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Enhancing the Competitiveness of Malaysian and Indonesian MSME Through Governance and Digitalization

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Abstract — Globalization forces the business world to adapt and transform, driving the urgency of digital integration and transformation. This article highlights the crucial role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in economic growth, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. Even though MSMEs are the main pillar of Indonesia's economic growth, they face challenges such as lack of financing, low productivity and lack of managerial capabilities. Optimizing MSME business governance is the focus, it is hoped that it can increase the efficiency of resource utilization. The solution that can be provided is in the form of intensive training to MSME actors in Bogor City and Regency as well as distributing questionnaires to Indonesian and Malaysian MSME actors. Data from respondents provides an in-depth picture of the profile of MSMEs, including demographic characteristics and perceptions of governance, entrepreneurship and use of technology. The results of the analysis show significant differences between MSMEs in Indonesia and Malaysia, especially in organizational governance and understanding of entrepreneurship. MSMEs in Malaysia show a higher level of maturity in implementing good governance and have a deep understanding of entrepreneurship. However, in the use of technology, both tend to be balanced, showing the same challenges and opportunities related to technology. This research provides a strong basis for increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs in the era of digital transformation, by providing recommendations based on comparisons between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Keywords—MSMEs; Governance; Indonesia; Malaysia; understanding entrepreneurship; use of technology

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization in recent decades has placed increasing pressure on the business world to change. This requires the business world to integrate efficiently in order to not only survive, but also thrive in a competitive environment. Efficient integration can only be achieved through digital processes and collaborative tools (1). Therefore, the importance of digital transformation is increasing (2). In this regard, empowering MSMEs through increasing digital capabilities is an important priority for ASEAN in its efforts to restore the economies of member countries (3). Increasing digital capabilities or digitalization of MSMEs is also a joint priority with ASEAN dialogue partners, including Russia (3). MSMEs are the main driver of a country's economic growth and development (4). In 2020 the national project is the sustainability of MSMEs and strengthening economic resilience since MSMEs digitizing MSMEs, and proposing opportunities for future cooperation, adapted to the pandemic situation, contributing to Gross Domestic Product, supporting the majority of jobs and working broadly in various economic fields (3). MSMEs have a significant impact on the Indonesian economy; MSME players support 99% of Indonesia's economic growth, contributing to GDP reaching 60.5%. In addition, the MSME sector absorbs 96.9% of the workforce, making a significant contribution to the Indonesian economy. This was proven after the pandemic, where as many as 84.8% of MSMEs resumed operations (5). On the other hand, MSMEs in Malaysia have an important role in the majority of total businesses in various sectors, and make a significant contribution to GDP (6). Malaysian MSMEs contribute 97.2% of Malaysia's GDP (7). However, MSMEs in Malaysia are less competitive due to lack of adoption and mastery of technology. Therefore, it is proven that MSMEs must be technology literate so that their businesses can develop (5). Several studies state the challenges faced by MSMEs in the global environment, for example, lack of financing, low productivity, lack of managerial ability, lack of access to management and technology (6). If Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) implement optimal governance, it is hoped that existing resources will work optimally, and produce high efficiency and effectiveness (8) . The government still faces many obstacles, both internal and external, to develop MSMEs. Sometimes MSMEs only think about how to get big profits, without thinking about whether the company is managed well or not (9). In fact, subconsciously, corporate governance plays an important role in determining the quality of a business to achieve profits (9). To improve the worrying condition of MSMEs, a program to develop entrepreneurial understanding is also needed which can reduce the level of open unemployment and poverty (10).

For this reason, the solution offered is to conduct intensive training and distribute questionnaires to MSMEs in Bogor Regency, Indonesia. Through the data collected, we can identify insight gaps and provide appropriate recommendations. In comparison, distributing questionnaires in Malaysia will provide a broader and more holistic perspective.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Organizational Governance

The essence of governance lies in separating decision making from decision ratification and decision implementation from decision monitoring. Theoretically, the same person can perform these two different functions (11). Organizational governance or what can be called corporate governance is considered as a series of processes and structures that are used to coordinate and manage the business affairs of a company in order to increase the company's sustainability and accountability (12). The aim is to achieve long-term value for shareholders, while still considering the interests of other parties involved (12). Corporate governance describes how a company should be run, directed and controlled. It is about monitoring and holding accountable those who direct and control management. For SMEs, this concerns the role of each shareholder as owner and manager (director and other officials). It is about establishing rules and procedures for how the company is run (12). Implementation of this principle plays an important role in creating a conducive climate for long-term growth and building stakeholder trust (13), helping SMEs in improving their prospects of obtaining funding from investors and financial institutions, having healthier growth and committing to business efficiency because of the external supervisory parties, reducing problems related to information asymmetry and reducing investment risks in SMEs, have a major impact on the internal operations of a company (12). The four main aspects of internal operations include strategic direction, financial expectations, transparency issues, and shareholder activism (12).

2.2. Understanding Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial knowledge refers to knowledge of entrepreneurial strategies that involve developing innovative ideas, as well as courage in identifying and taking opportunities and risks with a rational and logical approach, with the aim of achieving success in establishing and managing a business (14). The competitive advantage of entrepreneurial companies lies in creativity

and innovation. It would be a disaster if corporate governance weakens value creation efforts, for example companies that have gone through the growth and survival phase will form entrepreneurship.

company (12). Successful entrepreneurs generally have competencies, which include knowledge, skills, and individual attributes such as attitudes, motivation, personal values, and behavior needed to carry out tasks or activities (15).

2.3. Utilization of Technology

The use of digital technology is increasingly essential for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector so that they can continue to compete in the global market (16). The benefits of the digitalization process involve the ability of MSMEs to expand market coverage through digital marketing strategies, increase operational efficiency, and also improve the quality of the products and services they offer (16). Initiatives to transform MSMEs are carried out by using digitalization to increase stronger resilience and more productive and innovative capacity. The rapid growth of the digital economy and finance has created various digital platforms that provide innovation in production, consumption, collaboration and sharing processes. The application of digitalization provides opportunities for MSMEs to change and develop, so that they can survive, recover and grow with increases in corporatization, capacity and financing (17).

III. METHODOLOGY

This activity was carried out for 5 days, 2 days in Indonesia, namely 11 and 12 August 2023, then distributing questionnaires in Malaysia for 3 days, namely 19-21 July 2023. The target of this activity was 45 MSME actors in Bogor Regency and City. and MSME actors in Malaysia as many as 43 respondents. The methods that have been implemented to overcome partner problems are as follows: 1) assistance regarding governance, interest in entrepreneurship and use of technology to Indonesian MSMEs. 2) distributing questionnaires to MSMEs in Indonesia and Malaysia. In this research, data obtained through questionnaires was processed using descriptive data analysis methods, with the help of SPSS version 25 software.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This service activity was carried out with the aim of broadening insight in depth regarding the condition of MSMEs both in Indonesia and Malaysia in the context of the digital transformation era. Through concrete steps such as training and distributing questionnaires, it is hoped that a strong foundation can be created to advance MSMEs in a more competitive and sustainable direction. The results of PKM activities carried out in collaboration with MARA University of Technology (UiTM) include:

1) Accompaniment

Through this community service activity, the Unitary Business and Informatics Institute provides assistance regarding governance, interest in entrepreneurship and the use of technology.



Figure 1. Assistance regarding governance, interest in entrepreneurship and use of technology

2) Distribution of questionnaires to MSMEs in Indonesia and Malaysia

To find out the comparison between Indonesia and Malaysia in the context of digital transformation and MSME governance, detailing the contribution of MSMEs to improving the economy in both countries, the urgency of implementing good governance, and the challenges faced by MSMEs in adopting digital transformation, the PkM Team was assisted by Master of Accounting students, distributed questionnaires to MSMEs around the Jalan Bukit Bintang area, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Figure 2. Distribution of Questionnaires in Malaysia

The data obtained is as follows:

Respondent Profile

The results of the questionnaire distributed to MSME actors in Indonesia and Malaysia, along with the description of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire in this community service, can be calculated as follows:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender			
Man	20	23%	
Woman	68	77%	
Age			
25-30 Years	18	20%	
31-35 Years	19	22%	
36-40 Years	30	34%	
41-45 Years	12	14%	
> 45 Years	9	10%	
Based on Last Education			
Elementary School	18	20%	
Junior High School	15	17%	
High School/Equivalent	47	53%	
D3	2	2%	
S1	6	7%	
Based on Length of Business			
1-2 Yrs _	22	25%	
3-4 Yrs _	30	34%	

5-6 Yrs _	25	28%
6-8 Yrs _	1	1%
> 8 Yrs	10	11%
Based on Turnover per Month		
1-3 Million	24	27%
4-6 Million	12	14%
7-9 Million	3	3%
10-13 Million	2	2%
>13 Million	47	53%
Domicile		
Indonesia	45	51%
Malaysia	43	49%

According to the demographic information of respondents, the number of female respondents dominates, namely 6 8 respondents (77 %), compared to male respondents, 20 respondents (23 %). Meanwhile, the age of respondents in the category of respondents aged 36-40 years had the highest number of respondents, namely 30 respondents (34 %). Based on education level, the majority of respondents were high school/equivalent (53 %). Most respondents have been running a business for 3-4 years (34 %), with an average monthly turnover of around >13 million (53%%), respondents who live in Indonesia slightly dominate (51%).

Respondents' Perceptions

Descriptive statistical analysis consists of average values (mean), frequency, standard deviation, etc., with the aim of explaining the descriptive characteristics of each variable, namely: governance, understanding of entrepreneurship and use of technology. From the indicators, instruments can be arranged in the form of questions, for each question using a *Likert scale*: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly agree. So the range (r) (R = Highest Value - Lowest Value = 5-1 = 4, and the interval = 4/5 = 0.8, then an index of respondents' answers can be created as below.

Table 2 Category Index of Respondents' Answers

No	Interval Score	Information
1	1.00 - 1.80	Very low
2	1.81 - 2.61	Low
3	2.62 - 3.42	Neutral
4	3.43 - 4.23	Tall
5	4.24 - 5.00	Very high

Table 3 Index of Respondents' Answers to Organizational Governance Variables

Statement	Scale Mean Indonesia	Category	Scale Mean Malaysia	Category
Transparency	2.33	Low	4.14	Tall
	2.63	Neutral	4.14	Tall
	2.52	Low	3.91	Tall
	2.31	Low	3.53	Tall
	2.23	Low	3.56	Tall
Accountability	1.92	Low	3.53	Tall
	2.23	Low	3.47	Tall
	2.19	Low	3.56	Tall
Responsibility	2.25	Low	4.00	Tall
	2.23	Low	3.72	Tall
	2.21	Low	3.51	Tall
Independence	2.52	Low	4.02	Tall
Fairness	2.37	Low	4.07	Tall
Average	2.30	Low	4.07	Tall

Source: Data processed by SPSS, 202 3

In the analysis of table 3, the implementation of organizational governance in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), a comparison between Indonesia and Malaysia shows striking differences in several key aspects, including transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence and justice. In particular, the data shows that Indonesia has a low scale mean in all these categories, while Malaysia shows a high scale mean. This comparison shows that MSMEs in Malaysia have a better level of maturity and implementation of organizational governance compared to MSMEs in Indonesia, with a focus on key aspects such as transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence and justice. These differences may reflect differences in policies, business practices, and awareness of the importance of organizational governance in the two countries.

Table 4 Index of Respondents' Answers to Entrepreneurship Understanding Variables

Statement	Scale Mean Indonesia	Category	Scale Mean Malaysia	Category
Confidence	3.23	Neutral	4.49	Very high
	3.25	Neutral	4.49	Very high
	3.23	Neutral	4.35	Very high
Independence	3.12	Neutral	3.44	Tall
	3.02	Neutral	3.84	Tall
	2.90	Neutral	3.30	Neutral
	2.98	Neutral	3.23	Neutral

Perseverance	3.19	Neutral	4.28	Very high
	3.00	Neutral	4.30	Very high
	3.00	Neutral	4.26	Very high
Hard Work Spirit	2.98	Neutral	4.35	Very high
	3.12	Neutral	4.23	Tall
Entrepreneurial	3.00	Neutral	4.21	Tall
Interest	2.90	Neutral	4.21	Tall
	2.54	Low	4.21	Tall
Creative and	2.46	Low	4.14	Tall
Innovative	2.54	Low	4.07	Tall
	2.56	Low	4.02	Tall
	2.73	Neutral	4.26	Very high
Leadership Spirit	2.71	Neutral	4.35	Very high
	2.65	Neutral	4.12	Tall
	2.56	Neutral	4.12	Tall
	2.67	Neutral	3.86	Tall
Your Leadership	2.67	Neutral	4.28	Very high
Spirit	2.81	Neutral	4.12	Tall
	2.85	Neutral	3.95	Tall
	2.75	Neutral	3.81	Tall
Future Orientation	3.19	Neutral	4.00	Tall
	3.12	Neutral	4.14	Tall
Sales Promotion	2.90	Neutral	3.84	Tall
	2.06	Low	3.53	Tall
	2.10	Low	3.67	Tall
Direct Marketing	2.02	Low	2.98	Neutral
	1.90	Low	2.86	Neutral
Average	2.79	Neutral	3.98	Tall

Source: Data processed by SPSS, 2023

In table 4, data can be seen regarding the understanding of entrepreneurship in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), a comparison between Indonesia and Malaysia shows striking differences in various aspects including confidence, independence, perseverance, work enthusiasm. hard work spirit, entrepreneurial interest, creativity and innovation, leadership spirit, future orientation, sales promotion and direct marketing. In this context, the data shows that Indonesia has a neutral understanding of entrepreneurship with a scale mean that covers these various aspects. Meanwhile, Malaysia shows better performance with an average scale that is in the high category for all these aspects. In more detail, aspects such as confidence, independence, perseverance, hard work spirit, interest in entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, leadership spirit, future

orientation, sales promotion and direct marketing in Malaysia show a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship compared to Indonesia. These differences may reflect differences in educational approaches, entrepreneurial culture, and government policy support for MSMEs in the two countries. Higher awareness and understanding in Malaysia may indicate a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship development at the MSME scale.

Table 5 Respondent Answer Index for Technology Utilization Variables

Statement	Scale Mean Indonesia	Category	Scale Mean Malaysia	Category
Utilization	2.02	Low	2.95	Neutral
Intensity	1.87	Low	2.95	Neutral
	2.06	Low	2.72	Neutral
	2.21	Low	2.86	Neutral
	2.23	Low	2.60	Neutral
	2.10	Low	3.02	Neutral
Utilization	2.23	Low	3.00	Neutral
Frequency	3.91	Tall	2.95	Neutral
	3.60	Tall	2.79	Neutral
Number of apps/software used	3.13	Low	2.72	Neutral
	3.69	Tall	2.74	Neutral
Average	2.64	Neutral	2.85	Neutral

Source: Data processed by SPSS, 202 3

Based on table 5 above, in the context of technology utilization in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), a comparison between Indonesia and Malaysia shows similarities in the level of utilization, with both falling into the neutral category. Several aspects that are focused on in this analysis include Utilization Intensity, Utilization Frequency, and Number of Applications/Software Used. The data shows that both Indonesia and Malaysia have scale means that are in the neutral category for these three aspects. This indicates that MSMEs in the two countries have a balanced level of technology utilization, neither tending to be very high nor low. This similarity can be caused by various factors, such as the level of technology penetration, accessibility, and infrastructure support in both countries. Although both fall into the neutral category, further comparison and indepth analysis can provide better insight into the differences or similarities in the strategies and technology utilization of MSMEs in Indonesia and Malaysia.

V. CONCLUSION

MSMEs have a significant impact on the economies of both countries. In Indonesia, MSMEs support 99% of economic growth, contribute up to 60.5% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and absorb 96.9% of the workforce. In Malaysia, MSMEs contribute 97.2% to GDP. Despite this, Malaysian MSMEs are faced with the challenge of lack of technology adoption and mastery, which shows the need for increased awareness of the importance of digital transformation. Organizational governance is also an important focus in improving the quality of MSME businesses. Implementing optimal governance can ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization. Even though the government has tried to support MSMEs, there are still obstacles both internal and external. In order to improve the conditions of MSMEs, the article suggests a solution in the form of a program to develop entrepreneurial understanding, which can reduce unemployment and poverty levels. As a concrete implementation, intensive training activities were carried out and questionnaires were distributed to MSME actors in Bogor Regency, Indonesia and Malaysia. It is hoped that the collected data will provide in-depth insight into the condition of MSMEs in both countries. In the results and discussion, the article includes the frequency distribution of respondents based on demographic

characteristics and respondents' answer indices related to organizational governance, understanding of entrepreneurship, and use of technology. This data helps see the differences and similarities between MSMEs in Indonesia and Malaysia. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities for MSMEs in the era of digital transformation. Efforts to empower, improve governance, understand entrepreneurship and use technology are expected to help MSMEs become more competitive and sustainable in facing global challenges.

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