

STRATEGIES OF CREATIVE ECONOMIC ACTORS IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN EKANG ANCULAI VILLAGE, TELUK SEBONG DISTRICT, BINTAN REGENCY

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Abstract. This study aims to identify and analyze the strategies used by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in developing their businesses in Ekang Anculai Village, Teluk Sebong District, Bintan Regency. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, using interviews and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that MSME actors in this village implement various strategies such as utilizing social media, product innovation, attractive packaging, and collaboration with local tourism players. These strategies effectively expand market networks, increase sales, and strengthen business sustainability. The findings are analyzed through James Coleman's rational choice theory, which explains that entrepreneurs act rationally in utilizing resources to achieve their economic goals. This study confirms that MSME development strategies based on local potential and digitalization are essential in improving the village's economic welfare.

Keywords: Creative Economy, Rational Choice Theory, Rural Digital Transformation

1. Introduction

Indonesia plays a strategic role in the development of the digital economy in Southeast Asia[1]. To support this transformation, the government has formulated a National Strategic Plan encompassing six main pillars, one of which is the development of a digital-based creative economy[2]. The creative economy is a form of economic activity that relies on creativity, knowledge, and innovation as key assets in creating added value[3]. In this context, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a central role as both a driving force for the economy and a means of empowering local communities[4].

The digital transformation of MSMEs is one of the government's primary targets, with a projected digitalization of 50 percent of MSMEs by 2030[1]. E-commerce and social media are key platforms supporting this transformation[5]. However, many MSMEs have yet to fully utilize the potential of information and communication technology to develop their businesses, particularly in rural areas[6].

Ekang Anculai Village, Teluk Sebong District, Bintan Regency, is a tourist village with abundant natural and cultural resources. The village boasts a growing creative economy, specializing in processed foods and handicrafts[7]. Although some businesses have penetrated

markets outside the region and even abroad, most still face challenges in marketing, innovation, and digital media utilization[8].

This phenomenon demonstrates the need for adaptive and contextual business development strategies, particularly in utilizing social media and digital networks as a means of product promotion and distribution[5]. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the strategies employed by creative economy actors in Ekang Anculai Village in developing their businesses and to identify the obstacles and opportunities they face in navigating the digital economy era[3].

2. Research methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies of creative economy actors in developing businesses in Ekang Anculai Village, Teluk Sebong District, Bintan Regency[9]. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena naturally, contextually, and from the perspectives of business actors[10].

According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behavior[11]. The researcher acts as the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis process. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation as a form of data triangulation to enhance validity[9].

Data analysis was conducted inductively and interactively, starting from field data collection to drawing conclusions. This process included data reduction, data presentation, and verification[11]. This research also aimed to build an understanding of the strategies employed by creative economy actors and identify barriers and opportunities within the digital economy[12].

3. Result and Discussion

The research results show that the MSME strategies implemented in Ekang Anculai Village have significantly contributed to improving the local economy[13]. MSMEs in this village employ various strategic approaches, such as product innovation, improving service quality, utilizing digital technology, and strengthening marketing networks both locally and internationally[3]. These strategies are implemented in response to challenges such as limited market access, limited capital, and low digital literacy among some business owners[1].

Based on interviews with key informants, such as MSME leaders, business owners, and village officials, it was discovered that product innovation is a crucial step taken to increase MSME competitiveness[6]. For example, business owners have begun modifying products to suit the tastes of tourists visiting Bintan, given the village's proximity to tourist destinations. These efforts are also accompanied by improvements in product packaging and branding to create a

more professional and attractive appearance[5].

Furthermore, training and coaching from local governments and third parties also play a crucial role in strengthening the capacity of MSMEs[2]. The government provides support in the form of financial management training, digital marketing, and production equipment assistance[4]. This support helps MSMEs become more adaptive to changing times, particularly in the digital era[12]. Some MSMEs have begun marketing their products through social media and digital platforms, expanding their market reach[6].

However, challenges remain. Classic issues such as limited capital, difficulty accessing loans, and fluctuating market demand remain major obstacles to MSME development[8]. Furthermore, not all MSMEs have the same awareness and ability to capitalize on available opportunities, so success has not been fully achieved[13].

Analysis of the collected data also shows that the collaborative strategy between MSMEs and the village government has had a positive impact[7]. The village government plays an active role in encouraging MSME development through community empowerment programs. This participatory approach creates a healthier and more sustainable business climate[14]. Furthermore, the spirit of mutual cooperation within the community also strengthens the sustainability of small businesses in the village[9]. In general, the MSME strategy in Ekang Anculai Village focuses not only on increasing individual business incomes but also on contributing to the village's overall economic development. MSMEs are a driving force for the local economy, providing jobs, increasing household incomes, and fostering community economic independence.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that MSMEs in Ekang Anculai Village, Teluk Sebong District, Bintan Regency, employ diverse strategies to develop their businesses. These strategies include product innovation, utilizing social media, improving packaging quality, and expanding their market network through collaborations with tourism operators and participation in bazaar events. Leveraging local potential and the village's proximity to tourist areas are distinct advantages leveraged by these businesses to expand their market and increase revenue.

Support from village governments and related institutions also plays a crucial role in fostering and developing the capacity of MSMEs, through training, assistance with production equipment, and business legalization. Despite challenges such as limited capital and digital skills, MSMEs continue to rationally maximize available resources to scale their businesses. This aligns with the rational choice theory used in this study, where individuals act based on cost-benefit calculations to achieve their economic goals.

Overall, the MSME development strategy implemented by business actors in Ekang Anculai Village has significantly contributed to local economic growth, job creation, and strengthening the village's identity as a creative area based on local potential.

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