSION

Improving alliance performance doesn't rely solely on a single variable. Several effective and dynamic components are needed to achieve the desired success, thus maximizing results. Previous research has shown that several components, such as knowledge management, supply chain integration, and relational stability, can boost alliance performance. However, empirical research has shown that knowledge management plays no significant role in alliance performance. Similarly, supply chain integration has no impact on alliance performance. Therefore, new strategies are needed to address these issues.

Our research demonstrates that knowledge management, supply chain integration, and relational stability can be effective if supported by Mardhatillah (the principle of trust). Mardhatillah, integrated with relational stability, is a new variable (novelty) we propose in this study that can effectively mediate the weak influence of knowledge management on alliance performance. Mardhatillah relational stability mediates the relationship between knowledge management and alliance performance. Knowing the level of comfort in buyer-supplier relationships that are in accordance with Islamic values is very important because the act of mardhatillah is a good deed that contains elements including: 1) Activities with individual abilities based on the Quran and As Sunnah. 2) Activities carried out only hoping for the blessing of Allah SWT. 3) Activities that can provide blessings for all

parties. Increasing Mardhatillah Relational Stability (MRS) driven by Knowledge management will make the performance of SME alliances increasingly robust.

This study's limitations include the use of only knowledge management, supply chain integration, relational stability, and Mardhatillah Relational Stability (MRS) variables to improve alliance performance. Future research should add more variables to achieve more comprehensive results. Further research should be conducted on a broader scale with better sampling methods to obtain respondents with more precise generalizations.

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