

Maintaining Sustainability Competitiveness in Food Entrepreneurship During COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Small and medium businesses face tight competition with more and more entrepreneurs starting their businesses in the effort to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Entrepreneurs should have sustainable competitiveness so that they can survive during competition. Sustainability can be achieved through the creation of creative products, using business models that suit consumer needs and technological developments, one of which being utilizing marketing through social media and joining online communities as a medium to share experiences with fellow business people. This study examines the role of creative products, business models, and social media marketing in building competitiveness with online communities as a mediating variable. Based on primary data from a survey of 150 food entrepreneurs in the Greater Jakarta area, hypotheses were tested by the use of the Structural of Equation Model (lisrel-SEM). It can be seen in the findings that the participation of entrepreneurs in the online community is influenced by product creativity but not by business models and social media marketing. Competitiveness is influenced by the online community which is followed by entrepreneurs. These findings contribute to the entrepreneurship literature with the finding that shows social media marketing and business model do not influence entrepreneurs to join online communities and build sustainability competitiveness. These findings also show that product creativity encourages entrepreneurs to join online communities to gain sustainability competitiveness.

Keywords: Product Creativity, Business Online, Social Media Marketing, Online Community, Sustainability Competitive.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of small businesses (SMEs) is accelerating with the COVID 19 pandemic which has caused many companies to have to lay off their employees, which in turn makes them rely on their ability to open businesses. The food business is one type of business that many new entrepreneurs do because it tends to be easier to do by using their expertise and the development of online marketing. To compete and be recognized by consumers, entrepreneurs must be able to make products that have distinctive characteristics in comparison to other similar products which already exist in the market. Product quality is not the only factor that can make our products last long, but the peculiarities are the first to attract the attention of consumers. Entrepreneur creativity has a great role in creating different products. In developing products which are new, entrepreneurs must use their creativity (Du, Zhang, & Zhang, 2019). Adapting as well as getting to know the flow of business is needed by a new entrepreneur. To understand more of the mechanisms of business, an entrepreneur needs a business model. Creating value for a company needs a business canvas model (Osterwalder, Alexander & Pigneur, 2018).

Joining an online community will increase the entrepreneur's knowledge of how to run a business. The online community is an interaction of people who share the same experience, problem, and desire (Galarneau, 2002). Social media becomes part of the easiest forms of e-marketing to use for both consumers and dealers. Managing marketing through social media requires serious attention because all entrepreneurs do the same things. The marketing by using social media is a process that gives encouragement to individuals to promote through their website, services or products, via social channels which are online and to create communication by leveraging a community which is much larger that has the potential to be marketed than through advertising channels which are traditional (Weinberg, 2009). Engagement in an online community provides some firms with distinct forms of competitiveness (Fisher, 2012).

The study has the purpose of finding out what motivates entrepreneurs to join online communities with the goal of increasing competitiveness. Entrepreneurial motivation in this study is product creativity, business models and social media marketing. Previous studies on the relationship between product creativity, business models and social media marketing with online communities in the food business are still few. Likewise, the study of online communities as a mediating variable on competitiveness has still not been done much.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 PRODUCT CREATIVITY

Creativity is the capacity of developing new ideas and finding new ways of facing problems and opportunities. Creativity is a source of innovation, and motivation for people to produce a brand new idea into something that is regarded of being useful (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Creativity is also defined as an original idea and functional (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Creativity is nearly connected to a new functional idea (Ali Taha, Sirková, & Ferencová, 2016). Creative ideas do not turn out to be developed fully in the mind of the creator but are made from the search for information to be developed into something different from what already exists (Althuizen & Reichel, 2016). Meanwhile, Product creativity is a subjective evaluation of a product that shows its novelty and usefulness (Horn & Salvendy, 2006). Product creativity is an appraisal given by customers from product uniqueness's level differ from competitor product (Hong, Song, & Yoo, 2013). There are six major dimensions of creativity in making product such as novelty, resolution, emotion, centrality, importance and desire (Horn & Salvendy, 2006).

Prior study states that creativity has a great role in developing new products (Zocche, de Paula, Kunrath, Martins, & Lermen, 2018). Entrepreneurs try to foresee the new product chance in line to achieve target market and fulfill potential customer requirements (Honig & Hopp, 2019). Online community is a virtual organization as a place of knowledge exchange (Faraj, Jarvenpaa, & Majchrzak, 2011). In these communities, members can conduct contributions which are proactive to brands, in terms of offering review product and giving help to other users (Mandl & Hogreve, 2020). The proposed hypothesis:

H1: Product Creativity has significantly positive influence on online community.

2.2 MODEL BUSINESS

Business is a group of decision variables such as architecture, economics and business strategy which are handled to yield advantage which is competitive (Morris, Schindehutte, & Allen, 2005). A function of business refers to the various activities carried out by a company to achieve profit. Business performance is affected by changing environmental factors, as well as business models. The definition of business model is a model that pictures how a company is engaged in making a profit. Furthermore, business model is used to strategize how the company will make money and maintain profits (Stewart & Zhao, 2000). Osterwalder states that business model is plan or sketch or blueprint of how companies do business (Osterwalder, Pigneur, & Tucci, 2005). Amir and Zott defined the business model as a system and activities which are interdependent that define the system a firm to do business with partners, customers and vendors (Amit & Zott, 2012). Business model consists of 9 building blocks (Osterwalder, Alexander & Pigneur, 2018) such as customer segment, propositions of value, channels, customer relationships, streams of revenue, resources, key activities, key partnerships and structure cost.

The previous study found that the company's business model defines how its operations strategy and approach will create value for customers (Thompson, Peteraf, Strickland III, & Gamble, 2018), and other study also found that the business model is a framework in the beginning phases of a business to predict as well as analyze the risks that may occur due to lack of entrepreneurial experience and emphasizes the importance of the entrepreneur's imagination (Morris et al., 2005). The online community is a virtual organization as a place of knowledge exchange (Faraj et al., 2011). The proposed hypothesis:

H2: Business Model has significantly positive influence on online community.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The marketing of social media is a process that gives encouragement to individuals to conduct promotion activity of their products, websites or services through social channels which are online and to carry out communication by leveraging a much bigger community who are more likely carry out marketing activity than through advertising channels which are traditional (Weinberg, 2009). The marketing by social media form of online advertising that uses the context which is cultural of social communities including networks which are social, virtual worlds, social news sites, and sites of social opinion sharing to fulfill communication targets (Tuten, 2008). Social media marketing is a relatively new marketing opportunity but has the potential to offer advertising directly to groups' social niches based on the profile information they voluntarily provide through sites such as Instagram, Bebo, Facebook, Myspace, and others (Ryan, Damian & Jones, 2009). Elements of social media marketing (Gunelius, 2011) such as Content Creation, Content Sharing, Connecting, Community Building Web.

Prior study showed that new businesses must maximize social media marketing because it provides benefits, among others, as a medium of communication with consumers, introducing brands, and increasing revenue (Jung & Jeong, 2020). A virtual community is people in a group who carry out communication in a structured manner through news groups (Chen & Hung, 2010). The organization identifies the needs of online community members, accommodates their needs, and communicates effectively to increase the satisfaction level of the online community (Kang & Park, 2018). The proposed hypothesis:

H3: Social Media Marketing has significantly positive influence on online community.

2.4 ONLINE COMMUNITY

What is meant by online community is a group of people who have interaction online to share common interests (Cothrel & Williams, 2000). Other definition states that online community is aggregation which is social that emerges with technology to create networks of personal relationships in cyberspace (Rheingold, 2000). A lot of benefits can be obtained from online communities such as providing physical, economic, cognitive, and emotional resources to its members for discussion, and brainstorming. Preese declares that an online community is an interaction space where people gather to get and provide information or help, learn, and make friends virtually or online (Preece, 2001). One of the reasons for joining an online community is to increase knowledge, especially for those who are just starting a business. Online community is a virtual organization as a place of knowledge exchange (Faraj et al., 2011). The learning of entrepreneurial skills has been identified as one of the thematic trends which has become the key in behavioral research (Jansen, Veenstra, Zuurveen, & Stol, 2016). It is put into definition as a process of learning to recognize and act when there are opportunities, and interact on social platform to initiate, organize, and run ventures. The members get to know each other based on common interests which ultimately result in conducive behavior. A virtual community is people in group who carry out communication in a structured manner through news groups (Chen & Hung, 2010). Online Community Dimensions (Roberts, 1998) such as cohesion (feeling belonging to the community and having a group identity); effectiveness (the impact the group has on the lives of its members); help or assist (the desire and ability of group members to receive and ask for help); relationships (interaction opportunities between group members including friendship); language (a special term commonly used among group members); and self-regulation (the group's effort or ability to control and regulate itself).

Prior study showed that Engagement in an online community provides some firms with distinct forms of competitive advantage. As online communities become more pervasive, so this source of competitive advantage is likely to be increasingly relevant and important (Fisher, 2012). The proposed hypothesis:

H4: Online Community has significantly positive influence on Competitiveness

2.5 COMPETITIVENESS

Competitiveness can be defined as the capacity to encounter face competition and to succeed in facing competition. Competitiveness would then be the capacity to sell products that fulfill the needs and requirements (price, quality, quantity) and, meanwhile, make sure profits over time that enable the firm to flourish (Latruffe, 2010). As mentioned by Freebairn that competitiveness is the ability to distribute services and goods at the place, time, and form according to consumer demand (Freebairn, 1987). Supporting the opinion above, competitiveness is the capacity to deliver services and goods at the place, time and form the buyer wants at the same or better price than another supplier while getting cost return for the resources used. Competitiveness is also the ability to survive and grow under pressure (Jankowska & Hammar, 2013).

Dimensions of Competitiveness (Vilanova, Lozano, & Arenas, 2009) can exist in the forms of performance (ability to achieve the required product output); quality (suitability of products with consumer needs); productivity (ability to produce production output); innovation (introduction of new elements in the form of new information, organization, and management or processes that show discontinuity with the past); and image (understanding the impression that arises from understanding a reality). Firms can increase advantage which is competitive in the market and yield value for other firm stakeholder groups in the process (Tantalo & Priem, 2016). The company will be competitive if it is able to provide more value to its consumers than its competitors and this will be sustainable if it is able to maintain and even improve it even though competitors try to match or exceed what we provide to consumers (Thompson et al., 2018).

2.6 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

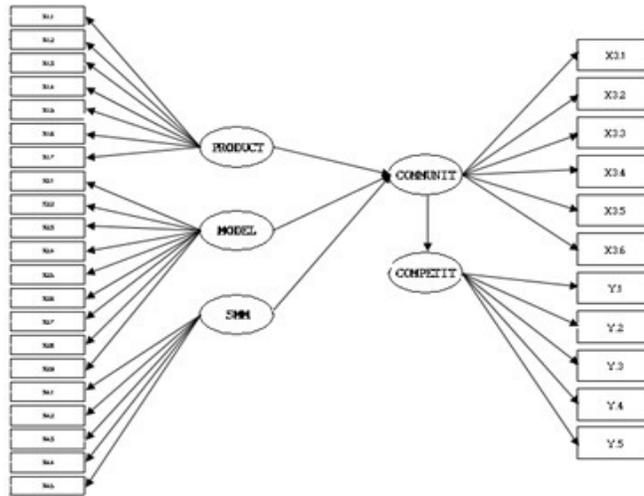


Figure 1. Conceptual Model for the Research

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The variables observed were 4 variables such as creative product, business model, social media marketing, and sustainability competitiveness. Thirty-two items include the measurement of exogenous variables such as seven items of creative product, nine items of business model, six items for online community, and endogenous variables such as five items of marketing of social media and five items of competitiveness. The scaling system implemented in this study is the 5-point Likert scale of 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-neutral, 4-disagree, and 5-strongly disagree. The variables of demographics being given questions are age, gender, period of becoming an entrepreneur (year), having other/side-Job or not, and social media.

Data analysis

This research used statistics inferential to test the effect of extrinsic Value, intrinsic Value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. The SEM LISREL was used for the inferential statistic.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES

Table 1: Descriptive Analyses

Gender	Frekuensi	Percentage (%)
Male	61	32.9
Female	124	67.1
Age		
< 20	34	18.4
21-30	74	40
31-40	30	16.2
>40	47	25.4
Period of becoming an entrepreneur (year)		
< 1	81	43.8
1 – 2	46	24.9

3 – 4	35	18.9
>4	23	12.4
Having Other/Side-Job		
Yes	77	41.6
No	108	58.4
Social Media		
Facebook	28	15.1
Instagram	79	42.7
Tik Tok	11	5.9
Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok	6	3.23
Instagram, Tik Tok	11	5.9
Facebook, Instagram	37	20
Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter	3	1.6
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	4	2.1
Instagram, Twitter	6	3.23

Source: Author' own elaborations

The respondents' profiles' analyses indicate that most respondents are female 67.1%, 40% are 21-30 years old, and period of becoming entrepreneur less than one year 43.8%. 58.4% of respondents have no other job except becoming an entrepreneur and the most social media used is Instagram 42.7%. So, it can be concluded that most of the respondents became entrepreneurs due to pandemic COVID 19.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Table 2. Construct Average Variance Extracted, Reliability and Discriminant Validity

Indikator	Standarized Loading	Error Variance	(Σ Standarized Loading ²)	Σ Error	Constuct Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Discriminant Validity
X1.2	0.76	0.42	3.63	3.33	0.75	0.52	0.72
X1.2	0.70	0.51					
X1.3	0.76	0.42					
X1.4	0.70	0.51					
X1.5	0.70	0.48					
X1.6	0.72	0.48					
X1.7	0.70	0.51					
X2.1	0.73	0.47	2.57	2.44	0.75	0.51	0.71
X2.2	0.75	0.44					
X2.3	0.69	0.52					
X2.4	0.73	0.47					
X2.5	0.68	0.54					
X3.1	0.60	0.63	4.47	2.62	0.71	0.63	0.79
X3.2	0.56	0.69					
X3.3	0.67	0.55					
X3.4	0.71	0.50					
X3.5	0.71	0.50					
X3.6	0.71	0.49					
X3.7	0.70	0.51					
X3.8	0.66	0.57					
X3.9	0.67	0.55					
Y1.1	0.86	0.26	4.46	1.77	0.85	0.72	0.85
Y1.2	0.89	0.21					
Y1.3	0.88	0.22					

Y1.4	0.87	0.25					
Y1.6	0.82	0.32					
Y1.6	0.85	0.27					
Y2.1	0.77	0.41					
Y2.1	0.87	0.24					
Y2.3	0.80	0.37	2.98	2.02	0.79	0.60	0.77
Y2.4	0.78	0.38					
Y2.5	0.62	0.62					

Source: Author' own elaborations

To give examination on the model of measurement, data appropriateness, discriminant, and convergent validity (Hair, JF., Black, WC., Babin, BJ., Anderson, RE., Tatham, 2010) CFA was conducted. Table 2 shows the standardized factor loadings and constructs reliability from validity which is convergent. Using 32 items for the model of measurement showed no validity and reliability issues in the data (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Each measurement had a significant factor loading higher than 0.50, for reliability had a Cronbach Alpha more significant than 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The last AVE value higher than 0.5, which provides convergent validity evidence. Discriminant validity is higher than AVE.

4.3 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSES

Table 3. Model Fit Indices for the Model of Measurement

Goodness Of Fit	Standard Fit	Result	Note
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	≥ 0.90	0.93	good fit
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	≥ 0.90	0.96	good fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.90	0.96	good fit
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	0.96	good fit
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	≥ 0.90	0.93	good fit
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	≤ 0.10	0.04	good fit
Standardized RMR	≤ 0.10	0.08	good fit
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	0.7	close fit
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	$0.80 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$	0.65	close fit

Source: Author' own elaborations

An analysis on confirmatory factor analysis was done in this study to assess the measurement model's overall validity and fit of the constructs. The key goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model are put into examination (Hu, Bentler, & Hu, 2009). Measurement model fit became the base for the overall chi-square for the measurement model was Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.93, Non-Normed fit index (NNFI) = 0.96, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.96, Relative Fit Index (RFI) = 0.93, and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) = 0.04 indicate adequate fit (Hair, JF., Black, WC., Babin, BJ., Anderson, RE., Tatham, 2010; Hu et al., 2009). Although the AGFI and GFI cannot fulfill their suggested cut-off Value of 0.90, respectively, all other fit indices fulfill the recommended Value. Thus, the model provides evidence of a good fit of the model which is strong (Steiger, 1980).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Tests

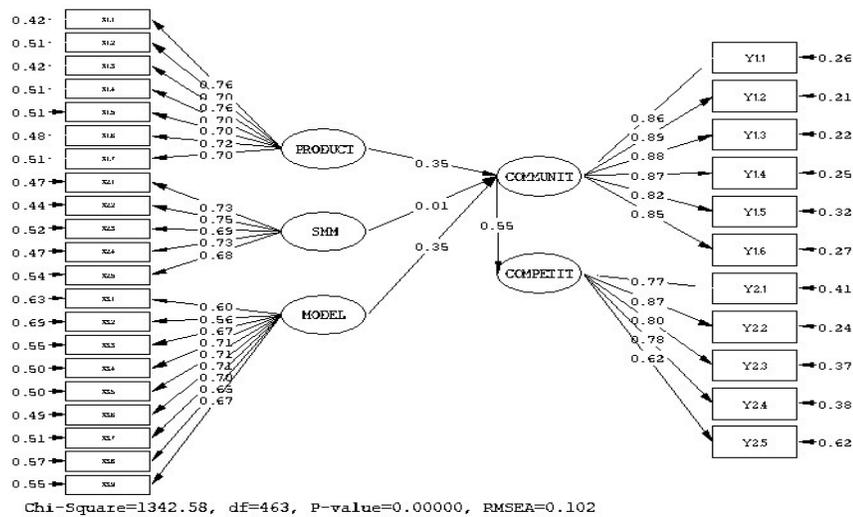


Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients Research Model ($p < 0.05$)
Source: Author' own elaborations

Figure 2 show there were two exogenous (independent) factors and two endogenous (dependent) factors. As for structural model, the proposed model achieved a reasonably acceptable overall fit to the data NFI = 0.91, NNFI = 0.94, IFI = 0.94, RFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.94, and RMR = 0.06 were shown in the results

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Path	Estimation	t- value	Critical value	Result
Product Creativity X_1 → Online Community (Y_1)	0.35	2.73	1.96	Significant
Social Media Marketing (X_2) → Online Community (Y_1)	0.01	0.04	1.96	Not Significant
Business Model (X_3) → Online Community (Y_1)	0.35	1.51	1.96	Not Significant
Online Community (Y_1) → Sustainability Competitive (Y_2)	0.55	5.23	1.96	Significant

Source: Author' own elaborations

Fig. 2 and Table 4 explain the findings of path analysis which is based on multiple coefficients of determination (R^2), coefficients of path (β), and t-values. Two hypotheses are supported in the results those are H1 (Product Creativity to Online Community with t-value = 2.73) and H4 (Online Community to Sustainability Competitive with t-value 5.23). Meanwhile two others do not support H2 (Social Media Marketing to Online Community with t-value 0.04), and H3 (Business Model to Online Community with t-value 1.51).

5. DISCUSSION

Competitiveness is an important factor for companies to survive in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the emergence of new entrepreneurs who are trying new businesses because of compulsion or an inner drive for entrepreneurship. Starting a business is not easy. Apart from determination, entrepreneurs must have something different to offer consumers. The products offered must have advantages over similar products already on the market. Product creativity is an appraisal given by customers from product uniqueness's level that differs from competitor product (Hong et al., 2013). Novelty alone is not enough to attract consumers, but it must also offer convenience for consumers. Creating creative products cannot be done instantly but must go through stages to produce something new and different. Product creativity is a subjective evaluation of a product that shows its novelty and usefulness (Horn & Salvendy, 2006). The antecedents of product performance which is new of firms from markets which are emerging will make us able to better understand the competitive benefits of the firms (Tsai, Baugh, Fang, & Lin, 2014).

However, unlike the previous study, social media marketing does not influence on online community. One of the reasons for joining an online community is to increase knowledge, especially for those who are just starting a business.

Online community is a virtual organization as a place of knowledge exchange (Faraj et al., 2011). Members of online community can give proactive contributions to brands, that includes offering review product or giving help to other users (Mandl & Hogueve, 2020). In this study, business model also does not influence on online community. The company's business model defines how its operations strategy and approach will create value for customers (Thompson et al., 2018), and other study also found that the business model is a framework in the beginning phases of a business to predict and analyze the risks that may occur due to lack of entrepreneurial experience and emphasizes the importance of the entrepreneur's imagination (Morris et al., 2005). Planning a good business model will generate good income. Profits are not only in the form of money but also the recognition of the brand by consumers which will bring long-term benefits. The model of business gives help to a firm to obtain competitive benefit (Malmström, Johansson, & Wincent, 2015) and keep the competitive benefit (Wirtz, Gottel, & Daiser, 2016).

Developing entrepreneurial skills is not always obtained formally but can also be informally. Joining an online community is one way to develop skills, knowledge, and insights related to business development by sharing experiences and transferring knowledge with fellow members for joint business development. The learning of entrepreneurial skills has been identified as one of the main thematic trends in behavioral research (Jansen et al., 2016). It can be put into definition as a process of learning to recognize and act on opportunities, and interacting socially to initiate, organize, and manage ventures. Online communities become more pervasive, so this source of competitive advantage is likely to be increasingly relevant and important (Fisher, 2012). In these communities, members can give proactive contributions to brands, that includes offering review product or giving help to other users (Mandl & Hogueve, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

Having competitiveness is an important factor for entrepreneurs to be able to survive and develop the business. Building competitiveness is done by managing available resources such as producing creative products, implementing effective business models, doing marketing through social media creatively and attractively and following online communities to get the latest knowledge. In this study, only product creativity influences online community, meanwhile social media marketing and business model do not influence on online community. Competitiveness is influenced by online community. Future studies could focus on the relationship of product creativity, social media marketing and business model on competitiveness and could be added with some variables that influence online community.

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