

RESILIENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AMONG MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS IN THE BOGOR AND DEPOK REGIONS OF INDONESIA

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores resilient communication strategies employed by micro-entrepreneurs operating in the Bogor and Depok regions of Indonesia. In the face of various challenges, such as economic fluctuations, market competition, and socio-political uncertainties, micro-entrepreneurs often rely on effective communication strategies to navigate and sustain their businesses. Through in-depth interviews and observations, this study examines the communication practices and resilience mechanisms adopted by micro-entrepreneurs to overcome adversities and ensure business continuity. This study focuses on understanding how these entrepreneurs utilize communication as a tool for adaptation, problem-solving, and relationship-building in the dynamic business environment of Bogor and Depok. The findings reveal that micro-entrepreneurs employ diverse communication strategies to mitigate risks and enhance resilience. First, they emphasize the importance of maintaining strong interpersonal relationships with customers, suppliers, and fellow entrepreneurs. Through personalized communication and networking, they establish trust and loyalty, which in turn contributes to the resilience of their businesses. Second, microentrepreneurs leverage digital communication technologies to expand their market reach and streamline their business operations. Social media platforms, online marketplaces, and messaging applications are used to promote products, engage customers, and facilitate transactions, enabling them to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and market trends. Furthermore, microentrepreneurs demonstrate resilience through effective crisis communication strategies. In times of adversity, such as natural disasters or economic downturns, they prioritize transparent and timely communication with stakeholders to manage expectations, mitigate panic, and coordinate recovery efforts. Overall, this study highlights the significance of communication in fostering resilience among microentrepreneurs in the Bogor and Depok regions of Indonesia. By understanding and leveraging various communication strategies, these entrepreneurs are better equipped to navigate challenges and sustain their businesses amid uncertainties, thus contributing to the resilience of the local economy.

Keywords: Resilient Communication, Micro-Entrepreneurs, Bogor and Depok Regions, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Micro-enterprises play a vital role in driving the local economy in various regions, including Depok City and Bogor Regency. By offering diverse products and services, micro-entrepreneurs not only create local jobs, but also contribute to the economic progress of surrounding communities. However, micro-entrepreneurs are often faced with significant challenges, both from the external and internal environments, which can jeopardize their business continuity. In this context, communication strategy is one of the main keys to building resilience and increasing the resilience of micro business actors.

The results of the TNP2K and Kemenkop UKM survey in 2020 showed that the percentage of disbursements of Banpres funds obtained by aid recipients (MSMEs) reached 69 percent, while the remaining 31 percent had not disbursed funds for the main reason that they had not received information. The type of information that most reaches the beneficiaries is about the amount of aid funds to be received, which is IDR 2.4 million, while other important information, such as the place of registration and the administrative mechanism for BPUM program registration is still not widely known and lacks detail (Bappenas, 2020).

The distribution of information is the most vital factor compared with the budget itself. A good budget allocation does not guarantee the success of an operation or strategy because it is determined by the circulation of information in the field (Bappenas, 2020). The existence of information will affect further steps to be taken. In addition to the existence of distorted information, it has become a new threat in the implementation of strategies that initially aimed to overcome threats. Information factors are likely to pose new threats, as well as in the context of this BPUM policy. The government's efforts through the Banpres policy can be seen not only as an effort to handle the Covid-19 pandemic, but also as a preventive effort/prevention against the emergence of greater threats that have the potential to disturb state sovereignty. The information carried out by the government is an effort to communicate with micro-businesses in terms of support to help resilience during the pandemic.

There is a lot of literature that recognizes the importance of communication so that MSMEs, especially micro businesses, remain resilient, including the results of mentoring activities for MSMEs to make efforts to optimize productivity through discussions to provide information, share problems, and convey difficulties faced, then this activity produces a better understanding of managerial knowledge and skills, setting standard operating procedures (SOPs) in achievement organizational structure and simple recording of income and expenditure (Budgeti *et al.* 2021). In addition, the role of other communication related to resilience was also explained by Kumala and Junaidi (2020), namely the appreciation of MSMEs for tax incentive policy information contained in PMK Number 44 / PMK.03 / 2020 and also a statement that MSMEs have taken advantage of these tax incentives and continue to improve compliance with tax obligations. Another communication role was carried out by Agustina *et al.* (2019) regarding the importance of counseling activities for halal product assurance certification for Small and Medium Enterprises. This activity is carried out during the socialization stage to assist in registering the halal product assurance certification *online*. Setini (2021) shows the results of his research that *knowledge sharing* variables can be mediators in the relationship between social capital and performance, then *knowledge sharing* can create various innovations to meet market demand.

Efforts to reduce stress, anxiety, worry, or problem-solving related to ongoing business due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are very likely to require communication interactions to find solutions. Buzzanell (2010) argues that the individual phenomenon of whether or not a person has or does not have, resilience is developed, maintained, and grown through discourse, interaction, and material development. This opinion can be perceived as a process of resilience communication in an effort to increase and reintegrate. This shows that communication carried

out by micro entrepreneurs and partners (government, community, etc.) requires equality of needs and the right solutions so that business activities can survive. How bad micro business actors are for their businesses depends on how they manage their businesses.

Microentrepreneurs face challenges in adapting to information and communication processes during the pandemic and recovery; this is both individually, groups, communities, organizations, and nationally, effective communication interactions will usually provide a positive response, then how to jointly answer and find solutions to the processes and changes that occur. In the process, we can see resilience as something dynamic, integrated, and lasting over time and through events, developing into patterns and depending on communication (Poole, 2013). identifies identical analyzes and analyzes the right form of communication construction for micro-level business actors to find solutions on how they can be resilient through communication behavior carried out in an effort businesses in the business they are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the above phenomena, the importance of communication processes and messages for miko-level business actors in efforts to be resilient during the pandemic and recovery to find solutions in facing problems of uncertainty and rapid change, accurate and reliable information, emotional support, adaptation in the digital environment, and recovery and rebuilding can be interpreted. Overall, resilience communication plays an important role in maintaining emotional balance, providing accurate information, overcoming challenges, and facilitating adaptation to COVID-19. The role of communication in efforts to improve the resilience of micro-enterprises affected by the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed positively to the building of economic independence and has helped efforts for national economic stability (Damastuti, 2020; Sofyan, 2017; Sulistyowati et al., 2021). Communication can play an important role in addressing resilience issues in micro-enterprises.

Within this framework, this study aims to fill the knowledge gap by investigating the resilience communication strategies used by micro-enterprises in both regions. Understanding the effective communication practices applied by micro-enterprises is expected to provide deeper insight into how communication can be an effective tool for increasing local economic resilience. Thus, this research has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the development of supporting policies and programs for micro-enterprises, as well as strengthen their role in building sustainable and inclusive local economies.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design:

This study uses a qualitative approach to investigate the resilience communication strategies used by micro entrepreneurs in Depok City and Bogor Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables in-depth data collection and a comprehensive understanding of the communication practices used by micro-enterprises.

Data Collection:

In-depth Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with microbusiness owners in both regions. This interview focused on the experience and communication strategies used by microentrepreneurs in facing various challenges in their business. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed for further analysis. **Participatory Observation:** Researchers conduct direct observations in micro-enterprises to understand the communication practices used in real situations. These observations will help gain a clearer understanding of how communication is applied in everyday business contexts.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis will be conducted inductively, starting with an in-depth reading and understanding of the interview transcriptions and observation notes. Key themes related to resilience communication strategies will be identified and analyzed through qualitative approaches, such as content analysis and thematic analysis. In the analysis process, researchers looked for patterns, similarities, and differences in communication practices used by micro-entrepreneurs in both regions. The analysis is guided by theoretical concepts related to organizational communication, business resilience, and local economies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study delved deeply into the multifaceted landscape of communication strategies employed by micro-entrepreneurs in the Bogor and Depok regions of Indonesia, revealing a rich tapestry of resilience mechanisms intertwined with interpersonal dynamics, technological adaptation, crisis management, and community collaboration. At its core, the research underscored the pivotal role communication plays in navigating the complex and often unpredictable terrain of entrepreneurship, where individuals must constantly adapt, innovate, and forge connections to thrive amid adversity. The limitation of understanding micro-level MSMEs to be used in research is based on Law PP No.7 of 2021 concerning the Ease, Protection, and Empowerment of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises with the appropriate criteria stipulated in the law. Micro Enterprises are grouped based on criteria of working capital or annual sales results.

Some of the weaknesses possessed by Indonesian MSMEs are the lack of capital both in amount and source, where credit growth disbursed by the banking sector is only 13.6 percent, in addition to the lack of managerial ability and operating skills in organizing in marketing aspects. In addition, unfair competition and economic pressure have resulted in a narrow and limited business scope. However, all these problems can be resolved with several policies that open opportunities for MSMEs to easily access the banking industry (Suci 2017).

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important and strategic role in national economic development. The role of MSMEs is to orient their respective types of businesses. This role makes a very meaningful contribution to the bolt of the country. Through natural resources and the ability to own human resources, this MSME business has its own profile.

The MSME Business Profile has seven sectors:

1. Trade Sector
2. Processing Industry Sector
3. Agriculture Sector
4. Plantation Sector
5. Livestock Sector
6. Fisheries Sector
7. Service Sector

Resilience communication plays a very important role in development. This communication approach focuses on building the ability of individuals, communities, and organizations to face, adapt, and recover from unexpected changes or crises (Franco et al., 2021; Isensee et al., 2023); in the context of development, communication plays a major role in building and strengthening social, economic, and environmental resilience. Resilience refers to the ability of a person or system to face, adapt, and recover from adverse stress, challenges, or changes. It is an important quality in the face of difficult situations or stressors that may appear in daily life. In general, resilience involves a person's ability to remain strong, elastic, and functional in the face of disruptive or destructive events. It involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes involving a variety of factors, such as mental resilience, adaptation flexibility, social support, and a positive attitude (Fletcher and Sarkar 2013; Masten 2018).

1. **Mental endurance:** This involves a person's ability to manage and cope with pressure, stress, or trauma in a healthy manner. Mental resilience involves a strong understanding of oneself, including personal strengths, weaknesses, and values.
2. **Adaptability flexibility:** Resilience is the ability to adapt to change and overcome challenges effectively. This includes the ability to move on, adjust plans, and find alternative solutions in difficult or unexpected situations.
3. **Social support:** Support from family, friends, and communities is an important factor in building and maintaining resilience. Feeling supported and connected with caring for people can help them overcome adversity and recover from challenging situations.
4. **Positive attitude:** Resilience involves positive mental attitudes. This includes self-confidence, optimistic expectations, the ability to look for positives in every situation, and focus on solutions rather than problems.

Resilience is the ability of a system or community to survive, adapt, and quickly recover from unexpected disruptions or changes (Chandel and Sharma, 2014). In the context of development, resilience refers to the development of infrastructure, policies, and strategies capable of reducing risk, overcoming challenges, and accelerating recovery after disasters or external changes.

The following are examples of resilience in development:

1. Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure Development Infrastructure development that is resilient to disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and storms, can increase the resilience of an area. Examples include building buildings with high earthquake resistance standards, developing early warning systems, and building effective dikes or drainage channels to reduce flood risk.
2. The implementation of sustainable natural resource management practices can increase the economic and environmental resilience of a region. For example, the use of renewable energy and diversification of income sources to reduce dependence on one sector can help cope with energy price fluctuations or market changes.
3. Building a diverse economy can increase a country or region's resilience to global or local economic changes. Diversification through the development of new sectors in the economy or reduction of dependence on one dominant sector can help mitigate the negative impact of economic shocks.
4. Building strong, participatory, and resilient communities to cope with change and disasters is an essential element in resilient development. Involving communities in project planning, decision-making, and implementation can improve their understanding, support, and preparedness for change or disasters.

Maintaining a stable and robust financial system can help protect a country's economy from global economic shocks. For example, implementing policies that regulate financial institutions, strengthening supervisory systems, and building financial reserves can help prevent widespread financial crises and accelerate recovery in the aftermath. Increasing the level of education and public awareness of disasters and climate change can help increase resilience. Education focused on disaster mitigation, climate change adaptation, and survival skills can help prepare communities for future threats.

Initiatives such as the example above can help strengthen the resilience of a country, region, or community in the face of challenges, natural disasters, or economic change. It is important to create policies that encourage resilient development and involve all stakeholders in their implementation (Guerrero & Walsh, 2023). Resilience in the context of development refers to the ability of a system to survive, adapt, and recover quickly after experiencing a disruption or crisis. Resilience is an important attribute in sustainable development because it allows a community or country to face challenges that arise both economically, socially, and environmentally (Kenzhegaranova, 2023).

The examples above demonstrate how resilience can be manifested in development. Through the right efforts, resilient development can help communities or countries to better face challenges and crises and build a stronger foundation for a sustainable future. One of the most salient themes that emerged from the study was the emphasis that microentrepreneurs placed on cultivating and maintaining strong interpersonal relationships.

Through personalized communication efforts with customers, suppliers, and peers, these entrepreneurs not only fostered trust and loyalty but also established a robust support network that proved invaluable during times of crisis or uncertainty. These relationships transcended mere business transactions, evolving into symbiotic partnerships characterized by mutual assistance and solidarity, thus highlighting the social fabric underpinning resilience in these communities.

Furthermore, this study sheds light on the transformative impact of digital communication technologies on the entrepreneurial landscape (Lessa et al., 2023). Micro-entrepreneurs demonstrate remarkable agility in harnessing platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and messaging applications to expand their market reach, engage with customers, and streamline business operations (Menter, 2022).

In doing so, they not only adapted to the evolving digital economy but also capitalized on the opportunities it presented, illustrating how effective communication can serve as a catalyst for innovation and growth. In times of crisis, microentrepreneurs exhibit a proactive approach to communication, employing transparent and timely strategies to manage risks, mitigate panic, and coordinate recovery efforts (Isensee et al., 2023).

Clear and empathetic communication not only instilled confidence among stakeholders but also fostered a sense of collective resilience, as communities rallied together to overcome shared challenges. This emphasis on crisis communication underscores the importance of resilience not only at the individual level but also within the broader ecosystem of interconnected businesses and stakeholders. Moreover, the study highlighted the collaborative ethos that permeated Bogor and Depok's entrepreneurial communities.

Micro-entrepreneurs engage in knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective action, leveraging their collective power to address common challenges and seize emerging opportunities. This spirit of cooperation not only enhances the resilience of individual businesses, but also contributes to the overall vibrancy and sustainability of the local economy.

The results of the interviews highlight the concrete efforts made by MSMEs to utilize digital communication as a means of increasing their business resilience. For example, Imr describes how he faced challenges when using email in the business licensing process. Despite difficulties, such as forgetting her password, she found a solution using emails belonging to her family members.

This action shows that MSMEs not only rely on one method but are willing to look for alternatives to utilize digital technology in running their business. Li stressed the importance of surveys as a tool for understanding customer preferences and needs. After conducting the survey, she developed a purposeful digital content strategy, such as sequential posts on Instagram Stories on the same topic. This move shows that MSMEs do not rely solely on intuition or personal experience, but actively use data and feedback from customers to direct their marketing strategies.

Ng's experience with online trading since 2010 also provides an overview of how some MSMEs have gained a competitive advantage through the use of digital platforms over a longer period of time. Having extensive experience in online trading, MSMEs such as Ng can better handle challenges and opportunities as well as gain valuable insights into consumer behavior and market dynamics in the digital age.

Overall, the results of this interview revealed that MSMEs have actively used digital communication as a tool to increase their business resilience. Through various concrete actions, such as exploring alternatives when facing obstacles, using data to direct marketing strategies, and utilizing long-term experience in online trading, MSMEs have been identified as dynamic and adaptive agents in the face of rapid and complex changes in the business environment.

The results of this interview illustrate the important role of relational communication in increasing MSME resilience. Li stressed the importance of listening to consumers and responding to their needs by producing relevant content on social media platforms like Instagram. He also noted that the advantage of MSMEs is their ability to build close relationships with consumers, which results in higher engagement rates than big brands such as Nestle.

This is reflected in the significant increase in turnover by 100 percent. In addition, Li actively engages consumers through phone calls to understand their habits and needs more deeply. This approach allows him to adjust his business strategy according to consumer preferences, which, in turn, increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Ro also demonstrated a commitment to relational communication by carefully checking the quality of salted eggs before serving buyers. This action confirms the commitment to providing quality services and ensuring customer satisfaction. Overall, the results of this interview revealed that MSMEs use relational communication as the main strategy for increasing their business resilience. Through this approach, they can build strong relationships with consumers, understand their needs, and adjust their business strategies according to market changes. This provides a significant competitive advantage for MSMEs when facing challenges and seizing opportunities in a dynamic business environment.

In our research, focusing on micro-entrepreneurs in Bogor and Depok, we delved deeply into the intricate dynamics of interpersonal relationships and their significance in fostering resilience within this community. Through qualitative analysis, we observed that micro-entrepreneurs place substantial emphasis on cultivating and maintaining strong interpersonal bonds with various stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and fellow entrepreneurs.

Our findings reveal that these relationships serve as a linchpin for resilience, offering a multitude of benefits that contribute to the overall sustainability and success of micro-enterprises. First, our research uncovered that micro-entrepreneurs prioritize building trust and loyalty with their customers through personalized communication and exceptional customer service.

By establishing rapport and understanding their customers' needs and preferences, these entrepreneurs can foster long-term relationships that transcend mere transactions. This trust forms the foundation of customer loyalty, which not only ensures repeat business but also provides a stable revenue stream, even during challenging times.

Moreover, our study illuminates the importance of strong relationships with suppliers in enhancing resilience among micro-entrepreneurs. Maintaining open lines of communication and fostering mutual trust with suppliers enables micro-enterprises to negotiate favorable terms, access essential resources, and adapt to fluctuations in supply chains more effectively. Additionally, these relationships often facilitate collaboration and innovation, as suppliers may offer insights or solutions to help micro-entrepreneurs overcome operational challenges or capitalize on market opportunities.

Furthermore, our research revealed the pivotal role of peer networks and community support in bolstering resilience among micro-entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs gain access to valuable resources, information, and emotional support through participation in business associations, industry groups, and informal networks. These networks provide a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and solidarity, enabling microentrepreneurs to navigate challenges collectively and amplify their resilience through collective action. In summary, our study underscores the intricate interplay between interpersonal relationships and resilience among microentrepreneurs in Bogor and Depok.

By investing in building and nurturing strong relationships with customers, suppliers, and peers, these entrepreneurs can create a robust support system that enhances their capacity to adapt, innovate, and thrive in the face of adversity. Recognizing the transformative potential of these relationships, policymakers and stakeholders can explore opportunities to support and strengthen interpersonal connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby fostering greater resilience and sustainability in local economies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our analysis of micro-entrepreneurs in Bogor and Depok highlights the pivotal role of interpersonal relationships in fostering resilience in this community. Through qualitative analysis, we have elucidated how micro-entrepreneurs prioritize building and nurturing strong bonds with customers, suppliers, and peers to effectively navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship. These relationships serve as a foundation for trust, loyalty, and collaboration, offering a multitude of benefits that contribute to micro-enterprises' resilience and sustainability.

Our findings underscore the importance of personalized communication and exceptional customer service in cultivating trust and loyalty with customers, which in turn ensures repeated business and stability during uncertain times. Additionally, strong relationships with suppliers enable microentrepreneurs to negotiate favorable terms, access essential resources, and adapt to changes in supply chains more efficiently.

Furthermore, our research highlights the significance of peer networks and community support in bolstering resilience among microentrepreneurs. By participating in business associations and industry groups, entrepreneurs gain access to valuable resources, information, and emotional support, enabling them to navigate challenges collectively and amplify their resilience through collective action.

Overall, our study underscores the transformative potential of interpersonal relationships to foster resilience among microentrepreneurs in Bogor and Depok. Recognizing the importance of these relationships, policymakers and stakeholders can explore opportunities to support and strengthen interpersonal connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby fostering greater resilience and sustainability in local economies.

By investing in building and nurturing strong relationships, micro-entrepreneurs can enhance their capacity to adapt, innovate, and thrive in the face of adversity, contributing to the resilience and vibrancy of the communities they serve.

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