

Partnership Modelling of Entrepreneurial, Digital and Performance Competencies among Coffee SME's in Bener Meriah Regency

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 16-10-2023 Revision: 22-10-2023 Accepted: 23-10-2023	The current initiative on SMEs development suggest that effective partnership programs play a pivotal role in enhancing SME competitiveness. However, current research in the area of partnership programs, specifically their impact on SMEs performance, remains
Keywords: Modelling Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Partial Least Square (PLS)	limited. Therefore, partnerships need to be examined with an emphasis on moderator variables to assess their impact on various aspects. This research presents an objective to determine a partnership program impact on SME performance. To fully understand the dynamic of the study, this research propose a Partnership Program model consists of three exogenous variables: Entrepreneurial Competence (KK), Partnership Program (PK), and Digital Competence (KD), and one endogenous variable: SME Business Performance. To analyse the data in the research, this research employs the Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis method. The PLS model is utilized to examine and determine the extent of influence among variables. The research population comprises 88 coffee-based SMEs participating in a partnership program in Bener Meriah Regency. The result of this research indicates that the significance test for the relationships within the Structural Model reveals strong statistical significance among various research parameters. Notably, the impact of digital competence (KD) on SMEs performance (KB) demonstrates the most robust relationship, with a substantial Std Beta value of 0.902. This pattern is consistent with the perspective of partnership programs (PK), where it exhibits significant effects on SMEs performance (KB) (0.429), digital competences (KD) (0.294), and entrepreneurial competences (KK) (0.451).

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the coffee sector have driven the establishment of foreign exchange villages in Bener Meriah Regency. A foreign exchange village is a village with significant export potential, making a substantial contribution to the local economy[1]. The primary criteria for developing foreign exchange villages are the natural resources with export potential. Bener Meriah Regency has significant potential in coffee production, making coffee one of the prominent Commodities, Products, and Types of Businesses according to Bank of Indonesia in 2022. This indicates that coffee and coffee powder are crucial products with great potential for development in Bener Meriah Regency.

In a way, improving the performance of SMEs contributes a crucial role in a country's economy. Therefore, many government agencies support the initiation and growth of SMEs to compete and improve their sustainability [2]. With the success of more SMEs, this will undoubtedly help reduce unemployment rates in the country. Partnership programs are one of the determinants of SME success [3]. These two programs consist of collaborative and environmental development programs [4]. The first initiative is a cooperative program with small businesses aimed at enhancing their capacity to become self-sufficient and robust through state-owned enterprise income. The second program is an environmental development program that utilizes state-owned enterprise income to improve the social situation in the

surrounding environment [5]. wo percent of net profits are the maximum allowed profits for financing partnership programs and environmental development initiatives, respectively [6].

Numerous community development activities have been planned in Bener Meriah, but the initiatives have not been successful, including the implementation of support for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) [1]. To respond to changes in the business world quickly and accurately, entrepreneurs need to leverage information technology [7]. In the digital age, many countries have undertaken the digitization of small industries to boost their national income [8], [9]. The government continues to support the SME sector to help them grow into large enterprises [10]. One effective way to improve SME performance is to use partnership programs to enhance the competence of SME players. This will be effective in increasing SME competitiveness.

At the moment, There is still a lack of research on partnerships related to competence. Previous partnership studies shows that no entrepreneurial and digital competence in the partnership program that are considered in the research [11]. Meanwhile another study on partnerships and digital competence has not linked to entrepreneurial competence as one of the exogenous variable [12]. Hence, partnerships need to be studied from the perspective of moderator variables to assess the impact of partnership roles on various variables.

Therefore, this research presents an objective to determine a partnership program model, entrepreneurial competence, and digital competence's impact on SME performance. The urgency of this research lies in the diversity of competencies and the performance of assisted SMEs. If this trend continues, it will negatively affect the success of the partnership programs that have been in place. The feasibility study in this research is based on the performance of assisted SMEs in contributing to the national economy. To support the finding of the research, this research uses Partial Least Square (PLS) model analysis. The PLS model is used to test and find out how big the influence is between variables. The population in this research is Coffee MSMEs which are members of fostered partners in Bener Meriah Regency. The findings from this research is expected to serve as an evaluation tool for partnership programs, and to determine the progress of the SME's development. This research is highly relevant to the National Long-Term Development Plan (RIRN) 2017-2045 in the field of economic growth, as well as the National Medium-Term Development Plan (PRN) 2020-2024, with a focus on strengthening socio-economic aspects based on SME performance. It also supports researchers working on competence, partnerships, and SME business performance-related roadmaps.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs qualitative and quantitate data captured by using questionaries and interview. The key steps on the research methods on this research is presented in Figure 1. Bellow:



Figure 1. Research Design

The research is conducted in Bener Meriah Regency, Aceh, Indonesia, which involving direct interviews and on-site observations at locations relevant to the study. These locations include coffee-based SMEs, the Cooperative and SME Agency, partnership program activities, and relevant government institutions.

The data used in this research is collected using questionnaires and will be analysed with the assistance of Smart PLS 4 software. This approach facilitates the identification of relationships among variables and the measurement of their impact in the context of the study on partnership programs, entrepreneurial competence, and digital competence in the coffee sector.

To analyse and process the data in the research, this research employs the Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis method. The PLS model is utilized to examine and determine the extent of influence among variables. this research propose a Partnership Program model consists of three exogenous variables: Entrepreneurial Competence (KK), Partnership Program (PK), and Digital Competence (KD), and one endogenous variable: SME Business Performance The research population comprises of the coffee-based SMEs participating in a partnership program in Bener Meriah Regency. The sampling technique involves 200 business operators, following Hair's (2014) recommendation, which suggests that PLS analysis can be performed with a sample size ranging from 100 to 200 samples.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 PLS Model's Variables and Parameters

This research propose a Partnership Program model consists of three exogenous variables: Entrepreneurial Competence (KK), Partnership Program (PK), and Digital Competence (KD), and one endogenous variable: SME Business Performance. Each latent variable has indicators. Latent variables represent the relationships between variables, and the structural model and its measurements are depicted in a path diagram (Figure 2). Latent variables cannot be directly measured, while indicator variables are measurable variables used as proxies for the latent variables.

No	Variables		Parameter	Ref
1	Entrepreneurial Competence (KK)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	Business Planning Skills: This indicator encompasses the ability to plan a business, create strategies, and manage available resources effectively. Innovation and Creativity Skills: This includes the ability to create innovative, creative products or services with high added value. Financial Management Skills: This indicator covers the ability to manage the financial aspects of a business, such as understanding financial reports, pricing calculations, and cash flow management. Networking Skills: It involves the ability to build a network of business relationships, both with customers, business partners, and other stakeholders related to the business. Communication and Negotiation Skills: This includes the ability to communicate effectively, influence others, and engage in negotiations in the business context. Risk Management Skills: This indicator encompasses the ability to recognize business risks, measure and manage them effectively, and make appropriate decisions when dealing with these risks.	[13]- [15][16]
2	Partnership Program (PK)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Intensity of Interaction between Partners and Entrepreneurs: This indicator can be measured through the frequency of meetings between entrepreneurs and partners, the duration of meetings, and the types of activities conducted together. Provision of Financial Support: This includes the amount and types of financial assistance provided to partners, such as capital for business, product development support, and funding assistance. Training and Skill Development: This covers the types of training provided, its duration, and its impact on improving the skills and competencies of partners in developing their businesses. Market Access: This encompasses the efforts made by partnership programs to assist partners in gaining access to broader markets, whether through business networks, product promotion, or collaborations with other parties. Trust and Cooperative Relationships: This includes the level of trust and cooperative relationships established between partners and entrepreneurs, whether in decision-making, product development collaboration, or profit- sharing arrangements.	[4], [17][18]
3	Digital Competence (KD),	1.	Hardware and Software Proficiency: This includes the ability to use hardware such as computers, laptops, smartphones, and various business- related applications and software.	[14]-[16]

Table 1. Variables and Parameters

Variables		Parameter	Ref
	2.	Information Technology Literacy: It involves understanding the concepts and terminology of information technology, including data processing, computer networks, and information security.	
	3.	Social Media Management: This encompasses the ability to manage social media as a means of promoting and marketing business products. It includes creating engaging content, understanding data analytics, and building customer relationships.	
	4.	Data and Information Analysis: This covers the ability to analyse business data and information using digital technology, such as processing sales data, generating financial reports, and understanding market trends	
	5.	Adaptability to Technological Changes: It includes the ability to keep up with rapidly changing digital technology developments and adapt to various technological changes.	
	6.	Privacy and Information Security: This involves understanding and implementing principles of privacy and information security in the use of digital technology. It includes creating strong passwords, avoiding virus attacks, and securing customer data.	
SME's Indicator	of 1.	Profitability: This includes the ability to generate adequate profit or earnings	
Performance (KB)		from the sale of products or services.	[18],
	2.	Business Growth: It encompasses the ability to expand the business, such as	[19],[20][21]
	2	increasing sales revenue, opening new branches, or expanding the market.	
	э.	products or services offered by the business, including product quality,	
	4.	Operational Efficiency: It includes the ability to manage resources effectively	
		and efficiently, such as inventory management, workforce management, and	
		optimizing operational costs.	
	5.	Innovation: This involves the ability to create new products or services, develop new technologies or methods, or undertake other innovations that	
	6	can enhance business performance.	
	6.	Business Sustainability: It includes the ability to maintain the business	
		to changes in the market or regulations.	
	Variables	Variables 2.	VariablesParameterInformation Technology Literacy: It involves understanding the concepts and terminology of information technology, including data processing, computer networks, and information security.Social Media Management: This encompasses the ability to manage social media as a means of promoting and marketing business products. It includes creating engaging content, understanding data analytics, and building customer relationships.Bate and Information Analysis: This covers the ability to analyse business data and information using digital technology such as processing sales data, generating financial reports, and understanding market trends.Social Adaptability to Technological Changes: It includes the ability to keep up with rapidly changing digital technology developments and adapt to various technological changes.SME's Indicator

3.2 Prediction Model and Parameter Estimation Model

In this section, Data from 88 respondents were collected and analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis with Smart PLS 4 software. The results of the data analysis are as follows.



Figure 2. Parameter Model Estimation

3.3 Model Evaluation

Measurement model evaluation is conducted by examining (a) internal consistency reliability using the composite reliability statistic, (b) indicator reliability using the indicator's outer loadings, (c) convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) statistic, and (d) discriminant validity using cross-loadings.

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	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
KB	0.890	0.894	0.916	0.648
KD	0.957	0.967	0.963	0.747
KK	0.930	0.938	0.942	0.671
РК	0.856	0.871	0.896	0.633

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

The composite reliability values (Table 2) for all constructs are greater than 0.7, indicating that the constructs have quite high internal consistency.

	KB	KD	KK	РК	PK x KK	PK x KD
KB1	0.748					
KB2	0.851					
KB3	0.911					
KB4	0.757					
KB5	0.778					
KB6	0.771					
KD1		0.952				
KD2		0.93				
KD3		0.745				
KD4		0.835				
KD5		0.858				
KD6		0.843				
KD7		0.942				
KD8		0.831				
KD9		0.819				
KK1			0.895			
KK2			0.882			
KK4			0.784			
KK5			0.811			
KK6			0.826			
KK7			0.79			
KK8			0.749			
KK9			0.805			
PK1				0.753		
РКЗ				0.845		
PK5				0.769		
РК8				0.835		
РК9				0.773		
PK x KD						1
PK x KK					1	

Table 3. outer loadings after elimination value under 0.7

The composite reliability values presented in Table 2, all surpassing the 0.7 threshold, signify strong internal consistency and reliability for the study's constructs. This indicates that the measurement model effectively captures the underlying latent variables, making the data collected highly reliable. Researchers can have confidence in the stability and consistency of the constructs, which is essential for drawing valid conclusions and conducting further analyses in the study.

The comparison of composite reliability and AVE values between the main model and the adjusted model is shown in Table 4 and Table 5. The adjusted model (Figure 2) is formed by removing certain indicators as indicated in Table 3. The comparison results indicate that the adjusted model (Figure 3) is able to improve the composite reliability and AVE values. Therefore, the adjusted model will be used for further analysis in this study.



Figure 3. Model Evaluation

The significance test in Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis is conducted to assess the statistical significance of relationships between variables in a structural model. It helps determine whether the relationships identified are significant or merely due to chance. Significance tests provide insights into the validity and strength of causal links between constructs in a research model. Therefore the signification test in this research is presented in table 4.

	Std Beta	Mean (M)	Std Eror	T Value	P values
KD -> KB	0.902	0.879	0.203	4.451	0
KK -> KB	-0.008	0.005	0.191	0.042	0.967
PK -> KB	0.429	0.437	0.096	4.462	0
PK -> KD	0.294	0.307	0.097	3.028	0.002
PK -> KK	0.451	0.459	0.097	4.63	0
PK x KK -> KB	0.587	0.573	0.243	2.413	0.016
PK x KD -> KB	-0.562	-0.545	0.26	2.161	0.031

Ta	bl	le	4.	Sign	ific	ation	Test
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The Standardized Beta (Std Beta) values represent the standardized regression coefficients for predictor variables in a PLS model. These values indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between the predictor variables and the dependent variable, while taking into account the units and scales of the variables. Therefore, based on the PLS model evaluation test, the result of test is presented as follow:

- Std Beta of 0.902 suggests a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable.
- Std Beta of -0.008 indicates a very weak negative relationship, almost negligible.
- Std Beta of 0.429 suggests a moderate positive relationship with the dependent variable.
- Std Beta of 0.294 suggests a weaker positive relationship.
- Std Beta of 0.451 suggests a moderate positive relationship.
- Std Beta of 0.587 suggests a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable.

• Std Beta of -0.562 indicates a moderate negative relationship with the dependent variable.

These coefficients reflect the importance and direction of the relationships between the predictor variables and the dependent variable in the model. Therefore, Digital competence (KD), Partnership program (PK) and its relation to SME's performance (KB) has the biggest relationship value that should be considered in this model.

	Signification Level
Digital competence (KD)	0.902
Entrepreneurial competences (KK)	-0.008
Partnership program (PK)	0.429
Partnership program (PK), Entrepreneurial competences (KK)	0.451
Partnership program (PK), Digital competence (KD)	-0.562

In Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression, an R-squared (R^2) value of 0.8 indicates that the model explains 80% of the variance in the dependent variable based on the variance in the independent variables. This value suggests a relatively strong relationship, meaning that the model captures a significant portion of the variation in the dependent variable. Meanwhile, An R-squared value of 0.0877 is relatively low, indicating that the model explains only 8.77% of the variance in the dependent variable. In addition an R-squared value of 0.204 indicates that the model explains 20.4% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Table 6. Signification Level					
	R-square	R-square adjusted			
KB	0.877	0.877			
KD	0.087	0.076			

0.194

0.204

KK

4. CONCLUSION

The performance of SMEs holds a critical role in a nation's economy, leading to various government agencies supporting SME initiation and growth. Success in this regard not only fosters economic development but also aids in reducing unemployment rates. Partnership programs, consisting of collaborative and environmental development initiatives, are central to SME success. The cooperative program enhances the capacity of small businesses for self-sufficiency, while the environmental development program utilizes income from state-owned enterprises to improve the local social environment. Despite multiple planned community development activities in Bener Meriah, they have often fallen short of expectations. In response to the ever-evolving business landscape, entrepreneurs must leverage information technology. The digital age has witnessed the digitization of small industries in many countries, augmenting their national income. Governments continue to champion the SME sector, offering support to help them evolve into large enterprises. Effective partnership programs play a pivotal role in enhancing SME competitiveness. Current research in the area of partnership programs, specifically their impact on competence, remains limited. The few studies that exist either overlook or inadequately address the critical link between entrepreneurial and digital competence. Therefore, partnerships need to be examined with an emphasis on moderator variables to assess their impact on various aspects. This research aims to establish a model of partnership programs and examine their influence on entrepreneurial competence, digital competence, and, ultimately, SME performance. The urgency of this research lies in the diverse competencies and performance levels of assisted SMEs, which can impact the success of partnership programs. The feasibility study in this research is rooted in the performance of assisted SMEs and their contribution to the national economy. Partial Least Square (PLS) model analysis is employed to investigate the relationships between variables.

Based on the results of the data processing and analysis, this research conclude that the significance test for the relationships within the Structural Model reveals strong statistical significance among various research parameters. Notably, the impact of digital competence (KD) on SMEs performance (KB) demonstrates the most robust relationship, with a substantial Std Beta value of 0.902. This pattern is consistent with the perspective of partnership programs (PK), where it exhibits significant effects on SMEs performance (KB) (0.429), digital competences (KD) (0.294), and entrepreneurial competences (KK) (0.451). Conversely, the standardized beta value of -0.008 suggests that Entrepreneurial Competences (KK) has a negligible adverse impact on the outcome variable. This effect is minimal and may lack practical significance, indicating that KK has limited influence within the model. It implies that variations in KK explain only a small portion of the variance in the outcome variable. Additionally, a standardized beta value of -0.562 indicates that both "PK" and "KD" have a moderately negative combined effect on the outcome variable. When considered together, these variables collectively exert a more substantial negative influence on the outcome variable.

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