

The Role of Local Culture in the Formation of Marketing Communication Networks for Microenterprise Sustainability in Coastal Areas

Priyo Subekti¹, Dian Wardiana Sjuchro²

^{1,2}Universitas Padjadjaran

Email: priyo.subekti@unpad.ac.id

Abstract: This research aims to examine the importance of marketing communication networks in the growth of micro-enterprises and appreciate the role of social and technological integration in developing culture-oriented marketing networks. The case study method was employed with a descriptive qualitative research design. The data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of documents related to marketing strategies. A purposive sampling technique was adopted in sampling micro-entrepreneurs engaged in trade and tourism within the coastal region of Pangandaran Beach. The study depicts local values such as togetherness, gotong royong, and trust networks as values-based marketing communication that bridges the micro-enterprises and the local communities, families, and business partners. Social media proved otherwise in extending the marketing network through technological adaptation and brand recall. In addition, engagement with government institutions and other similar sectors, such as distributors and tourism actors, also contributes significance to the stability of the microenterprise. In summary, the inclusion of local cultural elements into marketing communicational networks creates a synergy that enhances not only the marketing strategies but also the viability of the micro-enterprises operating in the coastal region. This study helps policymakers and businesses devise culture-centered marketing strategies to enhance the growth of the local economy.

Keywords: Pangandaran beach; micro-entrepreneurship; business sustainability; marketing communication network; local culture

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pentingnya jaringan komunikasi pemasaran dalam pertumbuhan usaha mikro serta mengapresiasi peran integrasi sosial dan teknologi dalam pengembangan jaringan pemasaran yang berorientasi pada budaya. Metode studi kasus digunakan dengan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen yang berkaitan dengan strategi pemasaran. Teknik purposive sampling digunakan untuk mengambil sampel pengusaha mikro yang bergerak di bidang perdagangan dan pariwisata di wilayah pesisir Pantai Pangandaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai lokal seperti kebersamaan, gotong royong, dan jaringan kepercayaan merupakan komunikasi pemasaran berbasis nilai yang menjembatani usaha mikro dengan komunitas lokal, keluarga, dan mitra bisnis. Media sosial terbukti mampu memperluas jaringan pemasaran melalui adaptasi teknologi, dan pengingatan merek. Selain itu, keterlibatan dengan lembaga pemerintah dan sektor serupa lainnya seperti distributor, pelaku pariwisata juga memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan terhadap stabilitas usaha mikro. Simpulan yang dapat diambil adalah, penyertaan elemen budaya lokal ke dalam jaringan komunikasi pemasaran menciptakan sinergi yang tidak hanya meningkatkan strategi pemasaran tetapi juga kelangsungan hidup usaha mikro yang beroperasi di wilayah pesisir. Studi ini membantu para pembuat kebijakan dan pelaku usaha dalam menyusun strategi pemasaran yang berpusat pada budaya untuk meningkatkan pertumbuhan ekonomi lokal.

Kata kunci: Pantai pangandaran; usaha mikro; keberlanjutan usaha; jaringan komunikasi pemasaran; budaya lokal

Introduction

For entrepreneurs in Pangandaran, local culture drives the network approach to marketing communications (Subekti et al., 2022). The small entrepreneurs developed considerations based on family and community. This is based on family and network values described by the local community on business and network marketing through word of mouth and business with locals within the community. This shows how family and neighborhood strengthen the network of business centers within the network.

At the same time, another perspective focuses on social perspectives. Business activity for small entrepreneurs in the area is equated with the contribution of job opportunities or necessary products to the community (Gurău & Dana, 2018). There are two central dimensions: transparency and trust, which focus on the marketing network, and such relationships with customers and businesspeople, which play an important role in long-term achievement. Another stable factor is the adoption of technological changes as a business strategy. Small entrepreneurs understand the requirement of reaching further edges to grasp a market, especially targeting the youth through online channels.

Their marketing strategies are aligned with the preferences of this age group, for example, including content that meets the needs and aspirations of young people or using social media. This 'help' is expected to increase penetration into new markets and position them as relevant, innovative entrepreneurs in times of social transformation.

This reality illustrates that the culture of small entrepreneurs in Pangandaran who are predominantly rural has an impact on their business operations and, thus, on their marketing communication network strategies. This network serves as a marketing strategy and a platform to promote local culture and provide business support that encourages business continuity.

In this age of globalization and the development of Information technology, entrepreneurial culture and marketing communication networks are two intrinsic factors that affect the business's success (Kraus et al., 2023). These two components influence the ways in which entrepreneurs identify and exploit business opportunities and challenges and how they interact with their target markets. These two concepts are, however, not independent but interrelated in different ways, and understanding their interrelationship can provide entrepreneurs with important ideas on how to learn to exploit the opportunities within the market.

In light of the above, and in the context of modern entrepreneurship, The relationship between entrepreneurial culture on the one hand and marketing communication network on the other is an important area of investigation (Goxe et al., 2022). The interrelationship can be conceptualized as a relationship where marketing communication and society are mutually reinforcing, and every marketing structure or activity has values, ideas, and activities that are stakeholders within society. In more detail, the entrepreneurial culture includes a set of principles and behaviors that enable an entrepreneur as he or she goes about his or her business.

Some previous studies, for example, Solano Acosta et al. (2018), show that the components making up the entrepreneurial culture are likely to influence the marketing communication networks of entrepreneurs. For example; those entrepreneurs whose operations are driven by a high value of innovations may be innovative and aggressive in their marketing

strategies. In addition, they may also be prone to involving partners from non-industry or industries that are outside their business norms.

On the contrary, the absence of an effective marketing communication network may not only provide an opportunity to enhance product and service sales. As it has been established by Shu et al. (2018) these networks also contribute to the enhancing of the culture of entrepreneurship in itself. This is because effective networking can provide entrepreneurs with resources, market opportunities, and diverse players' perspectives that can fuel innovation and business development. According to Shu et al. (2018), entrepreneurial culture and marketing communication networks are two of the key elements that intermingle in a business context and that drive entrepreneurs toward success.

For most entrepreneurs, the culture and networks that pivot around marketing communications are critical for the achievement of success in business (Shaw, 1999). According to definitions, the entrepreneurial culture includes sectors like employment of values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms, which interact to shape an entrepreneur's marketing strategy and its application. At the same time, marketing communication networks allow businesspersons or entrepreneurs to widen their business horizons nationally or globally (Buccieri et al., 2020).

The focus of coastal micro-enterprise studies appears to be more on the economic or ecological dimension – rather than the dimensions of the marketing communication networks through the prism of socio-cultural construction, which is quite a rare phenomenon in our studies. In this research, a social constructionist methodology is applied to consider how the values, norms and culture of small entrepreneurs in Pangandaran Beach influence on the marketing networking practices that are vital to the sustainability of their business.

The outcome of the pre-survey yielded preliminary results regarding the relationship between the patterns of marketing and communication networking that small entrepreneurs in the coastal area practice with their culture of entrepreneurship. Abundant and deep local culture directly affects trust, collaboration, and relationships between entrepreneurs and other players within a marketing network and, at the same time, enables these actors to adjust to the existing social and market conditions. For instance, in business, gotong royong and trust are the two most basic values that need to be incorporated for business relationships to be strong and lasting.

These small entrepreneurs also develop marketing strategies that show how the communication networks in marketing are not solely for economic purposes but also help cement an entrepreneur's culture. These networks act as avenues for self-help in sharing ideas, creating business possibilities, and maintaining business sustainability. The above facts prove that the marketing communication networks and the entrepreneurial culture are mutually reinforcing in real-life business activities (Oprica, 2013). Knowing this relationship more thoroughly offers new perspectives in coastal entrepreneurship research and makes it possible to devise more culturally sensitive strategies and policies toward greater business sustainability.

This research shows how marketing communication networks are created as an effect of the entrepreneurial culture with Pangandaran Beach's small business ecosystems' sustainability as the objective. It has been demonstrated that an entrepreneurial culture of self-reliance, courage, enthusiasm, and creativity is effective in driving people to self-initiate and actively develop adaptive and well-planned business networks.

As well as serving as a way to sell services or products, marketing networks encapsulate the entrepreneurial spirits that include determination, commitment to family, and a curiosity to continue learning. This innate bond strengthens the fact that marketing techniques are embedded within the culture of the entrepreneur. Equally, going out of one's way to appreciate local culture is another major dimension in effective network formation. Local instincts, and the ability to perceive possibilities and conform to the cultural environment and values are vital in developing win-win situations with many stakeholders. Speaking of culture, there is also an entrepreneurial culture that embraces risk and challenges that may be applied to marketing strategies to improve networking (Dimitratos et al., 2012). This good appreciation of the entrepreneurs' values and beliefs enhances business networks and ensures businesses adapt and introduce innovations that meet local demands, hence ensuring sustainability.

This study fosters the applicability of earlier studies too to elucidate the level of difference and advancement suggested in the research. While trying to explain the relationship between the aspects of the entrepreneurial culture with marketing communication networks, Berger offers in his Social Construction of Reality theory that social reality is through social processes and experiences. As it has already been noted, the small entrepreneurs of Pangandaran Beach have a constructed reality that family and community are fundamental aspects. Hence, marketing strategies that emphasize community and family are the most suitable ones. Also, it has to do with the entrepreneurs' perspective on their businesses, in that there is the motivation to generate pity by making social impacts with their businesses from the marketing perspective. The virtues of trust and integrity that are constructed and acquired through social and business relationships are key elements in forming marketing communication networks.

Moreover, to reach the young people, entrepreneurs develop marketing strategies that they feel are pertinent to the youth, which is the perception of entrepreneurs in society. The relational approach to marketing attempts to capture the social reality that considers love and commitment as prime to business. Regarding adaptation, social frames that define the significance of change do provoke accommodating and aggressive marketing approaches, which indicate the fact that social customs and ethics shape the marketing approaches of business entrepreneurs.

A further point from Liu et al. (2021), extends this understanding further by emphasizing the role of personal networks in the process of resource expansion or resource bricolage which seeks to achieve business objectives through different combinations of existing resources. In this case, small entrepreneurs in Pangandaran Beach can use family and community networks, which are useful during the process of making the structures, while networks of high relationship strength help the sharing of information, resource sharing, and more performant collaboration. The relationship among the networks formed, the use of ingenuity, and the intensity of the relationships are key in developing the strategy for marketing communication effectively and efficiently.

Equally so, Shu et al. (2018) provided a more comprehensive contribution by positing how social relations also facilitate the role of entrepreneurs in identifying valuable opportunities. In the entrepreneur network capability model, an entrepreneur's perception of the need for networking in business is influenced by his or her culture. For instance, those in the community focus will value family relations more than those who value social inclusion

and who seek people and organizations with similar focus. The importance of quality integrity & trust in building networks that are permanent and stable but resilient is echoed by Ruiz-Ballesteros & Cáceres-Feria (2016); identifying networks with business opportunities and managing them effectively is a great leap towards achieving the intended purpose of an entrepreneur.

In this case, flexibility and willingness to learn from the local entrepreneurial background enhance the coordination capability of networks, making them very important in identifying and exploiting new ones. All these indeed provide a very firm premise that entrepreneurial culture and marketing communication networks are synergistically interrelated, enhancing the survivability of small enterprises in the coastal zone areas.

Even though previous research has stressed the importance of entrepreneurial culture and marketing communication networks, little attention has been paid to its interplay within the socio-cultural and ecological context of coastal micro enterprises like Pangandaran Beach. Most literature focuses on the economic or ecological dimension of these enterprises and tends to neglect the socio-cultural construction of marketing communication networks. Furthermore, the effect of technology and inter-sectoral combinations on strengthening these networks in the contexts of globalization and digital change is equally underexplored.

The purpose of this study is to fill these gaps by examining how the small business ecosystem of Pangandaran affects and is affected by the marketing communication networks. The focus is on how these networks contribute to the growth and sustainability of micro-enterprise through technological adaptation and synergy. The construction of marketing networks that build upon the entrepreneurial values of the region and are innovative and sustainable. By using a social constructionist approach, the research will identify effective business enhancing its marketing efforts.

This study intends to investigate the impact of marketing communication networks as facilitators of micro-enterprise growth in the region. Its goal is to establish ways in which technological adaptation and intersectoral synergies assist in the pursuit of strengthening local marketing networks and, consequently, business continuity amidst current challenges.

Methods

This investigation employs a descriptive qualitative strategy with a case study technique in order to provide an in-depth exploration (Moleong, 2000) of how the culture of small businesses, particularly the one located within the coastal area of Pangandaran Beach, shapes the processes of coordination of marketing communication networks. The anchored site of the study was the coastal area of Pangandaran Beach, so this area is the focus of tourism and coastal trading activities, making it appropriate to be the focus of the study. The study respondents were small-scale entrepreneurs working in the tourism coastal trade. The research had 12 participants that cut across different small entrepreneurial businesses within the region. A purposive sampling technique was used, and the criteria included customers who own small businesses within the scope of Pangandaran Beach and are actively doing business with more than two years of experience in managing the day-to-day operations of the business, employ traditional and modern marketing communication networks, and are willing to be interviewed and even observed. Informants included small-scale traders in culinary, small-scale

accommodation, craft men, clothing boutiques, Pangandaran souvenir shops, tour guides, boatmen, and rental services for vehicles like motorbikes and bicycles. The study was done from March to June in the year, 2024 to investigate seasonal trends and issues among these entrepreneurs in their marketing communication networks.

Data was collected in three major ways (Bungin, 2001). First, detailed interviews were held with the aim to understand how both Traditional and Non-Traditional Businessmen operated concerning the Marketing Communication Networks. Secondly, the Participatory observation was carried out with the intention of seeing the marketing practice in action. That is customer participation, community outreach, and the use of advertising. Thirdly, document examination pertained to evaluating advertisements and other marketing-related materials and the transactional records of goods and services to add more impetus to what was collected from the interviews and the field study.

A grounded theory of data analysis was adopted, which had the following steps (Bajari, 2015): first and foremost was open coding used to determine preliminary categories in the data we collected from sociological studies; then, axial coding was used to determine repositories of categories based on thematic relationships, such as how cultural affiliations influence marketing approaches; lastly, selective coding was employed to draw conclusions that highlight the nexus between culture surrounding entrepreneurial activities and marketing communications nexus. Data validity was given all desired attention; in this case, it was drawn from method triangulation. The data obtained from interviews, observation, and documents were integrated to claim the finding is true. Furthermore, the research subjects made the review of research members operationally possible so that the findings could become self-owned. In contrast, the research process altogether was described in an audit trail.

Result and Discussion

This section provides information regarding the analysis from field data, including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Results are presented with the purpose of the study, which is to assess the role of the coastal entrepreneurial culture in the marketing communication network formation and to investigate the contribution of these networks to the existence of small enterprises within the Pangandaran Beach locality.

Related to the provision of business, knowing about the entrepreneurial culture and the particular values held by every group matters a lot. This is not only to pinpoint the various threats and opportunities that present themselves, it is also to help how cooperative ties between small scale business people can be effectively undertaken.

On a more positive note, the findings attribute key importance to local factors of cohesiveness, collaboration, and trust in delineating the configuration of marketing communication networks in coastal areas. Such values create opportunities and are not exclusively aimed at strengthening relationships with businesses but also modify marketing and communication processes and strategies to cater to technological change. This part concerns the effectiveness of these local values in marketing and integration into communication networks and business sustainability. Additionally, the results will be integrated with the theoretical framework and similar works to expand the understanding.

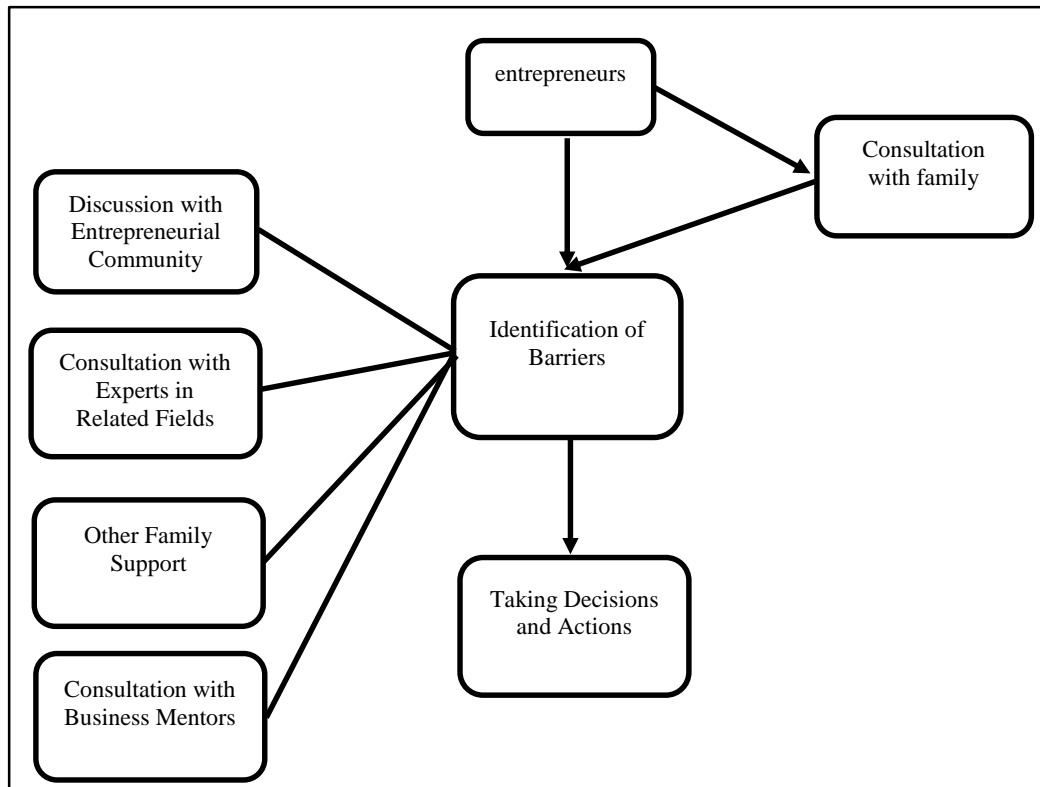
The findings demonstrate that the integration of family, community, social media, government, and multi-sector partnerships are essential in establishing effective communication in relation to small business development in the area. Family is the key unit where ideas, inspiration and first knowledge come from based on the principle of collective effort in entrepreneurship. The way forward is that the local population community provides mentorship alongside being the first users of the products, which enhances the product's visibility, sources of resources, and creation of synergistic networks that bolster marketing connectivity. Moreover, it is not only the local audience that entrepreneurs can reach which helps them build their brand and marketing strategy through such contact as well. The government thus has a significant responsibility because it also offers assistance in the form of information on the availability of capital support, training, and business conditions to entrepreneurs, which helps them expand their businesses. Similarly, partnerships across sectors, such as the use of distributors, hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies, illustrate how networking facilitates market growth and reduces distribution channel complexity.

These elements together demonstrate the effectiveness in the translation of local cultural aspects into a marketing communication network that facilitates business development as well as foster a resilient and growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in the coastal region of Pangandaran Beach.

However, the lives of entrepreneurs are also characterized by a good number of challenges. This can either be self-imposed barriers whereby an individual suffers from a lack of self-confidence or government policies that are not conducive; some challenges will always be there, and more often than not, they are unforeseen (Cheng et al., 2021). Today, one cannot talk about doing business without mentioning the various problems and challenges that entrepreneurs encounter and have to deal with (Otrachshenko et al., 2022). It is true that every entrepreneur, without exception, has to face several disorders, including internal and external ones (Chaudhary et al., 2021; Sánchez-Medina et al., 2020). Similarly, some self-imposed barriers can be confidence crises, decision-making uncertainty, or lack of appropriate skills. On the other hand, external barriers may include continuous changes in government policies, market volatility, and other competitive issues that may arise at irregular intervals.

Communication networks are seen as agents of change and development (Oprica, 2013). Communication networks do function as information conveyers and knowledge producers, but they also facilitate the interchange of concepts, provide motivation, and afford emotional and professional assistance (Fernández-Salinero & de la Riva, 2014). Different types and various aspects of communication networks are, in some capabilities of an entrepreneur, an asset for responding, adjusting, and dealing with the diverse challenges posed by the environment.

Figure 1 Flowchart of Communication Networks when Facing Entrepreneurial Barriers



Source: Research results, 2024

Regarding the entrepreneurial dynamics in Indonesia, different strategies and networks are developed depending on their backgrounds and traditions as entrepreneurs. This study focuses on small coastal entrepreneurs dwelling in the coastal area of Pangandaran Beach, who are naturally multicultural and resourceful individuals. Instead of making a distinction between or focusing on the origin of the entrepreneurs, this research investigates local concepts like togetherness, *gotong royong*, and trust, which are highlighted time and again in constructing cognate marketing communication networks relevant to the sustenance of small business enterprises.

Every entrepreneur has inherent challenges and barriers. However, these challenges are determined by the social, economic, and cultural context within which an entrepreneur finds himself. In this respect also, the research seeks to fulfill a proposed research goal: to identify and analyze the strategic and relational patterns of social networks that small entrepreneurs in the Pangandaran Beach area engage in for the protection and exploitation of resources and business opportunities. The knowledge and approaches they use are unique and thus have the potential to provide more in-depth information to policymakers, businesses, and other stakeholders in a bid to foster the growth and sustainability of small entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

The relationships of marketing and the establishment of communication networks in the practice of entrepreneurship are not only technical marketing issues but also social networks and relationships within business entities (Malecki, 2018). With reference to Pangandaran per se, the point is this complication becomes pronounced with the interaction or interaction of both native and migrant entrepreneurs. While advancing entrepreneurship, especially in the tourist

area of Pangandaran, marketing operations are peripheral in drawing the attention of many tourists and customers. But even in the face of such great opportunities, many problems and barriers are encountered. Creating an efficient and effective marketing communication network requires insight and skill in overcoming those barriers.

One of the most difficult problems facing them is the application of technology and the digital (Santos et al., 2023). Numerous budding entrepreneurs are getting online and actively using social networks and other channels to advertise their businesses (Paul et al., 2023). At the same time, the rapid transformation of technology creates challenges in following the latest trends and adopting developments, especially for native entrepreneurs who might not be able to utilize these technologies as efficiently as their immigrant counterparts. Moreover, socio-cultural and linguistic challenges are also involved. Native entrepreneurs possess knowledge of the local culture, which enables them to craft suitable marketing strategies for the locals.

On the other hand, immigrant entrepreneurs are likely to be more innovative and have strong, differentiated marketing models. Still, they must walk the extra mile to comprehend the subtleties of the culture and language of the locals. Such cultural and linguistic differences like this misunderstanding or miscommunication can pose challenges to the effectiveness of the marketing network created.

Technology usage and digitalization have become effective pillars of conducting marketing in the current era of social media and the internet (da Silva et al., 2023; Terho et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the changing pace of technology comes with two edges. Technological advancements are an added advantage, but they are also a disadvantage to those who are slow to shift (Scheidgen et al., 2021).

The targeting and over-reliance on one marketing platform like social media marketers or online marketplaces are often a flute for MSMEs. A change of policies, a change of algorithms or the shrinkage of a platform may even create a gap of sustainability in marketing and selling products or services. Due to the rapid growth of technology, many MSME players have been able to enter the digital space. As a result, competition is on the rise, particularly for MSME players who are slow to undergo technological changes. It is essential to be creative, be up to the latest trends and understand clients and their needs to survive this competition.

As the marketing and selling of products or services begin a business, the start of business ranges to only satisfying the customer's mandatory through a specific product or service but also the zealousness in marketing it along the trade, 'especially the target market's members,' (Zhao et al., 2023). Concerning business commencement, marketing communications networks are fundamental in enhancing brand recognition, establishing, and expanding the customer base, and clinching customer retention strategies (Müller et al., 2018). These networks span a variety of channels, including the new ones, social media, digital marketing, its older forms, publicity, and advertising, among others.

During the last decades, substantive shifts have occurred concerning how businesses interact with their current and potential customers. The emergence of new technologies and media drastically changed the pace of marketing communications. Hence, these are the networks that new businesses should use while appreciating and recognizing their aims and specific targeted clientele.

Marketing communication networks are of great importance for the chances of success of an enterprise, especially during its start-up phase (Torkkeli et al., 2019). It is quite interesting to point out that based on the field findings, both indigenous and migrant entrepreneurs in Pangandaran do not significantly vary with respect to the shaping factors of their marketing communication networks. This confirms that although there may be differences in the culture and its roots, the marketing communication networks that are constructed by both communities appear to be almost the same.

When dealing with business difficulties, the family provides the greatest support for small entrepreneurs in Pangandaran Beach. Emotional support from the spouse, parents, and the family in general are critical in providing psychological strength to the entrepreneurs as they face various pressures and uncertainties in business. As well as this, technology adaptation, especially active social network engagement, is also a marketing strategy for them. This shows that small entrepreneurs can keep pace with marketing technologies and use online social networks to deal with challenges such as competition and shifting consumer preferences.

The relations with the government agencies are also said to be of strategic nature in addressing the issues of regulation and financing. Through government connections, entrepreneurs are able to access capital, assistance training, and necessary regulations (Kapera, 2018). In the wake of the scarcity of funds, there is evidence that small entrepreneurs are aware of the resources and the need to widen their scope in looking for partners and assistance from investors. This emphasizes the importance of networks in creating strategic opportunities and relationships that enhance the entrepreneur's capacity to survive and expand their business.

Finally, as emphasized in the paper, communication networks are critical for small entrepreneurs on Pangandaran Beach to redress the various business constraints. Through such social interactions with family, community, government, and other business relations, they are able to develop and extend networks that assist in the availability of resources, information, emotional assurance, and creative ideas to tackle the problems in their businesses.

Conclusion

The study highlights that core regional values such as togetherness, cooperation, and trust are essential in shaping marketing communication networks for micro-entrepreneurs in Pangandaran Beach. These values form the foundation for strong relationships among entrepreneurs, their communities, families, and business partners, fostering both communication and sustainable local business practices. While social media extends the reach of these networks and aids in brand exposure, connections with government bodies and collaborations with distributors and tourism sectors are equally crucial for promoting the viability of microenterprises. The research emphasizes that integrating local cultural values into marketing strategies enhances the resilience and sustainability of businesses in coastal regions, offering valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars seeking to promote entrepreneurship in such areas.

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