

Strengthen the Resilience of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Covid-19 Pandemic Through the Strengthening Entrepreneurial Orientation and Religiosity (A Conceptual Framework)

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of economic impacts of COVID-19 on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is the main contextual of recent studies on entrepreneurship. SMEs as an important sector in the structure of the economy are the largest sector of COVID-19 impact. SMEs should still exist and survive the impact of COVID-19. Resilient of SMEs is an absolute action by strengthening Entrepreneurial Orientation and religiosity as inherent part in the process. Thus, the performance of SMEs will be better, resilient, and sustainable.

Keywords

Entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity, economic impact, COVID-19

Introduction

COVID-19 has had a real economic impact. Since the end of 2019, COVID -19 has spread to various countries and it influences on economic impact. It is unknown when it will end (Kuckertz et al., 2020). The greater impact of COVID-19 is on small and medium enterprises/SMEs (Brown & Rocha, 2020). In Indonesia, SMEs is the crisis sector that is more severe than in the crisis on 1998 of financial crisis (Sugiri, 2020). Based on P2E LIPI data, SMEs sector is the recipient of the multiplayer effect from the inactive tourism sector. SMEs in the food and beverage sector decrease on scale of 27% (Bahtiar & Saragih, 2020). Consequently, the supply and demand sides also decrease and many SMEs reduce labor. The demand on goods and services decrease because society lost their income (Sugiri, 2020; United Nations, 2020). Thus, this impact will continue in an uncertain time frame of the end of COVID-19.

SMEs are dominant sector in Indonesia's economic structure. SMEs have a major and important contribution to the national economy (Aknolt et al., 2020). There were 64,194,057 SMEs in Indonesia or 99% of the total business units in 2018. The SMEs sector employs 116,978,631 workers or 97% of the total workers in the economic sector (Kemenkop UKM 2018). In addition, SMEs are the largest contributor to

PDB (government local income) and media of improving people from poverty and equalizing the economic level of societies (Aknolt et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2020; Tambunan, 2008; Tambunan, 2011).

The government has conducted programs to provide strengthening the role, sustainability of SMEs and resilience in the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts consist of increasing government payments, providing loans for SMEs affected COVID-19 and extending national holiday to support tourism sectors and doing synergy program between ministries or agencies (Bahtiar & Saragih, 2020; Nasution et al., 2020; Sugiri, 2020). Researchers have carried out study on SMEs in particular and having a serious concern for the resilience of SMEs (Kraus et al., 2012; Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020; Rafiki & Nasution, 2019; Swierczek & Ha, 2003; Wardi et al., 2017).

Previous studies focus on Entrepreneurial Orientation as a key of the company in an effort to increase performance and achievement in the fierce competition and a crisis at any time. The relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and the performance of SMEs companies has been studied by researchers in many countries (Jantunen et al., 2005; Swierczek & Ha, 2003; Johan Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Zahra, 1995) but most of these studies focus on the level of

competition from the intrinsic elements of SMEs actors such as religion. Religion in entrepreneurship studies is one of neglected element (Corrêa et al., 2017; Pearce et al., 2010). Thus, the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior are fuzzy partly (Nwankwo et al., 2012).

Based on the literature review, this research argued SMEs with Entrepreneurial Orientation and religiosity can improve the performance and strengthen resilience in the crisis such as Pandemic of COVID-19. In the context of Indonesia, as the largest Muslim population in the world, religion certainly has an important role in life especially economic activities.

This paper is a literary survey of entrepreneurial orientation and religiosity and its relationship with the performance of SMEs. As part of a study in the entrepreneurship, this paper is expected to enhance limited literature on entrepreneurship, religiosity and SMEs performance. For researchers of entrepreneurial orientation and UMKM studies, these variables are consideration on empirical study of the relationship and influence of entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity and SMEs performance. Systematically, the paper is literature review on entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity relations of entrepreneurial orientation and relation to SMEs performance. Religiosity in this context is as variable moderation. The final section of this research encloses recommendations for the research agenda for academics and observers as well as those interested in entrepreneurship studies.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Orientation and Religiosity

Researchers have focused on Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) since 2010, although it was first introduced in 1983. EO is reflected in behavior which includes willingness to take risks, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive, and aggressiveness (Bolton & Lane, 2012). EO are reflected through processes or culture within the company (Jeffrey G. Covin, 2018).

There are two views on the EO dimension. First, the unidimensional determines by Miller, Covin and Slevin (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011). In the unidimensional view, the EO dimension consists of risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness in a company. Meanwhile, in a multidimensional view, the EO dimension consists of risk taking, innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy (Lumpkin et al., 2011).

Innovative is the essence to discovery new ideas, experiments and creativity. Innovative has an emphasis on R&D and the level of change of unique goods and services so as to increase customer satisfaction. If business actors have proactiveness behavior, innovation can run well. Proactiveness is the behavior of moving dynamically and moving early for an advantage and anticipating future events. Proactiveness is also an attempt to create demand in the future. The future is uncertain and has risks. Risk taking is the courage to face business risks. Competitive aggressiveness is an ambition to increase market share and autonomy. It is freedom in making decisions. Autonomy is important for growing and developing the previous four dimensions. Innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness may run well if there is freedom and independence (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Mevarech, 1982).

The literature on religiosity and entrepreneurship explains that religiosity has an influence on entrepreneurship at two levels such as micro and macro. At the micro level, it relates to the influence of religiosity on individual entrepreneurs, while at the macro level it relates to organization. The influence of religiosity on entrepreneurial individuals consist of motivation (Baron, 2004; Morris & Schindehutte, 2005; Pio, 2010; Ummu Kolsome Farouk, 2011), responsible business behavior (Avram & Kühne, 2008; Day & Hudson, 2011; La Pira & Gillin, 2006) and physical health and psychology (Bhave, 1994; Bird & Schjoedt, 2009; Holly & Buttner, 1992). At the macro level, there is the influence of religiosity on decision making (Dodd & Seaman, 1998) and the creation of new companies (Carswell & Rolland, 2004; Nair & Pandey, 2006; Woodrum, 1985), company performance

(Baharun & Kamarudin, 2001; Cheung & King, 2004; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004) and the socio-cultural environment (Cao, 2007).

For specific issues, religiosity and EO, previous research revealed that religiosity can strengthen innovation in business organizations while strengthening workers' commitment to achieving the company's vision and that the workforce in the company will be more creative (Neck & Milliman, 2006). In addition, information was also obtained on the effect of religiosity on EO in complex conditions and has a positive effect (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2007; Iyer, 1999; Martes & Rodriguez, 2003; Kwon, 1997) and some have no significant effect (Dodd & Seaman, 1998).

Statistically, it was found that there was a positive relationship between religiosity and EO (Audretsch et al., 2015; Bellu & Fiume, 2004; Gursoy et al., 2017). In a quantitative approach, it was found that religion did not stop the growth of EO in New Zealand (Carswell & Rolland, 2004). Religiosity affects the EO dimension, namely risk taking as a sub-dimension of EO. Specific research for Buddhists (Buddhism) of religion, it has a positive significant influence on risk-taking behavior in Japanese with dominant Buddhists (Hilary & Hui, 2009). Another finding on religious entrepreneurs in China who set up family businesses are not more risk averse than non-religious entrepreneurs (Jiang et al., 2015). In short, religion encourages and supports entrepreneurial activity and some dis-encouraging (Carswell & Rolland, 2007; Wiseman & Young, 2014). Many previous studies use unidimensional such as risk taking and innovativeness and proactiveness as dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (Al Mamun & Fazal, 2018; Rauch et al., 2009; Soininen et al., 2013).

These studies on the role of religion in entrepreneurship are mostly associated with Christianity and Buddhism (Audretsch et al., 2011; Balog et al., 2014; Cao, 2007; Van Buren et al., 2019). Different religions will certainly bring different results (Liu et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurial Orientation and SMEs Performance

The relationship between EO and the performance of SMEs companies has been tested many times. Research is conducted in several countries, for example in Sweden (Johan Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005), Slovenia (Antoncic, 2006; Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001; 2004), North Africa (Zahra, 1995), China (Chen et al., 2005), Finland (Jantunen et al., 2005), Thailand and Vietnam (Swierczek & Ha, 2003), Germany (Walter et al., 2006), Malaysia (Ummu Kolsome Farouk, 2011), Nederland (Kraus et al., 2012; Sekliuckiene & Sedziniauskiene, 2019), England (Hughes & Morgan, 2007), Turkey (Kaya, 2006), France (Dimitratos et al., 2004) and USA (Kemelgor, 2002) and Indonesia (Hari Adi & Adawiyah, 2018; Susanto et al., 2019). Thus, based on these research, EO has a positive influence on company performance (Covin et al., 2005; Johan Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005).

EO dimensions have been tested by previous researchers such as innovative, risk taking and proactiveness (Covin et al., 1989; Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Kemelgor, 2002; Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014; Naman & Slevin, 1993). Not all studies have found a significant effect of EO on company performance (Covin et al., 1989; Hughes & Morgan, 2007; Narver & Slater, 1990; Swierczek & Ha, 2003; Walter et al., 2006). Information on various studies explains that companies with EO implementation have better performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Wiklund, 1999; Zahra, 1991). Several other studies have found that business success is driven by EO (Jeffrey G. Covin, 2018). However, there are research findings on weak relationship of EO with company achievement (Dimitratos et al., 2004). In addition, it was also found that there was no positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and company performance (Covin et al., 2005).

In Indonesia, research focuses on EO and its relationship with SMEs performance. It is found that companies have different dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation in relation to decision making. Through the AHP approach, there is an information on the three dimensions of EO (innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking), innovativeness was found to be the top priority compared to the proactiveness dimension, and risk

taking among managers in four industrial sectors (Susanto et al., 2019). In addition, using moderating variables, the study also found that the performance of SMEs is influenced by EO which includes risk taking, proactiveness and innovation. The intensity of competition, market turbulence and technology are not able to strengthen the influence of Entrepreneurial Orientation on the performance of SMEs in West Sumatra (Wardi et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurial Orientation and SMEs Performance and Religiosity as moderation

Each of the EO dimensions as previously described has been tested for its effect on company performance. Innovation has a relationship with company performance (Barney, 1991). Innovation influences entrepreneurship factor (Stopford & Baden-Fuller, 1994). Risk taking and competence have a positive effect on company performance and long-term development (Li & Tang, 2010). Proactiveness has a significant relationship with entrepreneurial activity (Kickul & Gundry, 2002) and the relationship between proactiveness with innovative (Nasution et al., 2011). The proactive behavior of the directors can improve the financial performance of the company (Choi & Eunsuh Lee, 2017). Autonomy has a positive effect on company performance (Bajuri, 2017).

All religions have values of honesty and hard work, against waste and laziness (Gursoy et al., 2017; Hassan & Hippler, 2014; Liu et al., 2019). These values have differences for both western religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam and Judaism) and for Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism). In particular, Western religion emphasizes the servitude of God while Eastern religion emphasizes the philosophy of life (philosophy of life). In Western religion, the highest goal achieved is salvation, while enlightenment is in Eastern religion (Jiang et al., 2015; Marques, 2012).

Entrepreneurial achievement depends on the interaction of business actors in society (Deller et al., 2018) and the role of religion (Van Buren et al., 2019). It was found that religiosity has a strong influence on entrepreneurial activity in

Korea. Women entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial and religiosity tradition help them succeed in running a business in Sweden. The implementations of the five daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan and reading the Al-Quran support the implementation of good business governance (Pio, 2010). In Malaysia, it is found that religion is a significant factor on the entrepreneurial performance of women Muslim (Zulkifli & Rosli, 2013). Entrepreneurial characteristics and sources of capital in religious provisions are identified as very significant factors on company performance (Grine et al., 2015).

Based on the literature review, religion significantly influences and guides people in behaving and making decisions (Carswell & Rolland, 2004; Delener, 1990; Hassan & Hippler, 2014; Pepinsky, 2013). Previous studies state that EO has an effect on performance and business achievement. A good Muslim will influence on a good entrepreneurial orientation as well. Islam teaches Muslim to take risks, innovation, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness (Faizal, Ridhwan, & Kalsom, 2013; Gümüşay, 2015). Islam is an entrepreneurial religion (Hassan & Hippler, 2014). Islam encourages entrepreneurial activity. Al-Quran and hadith emphasize entrepreneurial activities. In the al-Quran, Surat al Isra verse 28, Allah stated, *“Look for the part for your afterlife but don't forget the part for your world”*. Prophet Muhammad SAW stated, *“work for your world as if you live forever and work for your afterlife as if you died tomorrow”* (Gümüşay, 2015). Islamic teaching encourage people to be productive or entrepreneurial (Adas, 2006). Entrepreneurship in Islam focuses on seeking the pleasure of Allah and profit for all. The whole entrepreneurial activity is inseparable from religious teachings and guided by Islamic teaching. Business achievement in Islam is not only in terms of financial achievements but more than the way of economic activity conforms to Islamic teachings (Hassan & Hippler, 2014).

Religion will strengthen the influence on EO. In the end, it will influence on business or business performance. Religion can be a moderating variable. There are still limited studies on its relationship of EO with business performance on

moderation variables (Huang & Wang, 2011). Previous research used strategy variables as moderation (Tang & Tang, 2012) and also national culture (Rauch et al., 2009).

Discussion and Conclusion

The review of empirical researches related to entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity and SMEs Performance are the attention of experts and researchers in the entrepreneurship studies. Various research findings have been revealed on the relationship of Entrepreneurial Orientation, religiosity and SMEs Performance. These research findings can enrich the study of the entrepreneurship. Previous research tested lots of EO to business performance but has yet to classify the sectors studied. These studies are not considered the social and cultural conditions of SMEs location. Each sector certainly has different characteristics and uniqueness. Thus, the social and economic context of company also makes a difference to the performance or growth of the business.

For further research, researcher and entrepreneurship enthusiasts can focus on the relationship and the effect of entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity and its relation to SMEs performance. Measures of various variables on entrepreneurial orientation, religiosity and SMEs performance can be adopted or developed from previous researchers. Hopefully, the findings can be applicable for SMEs managers and the government and other relevant elements.

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