



Improving business motivation in the time of crisis

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history Received: 2021-05-22 Revised: 2021-08-13 Accepted: 2021-10-23 Published: 2021-10-23</p> <p>Keywords COVID-19 Business training Crisis management Risk mitigation Entrepreneurships</p>	<p><i>The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on businesses. This condition is also experienced by many Minangkabau migrants, Micro and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in various cities in Indonesia. To increase the spirit of survival in the midst of a pandemic, the RANTAUNET community provides virtual business training for Minangkabau migrants in formulating business strategies in the midst of a pandemic. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with seven community administrators to prepare a training plan to be conducted. A total of 45 participants attended the virtual training. This virtual training program has provided motivation and knowledge inspiration for MSME actors in rearranging their business strategies.</i></p>
<p>Kata kunci COVID-19 Pelatihan bisnis Manajemen krisis Mitigasi risiko Kewirausahaan</p> <div data-bbox="268 1227 379 1339" style="text-align: center;"></div> <div data-bbox="177 1352 467 1420" style="text-align: center;"></div>	<p>Meningkatkan motivasi bisnis di saat krisis. Pandemi COVID-19 telah memberikan dampak besar bagi para pelaku usaha. Kondisi ini juga banyak dialami oleh perantau Minangkabau, pelaku Usaha Mikro dan Menengah (UMKM) di berbagai kota di Indonesia. Untuk meningkatkan semangat bertahan di tengah pandemi, komunitas RANTAUNET memberikan pelatihan bisnis virtual bagi perantau Minangkabau dalam menyusun strategi bisnis di tengah pandemi. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) dilakukan dengan tujuh orang pengurus komunitas untuk menyusun rencana pelatihan yang akan dilakukan. Total sebanyak 45 orang peserta mengikuti pelatihan secara virtual. Program pelatihan yang berjalan secara virtual ini telah memberi motivasi dan inspirasi pengetahuan bagi para pelaku UMKM dalam menyusun kembali strategi bisnis mereka.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Copyright © 2021, Maulana & Pesona This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license</p> <div data-bbox="1134 1346 1315 1413" style="text-align: right;"></div>

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stumbling block for entrepreneurs (Muehlemann et al., 2020; Teresiene et al., 2021). Not only large companies, many small, micro, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are also experiencing an alarming fate due to the decline in people's purchasing power (Bartik et al., 2020; Bendavid et al., 2021; Fairlie, 2020). As a result, not a few MSME activists have had to swerve and change their business model (Christa & Kristinae, 2021; Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). The business strategy must also be changed so that the business being carried out can survive (Kristinae et al., 2020; Mousa, 2021).

The economic challenges during the onslaught of COVID-19 are not only faced in Indonesia, but also in various other countries in the world (Beland et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2021; Obi et al., 2020). Various actions have been taken by local governments to save their economies from the threat of recession (Disemadi & Shaleh, 2020; Ejiogu et al., 2020; Wilson, 2020). Some of these actions, ranging from providing assistance to business actors, financial stimulus and loans, relaxation of taxes and credit interest, and even other assistance, also rescue programs have been carried out by the governments of many countries in the world, including in Indonesia. The government has implemented cash direct

assistance programs and economic policy packages throughout 2020 to 2021. However, the challenge to restore the business world, especially the MSMEs, also cannot be finished (Sarmigi, 2020).

The challenge of business continuity for MSME actors in Indonesia is not only felt in big cities, but also in the regions. Sarmigi (2020) even concluded that COVID-19 affected the income growth of SMEs in Kerinci City to reach -4% (Sarmigi, 2020). Likewise in East Java, Soetjipto (2020) indicated that 70% of MSMEs in East Java admitted to being confused about the sustainability of their business after this pandemic subsided (Soetjipto, 2020). The threat of a pandemic to MSME businesses has almost hit all regions in Indonesia with varying magnitudes of effect in each region.

There is no exception for immigrants from the Minangkabau tribe, West Sumatra. This ethnic group, known as master merchants and traders in various parts of the archipelago, has also not escaped the onslaught of the COVID-19 economy. In fact, most of these MSME actors from Minangkabau have to return to their hometowns (detik news, 2020), to plan strategies to return to running their businesses after the pandemic. As a community that has a tradition of living and doing business in other areas outside of their hometown, the Minangkabau ethnic group has a wide distribution of overseas communities in Indonesia, and even in the world (Bungo & Hussin, 2011). The tradition of wandering to various regions has become a moment to improve entrepreneurial skills which have become the hallmark of the people in Minangkabau (Rahman, 2016). So, it is not unusual if in markets and shopping centers in various cities in Indonesia, ethnic Minangkabau take the role of business actors there. This is a form of how the cultural values and business spirit are passed down from generation to generation by the Minangkabau people to their children and grandchildren, no matter where they are (Rahman, 2016). Unfortunately, the onslaught of COVID-19 on the business performance of the Minangkabau migrants is enough to be the reason for their declining business motivation. For some business actors who have to close their businesses, the choice to return home is the most logical thing for them. However, for others who are trying to survive in the midst of various challenges, motivation and relevant business strategies are the keys to their success (Maulana, 2020a; Pakpahan, 2020; Romagosa, 2020).

In relation to efforts to maintain and develop MSMEs, various Community Service (PkM) programs have been carried out by various teams from various universities in Indonesia. Some of the PkM activities referred to include financial management training and activities to increase MSME productivity (Sudiman et al., 2020), assistance in managing business legality (Yuwita et al., 2021), to training on MSME development by utilizing information technology (Tommy et al., 2020). However, PkM activities that are oriented to the development of MSMEs during the pandemic are still rarely carried out. The trainings that have been carried out are also usually limited to business strategy, not business motivation. Therefore, this training aims to provide motivation and business inspiration for MSME entrepreneurs from the Minangkabau community who have been hit by the economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This PkM activity needs to be held because it is in line with the eighth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainable development of the economy as well as the increase in productivity and employment are the main expectations contained in this goal.

METHOD

The writing of this article used a qualitative approach, which prioritizes the exploration of the opinion of the informants with case study data. Through the lecturing approach (lecture) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the author used in the delivery of training materials so that participants were more involved and connected with one another. This method is considered capable of providing a better exploratory understanding for all participants (NSS et al., 2015). The power of data exploration is the advantage of qualitative methods over quantitative methods (Maxwell & Reybold, 2015).

There are three main stages carried out in conducting this training, namely the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. The first is the preparatory stage which is held for two weeks before the implementation of the training. In this preparation stage, the PkM team held an initial meeting with the RANTAUNET community to conduct a focus group discussion (FGD) to develop training goals and targets. This FGD stage was attended by seven resource persons (Table 1). Through collaboration with the 'RANTAUNET' community, this business training is held not only for Minangkabau entrepreneurs, but can also be attended by MSME activists from any ethnicity.

The RANTAUNET community is a virtual Minangkabau nomad community that has been around since 1993. At the beginning of its establishment, this community used a mailing list as a means of communicating and exchanging information, including initiating many social programs and community development. As technology advances, this community has also turned to various other online communication media such as messaging applications such as WhatsApp, as well as other social media applications. As a community that focuses on social issues and community development, RANTAUNET has contributed a lot to the Minangkabau community, both in West Sumatra and overseas.

The result of this FGD is to map the topics and materials that will be delivered in the virtual training later. In addition, the authors also coordinate training methods with other speakers, so that the expected results can be achieved properly. In detail, here are the steps that the author did at the preparation stage before the training: (1) Exploring Training Topics and Needs: in this first stage, the author held a virtual meeting with several RANTAUNET community leaders to define topics and training needs. This meeting was conducted virtually, and also continued with technical coordination through

the WhatsApp messaging application. (2) Determining Training Targets: After determining the topic of motivation for business revival during this pandemic, the author then coordinates with one other speaker to determine training targets. We set three training targets, namely the first is related to increasing insight for MSME actors to be able to differentiate between Trade and Business. The second is to provide an overview of business strategy development which is conveyed through a case study of the Padang Pagi Sore restaurant by the second author. The third is related to the delivery of material on business motivation for MSME actors affected by the pandemic. (3) Preparation of the Training Implementation Schedule: In order for the material to be conveyed properly, thus, the authors and the committee make a clear training schedule at each stage. At the beginning, participants were asked to fill in their biodata and a brief description of the business they run. This serves as a guide for the speaker in providing an overview of the material so that it is easier for participants to understand later. (4) Implementation of Activities: This virtual training on business motivation is carried out with a duration of up to 4 hours on Sunday, June 14, 2020. The event took place in two sessions, namely lecturing by interviewees and also FGD which was attended by some participants. This is done in order to compile the next training material which is managed by the RANTAUNET Community.

Table 1. List of resource person for focus group discussion

No	Name	Description
1.	Arif Rangkyo Mulia	Office Stationary Merchant
2.	Dedi Yusmen	Manager of RANTAUNET
3.	Ferik Trianda	Digital Marketing Service Merchant
4.	Zahendri	Public Farming Businessman
5.	Mustaqim Amna	Journalist Observing MSME
6.	Ephi Lintau	Manager of RANTAUNET, Observer of MSME
7.	Izzurahman	Restaurant and Café Businessman

The second stage is the implementation of training. Based on the agreement with the RANTAUNET management, training related to motivation and business strategy was carried out in the midst pandemic virtually. Through access to the Zoom application, sponsored by an observer of social movements in Padang City, this virtual business training can be held for four hours. This training presented two resource persons, namely the author himself as an academic and a business consultant, and also invited a millennial entrepreneur of Minangkabau descent who owns dozens of cafe and restaurants in Jakarta. This virtual training was attended by 45 participants spread across various cities in Indonesia, as well as 25 other people who are committee members and Minangkabau leaders who live abroad. The training targets set are related to basic knowledge about business and its relevance to current conditions, as well as a review of business motivation from the Minangkabau cultural aspect.

The training session was interesting and the discussion was filled with enthusiasm from the participants. Not only attended by millennial entrepreneurs, this training was also attended by MSME actors who are over 60 years old, and have just started an online business after retiring from their permanent profession. This indicates that in the midst of the onslaught of the pandemic, business motivation must still be presented. Because a business without motivation will falter and tend to stop, and motivation without a strategy makes a business unable to operate. This is the main discussion in the virtual training. In addition to case studies from sources related to restaurant and cafe business process during the pandemic, the training also discussed two other business case studies. The first is an online shop case study by Mr Refluss (60), and also a Tour & Travel business by Uda Pradhana (26). The two case studies were discussed by resource persons to provide inspiration for strategies to survive and develop businesses amidst the hit of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last stage is the evaluation after the implementation of the training. For one hour after the session held, the writer and the committee conducted an evaluation with the RANTAUNET Community administrators to discuss the follow-up of the training program. One form of follow-up is to conduct monitoring and consulting activities through the help of WhatsApp groups that can be followed by MSME participants and actors who wish to consult for free with resource persons and other business figures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Even though the training took place in a virtual face-to-face (Figure 1), the enthusiasm of the participants seemed to never lose to that of the offline training. After the presentation of the material by the two resource persons for 40 minutes, the discussion and question and answer session ran with great warmth. Many participants had to take turns asking questions and even sharing stories about their business progress in the midst of the current pandemic. Some of the issues discussed in the discussion at the virtual training were related to business strategies during the pandemic, the business character of the Minangkabau people and their relevance to current motivations. Also, a discussion on how the concept of MSME actors in developing their business, even though some only run short-term trading practices, is not a more stable and sustainable long-term business. The authors describe these issues in the following sub-discussion. From the discussion and also the narratives of the training participants, it can be concluded that the entrepreneurial spirit for the Minangkabau people overseas is still their identity to this day. In fact, at this time of the hit of COVID-19, the synergy

of Minang migrants who are in many cities in Indonesia, looks even more solid to help each other. But indeed, in the end, not a few had to make tough decisions to temporarily close their business activities and had to go home while waiting for the situation to improve after this pandemic.

From the results of the discussion and discussion of case studies from resource persons and also training participants, it was concluded that in the current pandemic conditions, the motivation and business intentions of MSME actors must indeed be rebuilt. In addition to building motivation from the external side by looking at economic opportunities, internal motivational factors also need to be developed by MSME businessmen. One way to build internal business motivation is to recall the Minangkabau-style business philosophy which is the basis of thought for entrepreneurs in the RANTAUNET community. The second thing that needs to be considered is related to setting risk management strategies for business actors. Not only for large companies, it turns out that the ability of risk management must also be owned by SMEs. Of course, the understanding of risk is also adjusted to the scale of the business they run. The more you understand the pattern of risk management, the better the strategy will be to rise from this pandemic. The third result of this training is related to strategies for changing business models that can be developed also by all MSME actors. Reflecting on the case study presented by the resource person and the two participants, the migration of an offline business to an online business is an alternative strategy that can be developed by entrepreneurs during this pandemic. Three major points as a result of this training will be discussed in detail in the following subsections.

Building business through indigenous philosophy and tradition

The Minangkabau ethnicity cannot be separated from the identity of entrepreneurs who seem to be attached to them. The matrilineal system adopted by the Minangkabau community is believed to be one of the aspects that builds the entrepreneurship culture. As the only ethnic group in Indonesia that adheres to a matrilineal kinship system, the Minangkabau people have a tradition of wandering, namely leaving their hometowns for adult men to earn a living and other economic benefits to later become a living provision for themselves and their families left in the hometown (Hastuti et al., 2015). Although currently the meaning of wandering has developed, it is not only done by adult men, but also by adult women. In addition, economic motives are no longer the only reason to migrate, but can also be based on educational motives, marriage, and various other motives (Rahman, 2016).

The spirit of wandering has made the Minangkabau people engage in many trading activities, and become figures in economic activities in many regions in Indonesia. Most of their roles in these economic activities are as MSME actors who have daily necessities trading businesses such as restaurants, grocery stalls, clothing, and many others. As an ethnic group that adheres to the philosophy of "*adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*" (customs based on religion, religion based on the Qur'an), the correlation of Minangkabau culture with Islam becomes an inseparable unity. Therefore, the spirit to seek a better life based on Islamic teachings is also the reason for the Minangkabau people to carry out migration activities. Customary and religious identity for the Minangkabau ethnic group is a way of life that they always believe in no matter where they are. The vertical relationship between Minangkabau customs and Islam is a provision for Minang migrants in adapting to the area they live in. Customary and religious values serve as guidelines, but do not differentiate them from other ethnic groups. For this reason, the concept of migration of the Minangkabau community has a different approach compared to other ethnic groups in Indonesia (Hastuti et al., 2015).

Belief in religious teachings and cultural values is also what makes Minang migrants face this pandemic as a test in their business journey. "Humans plan, God also makes it happen", this belief was embedded in the Minang nomad when asked what they thought about the COVID-19 hit on their business journey. Even though various strategies must be drawn up immediately, the principles of religious and cultural teachings slightly balance their emotional condition.

Risk management for MSME business actors

The second major issue discussed at the training was related to how to develop a strategy to survive in the midst of pandemic hit. The current pandemic condition is a very formidable challenge for business actors, especially Minang entrepreneurs who are far overseas. The cost of living is high enough to make them unable to survive and have to return to their hometown. This condition is of course very unfortunate. But what can be done, the business situation is not promising, so even tough decisions must be made immediately. In Minangkabau philosophy, the context of good business strategy planning can be explained in the following expression:

*Ingek-ingek sabalun kanai
Ingek jo dahan nan ka maimpok
Kana jo rantiang nan ka mancucuak
Alun takilek alah takalam
Bulan lah ganok tigo puluah
Alun diliiek alah bakinyam
Raso lah sampai di dalam tubuah*

(Remember before you get hit
Remember the branch that will fall
Remember the branch that will pierce
Even if it's a moment, but it feels like a long time
A month is even thirty days
Not yet ripe, but tasted
The feeling has seeped into the body)

Source: *Collection of Minangkabau Traditional Poem* (Rangkoto, 1982)

The quote from the Minangkabau traditional philosophy is a guide for the Minang people in carrying out their daily activities, even when they migrate (Maulana, 2017). In fact, if drawn from a business perspective, this customary philosophy can be interpreted as a study of 'risk management' instilled by the ancestors of the Minangkabau community. The concept of planning and mitigating various possibilities that occur in the future is the basis in the science of risk management developed by many large and medium-sized business companies. In this context, even MSME actors can actually integrate the risk management concept into their business sustainability plans amidst the hit of disasters, even in the current pandemic situation.

This Minangkabau traditional proverb is of course not only a literary work, but is a life teaching that must be interpreted in the present context by its followers. In the business context, risk mitigation which is illustrated to the philosophy above is through the statement "Ingek Sabalun Kanai" (remember before you get hit). This sentence contains the message that in doing something, we must have a measurable plan for what we want to do. This also applies to the business context; business people should have a strategic plan before they run their business. The concept of planning in management science is the basis for the development of business strategy. In fact, a good business is a business that already has a measurable plan, so that the control and evaluation functions of its implementation can be implemented properly as well. The clearer the management function in its business strategy, the better the strategy that can be produced by the company (Varadarajan, 2010). Of course, in this case, the context of SMEs can also be equated with the concept of strategy in the company, although in different doses.

One approach in business planning is to use SWOT analysis, which is a set of analytical tools by mapping strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This SWOT analysis is one of the business planning tools that can help business owners in developing their business strategies. Not only for the context of large companies, this SWOT analysis can also be applied to the MSME business, and can also be seen from various perspectives, business and social (Putra & Maulana, 2019). In compiling a SWOT analysis, the four components of the analysis can be divided into two groups, namely the analysis of Strengths (S) and Weaknesses (W) viewed from the internal aspects of business actors such as financial conditions, workforce capabilities, as well as access to raw materials and distribution owned by the current business. Meanwhile, the components of opportunities (O) and threats (T) can be seen from the external aspects of the business, for example the situation of the business environment, competition from competitors, the general economic situation, as well as government policies and regulations related to the business sector. Strategy formulation by looking at the four components will help business actors to develop strategic plans in running their business in the future (Fred, 2015). The results of the discussion at the training also confirmed that many business actors, especially MSME actors, who still do not have a business strategy in running their business. The buying and selling practice that they do only fulfill the element of 'trade' alone, does not meet the criteria of a business that can be sustainable. In short, we can distinguish that trade tends to be oriented towards short-term results, while business is oriented to long-term and sustainable income (Makhrus & Mukarromah, 2020). For this reason, the big challenge in the midst of this pandemic will be felt for businesses that do not have a plan, only run based on feelings. Therefore, understanding of business strategies and good business managerial patterns must be improved for MSME owners and activists in Minang nomads, as well as other micro-business players in Indonesia.

Migration from offline to online business

In addition to providing material from two resource persons, during the virtual training, participants were also asked to share stories about their current business activities. Whether it is for those who have been negatively affected during this pandemic, or even those who have had a positive impact and their business performance has actually increased during this COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, various changes have occurred due to the hit of this pandemic (Maulana, 2020b).

Pradhana (26), a tour & travel entrepreneur based in the city of Padang explained how his business was affected by the severe COVID-19 pandemic. The business in the field of travel that he has managed for the past year has experienced a very significant decline in income. In fact, he and his co-workers had to swerve to open new business opportunities in order to continue the company's wheels. Currently, Pradhana and his colleagues are opening a new business in the field of digital marketing and design services for MSMEs and other colleague entrepreneurs. Even though he has not been able to get a wide market yet, at least this new business model can give him and his team a glimmer of hope in Padang.



Figure 1. Documentation on the implementation of the entrepreneurship training webinar for the Minangkabau entrepreneur community

Another story of a retired office in Jakarta. Reflus (60) said that during this pandemic, he actually runs new business opportunities that even some people think are not suitable for his current age. Even though he is 60 years old, Reflus is even more enthusiastic about learning the world of online trading by opening online stores in several e-commerce marketplaces in Indonesia. No need to work hard, Reflus actually offers daily necessities such as soap, shampoo, kitchen ingredients, and other household necessities in the marketplace application. For Reflus, this work from home period is an opportunity to do online trading business. Interestingly, Reflus takes advantage of the discount program from the well-known product producer to get a lower price for its merchandise stock. Owning a credit card that he had when he worked, Reflus has an alternative capital in collecting products with lower capital prices, so he has the opportunity to get a bigger profit compared to offline retail stores around where his consumers live. Reflus admitted, in one week, the sales turnover could reach millions of rupiah.

From the two narratives of the training participants, it can be concluded that the current conditions are indeed challenging for all business people, regardless of the type of industry they are in (Carlsson-Szlezak et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). However, it is the response to current conditions that will determine our success in surviving or even continuing to be in shock. The business strategy carried out by Pradhana and Reflus in the story above provides evidence to us that the motivation to do business in the midst of a crisis like today must be retained and maintained. Because if motivation has started to fade, various business strategies feel unreasonable and hopeless. This is because business motivation is also reported to be one of the predictors of business continuity (Ismail et al., 2016; Rey-Martí et al., 2015). Thus, one of the efforts to maintain business in the midst of a pandemic is to empower and maintain business motivation in every MSME.

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In addition, the courage of entrepreneurs to join the digital world is also an important stage in the pandemic era. The use of information technology is the best alternative in marketing strategies in the pandemic era. Marketing strategy is an important factor in any business because it will determine the profits earned (Aghazadeh, 2015; Jasra et al., 2010). Utilization of information technology needs to be applied in marketing strategies for MSMEs because it contributes

greatly to marketing in the digital era (Guercini et al., 2018; Ramanathan et al., 2012; Sanaei & Sobhani, 2018; Wang et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

The concept of motivation from external and internal individuals is needed for entrepreneurs in running their businesses. The lack of motivation in the midst of the hit of the current pandemic will diminish the enthusiasm to rise and continue business for MSME actors in Indonesia. Internal motivation can be obtained from believed spiritual values, such as religious teachings and cultural values. While external motivation can be obtained from various positive activities in the community, such as business training organized by the RANTAUNET community. One way to build internal business motivation is to recall the Minangkabau-style business philosophy which is the basis of thought for entrepreneurs in the RANTAUNET community. The second thing that needs to be considered is related to setting risk management strategies for business actors. MSME actors must also have risk management capabilities, of course, it is adjusted to the scale of the business they are living. The more they understand the pattern of risk management, the better the strategies they will develop to emerge from this pandemic. The third result of this training is related to strategies for changing business models that can be developed also by all MSME actors. Reflecting on the case study presented by the resource person and the two participants, the migration of an offline business to an online business is an alternative strategy that can be developed by entrepreneurs during this pandemic. Changes in business models are unavoidable, it takes the courage of business actors to be able to adapt in the midst of uncertain conditions like today.

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