

# CREATIVITY TURNS CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA (Study on Rumah Kreatif Disabilitas in Malang)

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**Abstract:** The Covid-19 outbreak that has hit various parts of the world has had a major effect on the world economy. Restrictions on interaction between individuals are the cause of the decline in the income of small business actors. Many of them had to temporarily close their businesses because of regional restrictions. This also has an impact on the community due to the shrinking of employment opportunities, thus increasing the unemployment rate. On the other hand, the community is faced with the consequences of fulfilling the necessities of life that continue to run. This makes people continue to think creatively and try to find ways to keep earning, one of them is through collaboration in the Community. The Community of RKD, which was established in 2019, currently has more than ten members with different skill backgrounds. This community is founded on a high sense of togetherness to complement each other and the spirit to work. The core of the entrepreneurial process carried out by the RKD business unit by empowering the expertise of members who make up business lines in the community. There are four business lines in this Community, including convection, tailor, craft, and shoe washing. The challenges faced by business actors open up great opportunities in adapting new knowledge and abilities. This behavior changes the order of business patterns that were previously run offline and then gradually switches to digital. The transformation of digital adaptation has proven to be able to increase the competitiveness of micro-enterprises in Malang City. This research is a qualitative research that obtains data by direct interviews and field observations to the research location at the Rumah Kreatif Disabilitas, Malang City. Researchers found that creativity has an important role in dealing with the crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the creativity of an individual needs to get the right place to develop his potential. The community also contributes to improving the skills of its members with a family approach, compassion, mutual cooperation to strengthen this community to face the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Business actors have had a positive impact during the pandemic with the adaptation of digital marketing through e-commerce and social media, which are the current focus of marketing.

**Keyword:** Creativity, Digital Adaptation, Community, Entrepreneurs.

## 1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is now in its second year, this condition is included in the non-natural disaster category and has had a major impact on people in Indonesia. Various sectors ranging from education, finance, to micro, small and medium enterprises have also felt the impact. This interaction restriction results in many activities being carried out from home, thereby narrowing the community's space for movement. Not a few workers who ended up losing their main job. The health crisis condition due to Covid-19 has increased the number of unemployment rates as data compiled by BPS in 2021 states that the open unemployment rate for the population aged 20-24 years has increased by 17.66% and for those aged 25-29 years it has increased by 9.27%. The Financial Services Authority in 2021 gave an assessment that the pandemic would be a major risk to the economy.

Crisis conditions have a major impact on the uncertainty of business continuity run by MSMEs. The effects of the pandemic have directly affected the weakening of the purchasing power of

the public or the household sector in the economy. The decrease in wages received by the community resulted in the purchasing power of households also decreasing. This is a factor that influences the role of households as consumers in the economy. Crisis conditions increase uncertainty and have an impact on weakening entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs as stated by Conti et al (2019). MSMEs, which were once the pillars of defense against shocks caused by the crisis, are currently having a major impact. Previous research conducted by Bartik et al., (2020) stated that the discussion about the impact of COVID-19 was felt by MSMEs. This is also felt by business actors in the city of Malang, especially small-scale business actors. Data on the number of students collected by BPS in 2019 (before covid-19) reached 246,983 students from both public and private campuses. The implementation of online learning has an impact on business actors by decreasing purchasing power. On the other hand, business actors are now starting to be open to learning to apply digital marketing in introducing their products.

Various efforts have been made to achieve this goal, in the process of formulating a plan, an idea is needed that involves creativity as a support. According to Clark Moustakis (1967), humanistic psychologists state that creativity is the experience of expressing and actualizing individual identities in an integrated form in relationships with oneself, with nature, and with others. Based on this creativity will lead to new innovations in producing goods and services. On the other hand, the environment also has an impact on the development of this creativity. The existence of a sense of mutual support, common vision and mission makes a group can be closer in creating creative ideas. Prabandari (2018) states that the latest concept in the new economy is supported by information and creativity where ideas and knowledge stocks of human resources become the main factor in economic activity. Creativity is one of the keys to the success of a business to win market competition. By creating a product that is new and different from other products, it will be of more value compared to other products. With creativity and innovation in the business being undertaken, it is very important for the sustainability of a business.

Previous research conducted by Ballor et al (2019) stated that creativity can be understood as what humans do in connection with the basic attachment of something. In his research found that an entrepreneur is those who develop new and even very important discoveries on the basis of insights and discoveries of previous people in history. An entrepreneur can be seen as those who discover something radically new and hidden in the hidden possibilities of reality and creation. Or entrepreneurs can be seen as those who develop new inventions, and even very important especially on the basis of the insights and inventions of those who have come before them in history. Creativity in running a business plays an important role because of creativity will lead to innovation for the products and services produced. The pandemic condition has taught business actors to take challenges into opportunities by combining various alternative collaborations.

The pandemic period also provides new opportunities for us by use of digital platforms to market their businesses. During the pandemic, there were many adjustments to people's habits to preferences for choosing the type of transaction. Restricted access to interaction makes people tend to like online transactions. Marketing with digital media is widely used because it can be accessed with small capital. As stated by Rahayu (2017) that e-commerce has benefits for MSME actors because it can expand market reach.

RKD Malang city is a community that accommodates its members to work and generate income. Here members will get assistance from other members who have expertise in a field. So the concept run by RKD is to form four main business lines in the hope of opening up job opportunities for its members. The results of the field visit showed that the lines of business they run include Convection, tailoring, handicrafts, and shoe washing. This study uses a qualitative method, which is an investigation carried out carefully to find facts and data for a study (Kurniasari, 2018). This research was made to answer how the disability creativity house

survives running a business in the midst of covid-19 and explores creative ideas that are applied to run their business.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Creativity**

Creativity is a process that generates new and useful ideas or opportunities, often stemming from making connections between different ideas or opportunities. Someone with creativity has basic skills in finding ideas and the ability to take risks in carrying out their ideas. Katz et al (2018). Mone (1994) discusses two measures of self-efficacy that encourage a person to become an entrepreneur. The first measure is analogous to expectations, and the second measure is analogous to the outcome of those expectations. Self success as an entrepreneur here is likely from getting the desired opportunities and job benefits for the work that has been done.

### **Theory Human Basic Needs**

Abraham Maslow suggested five human needs based on their level of importance starting from the lowest, namely physiological needs, security needs, social needs, ego needs, and the highest need for self-actualization (Nari (2020)). The theoretical concept of Abraham Maslow explains that humans have limited needs. The most basic needs are placed first in the hierarchy of needs, which consists of five levels of human needs and wants. Higher needs will encourage someone to get satisfaction for these needs, after the lower needs have been previously satisfied. Furthermore, Maslow said that the main human needs are at the first level, namely physiological needs which consist of the need to eat, drink, housing, and so on. The second need is the need for safety, protection from danger, threats and plunder. The third need is social need, namely love and satisfaction in relationships with other people, satisfaction because it is accepted by community groups, families. The fourth need is the need for status and position, self-respect, reputation and achievement. The fifth need is the need for fulfillment and self-development as much as possible, creativity, self-expression and doing what is most suitable and getting the job done by yourself.

### **Digital Technology**

Technology is the development of the transition from traditional ways to practical ways that are adopted by someone to make their work easier (Liu, 2021). The pandemic condition requires business actors to be able to adapt to the conditions so that the business they run can survive. Advances in technology also open up opportunities by using digital products to reach a wider market and increase business profitability. Digital media that are often used by business actors are e-commerce and social media such as Instagram, Facebook. According to (Fallis, 2013) e-commerce is a digital marketing tool to make sales and advertising by utilizing the internet based on B2B and B2C this can also be used to communicate with business partners. E-commerce has a positive impact on business lines such as sales and operations. This is in line with the opinion by Siagian et al (2020) that E-Commerce has a positive impact on customer-based business development, on the other hand it does not have an impact on purchasing management. In the same study, it was stated that advertising and publication are powerful ways of persuasive communication to customers.

## **3. Method**

This study used a qualitative descriptive method which was carried out in the RKD community in the city of Malang. Qualitative research is a means to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups regarding social or human problems. The research process involves the emergence of questions and procedures, data that is usually collected in a participant



setting, data analysis constructs inductively from specific themes to general themes, and the researcher makes meaningful interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2009). This is in line with Kurniasari (2018), qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret events. In this case a researcher will collect data by observing and conducting in-depth interviews in order to obtain research respondent data. Based on the qualitative data obtained, the researcher will explain the results descriptively. According to Sugiyono (2016) qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to examine the condition of natural objects (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument.

This research is located on Jl. Vinolia Flower No. 22, Jatimulyo, Lowokwaru District, Malang City. This location is the home base and production house for the Disability Creative House community. This location is a place for incubation of business ideas from each member of the community. Researchers obtained primary data by conducting direct observations and interviews with key informants. Selection of informants by considering their ability to understand the topics in this study. The researcher chose a leader from the community to be interviewed in more depth.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The results of the research conducted on the RKD showed that the pandemic period had an impact on the business being run, such as a decrease in turnover, a decrease in orders from customers, temporarily closing due to restrictions imposed by the government. This restriction has resulted in some people experiencing layoffs. This impact is also felt by persons with disabilities who used to work precariously. As a forum that prioritizes kinship, RKD provides opportunities for people with disabilities in Malang to join as members. Mrs. Indri has a high sense of willingness and desire to move forward, creating four business divisions as an effort to facilitate their members in working. The business division was formed based on joint discussions with community members and one person was chosen as the division coordinator. The division coordinator is responsible for providing briefing on the type of business being run which will then be evaluated by the chairman on a regular basis. The divisions in the Malang City RKD include Convection, Tailor, Craft, and Shoe Washing. This shows that someone with creativity has basic skills in finding ideas and the ability to take risks in carrying out their ideas. Katz et al (2018). It is evident that this community was born with ideas collected from members and carried out to provide opportunities for other members to continue to work and earn in the midst of a pandemic.

This effort is carried out as evidence that to maintain human survival will continue to try to meet their needs as conveyed by Abraham Maslow who suggests five human needs based on their level of importance starting from low, namely physiological needs, security needs, social needs, ego needs, and social needs. the highest need for self-actualization is Nari (2020). In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were problems in meeting basic needs due to job losses. However, members of the RKD struggle to hone their creative ideas so that they can continue to run a business to meet their daily needs.

Members who join will be directed to divisions according to their abilities. Mrs. Indri and the members are committed to providing opportunities for their members to work in order to fulfill their daily needs. Therefore, she uses her house as a base camp. So that members of this community can work every day in a proper place. With limited space and tools, the work system is made alternately according to the willingness of members. All members receive a division of wages according to the workload given by making a job summary which will be calculated at the end of each period by Mrs. Indri. In 2022, there have been improvements. As an effort to support broad marketing, RKD has now adopted the use of digital media. The media used are e-commerce and Instagram, this selection is based on the ease of access and the number of users. This research supports the research of Siagian et al (2020) that digital business has a

positive impact on business actors, the use of social media and e-commerce makes the products produced by RKD widely known by the public. digital adaptation makes it easier for RKD to sell its products, thereby increasing revenue each period. As an effort to support marketing, RKD appointed one member as the admin of the digital platform.

Thus, researchers can conclude that creativity can open up business opportunities when Covid-19 occurs. A great willingness to continue to learn and adapt also contributes to improving the quality of the business. The existence of a community facilitates its members to learn and innovate as well as foster a sense of family that makes members feel comfortable at work. This aspect is useful for business development in the future.

## 5. Conclusions

From the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that to be able to get past the effects of the pandemic for business actors is to cultivate creativity and high ability to learn. From creativity will grow new innovations that can create business opportunities that can improve living standards and meet the needs of life. The use of digital platforms is the right strategy during COVID-19 to market products. However, digital use also needs to be equipped with supporting skills in order to attract a wider range of consumers. Future researchers should be able to expand the research location and use other relevant research methods so that the results obtained are more significant.

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