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# Utilization of Customer Entrepreneurs as a Strategy to Improve Business Performance Performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

## Idham Khalik<sup>1</sup>, Ade Perdana Siregar<sup>2</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia, email. idham khalik@unja.ac.id
- <sup>2</sup> Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia, email. ade.perdana@unja.ac.id

Corresponding Author: ade.perdana@unja.ac.id<sup>2</sup>

Abstract: The role of MSMEs is important in economic growth in Indonesia, it can improve people's welfare. Indonesian MSMEs contribute to Gross Domestic Product and national exports. Utilizing consumer participation in marketing is a strategy that can be carried out by following technological developments. Implementing consumer utilization requires consideration of customer knowledge management, entrepreneurial collaborative capability and customer network quality so that business performance increases. The aim of this research is to examine the role of customer knowledge management, entrepreneurial collaborative capability and customer network quality in mediating the influence of customer entrepreneurship on MSME business performance. The data analysis method used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) measurements using SmartPLS software. The research results are (1) customer knowledge management as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurs has a significant positive effect on MSME business performance; (2) customer network quality as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurial collaborative capability as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurship has a significant positive effect on MSME business performance.

**Keyword:** Entrepreneur, Knowledge Management, & Network Quality.

#### INTRODUCTION

Economic growth in Indonesia throughout 2022 is an impressive growth of 5.31%, where this increase is above the government's target of 5.2%, this was explained by the Secretary of the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, Susiwijono Moegiarso in a press release on February 6 2023. The role of MSMEs is quite important in economic growth in Indonesia, which can improve people's welfare. Based on the ASEAN Investment Report (2022), Indonesia is the country that has the largest Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the ASEAN region. In 2021, the number of MSMEs in Indonesia will reach 65.46 million business units, where the number of MSMEs is much higher compared to other ASEAN

countries, namely Thailand 3.1 million, Malaysia 1.2 million, Philippines 996,700, Vietnam 651,100, Cambodia 512,900, Singapore 279,000, Laos 133,700 and Myanmar 72,700.

Customer entrepreneurs are end customers or product users who function as entrepreneurs to commercialize the products they use (H. Park, et al, 2020). The role of the customer entrepreneur is as a retailer between producers and consumers, and as the final consumer who consumes the product directly (J. Wang, Y. Tan, 2020). According to Hughes, M., & Morgan, R. E. (2007), the presence of customer entrepreneurs contributes to improving business performance, by increasing sales of their products, whereas according to M. Keane, Y. Chen (2019) customer entrepreneurs in selling products do not master management knowledge regarding marketing and product specifications, so that we cannot be responsible for the benefits of the products and services provided. Understanding a product is very important to create customer satisfaction and loyalty which can influence the business performance of a business.

Promotions carried out by customer entrepreneurs regarding products are very broad-reaching by utilizing their networks, this has a positive impact on market growth (J. Wang, Y. Tan, 2020). According to X. Cheng, et al., (2020), creating a quality marketing network to increase market growth is based on the ability to collaborate, where relationships between customers and consumers can produce good quality relationships. Customer entrepreneurs are not responsible for purchasing, storing and shipping products so that the ability to collaborate as an entrepreneur becomes a weakness in the long-term sales process. C. He, et al., (2019). Meanwhile, the implementation of this strategy requires consideration of the role of customer knowledge management, entrepreneurial collaborative capability and customer network quality so that business performance can improve. It is necessary to conduct research to examine the role of customer knowledge management, entrepreneurial collaborative capability and customer network quality in implementing marketing strategies using customer entrepreneurship as an effort to improve MSME business performance.

The purpose of this writing is (1) to examine the influence of customer entrepreneurs on MSME business performance; (2) examine the influence of customer entrepreneurs on customer knowledge management; (3) examine the influence of customer entrepreneurship on entrepreneurial collaborative capability; (4) examine the influence of customer entrepreneurs on customer network quality; (5) examine the influence of customer knowledge management on MSME business performance; (6) examine the influence of entrepreneurial collaborative capability on MSME business performance; (7) examine the influence of customer network quality on MSME business performance; (8) examine the role of customer knowledge management in mediating the influence of customer entrepreneurs on MSME business performance; (9) examine the role of entrepreneurial collaborative capability in significantly mediating the influence of customer entrepreneurship on MSME business performance; (10) examine the role of customer network quality in significantly mediating the influence of customer entrepreneurs on MSME business performance;

Marketing strategies using customer entrepreneurs to improve business performance, especially for MSMEs, have a big role, especially in product sales and market growth. According to D. Ahlstrom, culture) while according to H. Park, S. Kim, Y. Jeong, T. Minshall (2020), dimensions in measuring customer entrepreneurship include obtaining functional benefits, obtaining economic benefits, obtaining psychological benefits (obtaining psychological benefits).

Knowledge is information that an individual possesses that originates from the mind in the form of personalized information related to facts, procedures, concepts, interpretations, ideas, observations and judgments (Singh, G, et al., 2021). Customer knowledge management or consumer knowledge management is the management of knowledge that comes from customers regarding the experience and knowledge that comes from the customers themselves (Sujan, M., 2020). In the digital era, various platforms facilitating online communication have

the potential to facilitate customer knowledge management. Exploration of the role of social media in sharing knowledge, forming business models and maintaining entrepreneurship by improving business performance, especially in MSMEs.

The entrepreneurial concept that has been developed regarding collaboration capabilities includes dynamic capabilities, social capital and institutional marketing (Boso, et al., 2020). Capability is an ability that comes from the knowledge and experience a person has in managing resources so that they can produce the same product or service (Kale, et al., 2019). Human resource capabilities in an organization are required to have the ability to collaborate.

In the era of digitalization in social media, connectivity can reduce social distance, the determining factors for social distance are the level of trust and ease of communication (Oprica, R., 2019). An important element in communication is getting the same culture, information and language (Piercy, N. F. et al., 2020). According to (W. Wang et al., 2019), the development of entrepreneurial digitalization relies heavily on social networks, where business actors utilize organizational and consumer relationships to improve their business performance. The quality of long-term relationships has between business actors and consumers dimensions, namely trust, commitment and loyalty (Perry, M. L. et al., 2021). Utilizing consumer networks is a marketing strategy that can improve business performance, where the role of consumers in developing networks can help marketing performance in a business (Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S., 2020).

The performance of a business is measured financially and non-financially, where financially it looks at return on sales, profit growth and sales growth, while non-financially it looks at customer satisfaction, market growth and product quality, Bagheri (2017). Another view put forward by Mishra and Suar (2019), company performance is described by financial performance and social performance.

### **METHOD**

The population in this study are MSMEs that use e-commerce in business operations in Jambi Province, while the sample taken was based on the opinion of Hair (2010), namely in using SEM analysis the sample size was between 100 - 200, so for this study the largest number was taken. as many as 200 respondents. Taking samples with special characteristics according to the object under study (Akdon and Riduwan, 2007), the researchers took samples namely MSMEs that use e-commerce in business operations in Jambi Province

The data used are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained from respondents, data collection through interviews, field observations and distributing questionnaires, while secondary data is obtained from books, journals and government

Qualitative analysis was used to collect data obtained by in-depth interviews and observations. As is generally the case, there are two approaches used, namely the content analysis approach and triangulation analysis. This analysis is based on field notes or process notes for each researcher. Quantitative Analysis, with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) measurements using SmartPLS software. The analysis technique is carried out through analysis of the results of (1) outer model with indicators of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), loading factor and communality as well as reliability testing by analyzing the results of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability; (2) inner model with analysis indicators based on T-statistics and R-Square results.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The next measurement is a test measurement of the reliability value, the analysis is carried out using Cronbach's alpha with a minimum score of 0.7 and composite reliability with a minimum score of 0.7, where the score for each measurement of each variable is more than 0.7 then the variable is considered reliable. Testing measurements of validity values, analysis is carried out using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a minimum score of 0.5, where

the measurement score for each variable is more than 0.5, then the variable is considered to meet validity. The test measurement results can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Business Performance	0.873	0.883	0.899	0.503
Customer Entrepreneur	0.833	0.868	0.867	0.681
Customer Knowledge Management	0.802	0.831	0.853	0.596
Customer Network Quality	0.734	0.756	0.814	0.730
Entrepreneurial Collaborative Capability	0.819	0.833	0.857	0.677

Source: processed data, 2023

Based on table 5, it can be seen that the results of the Cronbach's alpha analysis for each variable show that the score is more than 0.7, where the business performance variable is 0.873, the customer entrepreneur variable is 0.833, the customer knowledge management variable is 0.802, the customer network quality variable is 0.734, and the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable is 0.819. These results show the accuracy and reliability of all variables in this study.

The results of the composite reliability analysis for each variable show that the score is above 0.7, where the business performance variable is 0.899, the customer entrepreneur variable is 0.867, the customer knowledge management variable is 0.853, the customer network quality variable is 0.814, and the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable is 0.857. These results show that the variables as a whole are declared reliable.

Testing the relationship between variables with a tolerance level or P Value of 0.05, then if the P Value is more than 0.05 the effect is not accepted. It is also proven that if the P value is above 0.05 then the T statistic is smaller than the calculated T, then the results are rejected. The results of data processing in this research, testing the relationship between variables can be seen in the following table:

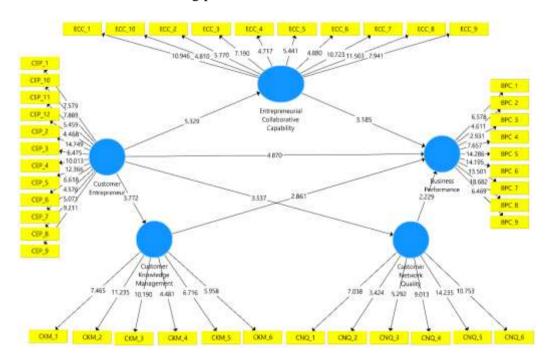
Table 2. Outer Weight

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Results
Customer Entrepreneur -> Business Performace	0.380	0.363	0.078	4.870	0.000	Accepted
Customer Entrepreneur -> Customer Knowledge Management	0.383	0.401	0.102	3.772	0.000	Accepted
Customer Entrepreneur -> Customer Network Quality	0.291	0.318	0.082	3.537	0.000	Accepted
Customer Entrepreneur -> Entrepreneurial Collaborative Capability	0.418	0.458	0.078	5.329	0.000	Accepted
Customer Knowledge Management -> Business Performace	0.358	0.287	0.092	2.861	0.020	Accepted
Customer Network Quality -> Business Performace	0.259	0.288	0.116	2.229	0.026	Accepted
Entrepreneurial Collaborative Capability -> Business Performace	0.430	0.431	0.063	3.185	0.003	Accepted
Customer Entrepreneur -> Customer Knowledge	0.437	0.412	0.095	4.442	0.000	Accepted

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Results
Management -> Business						_
Performace						
Customer Entrepreneur ->						_
Customer Network Quality ->	0.313	0.317	0.080	3.158	0.000	Accepted
Business Performace						
Customer Entrepreneur ->						
Entrepreneurial Collaborative	0.375	0.391	0.046	2.997	0.019	Accepted
Capability -> Business	0.373	0.371	0.040	2.331	0.019	Accepted
Performace						

Source: Processed Data, 2023

Based on table 2, the results of the analysis of the relationship between variables show that all P values are smaller than 0.05, so the results of the influence of each variable are accepted. The results of data processing for hypothesis testing through the results of the t-value model can be seen in the following picture:



Source: Processed Data, 2023 **Figure 1. Bootstrapping Model** 

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 4.870 and the P value is 0.000 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the customer entrepreneur variable on the business performance variable, so the customer entrepreneur variable has a significant influence on the business performance variable. (business performance). The test results show that the higher the utilization of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more MSME business performance will increase. In this influence, the customer entrepreneur variable includes the dimensions of obtaining functional benefits, obtaining economic benefits, obtaining psychological benefits and obtaining social benefits, so these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the business performance variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 3.772 and the P value is 0.000 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between

the influence of the customer entrepreneur variable on the customer knowledge management variable, so the customer entrepreneur variable has a significant influence on the customer knowledge management variable. The test results show that the higher the use of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more customer knowledge management will increase. In this influence, the customer entrepreneur variable includes the dimensions of obtaining functional benefits, obtaining economic benefits, obtaining psychological benefits and obtaining social benefits, so these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the customer knowledge management variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 3.537 and the P value is 0.000 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the customer entrepreneur variable on the customer network quality variable, so the customer entrepreneur variable has a significant influence on the customer network quality variable. The test results show that the higher the utilization of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the customer network quality will increase. In this influence, the customer entrepreneur variable includes the dimensions of obtaining functional benefits, obtaining economic benefits, obtaining psychological benefits and obtaining social benefits, so these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the customer network quality variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 5.329 and the P value is 0.000 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the customer entrepreneur variable on the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable, so the customer entrepreneur variable has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable. The test results show that the higher the utilization of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more entrepreneurial collaborative capability will increase. In this influence, the customer entrepreneur variable includes the dimensions of obtaining functional benefits, obtaining economic benefits, obtaining psychological benefits and obtaining social benefits, so these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 2.861 and the P value is 0.020 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the customer knowledge management variable on the business performance variable, so the customer knowledge management variable has a significant influence on the variable. business performance (business performance). The test results show that the higher the customer knowledge management in MSMEs, the more the MSMEs' business performance will increase. In this influence, the customer knowledge management variable includes the dimensions of basic product knowledge and knowledge related to the product, so these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the business performance variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 2.229 and the P value is 0.026 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the customer network quality variable on the business performance variable, so the customer network quality variable has a significant influence on the variable. business performance (business performance). The test results show that the higher the customer network quality in MSMEs, the business performance of MSMEs will increase. In this influence, the customer network quality variable, including the dimensions of trust, commitment and loyalty, means that these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the business performance variable.

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the statistical T value is 3.185 and the P value is 0.003 with a significance level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influence of the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable on the business performance variable, so the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable has a significant influence on the variable. business performance (business performance). The test results show that the higher the entrepreneurial collaborative capability of MSMEs, the business

performance of MSMEs will increase. In this influence, the entrepreneurial collaborative capability variable, including the dimensions of sharing information and knowledge, having reciprocal relationships, having relationships that can be resolved, willingness to work together and building adoption relationships, these dimensions partially have a positive influence on business performance variables.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded as follows: (1) customer entrepreneurs show a significant positive influence on MSME business performance. it is proven that the higher the use of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more MSME business performance will increase; (2) customer entrepreneurs show a significant positive influence on customer knowledge management, it is proven that the higher the use of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more customer knowledge management will increase; (3) customer entrepreneurs show a significant positive influence on customer network quality, it is proven that the higher the use of customer entrepreneurs in MSMEs, the more customer network quality will increase; (4) customer entrepreneurship shows a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial collaborative capability, it is proven that the higher the use of customer entrepreneurship in MSMEs, the more entrepreneurial collaborative capability will increase; (5) customer knowledge management shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, it is proven that the higher the level of customer knowledge management in MSMEs, the higher the MSME business performance will be; (6) customer network quality shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, it is proven that the higher the customer network quality of MSMEs, the greater the MSME business performance will be; (7) entrepreneurial collaborative capability shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, it is proven that the higher the entrepreneurial collaborative capability in MSMEs, the greater the MSME business performance will be; (8) customer knowledge management as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurs shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, where customer knowledge management is considered a variable that strengthens customer entrepreneurs in improving MSME business performance; (9) customer network quality as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurs shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, where customer network quality is considered a variable that strengthens customer entrepreneurs in improving MSME business performance; (10) entrepreneurial collaborative capability as a mediating influence of customer entrepreneurship shows a significant positive influence on MSME business performance, where entrepreneurial collaborative capability is considered a variable that strengthens customer entrepreneurship in improving MSME business performance.

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