

Entrepreneurial Literacy and Digital Literacy: A Key to Successful Business Sustainability of Clothing Merchants in the Modern Era

Marnoto*¹, Andi Syahriana Asdar², Rachmawati Novaria³, Andi Naila Quin Alisyahbana⁴

¹STIE Semarang, Indonesia

²Institut Teknologi Bisnis Nobel Indonesia, Indonesia

³Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Patompo, Indonesia

e-mail: otonram@gmail.com*¹, syahriana@nobel.ac.id², nova@untag-sby.ac.id³, nailaquinn@gmail.com⁴

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the sustainability of the clothing merchant business in the Modern Era by focusing on three variables, namely entrepreneurial literacy, digital literacy and business sustainability. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, and uses data collection techniques by interviews, direct observation of the research object. Then this research used 3 informants as research subjects, where these informants were the 3 most famous traders and had the largest business turnover in Makassar City. The Interaction Analysis Model uses concepts from Miles and Huberman. The research results show that the entrepreneurial literacy and digital literacy of clothing traders in this modern era can be categorized as good enough to support the development of these clothing traders. This is because traders have an understanding of the business they are establishing, never neglect in carrying out their obligations and things that could disrupt the continuity of their business. Meanwhile, business continuity shows that the clothing merchant business can be categorized as quite good, because it can develop and run well in line with increasingly modern developments.

Keywords: entrepreneurship literacy, digital literacy, business sustainability

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of unemployment is a universal challenge for every country, including Indonesia which faces high unemployment rates, especially among educated groups (Alam 2016; Hartoko, 2019; Mukminin & Purwanti, 2021). The low interest and motivation of Indonesian youth to get involved in the world of entrepreneurship has become a serious concern for various sectors, including the government, education, industry and society (Sukumar et al., 2022). In response to this phenomenon, various efforts have been made to stimulate and change the mindset of young people, who were previously more interested as job seekers, into individuals who have an entrepreneurial spirit (Lelliezza et al., 2019). It is hoped that joint efforts from various parties can create an environment that supports economic growth and overcomes the problem of unemployment in Indonesia.

Unemployment, as an undesirable reality, is a social disease that is widespread in society. The complex factors that influence high unemployment rates involve several important aspects. There are limited employment opportunities that can accommodate the number of job seekers (Jones et al., 2014). This can be caused by unbalanced economic growth with an increasing population. These conditions create a mismatch between job supply and demand, contributing significantly to high unemployment rates. Then, the lack of expertise or skills possessed by job seekers is also one of the triggers for unemployment (Hanapi & Nordin, 2014).

In the era of globalization and technological progress, jobs increasingly demand special skills. Job seekers who do not have skills relevant to the needs of the job market tend to experience difficulties in finding work. Therefore, it is important to increase access to education and skills training in line with labor market demands to minimize skills gaps and optimize employment opportunities.

In addition, according to Brand (2015), another factor that exacerbates the unemployment problem is the lack of information that job seekers can access about available job opportunities. Limited access to information on job vacancies, requirements, and labor market developments can hinder job seekers' ability to make informed decisions. Initiatives to improve the transparency and accessibility of job information can make a positive contribution to overcoming this obstacle. Then, according to Jeske (2018), the lazy culture that is still rooted in society is also a factor that is detrimental to job seekers. It is important to change perceptions towards hard work and provide positive encouragement for individuals to be more proactive in seeking and utilizing available job opportunities. Through a holistic approach involving the government, education sector, industry and society, it is hoped that a sustainable solution can be created to tackle the problem of unemployment.

Reducing the unemployment rate requires synergy between various parties, especially educational institutions, communities, and the government. Educational institutions have a key role in equipping students with skills and knowledge that are relevant to the demands of the labor market (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to update the curriculum in accordance with industry needs and skills training that accommodates technological developments. In addition, active collaboration between educational institutions and industry can ensure that graduates have the skills required by the job market.

The government as the main policy maker also has a significant role in reducing unemployment. In addition to creating policies that support economic growth and employment opportunities, the government also needs to provide incentives to educational institutions to improve the quality of education and its relevance to the world of work (Masino & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). In addition, training and assistance programs for less skilled job seekers can be implemented to improve their skills and competitiveness (Albrecht et al., 2015). Cooperation between the government, educational institutions, and the community will create a supportive ecosystem to holistically address the unemployment problem, by involving all parties in the effort to develop excellent human resources who are ready to compete in the labor market.

To overcome this, entrepreneurship is believed to be a driving factor in the progress of a country. This can be understood because according to Kritikos (2014), a small number of entrepreneurs can create jobs for others so that it has a positive effect on the economy. However, before someone starts or creates a business, it must and is mandatory for him to improve his entrepreneurial understanding of what business to start, how to manage, what strategies are needed to support success, how to anticipate and overcome problems that arise and others. This is where the importance of entrepreneurial knowledge that can be a provision before starting a business.

An entrepreneur is a risk-taker who is required to manage and organize all affairs and receive several financial and non-financial benefits. Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, hear, think and see. Literacy is used when creating messages with letters with the aim of recording the message. Entrepreneurial literacy is a person's understanding of entrepreneurs with various positive, creative, and innovative characters in developing business opportunities into business opportunities that benefit themselves, their communities, or consumers (Sariwulan et al., 2020).

Welter et al. (2017) say that entrepreneurship is the ability to create something new and different. This definition implies that an entrepreneur is a person who has the ability to create something new, different from others, or is able to create something different from what has existed before. Meanwhile, Gundry et al. (2014) defines entrepreneurship as a process of applying creativity and innovation in solving problems and finding opportunities to improve life

(business). This opinion is not much different from that of Drucker. That is, to create something requires a high creativity of the innovator's soul. Someone who has creativity and an innovator's spirit certainly thinks about finding or creating new opportunities to be better than before.

Hendrawan & Sirine (2017) entrepreneurial knowledge is the intellectual knowledge obtained and possessed by an individual through entrepreneurship education which can later help an individual innovate and enter the entrepreneurial field. Wirawan & Puspitaningsih (2019) state that there are several factors that influence a person's entrepreneurial literacy, namely basic entrepreneurial knowledge, knowledge of business ideas and opportunities, knowledge of business aspects. Januardi et al. (2023) states that the factors that influence entrepreneurial literacy are the formation of mindset, attitude formation, and behavior formation.

According to Pasban & Nojedeh (2016), in an industry that plays an important role is capital. Capital is all funds spent in the production process to obtain sales revenue (Graham et al., 2025). Usually, the working capital is used for labor costs, workers' rights, to produce goods and costs in other purposes (Harris & Krueger, 2015). Capital is a factor that has a fairly important role in the production process because capital is needed when entrepreneurs want to set up a new company or to expand their business, without sufficient capital it will affect the smooth running of the business, so that it will affect the income earned (Indrawan et al., 2018).

Entrepreneurship is a creative and innovative ability, observant of opportunities and always open to any input and positive changes that can bring business to continue to grow and have value (Isma, 2022). In entrepreneurship, there are several competencies, namely knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are connected to one another (Ernest et al., 2015), which are needed by entrepreneurs to be trained and developed in order to be able to produce the best performance in managing their business and must be able to carry out the functions of planning, organizing, mobilizing, and supervising so that the business they run can achieve the desired goals (Bird, 2019). These skills are an absolute requirement to become a successful entrepreneur.

However, entrepreneurial knowledge is not the only determining factor for effective entrepreneurship management, knowledge is important to prepare prospective entrepreneurs, however, knowledge will not necessarily give birth to an entrepreneur. This shows that there are other factors that can support the effectiveness of entrepreneurship management, namely the use of digital infrastructure in entrepreneurship.

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources (Rakib et al., 2024). The use of the internet in society generally varies, but in adolescents the internet is not only used to find academic information but also to build relationships through social networking sites. Shopova (2014) argues that digital literacy is the ability to use technology and information from digital devices effectively and efficiently in various contexts such as academic, career and daily life.

Spires (2019) argues that digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technology (ICT), to find, evaluate, utilize, create and communicate content or information, with cognitive and technical skills. Mohammadyari & Singh (2015) argued that digital literacy is defined as an individual's ability to apply functional skills to digital devices so that he can find and select information, think critically, be creative, collaborate with others, communicate effectively and remain aware of electronic security and socio-cultural developments.

Rusydiah et al. (2020) suggested that digital literacy is a combination of several forms of literacy, namely: computer, information, technology, visual, media and communication. Ngoasong (2018) in his research states that before knowing digital literacy for entrepreneurship, only a few students utilize social media to promote goods and services in entrepreneurship. Lestari et al. (2020) suggested that individuals need to have four core competencies so that they are said to be digitally literate, namely Internet Searching, Hypertext Navigation, Information Content evaluation, Knowledge Assembly.

In today's rapid digital era, it can encourage entrepreneurship to open entrepreneurs easily with various benefits and conveniences. Information technology, especially the internet, plays a big role in the business world, especially the marketing world (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Social media is information technology that is used not only for social activities but nowadays social media is a means of promoting products or services (Parveen et al., 2015).

The rapid development of information technology has brought the world of commerce to a new arena called the digital economy which is a current and future business trend. The electronic-based economy, often called the digital economy or e-commerce, has great potential in the future and plays an important role in becoming the backbone of the national economy. In today's rapid digital era, it encourages entrepreneurship to open entrepreneurs easily with various benefits and conveniences.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) make a major contribution to the economy. Along with the development of the global economy, business competition is increasingly competitive. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises have low competitiveness, one of the causes is low quality, low innovation, and limited mastery of technology (ICT). To have competitiveness and business sustainability, MSMEs must respond to rapid changes in technological innovation, focus on long-term interests, produce environmentally friendly products and strive for the preservation of natural resources, and efficient use of technology (Singh, 2019).

The presence of technology today is actually an opportunity as well as a challenge for students in developing the business that has been initiated during college. It is an opportunity, because with technology that has become the daily "life clothes" of students, with the gadgets they have, it will be a powerful marketing and production machine in reaching a wider market share and consumers. Being a challenge, if students cannot utilize technology appropriately for the development of their business, conventional competitors will come into the realm of their consumers with technology services, such as the presence of GoJek with Go-Food Products, Go-Send and Grab with Grab-Food, and the penetration of merchants through professional Marketplace such as TokoPedia, BukaLapak and others.

Marketing is an economic term that defines a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products or services of value with others. The important thing in marketing is the work done by sellers to promote behavior that is desired by the social environment (Schwepker & Schultz, 2015). Social networking website or commonly called a social networking site which is a web that provides a service that allows users to create profiles and have a global network of friends and have relationships due to social similarities.

Entrepreneurship courses are currently a compulsory course in all universities. This is a follow-up to the government's plan to promote entrepreneurial potential in the community in order to create jobs while reducing unemployment, which has continued to be a scourge for the community. In addition to being learned, entrepreneurship must also be widely internalized through the educational process. Individuals who have an entrepreneurial spirit are individuals who know their potential well, learn to develop their potential to see and create opportunities in realizing their goals.

According to Hawlitschek et al. (2018) Trade or exchange in economics is defined as a transaction process based on the voluntary will of each party. Trade like this can bring benefits to both parties, or in other words, trade increases utility for the parties involved. Trading is a very simple choice for people to make a living. Starting from a relatively small capital with sufficient expertise, they can trade so that from the results of trading their needs can be met.

Indonesia is one of the countries where most of the population work as traders, both large and small traders. Therefore, the author wants to explain about clothing traders in the modern era that some of the traders have used the internet in marketing their merchandise, but there are also some who have not utilized the online platform as a medium to provide information to the public, while the advantages of using social media are very good because they

can access information about the products they sell and can do the buying and selling process easily.

2. METHOD

The type of approach used in this research is a qualitative approach analysis with a type of phenomenology. The phenomenological approach aims to describe how entrepreneurial literacy and digital literacy influence the business sustainability of clothing traders in today's modern era. As well as seeing the phenomenon that exists in the market environment about how entrepreneurship and digital understanding of clothing traders. The use of this method is on the grounds that the focus in this study is the understanding and skills in entrepreneurship in clothing traders.

There are 2 types of data used in this study, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the respondents desired by the researcher, either through interviews with sources, and other field data collection. The primary data needed is the response of clothing traders regarding how entrepreneurial literacy and digital literacy affect business sustainability. Secondary data is data obtained indirectly from the object under study which, among others, is done through literature studies, literature and archives / reports such as, data from the local government, data on the general condition of the research location including geographical, demographic and other data obtained from clothing traders.

The object of research is informants who are cloth traders. Determination of informants in this study using Snowball Sampling. The informants consisted of 3 people where the 3 people were well-known clothing traders and occupied the top 3 with the largest turnover in Makassar City based on the researcher's best search. The subject of this research is informants, informants are people who are expected to provide information about the situation and background conditions. Determination of informants in this study was carried out Snowball Sampling, first one or two people were selected, but because with one or two people this did not feel complete with the data provided, the researcher looked for other people who were considered to know more and could complement the data provided by the previous two people until the informants in this study were three people. This means that the reason researchers use the Snowball Sampling technique is where in certain situations, the number of research subjects that have been determined previously does not provide in-depth information or in certain situations does not allow researchers to gain access to the sources, locations or subjects they want to study.

In line with this research, the data source used is primary data sources. Primary data sources are obtained directly from respondents by conducting direct interviews. Data reduction means summarizing, selecting key points, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns. This data reduction takes place continuously throughout the qualitative-oriented project (Lewins & Silver, 2014). During data collection, the next stage of reduction takes place, namely making summaries, coding, tracing themes, making clusters, and making partitions. This data reduction continues even after the fieldwork has ended and the final report has been compiled (Prastowo, 2012).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Clothing Merchants' Business Sustainability through Entrepreneurial Literacy

In this concept, entrepreneurial literacy has a major influence on business sustainability which is found in 3 aspects, namely knowledge, influencing factors and main elements.

1) Knowledge

One of the indicators of entrepreneurial literacy in clothing traders is basic entrepreneurial knowledge. Basic entrepreneurial knowledge is an understanding of trading or entrepreneurship possessed by a trader, one of which is about how to set up a business, this can

be known before doing or setting up a business or after setting up a business. An understanding is very important because it can have an influence on a trader. This is in accordance with interviews conducted with Informant 1 who stated that he already knew in advance about entrepreneurship, because his parents were also business people so he was told and taught in advance before setting up a business and according to him an understanding of entrepreneurship is clearly important because there is a lot to understand from trading, one of which is understanding the will of the buyer.

Based on the research results, it shows that knowledge is an understanding of entrepreneurship, understanding entrepreneurship in broad and basic terms, but in general the basics of entrepreneurship are very important, such as the influencing factors and basic elements. The results of this research are in line with research from Aulia et al. (2021) that entrepreneurship has several influencing factors such as capital, trading tools and understanding of market conditions. The most important part when understanding entrepreneurship is being able to give traders a sense of confidence and being able to understand consumers more broadly.

2) Influencing Factors

In entrepreneurship has influencing factors, factors that affect entrepreneurial literacy is the formation of mindset, attitude formation, and behavior formation. Apart from some of these influential factors in entrepreneurship are very related and important, namely capital, capital which is the main requirement to support a business in order to continue to grow, and skills are also important in order to become a sales strategy. This is in accordance with the results of the interview Informant 2 said that the influential factor in entrepreneurship is capital because to start a business the most important thing prepared and needed is capital then informant 3 also mentioned that another influential factor is skill because a trader must have a way to attract buyers to shop at his place but the most important thing is capital because it is used to develop the business.

On influential factors in entrepreneurship have several things, these factors greatly affect entrepreneurship, especially clothing traders, such as trade goods, trade tools, trading places and capital. From the results of interviews with respondents 2 said that in clothing traders or the scope of entrepreneurship capital is a very influential factor because of some of these factors will not be fulfilled if there is no capital. Capital is used as a tool to make up for the fulfillment of the initial needs of trading (Gorton et al., 2017). Apart from capital, skills are also needed by a clothing trader, skilled in offering trade goods, skilled in promotion, and skilled in arranging places to attract consumers (Nickson et al., 2017).

3) Main Elements

A competition certainly exists in a business, especially for a clothing merchant business that has many similarities in merchandise with other stalls or shops in the market. Therefore, a clothing trader should have a character that becomes a guide to attract buyers to want to shop at his shop. It was stated that some of the characters that must be possessed for a clothing trader are patient, friendly, not easily angry, smart in promoting goods, and praising the beauty of buyers so that those who shop can feel happy and satisfied shopping at their place. This is in accordance with the results of interviews with Informant 2 who said that being a clothing trader must have a patient character, not easily angry and friendly to buyers so that buyers feel happy shopping in his shop.

Entrepreneurship has a very broad scope, bringing the scope of clothing trading must have its own characteristics. Based on the results of interviews with respondent 3, seeing the number of clothing traders gives a sense of competition, so that clothing traders must be able to have a healthy competitive value to compete. In this case, it is intended that a clothing trader must have a distinctive characteristic that can be an identifier for consumers such as one example, namely selling tricks, according to a trader, especially a clothing trader, must have a friendly, kind and attentive nature to the needs of buyers, that way buyers will feel cared for and can generate interest in shopping (Harris et al., 2016).

Based on the results of this study in accordance with the theory according to McKeever et al. (2015), entrepreneurship is a creative endeavor that builds a value from nothing to exist and can be enjoyed by many people. According to him, every successful entrepreneur (entrepneur) has four main elements, namely ability, courage, determination and creativity. However, from the results of interviews with responses, patience is the most important thing when becoming a clothing trader and several others.

b. Clothing Merchants' Business Sustainability through Digital Literacy

In this concept, digital literacy has a major influence on business sustainability in three aspects: knowledge, evaluation of content and information, and internet search.

1) Basic Digital Knowledge

One of the indicators contained in digital literacy in clothing traders in the new market of bantaeng district is basic digital knowledge. Digital basic knowledge is an understanding of technology and its development that has entered the world of marketing, by looking at the current technological developments that are so rapid that the sales process is becoming more sophisticated, this according to informant 1 certainly affects the buying and selling process between sellers and consumers who affect clothing traders in the new market of bantaeng district. Based on observations, several clothing traders have used technological sophistication in the buying and selling process, namely by using social media (facebook, whatsapp, tiktok and instagram) to market their products, this technological sophistication provides good benefits for sellers and buyers, the seller feels the benefits, namely the increased income he gets and the buyer makes it easier for him to buy the desired item.

Knowledge is an understanding of digital or technology, seeing the development of technology today which is very broad requires everyone to be able to keep up with its development, based on the results of interviews from this very rapid technological development that brings the marketing process no longer face-to-face or commonly found in traditional markets but can also be online through several applications, ranging from communication applications to applications specifically made for the marketing process. According to Ottman (2017), a trader should understand the new way of marketing his merchandise in order to increase sales.

2) Content and Information Evaluation

The next indicator is the evaluation of content and information. After creating an account on social media such as Facebook, the next step is to manage it, the account used for trading must be managed properly, there are many ways that can be used to manage the account, namely by paying attention to the appearance, paying attention to the content or images entered, then the most important thing to do is a way so that the account used can be found and visited by many other social media users, by paying attention to the appearance of the account in general, it can increase the attractiveness of visitors to enter and look at the images in it. then

what is important is that when sending images do not forget to tag friends' accounts or other trading accounts, one example is the Bantaeng Dagang account, Then the important thing is when sending pictures, don't forget to tag a friend's account or another trading account, one example is the Bantaeng Dagang account, then on Facebook there are also trading groups and the number of members is not small so that it can provide good opportunities, this is one example of why trading online has a very good effect on users, but on the good side, it is also necessary to protect the account from abuse because there are many irresponsible parties who can suddenly steal or take over the account used so it is necessary to pay attention to account security. This is in accordance with the results of the interview with Informant 2.

The content or content of a social media account is a priority because the content is a characteristic or identity of the account, based on the results of interviews with informant 1 for accounts used for trading requires content that has value, this is of course what is needed by consumers such as pictures of trade goods, pictures of the types of goods along with descriptions that can be information by consumers when visiting the account. This is in line with the opinion of Hogarth (2019) that one of the important things is the appearance of the account which must also be made attractive so that it is pleasing to the eye.

3) Internet Search

The next important thing is how to make the account created easy to find by visitors or in internet searches, because there are many competitors, it is necessary to do a way to make the account easy to search or easy to get. There is one way that is often used by pekaian traders to introduce accounts to other visitors, namely tagging as many Facebook friend accounts as possible when sending pictures so that they can be known and easily reached. This is in accordance with the results of the interview with informant 3.

One of the most important things by clothing traders on the trading account used is the internet search process, based on the results of interviews with informant 2 said that the account used in trading must be easily found by buyers, so that a way is needed so that the account can be visited and found by other users, one of which is by tagging other friends' accounts as much as possible when sending pictures of trade goods.

Based on the results of this study in accordance with the opinion of Camisón (2014), there are supporting factors for entrepreneurial change, one of which is technological progress, Örnek & Danyal (2015) The use of technology in entrepreneurship will provide many positive benefits for business success and can provide many conveniences in carrying out entrepreneurial activities, such as easy access to information, network expansion and also to communicate. That is why the emergence of social media can be an effective solution in running technology-based businesses, such as Facebook, Instagram, Shopee, Lazada, OLX, Bukalapak and others.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

a. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial literacy affects clothing traders in business sustainability because entrepreneurship requires knowledge about entrepreneurship and knows the factors that influence entrepreneurship and has the main elements of entrepreneurship which are creativity, self-patience and skills in running a business. Then, digital literacy affects clothing traders in business sustainability

because entrepreneurship requires knowledge about digital, content evaluation and internet searches to help marketing and business account security. Finally, business sustainability of clothing traders because in entrepreneurship basic knowledge in business sustainability. Has supporting factors and inhibiting factors that trigger entrepreneurs to improve the system in entrepreneurship.

b. Suggestion

Based on the results of the study that revealed a positive relationship between entrepreneurial literacy and business sustainability of apparel traders, it is recommended that the government and educational institutions improve learning approaches that promote entrepreneurial skills. Training programs and workshops that focus on aspects of creativity, patience and managerial skills can significantly contribute to strengthening entrepreneurial literacy among business owners. In addition, it is important to encourage collaboration between education and industry to provide relevant practical experience so that apparel traders can effectively apply entrepreneurial knowledge in running their businesses.

Furthermore, given the positive impact of digital literacy on the sustainability of apparel traders' businesses, it is recommended to develop specific training programs that focus on the use of technology and digital marketing. The government, together with the private sector, can provide access and support to improve apparel merchants' ability to utilize digital platforms, conduct content evaluation, and understand internet search strategies. In order to improve digital literacy, it is important to promote digital security so that apparel merchants can protect their business data. Thus, the integration of digital literacy can be one of the keys to success to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of apparel merchants in the modern era.

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