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# The Influence of Entrepreneurial Culture on Sustainable Competitive Performance of MSMEs with Digital Marketing Capability as a Moderating Variable

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of entrepreneurial culture (EC) on sustainable competitive performance (SCP) of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), with digital marketing capability (DMC) as a moderating variable. The revision addresses theoretical distinctions, measurement improvements, methodological transparency, and contextual contributions. A sample of 80 processing-industry MSMEs in Semarang Regency was surveyed using structured questionnaires. Power analysis indicates that the sample is adequate for medium effect detection but limited for smaller interaction effects, which is acknowledged as a limitation. The results show that EC positively and significantly influences SCP, and this relationship is strengthened by DMC. Findings highlight the role of shared cultural values in shaping entrepreneurial behavior and the importance of digital readiness. The Indonesian MSME context characterized by resource constraints and digital literacy gaps makes the findings particularly relevant. Practical implications are provided for managers and policymakers through specific low-cost digital marketing practices.

**Keywords:** digital marketing; sustainable competitive performance, entrepreneurial culture

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## 1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the economic development of many countries, particularly in terms of job creation, innovation, and poverty reduction. However, in today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment, MSMEs often struggle to maintain long-term competitive performance. One of the critical factors influencing their ability to thrive is the presence of an entrepreneurial culture defined by values such as innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness within the organization. In Indonesia, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) also play a vital role in Indonesia's economy. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) account for more than 60% of Indonesia's GDP and employ nearly 97% of the workforce (Limanseto, 2025).

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However, they face persistent challenges in sustaining competitiveness due to resource limitations, rapid technological shifts, and volatile markets. In such contexts, fostering an entrepreneurial culture (EC) defined as shared values, norms, and collective behaviors that encourage entrepreneurial activity becomes essential. Importantly, EC differs from Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), which reflects managerial postures (risk-taking, innovativeness, proactiveness). While EO represents strategic choices by top management, EC captures collective cultural norms that shape organizational practices (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

In today's era of globalization and intensified market dynamics, maintaining a sustainable competitive edge is essential for the continuity of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). As markets grow more volatile and technology rapidly evolves, MSMEs are required not only to survive but also to remain competitive and expand their presence. Tambunan (2019) asserts that a strong and enduring competitive position is vital for MSMEs to thrive at both national and international levels.

Moreover, achieving Sustainable Competitive Performance involves more than operational efficiency. It requires the ability to innovate and adapt to the changing business landscape. According to Teece (2018), firms with dynamic capabilities those that can integrate, build, and transform internal and external resources are better positioned to maintain long-term competitiveness. Likewise, Farouk et al. (2016) emphasize that innovation and organizational adaptability are key components in driving sustainable performance, especially for firms with limited resources such as MSMEs.

Entrepreneurial culture (EC) embodies the collective values, mindsets, and behavioral patterns that support entrepreneurial initiatives within a business. It shapes how organizations perceive opportunities, take strategic actions, and respond to change. Elements such as innovation, willingness to take risks, and a proactive approach are core to EC and contribute significantly to a firm's adaptability and market responsiveness. For MSMEs, cultivating a strong entrepreneurial culture is essential to remain competitive. It encourages quick decision-making, experimentation, and continuous improvement, allowing small firms to better navigate market challenges and uncertainty. As highlighted by Lumpkin and Dess (1996), firms that internalize entrepreneurial values are more capable of embracing strategic change and seizing growth opportunities. Rauch et al. (2009) further affirm that Entrepreneurial culture plays a critical role in driving innovation, performance, and sustainable business growth in small enterprises. EC reflects how entrepreneurship is embedded as a cultural norm in decision-making, teamwork, and innovation. This different with Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), which emphasizes managerial postures such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. MSMEs in Indonesia are strongly influenced by collective cultural values, which play a significant role in shaping long-term competitive performance.

In today's digital era, digital marketing capability (DMC) is a key enabler for MSMEs to expand their market reach, build stronger relationships with customers, and optimize costs through data-driven strategies. Firms that develop strong digital marketing practices tend to be more agile and competitive in the evolving marketplace (Kamboj et al., 2018). However, many MSMEs particularly in developing countries struggle to fully utilize digital marketing tools, due to limited skills, resources, and infrastructure (Dwivedi et al., 2021). This disparity suggests that digital marketing capability may play a moderating role, influencing how effectively Entrepreneurial culture contributes to sustainable competitive performance. Despite extensive research linking Entrepreneurial culture to business performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Ferreira et al., 2016), there is limited attention to how this relationship plays out in the context of sustainability. Even fewer studies explore the moderating effect of digital capabilities, especially in MSMEs operating in developing economies such as Indonesia.

Sustainable Competitive Performance (SCP) requires more than short-term profitability. It includes dimensions of financial performance, customer satisfaction, operational resilience, and long-term sustainability (Nguyen et al., 2023). Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) emerges as a critical moderating

factor, enabling MSMEs to translate entrepreneurial culture into market performance by integrating analytics, content creation, and multi-platform strategies (Wang & Kim, 2023).

This study aims to clarify the distinction between EC and EO, improve SCP and DMC measurement, ensure methodological rigor, and highlight the uniqueness of the Indonesian MSME context.

## 2. Literature Review And Hypotheses Development

Entrepreneurial Culture (EC) has become an important focus in organizational and entrepreneurship studies due to its role in shaping innovation, adaptability, and long-term performance. In general, EC refers to shared values, beliefs, and practices within organizations that encourage entrepreneurial behaviors such as innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Zahra (1993) emphasized that entrepreneurial culture helps firms remain competitive by fostering an environment that promotes opportunity-seeking and continuous improvement. This is increasingly critical in today's dynamic and uncertain markets. Ireland et al. (2009) also highlight EC as a driver of strategic entrepreneurship, enabling firms to simultaneously pursue opportunities and build competitive advantage.

For SMEs, developing an entrepreneurial culture is crucial since resource constraints require them to rely on innovation and agility (Rauch et al., 2009). EC enhances SMEs' ability to quickly adapt to market changes. However, its effectiveness is not independent; it is shaped by both external conditions (e.g., market dynamics) and internal factors (e.g., leadership style and organizational structure) (Covin & Slevin, 1991).

In the context of digital transformation, EC plays a vital role in encouraging the adoption and integration of technology. Kreiser et al. (2013) demonstrated that organizations with a strong entrepreneurial culture are more open to technological changes, thereby fostering sustainable competitive advantage in the digital era.

Thus, EC is a fundamental element in driving innovation, agility, and sustainable performance, particularly for SMEs. Its impact is amplified when supported by strategic resources such as digital capabilities and adaptive leadership.

Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) is increasingly regarded as a strategic asset that enables firms—especially SMEs—to improve market responsiveness, customer engagement, and performance outcomes. DMC encompasses the ability to integrate, manage, and leverage digital technologies (e.g., social media, SEO, CRM, and content marketing) in support of strategic objectives (Wang & Kim, 2023). Recent literature positions DMC as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between entrepreneurial factors (e.g., entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capability, or entrepreneurial culture) and firm performance (Purwanti et al., 2022).

A study by Al Koliby et al. (2024) on manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia found that DMC strengthens the relationship between EC and Sustainable Competitive Performance (SCP). Firms with strong DMC are more successful in translating entrepreneurial values into performance advantages. Similarly, Herhausen et al. (2020) showed that DMC moderates the relationship between innovation orientation and customer engagement in the online retail sector.

Furthermore, Purwanti et al. (2022) argue that environmental dynamism reinforces the moderating role of DMC. In highly dynamic environments, firms with strong DMC are better able to align entrepreneurial strategies with optimal performance outcomes. Liu et al. (2021) also found that SMEs with robust digital capabilities are more effective in aligning entrepreneurial initiatives with market needs.

Sustainable Competitive Performance (SCP) refers to a firm's ability to consistently achieve long-term competitive advantage through unique and difficult-to-imitate capabilities. SCP emphasizes the combination of competitive advantage and long-term sustainability, encompassing innovation, strategic agility, digital transformation, and effective utilization of organizational resources (Ahmed et al., 2022). Teece (2020) stresses that sustainable advantage depends on a firm's capacity to continuously reconfigure its resources in response to environmental changes.

In the context of SMEs in emerging markets, SCP is closely linked to EC, innovation, and digital readiness (Al Koliby et al., 2024). Moreover, sustainability practices such as eco-friendly innovation and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been shown to enhance long-term performance (Nguyen et al., 2023). Digital transformation also serves as a key driver of SCP, as it enables firms to improve efficiency, agility, and market reach (Wamba et al., 2021).

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Entrepreneurial Culture has a positive and significant effect on the Sustainable Competitive Performance of SMEs.

H2: Digital Marketing Capability strengthens the relationship between Entrepreneurial Culture and the Sustainable Competitive Performance of SMEs.

### **3. Methods**

#### *3.1 Population and Sample*

The population in this study consists of 206 processing industry MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in Semarang Regency that are part of the region's officially supported MSME program. These MSMEs were selected because processing industry enterprises possess characteristics suitable for examining the influence of entrepreneurial culture, digital marketing capability, and sustainable competitive performance. Processing industries often face challenges related to competitiveness, making them appropriate for evaluating the extent to which entrepreneurship contributes to performance improvement. According to Hair et al. (2017), the minimum sample size should be at least ten times the number of indicators. Therefore, this study uses a sample of 80 MSMEs from Semarang Regency, meeting the minimum sample criteria. The sampling technique used is cluster sampling. Using cluster sampling, 80 MSMEs were selected. Clusters were defined by sub-districts, with random selection within each cluster. Although the  $10\times$  indicator rule was used initially, a post-hoc power analysis ( $f^2 = 0.15$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , power = 0.80) suggested that a minimum of 77 cases was needed, indicating marginal adequacy.

#### *3.2 Data Collection*

The data used in this study are primary data collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed using a 5-point Likert scale to measure entrepreneurial culture, capability, sustainable competitive performance, and digital marketing capability.

#### *3.3 Data Analysis*

This study employs a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research, grounded in the positivist paradigm, investigates specific populations or samples through the use of structured research instruments. The data collected are numerical and analyzed using statistical techniques to test predetermined hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2016). The moderation regression analysis involves first examining the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, followed by testing the interaction effect between the independent variable and the moderating variable. Validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Discriminant validity was confirmed with Fornell-Larcker

criterion and HTMT ratios ( $<0.85$ ). Moderated regression analysis with PROCESS Model 1 was applied. Interaction plots and simple slope analysis were produced to interpret moderation effects. To explore this relationship, a research framework is developed to map out the key variables and their interactions, providing a foundation for the study's hypotheses and analysis as can be seen in Figure 1.

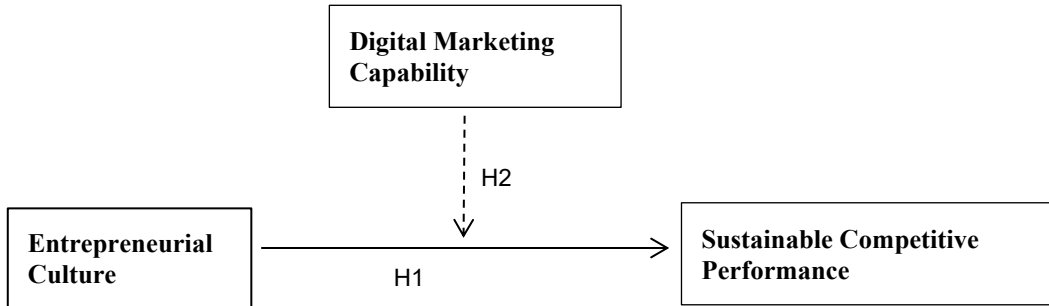


Fig. 1 Research Framework

To empirically investigate the influence of Entrepreneurial Culture on Sustainable Competitive Performance and digital Marketing capability as a moderator variable, it is essential to identify and define the research variables clearly. Each variable used in this study is derived from relevant theories and previous studies, ensuring both theoretical and practical relevance. Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the variables, and indicators that will be used to measure them.

Table 1. Variable and indicator

Variable	Operational Definition	Item No.	Statement
<b>Entrepreneurial Culture (EC / X1)</b>	The extent to which the organization supports innovative behavior and risk-taking.	1	Our MSME is known for a culture that encourages entrepreneurship, innovation, and risk-taking.
	The degree of organizational support for individual creativity and new ideas.	2	Our MSME promotes a culture that encourages individual initiative, risk-taking, innovation, and the development of unique ideas.
	The level of commitment to continuous innovation and transformation.	3	Our MSME is committed to innovation, development, and continuous change.
<b>Digital Marketing Capability (DMC / X2)</b>	Understanding how digital media can be used to build and manage customer relationships.	1	Our MSME understands digital capabilities that connect with customers (i.e., creating and managing long-term customer relationships via digital media).
	Awareness of using digital tools to detect and adapt to market changes.	2	Our MSME recognizes digital capabilities for market sensing (predicting customer preference changes using digital media).
	The ability to foster long-term relationships with channel partners via digital media.	3	Our MSME recognizes the capability of digital channel bonding (building strong ties with wholesalers, retailers using digital media).
<b>Sustainable Competitive Performance (SCP / Y)</b>	Relative profitability compared to competitors.	1	In the past three years, our MSME has achieved significant profits compared to competitors.

Variable	Operational Definition	Item No.	Statement
X3)	Efficiency in logistics and delivery time management.	2	In the past three years, our MSME has reduced product delivery cycle time compared to competitors.

Source: Al Koliby, I. S. M., Mehat, N. A. B., Al-Swidi, A. K., & Al-Hakimi, M. A. (2024)

#### 4. Results And Discussion

In this research, the respondent profile is described based on the data collected, and analyzed to address the research objectives, particularly regarding gender and age.

Table 2. Respondent profile

No	Profile Category	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	<b>Gender</b>	Male	47	58.75%
		Female	33	41,25%
2	<b>Age Range</b>	20–40years	28	35%
		>40 years	52	65%

Source: SPSS output (2025)

Based on the calculations of each statement item using SPSS version 25, it was found that all statement items had Pearson correlation values greater than 0.3, indicating that the statements are considered valid (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This suggests that the items have a significant relationship with the construct being measured and can be categorized as valid indicators. Based on the SPSS output analysis, a value of 0.849 was obtained, which is greater than or equal to 0.600. Therefore, the instrument used in this research is considered reliable. A statement instrument is considered reliable if its reliability coefficient has a minimum value of 0.6 (Sugiyono., 2019). The data utilized in this study demonstrate no indication of multicollinearity among the independent variables within the regression model, exhibit no signs of heteroscedasticity or autocorrelation, and confirm to a normal distribution. Factor analysis also confirmed the distinctiveness of EC, SCP, and DMC constructs. Reliability coefficients ( $\alpha$  and CR) exceeded 0.70. Discriminant validity was supported by AVE > 0.50 and HTMT < 0.85.

Table 3. Moderating Regression Analysis Result

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>
Constant	5.794	331	17.515	0.000	
EC	1,711	150	11.381	0.000	
EC*DMC	0.311	0,21	4,83	0.000	
R <sup>2</sup>					0.759

The analysis conducted on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) shows a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial culture (EC) and sustainable competitive performance (SCP). Regression analysis confirms that MSMEs that embrace entrepreneurial values such as innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness tend to outperform their counterparts in sustaining long-term market competitiveness.

Furthermore, Digital Marketing Capability (DMC) was found to significantly moderate the relationship between EC and SCP. Specifically, MSMEs with high DMC demonstrated a stronger link between entrepreneurial behaviors and competitive outcomes. In contrast, firms with lower DMC struggled to convert their entrepreneurial mindset into performance benefits, highlighting the role of digital readiness as a strategic enabler. Statistical tests (e.g., interaction term significance in moderated regression) confirmed the moderating effect of DMC at the  $p < 0.05$  level, suggesting that the impact of EC on SCP is contingent upon the firm's digital marketing sophistication. Regression results showed EC significantly influenced SCP ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The interaction  $EC \times DMC$  was positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that DMC strengthens the EC–SCP link. Interaction plots revealed that MSMEs with high DMC derive greater SCP benefits from EC compared to those with low DMC.

## 5. Discussion

These findings support prior literature that identifies entrepreneurial culture as a critical internal driver of innovation and performance in SMEs. As noted by Lumpkin and Dess (1996), an entrepreneurial orientation, when embedded in organizational culture, enhances a firm's adaptability and competitive edge. This study extends that understanding by showing that entrepreneurial culture alone may not be sufficient, its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when paired with strong digital marketing capability.

The results align with the study of Al Koliby et al. (2024), which emphasized that innovation capability and DMC act as strategic levers for entrepreneurial culture to generate sustainable performance. Their research in Malaysian manufacturing SMEs echoes this study's findings by confirming that digital marketing tools enable firms to better engage with markets, communicate brand values, and accelerate entrepreneurial initiatives.

Moreover, the moderating role of DMC is consistent with the resource-based view (RBV) and dynamic capabilities theory, which suggest that firms must not only possess valuable resources but also deploy them effectively in rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2020; Wang & Kim, 2023). The digital transformation has amplified the importance of such capabilities, especially for MSMEs operating under limited resources.

The significant moderation effect implies that MSMEs should invest in developing digital marketing skills, platforms, and tools to fully realize the benefits of entrepreneurial initiatives. Digital marketing strategies such as social media campaigns, SEO, CRM, and real-time analytics empower firms to translate entrepreneurial actions into customer value and long-term competitive advantage (Herhausen et al., 2020). From a practical perspective, MSME managers and policymakers must recognize that fostering an entrepreneurial mindset without equipping businesses with digital tools may result in underutilized potential. In contrast, integrating entrepreneurial culture with digital marketing strategies creates a synergistic effect that enhances competitiveness, innovation adoption, and sustainability.

Findings confirm that entrepreneurial culture significantly improves sustainable competitive performance, particularly when supported by strong digital marketing capability. The results align with Al Koliby et al. (2024) and Herhausen et al. (2020), emphasizing the synergistic role of digitalization and entrepreneurial values. The Indonesian context highlights how cultural collectivism and limited digital literacy shape MSMEs' reliance on community-based entrepreneurship while digital tools provide scalability.

From a managerial perspective, five low-cost digital practices are recommended for MSMEs: (1) using WhatsApp Business for catalogs and customer service, (2) leveraging Shopee/Tokopedia marketplaces, (3) implementing Instagram or TikTok content calendars, (4) using analytics tools for market insights, and (5) participating in free digital training programs provided by government and platforms.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that fostering an entrepreneurial culture significantly enhances the long-term competitiveness of MSMEs. This revised study demonstrates that EC enhances SCP, with DMC as a crucial moderator. Theoretical contributions include clarifying EC vs EO and expanding SCP and DMC measurement. Practical contributions offer MSMEs actionable digital practices. Limitations include the small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and focus on one region. Future studies should expand samples and incorporate longitudinal data.

Businesses that emphasize innovation, proactive decision-making, and a willingness to take risks are more likely to achieve and sustain superior performance. Moreover, digital marketing capability plays a crucial role in reinforcing this relationship. MSMEs that possess strong digital marketing skills and infrastructure are better equipped to translate entrepreneurial values into practical business success and market advantages. This implies that entrepreneurial culture, while essential, needs to be complemented by digital capabilities. When combined, these two elements create a powerful synergy that boosts resilience, innovation capacity, and sustainable competitive edge, particularly in fast-changing business environments. For MSME managers and policymakers, the implication is clear: promoting entrepreneurship must go hand in hand with digital empowerment to unlock the full potential of micro and small businesses.

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