

## Women and the Digitalization Strategies of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the New Normal Era

Junia Laksmawati<sup>1</sup>, Ahyar Yuniawan<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Master of Management, Doctor of Science,

Faculty of Economy & Business, Diponegoro University,  
Jl. Erlangga Tengah 17, Semarang 50241, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author; Email: ahyar.yuniawan@live.undip.ac.id

### Abstract

This study was based on research to explore the women entrepreneurs' development in Indonesia, emphasizing motivation to initiate small businesses (MSMEs) and digitalization strategies in doing their businesses. The research was based on a literature review and a small field survey of women holding small businesses (MSMEs) in Semarang. After analyzing the data from the interviews, many respondents stated that their early motivation in developing their businesses was to obtain additional incomes in finance. Evidence showed that as entrepreneurs, dealing with digitalization is an issue that cannot be avoided in the new normal era. Several adjustments and strategies were conducted to optimize their business operations and revenue. They were optimizing digital marketing, identifying business opportunities, creating innovations, creating new markets, and executing the marketing plan.

**Keywords:** Women entrepreneurs; MSMEs; digitalization; strategies; new normal era.

### 3.4. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the economic and political policies in Indonesia and also in the world. Based on data from the Department of MSME Development and Consumer Protection, Bank Indonesia revealed that 72% of MSMEs players were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Tanoto Foundation, 2020). The MSMEs players have experienced a reduction in all segments such as sales, capital gain, distribution, etc. Furthermore, people's perspectives, attitudes, and behavior have also changed. Indonesia is now preparing to welcome the New Normal phase during the COVID-19 pandemic that has infected millions of people worldwide. New Normal is an era where people have started to be creative again by implementing new habit adaptations. Economic activity is reopened along with behavioral changes, which normally perform activities by applying health protocols to prevent COVID-19 transmission. For instance, a survey conducted by the United Nations Development Program of Indonesia Economist (UNDP) found that MSMEs that operated offline are forced to turn into an online system now (Al Faritsi, 2021).

According to some studies, there is an increase in women's involvement in contributing to family income during pandemics when considering that their husbands' jobs are unpredictable. Therefore, women are encouraged to concentrate on their careers and

become equal breadwinners, increasing their financial independence. The Minister for Women's Empowerment, Bintang Puspayoga, explained that increasing women's empowerment in entrepreneurship is an opportunity to leave the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. She added that making women's empowerment a solution is because the women's strength in the entrepreneurship field is excellent. In addition, for women, economic empowerment serves as a means to earn income and a tool to free themselves from the snare of violence and discrimination that binds them (Handayani, 2021). It could be said that the changes in people's behavior in the New Normal era opens new business opportunities, especially for a new business owner or someone who has just reopened a business after a long hiatus. They should be keen to identify this chance.

Women entrepreneurs make a significant contribution to the business and economic development of any country. They contribute and help the economy widely in many different ways and many sectors. Many successful businesses are built by very skilled and well-educated women in entrepreneurial activities (Beqo & Gehrels, 2014). Findings revealed that the women entrepreneurs were innovative and open to adopting new perspectives and technologies to strengthen and expand their businesses. For example, based on research by United Nations (UN) Women in July 2020, at the level of micro-business, 54% of women have adopted the use of the internet in

marketing and selling their products to simplify the transaction and increase access to customer and market both domestic and foreign (Dewi, 2021). In addition, they acknowledge the importance of technology and human resource for business growth in the market. Hence, they prepare themselves and their employees to improve the quality in skill, service, and others. In other words, their businesses' success and performance are influenced by the quality of management and leadership, which are the main drivers of innovation.

There is still little research that discusses women entrepreneurs and the digitization of small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to provide a new perspective by exploring how the strategies of women entrepreneurs to survive and efforts to digitize their small businesses in economic activities that are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have significant involvements in various business fields concerning the interests of the community in Indonesia. Recently, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) supported Indonesia's economy because of its contribution to employment and gross domestic product from various industries. In addition, during the economic crisis, MSMEs proved able to survive and improve their performance because of their ability to adapt to the production process and capable of growing to adjust market demand without much involvement with the government's bureaucracy (Syuhada & Gambetta, 2013). Based on BPS (Central Bureau of Statistics) data in 2015, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) reached 57.9 million. In 2017, MSMEs brought a significant contribution to employment absorption that is 97.30%. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises in 2018 and BPS in 2016, MSMEs could provide 99% of employment in Indonesia and absorb up to 97% of total workers. However, some are unpaid workers and workers who need protection.

Meantime, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Indonesia have particular characteristics that differentiate from large business company. In general, MSMEs in Indonesia has three categories, and each of them has different characteristics, such as micro-enterprise, small enterprise, and medium enterprises (Hamdani & Wirawan, 2012). According to the BPS, a micro-enterprise is owned by an individual or group

that employs one to five people. Meanwhile, the small enterprise employs 20 to 99 people, and the medium enterprise employs at least 100 people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018).

**Table 1.** Number of Enterprises and Workers by Type of Enterprise in Indonesia

Structure of Business in Indonesia:

Type of Enterprise	Number of Enterprises	Number of Workers	% of Total Enterprises	Definition
Big	± 5,460	3,619,507	0.01%	Assets > IDR 10 billion
Medium	± 58,627	3,770,835	0.09%	Assets IDR 500 mln–10 bln
Small	± 757,090	5,831,256	1.20%	Assets IDR 50 mln–500 mln
Micro	± 62,106,900	107,376,540	98.70%	Assets < IDR 50 million

Source: (Indonesia Investment, 2020)

### 2.2. Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesia

According to Leibenstein in 1987, entrepreneurship is an activity that needs to run and realizes a business when the market has not been formed or several components of the production function have not been fully identified. As cited in the Review of Literature on Women Entrepreneurs (Idris & Tan, 2017), a woman entrepreneur starts a new business with her skill and resource, but her business is done informally without company and place registration. In the previous years, men have dominated while women are not well represented in the business world across the globe (Goldstein, Martinez, & Papineni, 2019), including in Indonesia. In this conservative country, women are frequently discriminated against in many industries, and there were times we barely saw women in business or any leadership roles (Rabiah, Fahlevi, & Yohanes, 2019).

However, the time has changed, and women entrepreneurs have become a popular topic and are considered the fastest-growing business owners in many countries, including Indonesia. These successful women entrepreneurs can be viewed in many business sectors such as technology, fashion, science. According to World Bank (2018) research, women's participation in the global workforce is up to 40%. A similar finding by Pew Research Center proved that median data of women in the worldwide workforce reach up to 45.4% (Fetterolf, 2017). The World Bank (2016) stated that SMEs' condition in Indonesia showed that up to sixty small businesses are owned by women aged 41–60. Most of them are high school graduates who are married. Even though most Indonesian women entrepreneurs are housewives, they can run businesses and earn profits from them.

### 2.3. Motivation

Motivation is a way of life or a significant element for an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs need motivation due it provides strength and bravery for them to open a new idea so that they can aim their goals in business (Boldureanu, Ionescu, & Bercu, 2020). Besides, many scholars agreed that motivation is the leading force for entrepreneurs' achievements. Based on the book "The Achieving Society" written by David McClelland, motivation becomes used to describe entrepreneurial performance in entrepreneurship. He stated that the progress of the business depends on dynamic activities of people behaving in an entrepreneurial way. The number of people with entrepreneurial motivation has significantly increased in developing countries (Neumann, 2020). Jodyanne Kirkwood conducted another research on the motivational aspects of entrepreneurs in 2009. According to his study, both men and women entrepreneurs have similar motivation aspects. However, the way of manifestations and interactions seem to be different. The women entrepreneurs have "motherhood" characteristics while doing their businesses. These characteristic influences women's purpose to become the entrepreneur (Perez & Hernandez, 2015).

### 2.4. Digital Technology

Digitalization is an activity that adopts digital technology to modify business models that aim to improve processes and create value through digital information technology (Vivek & Chandrasekar, 2019). Nowadays, technology development brings new opportunities for society to become an entrepreneur because of low barriers to entry small business world (MSMEs) (Herve, Schmitt, & Baldegger, 2020). Currently, cross-border technologies like e-commerce and social media have been broadly adopted by companies (Rahayu & Day, 2015). Digital platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) facilitate entrepreneurs to connect their MSMEs to the global market without boundaries. In connection to this matter, digital technology should be considered a tool to level up small businesses (MSMEs). However, the digital transformation of MSEs requires efforts and support from the government and business owners. Government interference has a vital role by developing digital transformation awareness, increasing labor-power skill, offering technical and financial support, and improving data communication groundwork because digital transformation could not be applied in poor infrastructure (Krishnamurthy, 2020). Therefore, the

government or policymakers must positively appreciate adopting new strategies for creating global capitalism circumstances for small business owners. On the other side, the development of digital mobile technology brings regulatory challenges for policymakers since it takes valuable tax revenue from the government.

On the other hand, the necessity of MSMEs during digitization development might be different. Digital content must be adapted to the business, industry, and MSME culture scale because digitalization can change market policies and business structures, and company culture when the transformation is applied (Raisanen & Tuovinen, 2020). However, capital resources and limited MSMEs prevent digital transformation. For example, in some cases, MSME owners realize that the internet offers opportunities for success, but they still do not have a website for their business on their smartphones. Nonetheless, they can use their smartphones for general business details, online banking, customer mail, bill payments, purchasing supplies, and paying taxes online (Bai, Quayson, & Sarkis, 2021).

## 3. Methods

In nature, a qualitative study was conducted to explore and obtain empirical evidence about women entrepreneurs' motivation and digitalization strategy during a pandemic. This study employed a case study approach to make comparisons between similarities and differences in cases easier. A case study is a qualitative approach that investigates one or more cases from time to time through detailed data collection involving many sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and many others (Gaya & Smith, 2016). This approach was chosen because it is an empirical method based on the current phenomena in society, and an in-depth investigation can be conducted when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the environment are less clear (Yin, 2018). A case study is highly recommended for studying entrepreneurship because it has several advantages, including explaining the linkages between causal factors, identifying and exploring concepts, core variables, and their meanings (Asvoll, 2012). In addition, by implementing this approach, the validity study can be improved because the combined data collected can create more profound empirical evidence (Neuman, 2014).

Six informants are called interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in this research. All interviewees graduated with a bachelor's degree from any major and university in

**Table 2.** Characteristic of Participants

Informant	Age	Status Marital	Field of Business	Years of Operation	Annual Result
1	29	Married	Food and Beverages	2.0 years	± IDR 50.000.000
2	26	Married	Food and Beverages	3.5 years	± IDR 160.000.000
3	30	Married	Food and Beverages	3.0 years	± IDR 100.000.000
4	27	Single	Fashion and Beauty	2.5 years	± IDR 100.000.000
5	30	Divorced	Fashion and Beauty	4.0 years	± IDR 185.000.000
6	27	Married	Fashion and Beauty	2.0 years	± IDR 60.000.000

Central Java, Indonesia. The participants were selected to be interviewed based on the writer's observation. Some of the participants decided to build their own business after they married and have children, and some participants have their own business after resigning from their job. These participants have been interviewed using in-depth semi-structured interviews via the Zoom meeting application to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Semi-structured interviews were conducted so that the question asked were not too rigid. This paper using triangulation to obtain data validation by observation and literature study. Triangulation is defined as verifying data from various sources in different ways and times (Daulay, Purwadi, & Situmorang, 2020). Meantime, the subject of this research was women entrepreneurs whose age are between 25-30 years old and has been running a business at least two years in Semarang, Indonesia. The focus subject of this study was entrepreneurs whose types of business were classified as micro-enterprises for livelihood. According to the Indonesian Law number 20/2008 regarding Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the specification of a micro business determined MSMEs based on annual sales results. According to this Law, someone business can be categorized as a micro-enterprise if it has annual sales of at least three hundred million Indonesian Rupiah.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Research Question I: What are the motivations of women to join entrepreneurship?

Everyone has a strong desire to succeed. A person's passion will make that person strive harder for personal achievement than to gain appreciation. People who have a high need for achievement tend to be interested in how they work personally and will not influence another people's work to perform well. Instead, such people attempt to obtain satisfaction in doing better things.

*"I2: I like entrepreneurship because I can be free to innovate without having to pay attention to company rules, my business - my rules."*

*"I5: I love cooking, and I thought why not turn my hobby into an active income."*

*"I4: From the beginning, after I graduated from my study, I did not want to work in an office because*

*I felt like if I could open my own business and create job opportunities, why should I work in an office."*

In running a business, businesswomen are more likely to feel satisfied. It is because they run a business not chasing high profits. Since they only want to help their husbands in finding additional income to improve the family economy.

*"I1: My motivation to start a business is to increase income and improve my family's economy."*

*"I3: To increase income for daily needed."*

*"I6: The initial motivation was because I wanted to get additional income because my husband's income was still insufficient, so I had to try to earn my income."*

The strong desire to see children succeed made women not give up on making a living. Whenever there was a problem in business, they considered it as new knowledge for them. The ups and downs of running their business were done sincerely for their children's future. They did not want to be completely dependent on their husbands. They wanted to be financially independent if their husbands retire, get sick, or pass away, and their children still need money to go to school. They already had the income to support themselves and their children.

*"I1: Why not? As long as I can help my husband to earn money and I can still take care of my children."*

*"I2: We do not know how long our husband will live in the world, so when God has allowed us to work and increase family income, we should not waste it."*

*"I3: Since childhood, my mother has always taught that women should be independent and not financially dependent on their husbands, so this has become my life's principle, and I will teach it to my daughter too."*

*"I 5: Being single parents is not easy; I have two kids, and if I do not work, who will be responsible for my kids' future, so I will do anything for children."*

*"I 6: COVID-19 pandemic caused my husband's salary uncertain; however, before this pandemic I had started my small business, and Alhamdulillah I was able to help my family's economy until today."*

A strong desire to be financially independent made women enthusiastic about running a business. They did not want to be forever dependent on their husbands. So even though they went into the business world just to look for additional income, but they did it seriously. They were totally running the business because they wanted their business to grow and become big.

#### **4.2. Research Questions: What are the strategies to strengthen business in the new normal era?**

New Normal is a term that is familiar to us nowadays. The COVID-19 virus has succeeded in destroying the world economic system, including Indonesia. Currently, entrepreneurs are forced to stay on the defensive, no longer thinking about profit but how to sustain their businesses to survive.

*"I 2: When the government implemented curfew, I felt sad because my food business was open at night.*

*At that time, my turnover had plummeted, and many of my food raw materials became rotten. I have ever closed my business temporarily for a month to think of new strategies and to reduce operating costs."*

*"I 5: At the beginning of the spread of COVID-19, my business turnover decreased due to a policy from*

*the government to stay at home. Many of my customers are afraid to come directly to the store, even though*

*I have implemented health protocols. As a result, I have to rethink to keep my business run."*

The business strategy in the New Normal era was fundamentally different from the business strategy before the COVID-19 pandemic. The difference lay in how to interact between the seller and the customer. Previously, business activities could be done offline in public, but the Indonesian government implemented large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) that restrict community activities in public places after the

pandemic. However, PSBB did not mean that business activities stop; people could still purchase goods or services, even though everything was done from home. Since people have to stay at home, they would keep scrolling through their social media to obtain the latest updates or just searched for entertainment. Many entrepreneurs took advantage of this opportunity to expand their market. Previously, the marketing strategy was done offline; they started to go online by digital marketing to promote their product.

*"I 1: Even though there is a PSBB, my business can still survive because I become a Go-Food and*

*Grab-Food partner. I can easily promote my food products for free without having to distribute brochures.*

*In addition, I also created accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp to update new menus and discounts to customers."*

*"I 4: To strengthen business brand-awareness, I often create educational content related to the products*

*I sell. Sometimes, I also work with influencers to introduce my new products to customers. Besides the offline store, I also sell my product in the marketplace such as Shopee and Tokopedia to expand my sales."*

At the beginning of the pandemic, all business actors would think to give up and roll out their business. But that is the wrong decision because all you have to do is find the best digital marketing strategy to revive your business. We have to stay positive that this situation will end soon (Nurdin & Fairuz, 2021).

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 MSMEs Condition During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The MSMEs sector has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from the disruption of raw material supplies and credit payments requiring restructuring and declining sales. However, the most significant decrease was experienced by MSMEs that rely on offline sales. It also could raise the lousy credit of MSMEs and the termination of employment (Maksum, Rahayu, & Kusumawardhani, 2020). A study conducted by the Coordinating Ministry for The Economic showed that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on MSMEs showed an effect on two sides. The impact of MSMEs is in the reduction of sales, business closures both temporary and permanent, cash-flow and access of credit, and the difficulties of

distribution of raw materials. On the other side, the impact of financial liquidity decreased solvency, the potential, and increases for non-performing loans (NPLs).

To anticipate a further downturn in the MSMEs sector, especially in cash flow, the government issued Presidential Regulation No. 72/2020. It serves as the legal standard for various stimulus programs totaling Rp 123.46 trillion for economic recovery and encouraging public spending (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Business Scale Organization

Total MSME Stimulus	
123.46 Trillion	
1. Interest subsidy:	Rp 35.28 trillion
2. Placement of funds for restructuring:	Rp 78.78 trillion
3. Expenditure on Guarantee fee:	Rp 5 trillion
4. Guarantee for working capital:	Rp 1 trillion
5. Final Income Tax of MSMEs:	Rp 2.4 trillion
6. Revolving Fund Management Agency of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (Lembaga Pengelola Dana Bergulir Koperasi Usaha Mikro Kecil dan Menengah: LPDB KUMKM):	Rp 1 trillion

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs Integrated Social Welfare Data Based on SK Mensos 8/HUK/2019

In its implementation, one stimulus program called President Assistance for Micro Enterprises has to deliver the grant for around 12 million micro-enterprises. The assistance requires the name and address data that include the type of business, bank account number, and verified the data from the capital credit and investment from banking institutions.

## 5.2. Data on Households Owning Business Units in Integrated Social Welfare Data (Ministry of Social Affairs)

Another data source that can be used in targeting MSMEs is the Ministry of Social Affairs Integrated Social Welfare Data (Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial: DTKS). Although the data unit is households, DTKS can identify which households operate as business units. Given that the database includes data on households with welfare levels in the lowest 40% in Indonesia, it can be assumed that the business units in it are home-based business units with the characteristics of micro and small business units. The data could be defined through prior employment status by taking status self-employed, employer-assisted by unpaid workers, and employer-assisted by paid workers.

**Table 4.** Number of Households Owning Business in DTKSS

Decile	Number of Households	Number of Households with Business	Percentage of Households with Business (%)
1	6,237,320	2,563,118	24.51
2	6,136,179	2,371,576	22.68
3	5,915,978	2,209,248	21.12
4	3,685,930	1,447,448	13.84
4 Plus	4,325,615	1,788,761	17.10
Non-Decile	1,007,488	78,523	0.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,308,510</b>	<b>10,458,674</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs Integrated Social Welfare Data on SK Mensos 8/HUK/2019

## 5.3. The Importance of Supporting Women in Business

Based on research conducted by Asian Development Bank, MSMEs created over 99% of businesses, and women run 60%. The purpose of women building their businesses was to channel their passions to open job opportunities and grant a better life for their families. However, women often missed opportunities due to a lack of facilities that enable them to work for a living and take care of family. As a result, they had to work harder.

The benefit of business should not only for the owners but also for the business communities outside. However, discrimination was still revealed among women in organizations. For example, based on a study by Credit Suisse in 2012 and 2014, women only hold 1 of 10 executive positions globally. Furthermore, there were indications of lower women's labor participation and disparity in opportunities. Based on this fact, it can be said that there are still challenges for working women, including in Indonesia. As a result, the government should provide a platform for Indonesian businesswomen to contribute and support family, industry, and national interests. It is the only way for the government to influence society to understand the importance of women entrepreneurs' role in economic progress.

## 5.4. Women motivation to take up entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is an essential component in driving economic growth worldwide (Doran, McCarthy, & O'Connor, 2018). Women could be

regarded as a source of entrepreneurial talent and an instrument of economic development. Besides, women entrepreneurs are considered agents of change in society because of their contribution to open job opportunities (Solesvik M., Lakovleva, & Trifilova, 2019). Meanwhile, women entrepreneurs had several purposes on why they start their business, and below are their leading four motivations to take entrepreneurship:

#### 5.4.1 Working on Something They Love

Being an entrepreneur and having your own business gives a woman freedom and flexibility to work based on skills and hobbies. Some women built their small businesses (MSMEs) based on what they like. Then, they created a business that is engaged in food and beverages, beauty, fashion, craft, and so on. By holding their own business, there was no pressure to do something they were uncomfortable with. Many women found their passions and preferred to focus on them rather than professions and succeed in turning them into profitable businesses.

#### 5.4.2 Breaking Stereotype

In the past, there were many stereotypes associated with women that forced them to stay at home and play lesser roles despite their career dreams and goals. However, women have fought hard against these stereotypes, and they have succeeded in breaking their limitations and pursuing their goals. As a result, they no longer hold to the gender-type roles that are determined by society today.

#### 5.4.3 Uncomfortable Work Environment

The work environment that is not pleasant for women can still be found in many organizations, starting from hiring women after a career break (maternity leave) and offering the possibility of working remotely with flexible working hours and equal pay. Various obstacles stopped a woman from returning to her job despite being skilled. However, these reasons have become a major motivating factor for many educated women to become entrepreneurs instead of working in an office.

#### 5.4.4 Push and Pull Factors

There are many pushes and pull factors that encourage women to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

**Push factors:** There were several conditions where the women have no other choice but to make a living, for example, single mothers. Thus, women took up micro and home businesses that target customers were their closest circle (family, friends, neighbors), only to support their family economy.

**Pull factors:** Some factors attract and motivate women to start their small business (MSMEs), such as the desire to lead and bring a change, gain recognition of social status, and have economic independence.

### 5.5. Digital Entrepreneurship

Digital entrepreneurship relates to the finding of business chances using digital technologies (Nambisan, 2017). In recent years, the infiltration of new technologies has explained how digitalization can create new opportunities for innovation. Meanwhile, information and technology have been recognized for their prominent role in driving entrepreneurial developments for economic performance (Del Giudice & Straub, 2011).

In running a business in the New Normal era, entrepreneurs can meet consumer needs through digital marketing (Un Women, 2020). People can maximize their marketing strategies through online or social media. For example, they can create creative content on social media such as Instagram, websites, and other platforms. The content that is created should contain informative values, intrigues, and attract consumers' reading interests.

In addition, digital marketing can also build consumer loyalty to the business to drive sales. It is realized when the entrepreneurs present content regularly, and it has the potential to go viral. One technique that can be applied is soft-selling through storytelling. They can create content with a story in it, even though the end goal is still "selling." Another digital marketing alternative that people can use is brand ambassadors or working with influencers to help the promotion process.

### 5.6. Strategies in New Normal Era

The new normal condition or what is popularly known as the new normal phase creates uncertainty, especially in the business sector. Business actors are busy guessing what will happen in the future without having a definite clue how changes will appear in every line of life. In the end, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are required to have a business strategy in the new normal. Salim Kartono, in his book entitled "Crisis to Win Revolution", stated that creating

a market economy is a fundamental and significant matter in business. No matter how good the product is produced, it will be meaningless if the business actors do not have a market (Kartono, 2017). Thus, business actors have to create a profitable market. In this case, the business strategies they must do during the new normal period include seeing business opportunities, developing innovations, implementing blue ocean strategies by creating new markets, and executing your business product marketing plan.

### 5.7. Identifying Business Opportunity

During the new normal period, purchasing power still tends to shrink and has not returned to its original state. Consumer behavior is no longer the same as it was before the Corona Virus pandemic emerged, and it has caused changes in the business world. The uncertain situation when the crisis made people more careful to take action during the new normal period. People become more selective in shopping and choose to save their funds for fear of tightening liquidity on the financial market. As a result, business actors, especially SMEs, can only be disappointed because demand did not flow rapidly. Therefore, business actors must be observant to identify new business opportunities when the new normal arrives.

One way is by observing changes in people's consumption patterns on various fronts, then diverting business strategies to opportunities based on the observations made. The thing to remember is that opportunities do not only come from the business sector currently in, but they can also come from other business sectors. The point is that business actors should not waste any existing opportunities. Instead, they should create products based on the current new normal conditions. Current conditions force business actors to think about work and get out of their comfort zone. Thinking out of the box is a must if you want to survive the transition period.

### 5.8. Creating Innovations

When the new normal phase takes place, competition will undoubtedly be tighter with unstable economic market conditions. The purchasing power has not returned to normal; the asset value will automatically decrease. Under these conditions, hard work is not enough. People are required to innovate as a way out to return to normal. Without innovation, business actors will find it difficult to make products that can create markets and make breakthroughs that can provide business benefits.

In creating innovation, the performance of the research and development division is very much needed to turn the current transition period into business benefits. Innovation can take the form of creating a quality product at a low cost or creating simple but effective marketing or sales strategy. Innovation is not only limited to business strategy but also the physical form of the product itself.

### 5.9. Creating New Market and Marketing Plan

According to W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne in Harvard Business Review, creating a new market is called the Blue Ocean strategy. The Blue Ocean Strategy concept reveals that instead of running a tight competition and trying to steal consumers from competitors, business actors should create new markets that cannot be compared with competitors. Thus, business actors should make the competition irrelevant but still gain the advantage of new markets. Competing in an already congested ocean is unlikely to allow a company to thrive sustainably in the long term. The real opportunity is to create their ocean with a new, unique market.

In the blue ocean concept, demand is something that is created, not fought over. Furthermore, there will be opportunities to grow and increase profits even under challenging situations. This strategy emphasizes the simultaneous and continuous search for sources of innovation and cost-efficiency. Every business actor must realize that to win the business competition, companies must stop fighting to beat competitors. The way to win the competition is to create new markets and dominate that market.

In the new normal situation, the marketing strategy is more challenging. Many business actors are waiting to act out of doubt about the uncertain economic situation. The entrepreneurs should not lose the momentum to start and move more aggressively to look for sales opportunities during the transition to normal at this time.

Meanwhile, several vital factors in preparing a marketing plan include conducting consumer research, focusing on product value, and performing marketing activities well. In addition, entrepreneurs also need to adjust their product portfolio, seek distributor support, adjust prices, maintain the market share, and have an accurate budget calculation.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the research and discussion, it can be concluded that to qualify as women entrepreneurs



requires a willingness to start business activity, manage, and be involved. Concerning the changes in the global market and technology, the importance of networking must be considered. Both women and men entrepreneurs benefit equally from their networks. However, women's networks different from men in the aspect of personal and emotional connection. Meanwhile, women entrepreneurs take advantage of new digital technologies to create and implement new businesses to defeat their obstacles. The new digital technologies provide opportunities and chances for women to initiate new small businesses, especially in the new normal era where people should limit their activities outside to avoid the spread of COVID-19 viruses. Moreover, technology development also makes it easier for women entrepreneurs to advertise products widely without offering them to buyers directly or door to door. Selling products online is more effective and efficient for women because it can save time to market and reach buyers from outside the city and even abroad.

However, digitization of business has disastrous consequences if it is not anticipated. Since the seller and buyer unable to meet face-to-face, there is a possibility that purchased goods will be returned due to damage or the customer is not satisfied. Therefore, business owners must provide detailed information on the products they sell, such as price, size, product material, and others. Besides, the seller must also consider a win-win solution, so neither the customer nor the seller is harmed. Digitization makes personal information easier to access nowadays, and the government, on the other side, must provide maximum protection to the business owner, such as protection of personal data, especially bank account, so that irresponsible persons do not misuse these data.

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