

Religious Values as Social Capital for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Facing Crisis in Kediri City

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of religious values as a form of social capital in supporting the resilience of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kediri City, Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with eight MSME owners who managed to maintain their businesses throughout the crisis. The findings reveal that religious experiences and beliefs foster resilience and adaptability by encouraging persistence, community engagement, and mutual support. MSME owners relied on religious communities not only for spiritual guidance but also as practical networks for business adaptation. This study highlights the importance of integrating religious values into the conceptualization of social capital, suggesting that faith-based networks provide both psychological and material resources for business survival in times of crisis. The research offers new insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to enhance MSME resilience through community-based and religiously-informed approaches.

Keywords: *Religious values, social capital, MSME resilience, pandemic, Kediri*

A. Introduction

Disasters have a tremendous impact on the social and economic sectors (Ludvigson, Ma, and Ng 2020; Nayak et al. 2020; Shehzad, Xiaoxing, and Kazouz 2020), health (Ćosić et al. 2020), and politics (Jaziri and Miralam 2021; Plümper and Neumayer 2022). In Indonesia, the impact of the Covid-19 disaster also resulted in an economic decline of minus 5.32% with the largest contribution of minus 4% in Java (Kediri 2022), requiring the government to take extra measures to overcome it. The decline in the economy for two consecutive quarters is one of the conditions that can cause a recession (Shiskin 1974). Household consumption growth also contracted by 5.51%. In addition, real sales, which are an indication of a weak economy, also contracted by 5.3%, accompanied by an increase in the number of unemployed to 9.77 million people (Purwanto 2021).

Responding to the pandemic outbreak as a disaster, governments around the world have taken a series of measures to reduce the impact of the pandemic, such as *social distancing*. *Distancing* and *stay at home* that causes disruption to

businesses and people's livelihoods (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020; Leite, Lindsay, and Kumar 2021). In Indonesia, the government has attempted to issue policies to encourage the recovery of the economy. PEN (National Economic Recovery) is expected to reach all groups, especially the lower middle class, to continue their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic (Kemenkeu.go.id, 2020). Interest and tax subsidies for MSMEs, credit stimulus (Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia 2021), BLT, Pre-Employment Cards, Electricity fee exemptions are part of the PEN implementation strategy (Purwanto 2021).

During the pandemic, Kediri City was affected by a contraction in economic growth reaching minus 6.25% during 2020 (Kediri 2022) worse than the national economy. Relying on the creative industry and social services to the community, the Covid-19 pandemic has stopped many economic activities (Kediri 2022). In Kediri City, the employment sector that absorbs the most workers is the service sector, which is 75.68% in the form of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, hotels, transportation services, financial services or other community services. There is a fact that there was a significant increase in the number of trading facilities in the form of shops and stalls on the side of the road during 2020, which was 2 to 3 times more than the previous year (Kediri 2022). This is also accompanied by an increase in the number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Kediri City, which is 14.5% from 5,070 in 2020 to 5,808 in 2021 (Kediri 2022). On the other hand, the Kediri City government's policy of imposing restrictions on community activities (PPKM) has created a dilemma for the government's efforts to save the lives of its people and the sustainability of its economy. The fact that the number of trading facilities and the existence of the PPKM policy have increased is an interesting phenomenon that people are still trying to survive and improve their economy amidst difficult government policies.

Value is one of the variables in social capital owned by society to run their lives according to the existing environment. Social capital has an important role in shaping the economy (Chetty et al. 2014; Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2004; Knack and Keefer 1997) and social outcomes (Knowles 2007; Putnam 2000; Wu et al. 2020). In responding to crises, trust, norms and networks enable individuals and communities to more easily access various sources such as information, assistance, and financial resources along with emotional and psychological support (Aldrich 2010). Resignation in facing crisis conditions and economic demands is a difficult situation for business actors to overcome, so religion can play its role as one of the strategies to deal with this condition (Norris and Inglehart 2013).

Research on the Covid-19 pandemic has focused largely on the economic sector (Nasution, Lili Yulia Anggraini, and Khumairani Putri 2022; Nicola et al. 2020; Qiu et al. 2021). In line with that, Olena et al stated that poor public health

conditions lead to a decrease in social capital in the community (Olena, Liubov, and Nadiia 2020). Bond, A. J et al also explained that during the pandemic, isolation measures can be utilized by business actors by utilizing networks to promote their products (Bond et al. 2022). As a result of the decline in network ties and affiliation groups, social capital becomes more limited and potentially more valuable (Borkowska and Laurence 2021). In addition to economic conditions, conditions on how the economy can grow by paying attention to both social and individual conditions should also be considered. Such as how society implements regulations made by the government regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Pitas and Ehmers stated that when people experience physical distancing mandates and reduced social capital, local social ties may have become increasingly important for psychological protection against stress pandemic (Pitas and Ehmer 2020).

Talking about social capital, Rice TW in his research stated that social capital in the form of trust and norms is often found to be more consistent in producing positive power than structural social capital in the form of networks or group membership (Rice 2001). In the Covid-19 pandemic situation, several studies have found that social capital causes the increasing rate of spread of Covid-19. The three elements in social capital are values/norms, networks and trust (Ding et al. 2021; Varshney, Socher, and Research 2020; Wu et al. 2020). This condition is also emphasized by Farboodi, M et al stated that social activities have an impact on social interactions during the pandemic, when social activities are limited, the pattern of social interactions will change and vice versa. Meanwhile, restrictions and maintaining distance are part of reducing social activities from the community (Farboodi, Jarosch, and Shimer 2021).

In addition to social capital, religion is an important part to discuss in a value that is recognized in social capital. Bentzen noted a 50% increase in Google searches for topics related to prayer compared to the period before the Corona crisis (Bentzen 2021). Gecewicz stated that a quarter of US adults said their faith had become stronger because of the pandemic (Gecewicz 2020). While Garelli found an increase in prayer during the pandemic (Garelli 2020). Del Castillo et al in his research stated that Filipino Catholics use religion as a resource to cope during difficult times. Molteni, F et al in his research wrote that religion plays an important role in family conditions in facing the Covid-19 pandemic (Molteni et al. 2021). Makridis et al. showed that religiosity also mediates the effects of business cycle fluctuations on individual well-being (Makridis, Johnson, and Koenig 2021).

Literature review states that many studies on the impact of the covid-19 disaster on society have focused on the economy and how to recover from economic downturn. A growing body of research has suggested that, in times of crisis, higher levels of social capital can improve the ability of individuals or

communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the crisis (Aldrich 2010; Helliwell, Huang, and Wang 2014; Klinenberg 2003; Poortinga 2012). However, not many have discussed religious values as part of the norms and values of social capital in society that are used in dealing with the covid-19 pandemic. This study attempts to analyze how *religious Value* is the main capital for business actors in Kediri City to survive in the face of pandemic conditions. amidst economic demands and their compliance with every government policy.

B. Method

This study aims to reveal how religious values serve as social capital in overcoming the crisis among MSMEs and their responses to government policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study uses primary data obtained through interviews with informants selected according to the research rationale and deemed suitable and eligible (purposive sampling) to serve as informants. These informants were selected based on the criteria of their businesses remaining operational during the pandemic, meaning they still carried out economic activities related to their businesses. Furthermore, the selected entrepreneurs were actively involved in empowerment within their communities, enabling them to survive during the pandemic. Interviews were conducted offline, discussing each selected entrepreneur. Furthermore, documentation and observation were conducted by identifying the activities carried out by informants during the pandemic related to their businesses, both through social media, digital media, and direct activities. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were validated using triangulation methods with coincidence and cross-checking of the data obtained from each method. This method is used to obtain certainty and credibility from the data, thus deeming it sufficient to describe the phenomenon being studied (Moleong 2017). The results of this validity test will be reduced to determine and identify findings in the field. Data reduction is carried out by sorting the phenomena into two categories, resulting in preliminary findings related to indicators of religious values and responses to government policy. The findings are then compiled and codified to be explained using existing building theories.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Results

1) Adaptation of MSMEs

The most crucial aspect of surviving the pandemic is that entrepreneurs must be proactive, seeking information, joining communities, and innovating with new businesses. The various ideas for exploring new business opportunities, such as mask production, certainly didn't emerge in isolation; they stemmed from input from the community and ideas developed from the

abundance of information received, including from the government. Almost all informants also engaged in innovation by adapting or changing products to meet market needs. Innovation and exploring new business opportunities are considered among the most effective ways to respond to government policies related to the pandemic. Furthermore, this approach allows entrepreneurs to survive. This description reinforces the idea that seeking new business opportunities and innovating products that are in demand during the pandemic can help MSMEs survive the crisis, especially with the numerous government policies surrounding the pandemic.

Public policy is the action of an individual, group, or government within a specific environment, aimed at exploiting potential and overcoming existing obstacles for a specific purpose (Nugroho 2006). Meanwhile, James Anderson, defines public policy as an activity with a specific purpose, followed and implemented by stakeholders. Kediri City is implementing Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) in accordance with Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 34 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Level 4, Level 3, and Level 2 Community Activity Restrictions for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Java-Bali Region (Agustino 2006).

The regulation was followed up with the issuance of the Decree of the Mayor of Kediri Number: 188.45/237/419.033/2021 concerning the Fourth Extension of the Implementation of Level 4 Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) Corona Virus Disease 2019. The government's policy in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis and disaster is not only limited to PPKM but also the implementation of the PEN (National Economic Recovery) policy of interest and tax subsidies for MSMEs, credit stimulus, BLT, Pre-Employment Cards, Electricity fee exemptions are part of the PEN implementation strategy have also been implemented in Kediri City. At the beginning of the pandemic, many government policies had an impact on the business sector, both on a small, medium and large scale (Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia 2021; Purwanto 2021). The main thing that business actors felt at that time was certainly an important response so that they could survive in running their businesses until now. Many MSME actors sought information on how they could continue to operate amidst the many restrictions on both economic scale and mobility. Among other things, they monitor social media activity, seeking information to continue producing and selling their wares.

They also communicate with colleagues both within and outside Kediri to find out what business opportunities are still viable with ikat weaving. There's not much they can do, as most colleagues outside the city are also experiencing the same economic stagnation and decline during the pandemic. They can't do anything and are still seeking similar information to continue developing their businesses. Such conditions haven't discouraged MSMEs in Kediri, who continue

to promote their wares through social media and seek business information. One such example is Dian (39), an informant who spoke about the catering business, stating that it presented a good opportunity. Because her business is catering, a neighbor ordered food for a week's isolation. The order came when she tried to promote a WhatsApp status about dishes that could be ordered daily. This opened up a new opportunity for her to survive in the catering business during the pandemic. This idea emerged when he was searching for information on social media groups. Many people were ordering food because they didn't want to leave the house, were sick, or were afraid of contracting the coronavirus, among other things. While information about business developments was also widely available on social media, it was also common to seek information about assistance for business development. Many people were waiting for this assistance, including social assistance to help them survive the recent disaster and economic crisis, whether in the form of direct assistance, subsidies, or business assistance.

The presentation revealed that in response to government policies related to the pandemic, which largely restricted economic activities and other services, seeking information about business development through social media, colleagues and relatives, and local authorities was the primary step taken by business owners.

In response to government policies related to the pandemic, business owners in Kediri City naturally had their own methods for survival. The primary approach taken by MSME owners at that time was joining MSME communities. For those involved in the culinary industry, there are communities open to anyone. Other communities exist, such as groups of entrepreneurs or MSME activists. These communities provide information related to MSMEs, and members receive numerous benefits from joining. Members within the community are permitted to sell their goods within agreed-upon rules, minimizing the likelihood of conflict. This is because the communities they join are intended to help members develop their businesses.

Recitation groups were also found. While the previous communities were open to the public, there were also communities for business development, but they were not intended for the general public but for specific groups, known as recitation groups. One informant called these specific communities "partners" and "recitation communities." They gather to recite the Quran and develop their businesses, exchanging information about their respective businesses. Other information can also be obtained from the communities they join, such as information about business assistance, collaborations, and partners.

The existence of MSME communities among MSME owners has had many positive impacts on their business survival during the pandemic. This is undoubtedly due to the active efforts of MSME owners to join the communities.

Those who had never previously joined a community joined, expanding their networks and friendships, thus gaining numerous benefits from the community. This is further supported by Wollschleger's statement that attachment and closeness in social relationships are crucial components of social capital for religious certainty (Wollschleger 2021).

2) Religious Experience and Beliefs

Regarding the religious values held by business owners in surviving the pandemic, researchers discovered a common attitude adopted by most MSMEs to survive government policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The "keep trying" attitude is a key finding, illustrating the religiosity of business owners. Furthermore, informants described the idea that if they remain silent and do not move, they will not be able to survive. Therefore, the path must be taken: to keep moving, to try whatever it takes to continue selling.

Beyond the phrase "keep moving and changing," the religious attitude depicted in this study is the effort to continue promoting their products. Not many can achieve this, but this attitude directly provides positive affirmation for business owners to remain committed to running their businesses. This finding of "keep trying" illustrates that not giving up easily in life and the trials it presents is a key point in facing crises and disasters. Therefore, the attitude of continuing to try and not giving up easily under circumstances provides the strength to survive in managing existing businesses.

An interesting finding in this study is that business actors' coping with crises and disasters is crucial for the sustainability of their lives going forward. Several sources indicate that informants believe in the certainty of their fortune. Therefore, they focus on self-improvement while awaiting its arrival. This focus on self-improvement is one way to seek their fortune. Furthermore, by continually improving themselves, they believe that what they receive will be commensurate.

This focus on self-improvement involves continuously improving their competencies. For Anita, studying extensively, in addition to filling her free time during the pandemic, she also prepares herself to face competition by improving the quality of her services. Self-improvement and self-improvement are not only about competence but also about religious knowledge. Many participate in online religious studies to fill their free time. This effort is intended to draw closer to God and increase patience in facing this crisis.

Participating in these online religious studies also fosters a new form of solidarity, a sense of shared destiny and shared responsibility in the face of COVID-19. This group conducts numerous social activities, including donations, rice sharing, blessed Friday prayers, charity, and more. The findings of this study indicate that self-improvement by increasing competencies, studying religious knowledge, and growing closer to family and the surrounding community are

attitudes directly experienced when facing the pandemic. These experiences became a religious journey during the pandemic in their efforts to survive and run their MSME businesses.

During a crisis, many of us strive to meet our own needs rather than the needs of others. This contrasts with the attitude of entrepreneurs in facing the crisis and striving to survive. Reni, an informant, explained why her business didn't close at the start of the pandemic, even though government policies were impacting all sectors. The main reason was for her employees, as she didn't want to further burden them in the already difficult conditions.

Starting with the intention of helping others was the initial motivation for surviving during the early stages of the pandemic. Furthermore, entrepreneurs experienced many benefits from this approach. While the intention to help others was evident, they received more orders. This enabled them to continue their business during the pandemic, thanks to the orders that stemmed from the intention to help others.

This study demonstrates that the intention to help others has been demonstrated by MSME entrepreneurs to survive in the face of crises and disasters. Furthermore, they gained experience dancing, which, with this intention, impacted the sustainability of their business. This experience strengthened their faith in good deeds and the blessings that come from God.

2. Discussion

1) Response and Resilience of MSMEs

The findings reveal that in response to government policies related to the pandemic, namely the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM), in accordance with Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 34 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Level 4, Level 3, and Level 2 Community Activity Restrictions for the 2019 Coronavirus Disease in the Java-Bali Region, MSMEs sought information about business development through social media, colleagues and relatives, and local authorities. According to Grindle (1980), public policy implementation involves, among other things, the content of the policy. Indicators that can influence policy implementation include the level of behavioral change, which encompasses the response and compliance of policy implementers. This compliance and response are the focus of this research, necessitating an investigation into the policy's implementation. This is because policy implementation is essentially an effort to translate public policy through various programs and actions, thus requiring a process of investigation and program analysis (Grindle 1980).

Previously, many MSMEs were unable to utilize media provided by the government or the public as part of their development efforts. During the pandemic, these media platforms became widely used, and the public became

aware of their importance. Bond et al. explain that during the pandemic, businesses could leverage isolation measures to promote their products by leveraging their networks (Bond et al. 2022). As a result of the decline in network ties and affiliations, social capital became more limited and potentially more valuable (Borkowska and Laurence 2021).

These platforms also facilitated the MSME community, which was previously facilitated by the Kediri City Government. The presence of MSME communities, participated in by MSMEs, had many positive impacts on their businesses' survival during the pandemic. This was undoubtedly due to the active participation of MSMEs, who had never previously joined, expanded their networks and friendships, thereby gaining numerous benefits from these communities. This community also leads to social networks, namely social ties through group membership and associations that often help generate benefits or advantages for individuals and social groups (Bourdieu 1986; Lin 2002). Mutual assistance and shared benefits are essentially part of social norms, which are the primary outcome of policy implementation, namely, change is acceptance of the policy itself. Social norms here refer to forms of social support, helping behavior, and collective efficacy (Ferlander 2003). Meanwhile, the facilities provided by the government to MSMEs will also build a chain of trust that can form strong social capital. This is because trust encompasses not only people's trust in others but also their trust in political institutions (Wu et al. 2020; Wu and Wilkes 2018). Social norms refer to forms of social support, helping behavior, and collective efficacy (Ferlander 2003).

Different forms of social capital and social environments often produce unequal impacts on social outcomes (Poortinga 2012; Yip et al. 2007) and can also imply different resources, support, and obligations (Ferlander 2003). On the other hand, using social capital and trust to explain the quality of responses to COVID-19 across US states. They found that states with higher levels of social capital and trust tended to have higher testing rates. Communities with greater social capital often perform better economically and politically and have wealthier and healthier individuals (Kawachi, Subramanian, and Kim 2008; Knack and Keefer 1997; Putnam 1993). Fields from sociology to epidemiology recognize social capital as a key source of 'resilience', reducing the impact of stressors on people's lives (Bonanno 2004; Ledogar and Fleming 2008; Putnam 2000). Social capital is crucial during "extraordinary times" (Kawachi and Subramanian 2006; Ledogar and Fleming 2008; Tsuchiya et al. 2017), such as natural disasters or (potentially) contemporary public health crises.

Other findings indicate that new business opportunities and the search for innovations in products that are in demand during the pandemic can help MSMEs survive the crisis, especially with the many government policies regarding the pandemic. Government policies in dealing with the COVID-19

crisis and disaster are not limited to PPKM but also the implementation of the PEN (National Economic Recovery) policy, interest and tax subsidies for MSMEs, credit stimulus (Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia 2021), BLT, Pre-Employment Cards, and electricity fee exemptions are part of the PEN implementation strategy (Purwanto 2021) which has also been implemented in Kediri City. Grindle (1980) stated that in the implementation of a policy, there are interests that are influenced, so that, such as capital assistance, credit subsidies, and electricity, there are many things that are impacted by the policy (Grindle 1980). Therefore, MSMEs are also one of those affected by this policy. They not only wait for assistance but also have to survive by actively seeking information on new business opportunities. Government efforts regarding policies during the pandemic are part of modernization and adaptation to the environment. Modernization has brought about profound social changes, ranging from increased rationality and economic security to a weakening of social ties (Ruiter and Van Tubergen 2009). Among these changes, increased financial, social, and existential security has led to a reduced need for religious reassurance (Höllinger and Muckenhuber 2019; Immerzeel and Van Tubergen 2013; Molteni et al. 2021; Norris and Inglehart 2013). Therefore, religious coping is widely debated, highlighting that people experiencing insecurity tend to feel stressed and lose control of their lives (McFadden and Pargament 1998). In such situations, religion finds fertile ground to develop its arena.

The above analysis shows that the responses of MSMEs and their efforts to survive are part of environmental adaptation, which the government participates in through adaptive policies. In addition to the government as policymakers, the implementers and subjects of these policies, namely MSMEs, also adapt through the activities and behaviors they develop. Essentially, MSMEs grow alongside the government, creating a space that is expected to become an important arena in society. The modernization born through this adaptation does not necessarily ignore the important aspects that must be implemented and developed alongside these behaviors, namely the position of religion and religious behavior. Ruiter and van Tubergen (2009) state that one of the impacts of modernization is the weakening of social ties, but this does not occur in the process of MSMEs surviving the crisis (Ruiter and Van Tubergen 2009). They become more engaged through active participation in the community and strengthen their bonds through sharing information.

This sense of bonding can be considered part of the initial process of developing religious values. Because they share a shared belief, share the burden of facing the crisis, and must rise together, this is the basis of the social capital that emerges within their group. When many people are depressed during a crisis, they persist and consider this shared responsibility to be useful in coping with stress. According to Pargament (1997), stress can cause people to lose

control of their lives. Therefore, in times of crisis, the need for religion to manage stress should not be neglected (McFadden and Pargament 1998). This is because it is very clear that the more they fulfill their economic, social, and existential needs beyond their control and are overfulfilled or even excessive, the less their need for religion decreases (Höllinger and Muckenhuber 2019; Immerzeel and Van Tubergen 2013; Molteni et al. 2021; Norris and Inglehart 2013). Thus, the development of social capital, the bonds between MSMEs that they work together amidst the limitations caused by the pandemic, makes them increasingly aware of the essence of religion itself. The values, norms, and behaviors of this developing informal bond become part of the social capital building of MSMEs in their survival (Putman et al. 2004).

2) Religious Values of MSMEs as Social Capital

a. Religious Experience

Glock and Stark, state that religiosity is a religious commitment to one's religion and faith (Nashori and Diana 2002). This commitment can be seen through the activities and behaviors demonstrated by an individual that align with religious teachings and beliefs. For a Muslim, religiosity can be determined by the extent to which a person's knowledge, belief, practice, and appreciation of Islam are present. Kecskes & Wolf's (1993) defines religious values as "Religious Experience" and "Religious Belief." Religious experience can be demonstrated through the experiences they have experienced in their lives in accordance with religious commandments. Religious belief, on the other hand, is what a person believes in as they live their life as a religious person. Therefore, religious value is something considered valuable from an individual's activities based on the commands and rules of their religion and their beliefs. It is considered valuable because it stems from the religious values enshrined in the rules within that religion. This study shows that self-improvement by increasing competency, studying religious knowledge, and becoming closer to family and the surrounding community are attitudes directly experienced when facing the pandemic. These experiences become a religious journey during the pandemic in efforts to survive and run their MSME businesses. Bentzen noted a 50% increase in Google searches for topics related to prayer compared to the period before the coronavirus crisis (Bentzen 2021). Gecewicz stated that a quarter of US adults said their faith has become stronger due to the pandemic. This aligns with the efforts of business owners who are striving to improve themselves, both in competency and spirituality. Therefore, they attend religious studies, deepen their religious studies, and gather with family as part of efforts to strengthen their faith (Gecewicz 2020).

Makridis et al. emphasized that religiosity also mediates the effects of business cycle fluctuations on individual well-being. The findings of this study also show that when business owners gather in religious communities, they

strengthen each other, receive numerous benefits, build networks, and agree on how to accept the pandemic (Makridis et al. 2021). When discussing ways in which religion can be useful in adverse situations, Communities can also provide tangible assistance in various forms, such as housing, financial assistance, and food provision (Stolz 2009; Storm 2017). Religion explains the activities of its followers, illustrating how religious values and religious beliefs are incorporated into these activities. On the one hand, religion can provide knowledge and psychological support through myths and parables (Stolz 2009), a shared worldview (Zapata 2018), and a sense of certainty (Brandt and Henry 2012). On the other hand, religion can provide and strengthen social bonds and religious communities where people can find comfort and support (Ellison and George 1994; Lim and Putnam 2010). This is part of the building block of social capital, namely the values and behaviors of social engagement. Therefore, social capital is built by MSMEs so that they survive through the benefits to their group. Social capital is particularly important during “extraordinary times” (Kawachi and Subramanian 2006; Tsuchiya et al. 2017), such as natural disasters or (potentially) during contemporary public health crises.

b. Religious Belief

Research findings reveal a persistent attitude among MSMEs, demonstrating that persistence in life and the trials it faces is a key factor in navigating crises and disasters. Therefore, this persistent attitude and persistence in managing a business provides the strength to survive, reflecting faith in God's will. Glock and Stark, define religiosity as a religious commitment to one's religion and faith. This commitment can be seen through the activities and behaviors demonstrated by an individual, which align with religious teachings and beliefs (Nashori and Diana 2002). For a Muslim, religiosity can be determined by the extent to which they possess knowledge, belief, practice, and experience of Islam. Kecskes & Wolf's (1993) defines religious values as "Religious Experience" and "Religious Belief." This illustrates that persistent effort is part of the religious values acquired through faith in religion itself. The commitment to continuous endeavor and effort in accordance with religious commands and the belief that disasters and crises are destiny are strong religious values held by MSMEs (Yono 2020).

Other findings also indicate that MSMEs demonstrate a willingness to help others to survive crises and disasters. Furthermore, they gain valuable experiences, which impact the sustainability of their businesses. These experiences strengthen their belief in good deeds and the blessings that come from God. Religion can provide and strengthen social bonds and religious communities where people can find comfort and support (Ellison and George 1994; Lim and Putnam 2010). Communities can also provide tangible assistance in various forms, such as psychological support, food, housing, and other

resources. This aligns with several studies that show religion can provide knowledge and psychological support through myths and parables (Stolz 2009), a shared worldview (Zapata 2018), and a sense of certainty (Brandt and Henry 2012). The availability of both material and non-material support during the crisis made MSMEs feel less alone and able to rise up and fight together. In addition to mutual support, they also engaged in activities such as joint religious studies, which served as a source of mutual support within a religious context. Therefore, the intention to help each other also arose from frequent joint religious activities, such as religious studies, during the pandemic. This aligns with Garelli's research, which found an increase in prayer during the pandemic (Garelli 2020). Del Castillo et al. also stated in their research that Filipino Catholics used religion as a resource to cope during difficult times. This study strongly supports the idea that fostering a desire to help others, and frequent gatherings in religious communities, were among the resources they chose as a strong resource in facing the crisis (A. del Castillo, del Castillo, and Corpuz 2021). Molteni, F et al. also wrote in their research that religion plays a crucial role in family conditions in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (Molteni et al. 2021).

D. Conclusion

The response and survival of MSMEs include actively joining communities and media, expanding their networks. They survive by actively seeking information on new business opportunities. Meanwhile, MSMEs' religious values reflect their religious experiences, improving their competencies, studying religious knowledge, and growing closer to their families and communities. Furthermore, they gather in religious communities, strengthening each other, building networks, and fostering acceptance—all of which are building blocks of social capital. Religious belief, fostering perseverance and perseverance, and a desire to help others fosters faith in good deeds and the blessings of God. This bond fosters a sense of belonging to others, and mutual support becomes a key asset in facing crises. MSMEs must strengthen their religious and community values to enhance resilience. Future research should include more respondents, other regions, and broader crisis situations, not just the pandemic.

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