

A Theoretical Concept on the Strengthening Small and Medium Enterprises After the Covid-19 Pandemic Through Sustainable Sociopreneurship-Based Communities

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic harms sustainable development in Indonesia. This study aims to find innovative ideas to restore Indonesian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) during the Covid-19 pandemic by taking the substantial value or essence of Pancasila, namely cooperation, which is then applied to the concept of sociopreneurship. The study applies a qualitative analysis approach, in which the author plays a role as a participant-observer and thus a valid data source in the field. The concept of sociopreneurship implies that SMEs apply a business development strategy that utilizes a non-profit-oriented community to build a network of cooperation. This community facilitates SMEs, who are members of the community, with the support of the necessary resources, information or data, and soft skills. Sociopreneurship-based communities embody a qualified and suitable collaboration era for SMEs, which incidentally are starting to be dominated by people who are technology and information literate so that collaboration with external parties (the community) can be more effective. This study finds that although the Covid-19 pandemic has had a tangible impact on the SMEs sector, this impact can be overcome by applying a business development strategy through the sociopreneurship community, which makes SMEs players immediately adapt to environmental changes. This study also finds that sociopreneurship can be used as a long-term sustainable development model.

Keywords: Covid-19, Indonesia, SME, sociopreneurship, sustainable development.

1. Introduction

Even though Indonesia has enacted the New Normal Policy, restrictions on the movement of Indonesian people still occur. Restrictions on mobility have a very significant impact on people's lives, directly impacting Indonesia's sustainable development. As it is known, the state continuously makes every effort through planned work programs and policies to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development is a development process that provides a balanced portion of economic, social, and environmental interests. Sustainable development can be seen from several indicators which refer to the Sustainable Development Goals. Of the several indicators, which received a significant influence with the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic, they focused on two indicators, namely:

- Social Aspect

This aspect includes Poverty Eradication, Education, Protection, and Improvement of Public Health.

- Economic Aspect

These aspects include International Cooperation to Accelerate Sustainable Development, Changes in Consumption Patterns, Financial Mechanisms and Resources, Transfer Capacity-Building, and Environmentally Friendly Technologies (BPS, 2015).

Unfortunately, the limited mobility of people's activities makes the above aspects run further back. This means that these indicators are not met. In detail, referring to the social aspect, the Central Statistics Agency recorded the first increase in the poverty rate in the last three years due to the coronavirus increasing by more than 2.7 million people. Based on BPS data, those categorized as poor are those whose expenses are below IDR 460 thousand per person or IDR 2.2 million per family per month. The government claims that the social assistance provided has dramatically reduced poverty. Moreover, looking at the data, this number

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is not small, so it will take a long time to change the economic status of the poor to become more prosperous (Wijaya, 2021).

The increasing number of poverty is exacerbated by the limitations of face-to-face activities that end in the work vacation of employees in a company. Instead of being too long, layoffs occurred and created new unemployment. The impact of lost or decreased income can trigger social deviation actions as an effort to fulfill needs which, of course, have a direct effect on aspects of health and education. Furthermore, for the economic aspect based on the basic principles of the market, the pandemic creates a lack of space for sellers and buyers to meet so that the continuity of market activity slows down. This affects the level of social welfare. In a broad scope, the picture of the welfare level is illustrated by domestic market conditions and foreign affairs that refer to international cooperation. Export-import activities will be hampered because health aspects need to be included in these activities. As a result, tax revenues and foreign exchange experienced a downward trend. In addition, many development projects have stalled and are not following plans, such as infrastructure development or technology development.

Based on the explanation above, to get through the pandemic crisis, the attention is not only on overcoming it by considering strategic steps considering the impact of the crisis has become the center of attention at once and occurs in all countries so that the problem is complex. It is also acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has reduced people's purchasing power due to reducing outdoor interactions to suppress the spread of the pandemic. As a result, many consumers are now keeping their distance and switching purchases digitally. By understanding the complexity of this issue, Indonesia, as a country being hit by a pandemic, must find a way to socio-economic recovery.

One way is to increase economic growth. Unfortunately, with various problems and changes in adapting people's lifestyles, increasing economic growth is not easy and succeeds in a short period. However, some sectors are considered to play the most essential and fundamental pillars of the economic ecosystem in Indonesia. This is evidenced by data showing that 99% of business actors in Indonesia are in the SMEs sector. The role of this sector has contributed 60% to the national gross domestic product and 97% to the absorption of labor affected by the pandemic. From a historical approach, during the 1998 economic crisis, it turned out that the SMEs sector had a very positive contribution to saving the Indonesian economic ecosystem at that time. The same thing happened during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the SMEs sector has excellent potential to become an accelerator of national economic recovery (Arianto, 2020).

As an accelerator of national economic recovery, the SMEs sector must no longer be allowed to experience bad conditions, such as when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Indonesia. Although this sector is considered necessary, SMEs have experienced the worst impact from the Covid-19 pandemic with the most significant impact recipient compared to other sectors. Many SMEs have had to close

their businesses due to declining purchases and are still dependent on offline sales. Coupled with several SMEs sectors that have not adapted digitally in the end, they are significantly affected and have closed their businesses (Purnomo, 2019).

To avoid a bad experience in the SMEs sector again, a strengthening is needed through a breakthrough for the development of the SMEs business itself. This means that support at various levels of society is needed to revive the potential of Indonesian SMEs by optimizing the sharing of information, technology, experience, and capabilities. Moreover, the education level of SMEs actors is still low, which affects their mindset, experience, access to information, and level of analysis (Nainggolan, 2016).

The question support refers to the concept of sociopreneurship. Sociopreneurship is an entrepreneurial model that can be used as a business development strategy that can adapt to various environmental changes and then produce new characteristic phenomena in terms of business. This is based on the emergence of sociopreneurs who are members of communities with backgrounds in various fields of science, such as technology, public policy, business, communication, and other related fields of science. Some of these fields will mutually support each other in optimizing new characteristics for strengthening the Indonesian SMEs sector. The involvement of sociopreneurs can improve the competitiveness of SMEs both mentally, market access, administrative efficiency, and the business itself in a modern way (Bauer & Flagg, 2010). These results can be achieved through measurable and strategic work programs created by sociopreneur to be applied in the SMEs sector.

From the description above, this research aims to provide innovative ideas to restore Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic by taking the substantial value or essence of Pancasila, namely cooperation at various levels of society which is then applied to the concept of sociopreneurship. The author tries to explain the strengthening of SMEs through community-based sociopreneurship to achieve sustainable development. From this goal, it will be interesting to analyze whether the existence of a sociopreneurship-based community in improving the capabilities, knowledge, and experience of SMEs as reinforcement in achieving sustainable development is necessary or not. That way, it will be a determinant or material for consideration for Indonesia and the parties involved in strengthening the role of the SMEs sector for sustainable development.

This study identifies how to strengthen SMEs through community-based sociopreneurship in achieving sustainable development. By identifying this problem, the author tries to analyze the potential of sociopreneurship-based communities to strengthen the SMEs sector in Indonesia's recovery. The benefit of this research is to strengthen the SMEs sector through community involvement based on sociopreneurship so that if a pandemic occurs, that can destabilize the Indonesian economy, and the SMEs sector can recover it in the shortest possible time.

2. Introduction

2.1. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a development process that provides a balanced portion of economic, social, and environmental interests. The operationalization of the concept of sustainable development requires indicators to assess its effectiveness. In many countries, sustainable development indicators are linked to participatory, integrative, cross-sectoral, and comprehensive development strategies. Sustainable development indicators have been identified in Agenda 21 as a tool for decision-making. A set of sustainable development indicators, including guidelines and methodologies, has been compiled by the Commission on Sustainable Development, CSD, since 1995 (Servaes, 2017).

Sustainable development. Ordóñez and Duinker (2010) state that sustainable development is first a capacity to maintain ecological, social, and economic stability in transforming the biosphere's services to humans. Both meet and optimize the needs of current and future generations. The third is the indefinite persistence of the necessary and desired system (socio-political or natural). Fourth, the integration of ethical, economic, social, and environmental aspects in a coherent manner so that generations of humans and other living beings can live in the present and the future without limits, fifth, fulfill the needs and aspirations under the limiting factors of the environment, social and technology, and sixth live in harmony. With nature and others, the seventh maintains the quality of the relationship between humans and nature (Ordóñez & Duinker, 2010).

There are at least four points of the principles of sustainable development, including:

- Equity and social justice. This first principle means that the development process must ensure equal distribution of natural resources and land for present and future generations. Development must also ensure the welfare of all levels of society.
- Appreciate diversity (diversity). Biodiversity and cultural diversity need to be maintained to ensure sustainability. Biodiversity relates to the sustainability of natural resources, while cultural diversity relates to the equal treatment of everyone.
- Using an integrative approach. Sustainable development prioritizes the relationship between humans and nature. Where humans and nature are elements that cannot stand alone.
- Long-term perspective, in this case, sustainable development is oriented not only to the present but also to the future. To ensure that future generations have the same or even better environmental conditions.

2.2. Sociopreneurship

Sociopreneurship combines two goals: to gain profit and provide a remarkable social impact on the community. The presence of sociopreneurs will provide changes that go hand

in hand with discovering new solutions to overcome social problems. The business expansion carried out by sociopreneurs is solely for helping the community. Sociopreneurship is defined as an innovative activity that creates social value. Sociopreneurship is also seen from its primary focus on social missions to its main orientation on commercial and social goals. Sociopreneurship does not have to be philanthropic (generous) or commercial to achieve a productive balance (Austin et al., 2012).

According to Hulgard (2010), sociopreneurship is born from a civil society that has the initiative and participates in optimizing the existing social capital in society. There are four kinds of social capital (Hulgard, 2010):

- Networking fosters good relations between each other, between institutions, and between institutions and individuals to produce good economic relations and the achievement of social welfare.
- Trust is related to relationships, expectations, and actions/social interactions. A sociopreneur must be able to build trust with one another.
- Norms emerge from mutually beneficial exchanges. This means that if the benefits are enjoyed by only one party in the exchange, other social exchanges will certainly not occur. Norms concern the rights and obligations of both parties that can guarantee the benefits derived from a particular activity.
- Social action, which is the result of a decision to do something. The decision to act is usually taken based on the meaning or value that exists in a person. If one does not act, then the impact of social capital on growth will not occur (Zulkifli, 2013).

According to Hulgard (2010), a sociopreneur can solve social problems in innovative ways. This innovation is a process of trying to find ways to do things better in the form of ideas, goods, events, and methods considered new by the community. The role of sociopreneurs in implementing social values, according to Hulgard, is that the business must be able to create authentic and functional social benefits for the community, the surrounding environment, the nation, and the state. The social benefit in question is an approach to trying to increase social ties by knowing the needs and desires of the community and providing more personal or personal services.

Successful sociopreneurs are sociopreneurs who can balance social activities and business activities. A person carries out business activities to be developed to ensure independence and sustainability of the social mission. Sociopreneurship actors can be individuals, proactive organizations, including:

- Community-based organization.
- Socially responsible enterprises.
- Socio-economic or dualistic enterprises (Tan et al., 2005).

3. Methodology

These conclusions have been reached based on data analysis and case studies acquired through descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research was chosen

because it may be carried out by an author who describes the subject matter as a phenomenon that affects the strengthening of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) after the Covid-19 pandemic through sustainable sociopreneurship-based communities. Sociopreneurship-based communities will be highlighted as a way to help Indonesia recover from the pandemic, following the challenges that have been identified in this research.

As an observer participant, the author serves as a valid data source in the field using the analytical-qualitative approach that has been chosen. The author hypothesizes using primary data sources such as previous research, scientific journals or proceedings, and secondary data sources such as books and the internet. Observation and documentation are used to analyze the data gathered in this research. Data checking (editing) and data marking are used in this research to process the data (coding). The data reduction results are then compiled and presented in the narrative-descriptive text for data presentation (data display) purposes.

Actual data on the implementation of sociopreneurship on strengthening SMEs through sociopreneurship-based communities have been carried out and are sustainable. As an example of its activities, in December 2020 in Bogor, a briefing on sociopreneurship was held. At the event, the General Chairman of JOSAY, Prof. Dr. Ir. A.R. Adji Hoesodo, S.H., M.H., MBA., and Chairwoman of the JOSAY Board of Trustees, Dr. Riana Susanti, M.Sc. to fill the briefing on sociopreneurship, primarily related to the use of internet technology and social media.

The General Chairman of JOSAY gave a presentation on how to create a new market and business opportunity in a world affected by the pandemic, then a briefing on how to use social media to increase turnover, market exploration opportunities, and access sales throughout the world. This first resource person is Mr. Adji Hoesodo, an alumnus of Universitas Indonesia, who managed to provide fascinating material, and the participants also seemed very enthusiastic in listening to the briefing.

The second resource person is Mrs. Riana Susanti, an alumnus of the University of Indonesia and an entrepreneur. She provides more detailed material on where SMEs must make changes, such as uploading new news, empowering websites, making a company budget, and business illustrations that have been proven. This second resource person also said that it is not impossible for SMEs that do not have restaurants, but if they can cook at home and sell through social media or e-commerce, they will become very successful people. In addition, some tips are also given so that SMEs can survive a problematic pandemic situation because if SMEs are successful, the country will undoubtedly be lighter.

Like the 1998 world crisis, Indonesia can still stand tall because 98% of business actors are SMEs. Therefore, the role of SMEs is significant because they are also contributors to the gross domestic product of up to 65%. The two resource persons invited the participants to be active, not give up, and always pray to God to be given smoothness and ease. Of course, SMEs must also continue to use

strategies for strengthening SMEs through proven sociopreneurship-based communities to be more professional.

In the following section, the author explains what is being done with the technique, data, and recommended solution that has been identified. More information may be found in the accompanying illustration, which makes it simple for readers to comprehend.

4. Data and Proposed Solution

The presence of a pandemic has a direct negative impact on Indonesia's sustainable development. The vulnerability of domestic affairs requires the completion of the right approach, especially considering that the phenomenon of this disease outbreak is not the first time this has occurred. The increase in unemployment goes linearly with the increase in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This is due to the demand for the community that whatever happens, they must find a way to generate financial benefits. Instead, the SMEs sector is the best choice because the SMEs typology does not require significant capital and high technology, making it easy to operate. This means that most people think entrepreneurial conditioning activities are an independent solution.

Unfortunately, the independent solution in question is not as beautiful as the meaning of the word "solution." SMEs must swallow the harsh reality of adapting to existing environmental changes, namely when the surrounding environment is decorated with the Covid-19 pandemic atmosphere so that mobility is limited. This condition is what led them to several problems. The problem is exacerbated by conditions that illustrate that SMEs are one element that is not necessarily able to analyze problems systematically and adequately, before heading to finding solutions to problems, the source of the problem is known in advance. The problems faced by SMEs during the pandemic include:

- Lack of awareness and motivation to develop the business more professionally.
- Lack of information and knowledge so that no innovative steps are taken, such as management of marketing, production, capital, and sales strategies. Marketing is a problem that almost all SMEs often encounter. Especially in the Covid-19 pandemic, it is difficult for them to reach the market due to the transformation of their lifestyle, which is shifting to the digital world. Likewise, product packaging lacks attractiveness to attract consumers' attention.
- Limited access to funding and capital is accompanied by complicated credit application requirements, guarantees, and lengthy processes. During a pandemic, lenders will consider the community's financial weakness as a consideration in providing loans.
- Limited access to finance and reach of the target market means that SMEs must be able to take advantage of digital technology, such as social media in terms of marketing, given the relatively low marketing costs. However, understanding digital technology cannot be

learned by SMEs by itself. Unfortunately, no group, organization, or business community can overshadow the SMEs in transferring information, knowledge, and experience related to technology (Wulandari & Dewanti, 2007).

Referring to the four points above, sociopreneurship is a business development strategy that comes from social ideas with an entrepreneurial approach. Sociopreneurship, which is the focus of discussion in this paper, is community. Sociopreneurship-based communities will act as providers and givers of social impact on the problems and needs of SMEs through change. These changes will bring a new perspective on improving the economic system to find solutions so that SMEs can develop their businesses with existing resources. The resources in question are social capital in the community, including:

- Network sociopreneurship-based communities foster good relations between the public and private sectors, including practitioners, institutions, institutions, and academics, through their networks to produce good socio-economic relations and achieve the SME sector's welfare.
- Trust is carried out by the sociopreneurship-based community through social interaction. This social interaction carried out between members of the community seemed lighter, easier to understand, and communicated to SMEs. This interaction can also be adjusted to the abilities and background of each SMEs actor.
- Norms emerge from mutually beneficial exchanges through interaction and transfer of knowledge, skills, experience, and information between communities and SMEs. In this case, as part of the structure of the social environment, both will fulfill the rights and obligations of both parties, which can guarantee the benefits derived from a particular activity.
- Social action, which is the result of a sociopreneurship-based community, decided to do something through programs and agendas that are strategic, systematic, creative, and innovative. The decision is taken based on reality, problems, and goals to be achieved (Chuop, 2016).

The four social capitals are utilized to develop SMEs businesses can be more optimal. This is where various assistance is needed through training and coaching that can make SMEs actors prepare themselves to compete and have a more professional business by using existing technology. For the SMEs sector to benefit from technology and reach a level where they can compete, it is necessary to remove some of the barriers that are holding them back, including:

- Affordability, where they do not have sufficient capital to allocate to technology use.
- Lack of awareness of technical skills and understanding of technology for business development.
- Infrastructure as a core requirement of all forms of technology implementation is inadequate so it becomes a significant barrier to technology adoption and use.

- The private and government sectors that play an essential role in infrastructure development promote increased use of technology.
- Limited management capacity to incorporate technology into the SMEs environment (Saunila & Ukko, 2014).

From the five obstacles above, the author tries to highlight the involvement of individuals from various fields in the sociopreneurship-based community that can optimally live the role of the community. The support of individuals, such as academics, policy observers, technology/information, researchers, government institutions to management is one of the proper steps in forming an interconnected and sustainable network to determine innovative steps to overcome the obstacles above. With a network owned by the community, they can access the public and private sectors to collaborate in supporting the strengthening of the SMEs sector.

The community as a forum for SMEs players will also measure the extent to which the application of the technology forms a competitive advantage that refers to constructs on five main dimensions:

- The efficiency of technology application for SMEs to offer lower prices than other competitors.
- The functionality of the technology application provides the user with the required functionality.
- Impact of technology application.
- Preemptiveness, namely the priority of early penetration with the successful application of technology to the market.
- The synergy of technology applications is closely integrated with business objectives and strategies (Qureshil et al., 2009).

The sociopreneurship approach was chosen because the impact mitigation strategy model aims to revive the SMEs sector, which can encourage the recovery of the Indonesian economy and solve social problems. By presenting the state as a community that owns privileges that others do not have, namely policymakers, and can raise and lower taxes, the state approach accelerates the implementation of activity objectives. The sociopreneurship approach is an alternative solution for solving social problems in synergy with the government level. Its implementation includes sociopreneurship-based economic policies and making economic activity programs through government institutions and regional or central sociopreneurs, making economic activities aimed at making profits (profit-oriented) and at the same time empowering target communities so that they can help them in solving their social problems. This strategic model is intended to tie social missions with economic activities so that they are sustainable.

From the description above, the author tries to present the problems, solutions offered and outputs through the presence of a sociopreneurship-based community that leads to sustainable development.

Table 1. Problems proposed solutions and outputs (Sustainable Development)

Problem	Solutions	Sustainable Development
Economics		
The development of the SMEs sector is not optimal in terms of productivity, management, utilization of technology, and market access.	Opening and promoting innovative SMEs products by utilizing technology and capital to gain market access on a local, national and international scale through compliance with normatively applicable Standard Operating Procedures. Internal coaching and training and soft skills for SMEs to reach a level where they can compete through sharing knowledge, skills, and experience and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure.	The return of the wheels of the economy to SMEs through an increase in Gross Domestic Product is accompanied by the elimination of poverty, the provision of employment opportunities, and competent human resources with soft skills.
Partnership		
There is no synergy between the business community, academics, practitioners, and public and private sectors that can overshadow entrepreneurs developing their businesses.	Partner collaboration and collaboration programs between sociopreneurship-based communities, universities, government institutions, practitioners, private companies, and SMEs are strategic, systematic, innovative, and measurable.	The creation of sustainable partnerships and collaborations to ensure the SMEs sector continues to live and contribute to sustainable development during the pandemic.

Source: Author's Elaboration

Based on the discussion of the relationship between problems, solutions, and outputs in the table above, it can be said that the presence of a sociopreneurship-based community that plays a role in strengthening the SMEs sector is following the sustainable development mission expected by Indonesia during the pandemic. Regarding the sustainable development mission, programs can be implemented by solving the SME sector's problems. This can illustrate that sociopreneurship-based community activity applied to work programs is oriented to problem-solving and transfer of knowledge, skills, and experience and is also aligned with supporting sustainable development. In addition, the sociopreneurship-based community also helps strengthen the SMEs sector through information and technology to be used innovatively and optimally (Utama, 2018).

The concept proposed by the author is not new. By referring to the concept of entrepreneurship and sustainability, the author examines the concept of sociopreneurship based on two things. First, this concept continues a sustainable program in society, but its achievements are not optimal. Several things, including causing the non-optimal programs that have been implemented:

- Change the government, which means changes to the work program and coaching models.
- Inconsistency from actors in the business community itself resulted from the actor's decision to change the type of business in a short time and not focus on running his business.

Second, the author observes that the transformation of the times requires society to be able to adapt to these changes (Palesangi, 2012) (Megawati et al., 2019) (Pio & Montolalu, 2012) (Saputri, 2016) (Syatiri, 2021). The concept of sociopreneurship is also strengthened by the increasing number of locally and nationally entrepreneurial-based communities:

- Covid-19 pandemic.
- Digitization in all aspects of life in a country. This sector is also trying to implement digitalization to make all work easier. Of course, the empowerment of SMEs is also expected to be optimal.

5. Conclusion

From the results and discussion above, the author concludes that although the Covid-19 pandemic has had a tangible impact on the SMEs sector, this can be overcome with a business development strategy through the sociopreneurship community that makes SMEs players immediately adapt to environmental changes. Sociopreneurship-based communities play an essential role in strengthening SMEs through four social capitals in the community, namely networks, trust, norms, and social actions. As a result, the community can optimize the synergy of the sociopreneurship ecosystem between the public and private sectors to support SMEs in the use of digital technology to create competitiveness and competitive advantage as an innovation capability.

The presentation of this research analysis illustrates that strengthening SMEs through sociopreneurship-based communities can be used as a choice of long-term sustainable development models. With the relationship between the problems, solutions, and outcomes described, it can be said that the presence of a sociopreneurship-based community that plays a role in strengthening the SMEs sector is following the mission of sustainable development expected by Indonesia during the pandemic. The applied sociopreneurship-based community activities have been aligned to support sustainable development.

It is hoped that a community-owned network can support the implementation of sociopreneurship-based community collaboration. They can access the public and private sectors to collaborate in supporting the strengthening of the SMEs sector so that the SMEs sector can emerge as an accelerator of Indonesia's recovery. Indonesia can slowly support every activity and program carried out by sociopreneurs. This can be a consideration for the government regarding things that need to be improved, especially in terms of policies in sociopreneurship to support the SMEs sector. In addition, state-owned and private companies are expected to carry out community development activities based on sociopreneurs

so that SMEs' business development activities sustainably are on target.

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