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## HOW DO FEMALE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AFFECT TO PERFORMANCE FROM A CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE?

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The study aims to explore the style of leadership of small business women by applying the theory of power competition to analyze competence influencing leadership in power SMEs competitiveness. Study will focus on the abilities for growth in a period longer than a profitability period short for SMEs. Ability growth is considered a fundamental factor for SMEs, so follow up a study about the influence of women in competence to SMEs performance growth. **Research Design & Methods:** A quantitative research (positivism). The research location is SMEs in Batu City with 98 respondents. Data analysis methods use validity, reliability, classic assumption, and hypothesis tests. **Findings:** The female leadership competencies with five dimensions (strategic visions, operation management, professional knowledge, hands-on experience, relationship building) have a positive and significant effect on performance from the perspective of consumers. **Implications & Recommendations:** The study is that it can provide an understanding of female leadership, that the spirit of competence within oneself needs to be developed so that the business that is built can progress and develop rapidly. **Contribution & Value Added:** The study expected to be able to provide information as a basis for consideration, support, and contribution of ideas to decision makers in an effort to be able to increase income and carry out business development.

**Keywords:** female leadership competencies; performance; SMEs.

**JEL codes:** M20, M21

**Article type:** research paper

### INTRODUCTION

Performance growth in SMEs to date has increased rapidly. Indonesia can survive because of the synergy and important role of SMEs that continue to work. SMEs have a very strategic role in the national economy and contribute to increasing gross domestic product, absorption power work, until enhancement of export and national investment. The enhanced number of SMEs expected to achieve national targets will grow 2% of the total entrepreneurs who become key progressives in a country (Ministry of Finance RI, 2020). If seen from the number of existing businesses in Indonesia, 99% are dominated by MSMEs, namely 64.2 million business actors. These 37 million MSMEs in Indonesia are managed by women (Ministry of Communication and Informatics Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Female leadership's contribution to economic and social development increased rapidly over a number of years. Female leadership is one of the key driving forces in global economic growth. The proportion of women involved in entrepreneurship is increasing worldwide. The majority of female workers in developing countries enter the labor market. They work through the SME sector, and most of them are involved in industrial and other small-scale services (D. K. Singh & Singh, 2013). SMEs are very important for the national stability of the economy and play a key role in developing innovation

productivity and fieldwork. Stability and sustainable SMEs development still need to be maximum and face difficulty in financing because that is important For guarding sustainable and stable growth as well as building structure and proper organization, especially team management peak For achievement growth, sustainable and capable companies endure from intense competition in the market.

Increasing women's participation in SMEs should be realized in a community-directed manner. Because the dual role of women as mothers and women entrepreneurs is a form of struggle to balance work and responsibilities in the household (Fisher et al., 2014). S. Singh et al. (2015) reveals female leadership must be confident, innovative and creative in order to achieve economic independence both personally and in collaboration with others. In addition, they are able to provide opportunities for others to work by starting, building, and running a business, while maintaining personal, family, and social life. The increasing role of women as SME owners proves that women do not only play the role of housewives such as taking care of children, cooking, and doing other housework. The role of women in the economic field can be seen in various types of work. Work activity is an effort to earn a living and a strategy to survive (Yim et al., 2022). According to Agarwal & Lenka (2015), in general, women are motivated to work because of economic pressure. As household needs increase, income must also increase.

The development of women's entrepreneurship is an interesting phenomenon both from an economic perspective (economic equality) because good equality is especially social equality in moderate countries, experiencing a process of political, social and economic transformation. By working informally, women can find financial freedom and become more independent and able to contribute to household income. No longer dependent on their husbands, they can replace them as the main breadwinner. Starting from just self-actualizing, working, and being financially independent then the women enjoy it. Women's need to get information and develop themselves more along with advances in technology and telecommunications. Women choose to work as entrepreneurs, because the work is flexible (Connerley et al., 2008). Entrepreneurship is in high demand by women because it is able to sustain household life and can fulfill self-development needs, while on the other hand it can improve regional economic development and the position of women in the family (Abbas & Rawabdeh, 2022). The establishment of a female leadership community is intended to develop the potential of women in their business.

The development of female leaders will have an influence on the development of female leadership in the future. The development in society, the knowledge and quality of female employees have improved greatly. Thus, the effectiveness of female leadership has also increased at the same time (Pande & Ford, 2011). Entrepreneurship is related to the ability to recognize opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The type of opportunity detected will have an impact on the selection of business entrepreneurs. Eagly & Carli (2003) argue that opportunity alone is not enough for business creation. Entrepreneurial motivation is necessary for successful business creation (Gupta et al., 2013). Women's leadership is closely related to competitive organizational strength and competitive advantage. Design strength is competitive, both in firms, industries, and countries (Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Goldberg et al., 2003). Several researchers have applied the theory of competitiveness and competitive advantage to explore the factors that contribute to business competitiveness (Ai, 2018; An & Thi, 2012; Hofmann, 2010; Tho & Trang, 2009). Leaders play an important role in shaping business, strategy, and objective decisions (Asree et al., 2010). It has been recognized that competent leadership is a determining factor for business success (Asree et al., 2010; Clarke, 2010). The process of leadership means creating social influence to foster participation, all members carry out the vision, goals, and mission of the organization (Asree et al., 2010; Clarke, 2010).

Some previous leadership and management studies have focused on the context of large firms and ignored the scale of small and medium enterprises (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004; Vecchio, 2003). Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to explore the leadership style of women small business owners by applying Power competition theory to analyze the competencies that influence leadership in SME competitiveness. The research will focus on the ability for growth over a longer period rather than a short period of profitability for SMEs. Growth capability is considered a

fundamental factor for SMEs, so it is necessary to follow up the study of the influence of women in competence on the growth performance of SMEs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Female leadership Competencies

According to [Carter & Shaw \(2006\)](#), women's leadership and skills are still low, and women's feminine style is used in organizational work. Research related to competency is motivated by aspirations to achieve superior performance to achieve business success ([Bhardwaj & Punia, 2013](#)). Skills, expertise, intelligence, and competence are interrelated and often used interchangeably in the literature ([Smith & Morse, 2005](#)). Female leadership, The competencies in this study, have several indicators ([Cong & Thu, 2021](#)), which are as follows: (a) strategic visions, namely visions that are easily articulated, easily understood and accepted by all parties in the organization. A vision understood and accepted by all parties will become a magnet that binds the organization. It is hoped that employees will have a high and long-term commitment to the organization so that business decisions can be made and implemented more easily; (b) operating management is needed in a business to control production activities. A business requires the supervision of several elements supporting its activities. Such as finance, marketing, and production that goes into operational activities; (c) professional knowledge, Professionalism in doing business will maintain client confidence that they are working with people who can and will get the job done. Professional knowledge, in this case, can be in the form of knowledge in marketing, finance, competitors, etc; (d) hands-on experience is a real event or activity experienced during entrepreneurship, which has provided knowledge, knowledge, abilities, and skills that can be drawn from the event; (e) relationships building is a trait that a leader must possess. A female leader needs relationship building to maintain client, customer, and employee/team relationships. Success at work requires us to make effective relationships – both on the outside and inside.

### Performance from Customer Perspective

Growth Performance in this study focuses on performance from a customer perspective ([Cong & Thu, 2021](#); [Robbins & Judge, 2016](#)). Competence and performance from a customer perspective means that customer loyalty is higher than before, customer satisfaction is higher than before, customers are more attached to MSME products/services, and so on that are related to customers ([Cong & Hai, 2015](#); [Cong & Thu, 2021](#); [Robbins & Judge, 2016](#); [Tho & Trang, 2009](#)). So, the conceptual framework and hypotheses in this study present on [Figure 1](#).

H1: The effect of strategic visions on female leadership competencies to performance from customers' perspectives

H2: The effect of operations management on female leadership competencies to performance from customers' perspectives

H3: The effect of professional knowledge on female leadership competencies to performance from customers' perspectives

H4: The effect of hands-on experience on female leadership competencies to performance from customers' perspectives

H5: The effect of relationships building on female leadership competencies to performance from customers' perspectives

## METHODS

This research is quantitative research (positivism). The research location is SMEs in Batu City. The selection of MSMEs in Batu City as a research setting is considered appropriate because Batu City is currently a tourist destination in East Java. The population in this study consists of SMEs in Batu City which are spread across the culinary business sector, fashion business, souvenir business, agribusiness business, tour, and travel business, creative product business, and event business. Organizer and business needs of children. The number of SMEs in this sector is 4,570 businesses. In this study,

researchers narrowed the population by calculating the sample size, which was done using the Slovin technique (Supriyanto et al., 2023). The purpose of using the Slovin formula is that in taking the sample the number must be representative so that the research results can be generalized and the calculation does not require a table of the number of samples, but can be done using simple formulas and calculations. The percentage of leeway used is 10% so that the sample that becomes the respondent is 98.06. Researchers adjusted the number of respondents to 100 people. The data collection in this study was carried out using the following methods: Data collection techniques using a questionnaire. The dependent variable is female leadership with the dimensions are strategic visions, operation management, professional knowledge, hands-on experience, relationship building (Cong & Hai, 2015; Cong & Thu, 2021). Item used in independent variable, performance from a customer perspective is customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, customers are increasingly attached to the product, customers are more pleased with the product, customers are more interested in the product, customers are more satisfied with the product (Cong & Hai, 2015; Cong & Thu, 2021; Tho & Trang, 2009). Data analysis methods use validity, reliability, classic assumption, and hypothesis tests with SPSS 21.

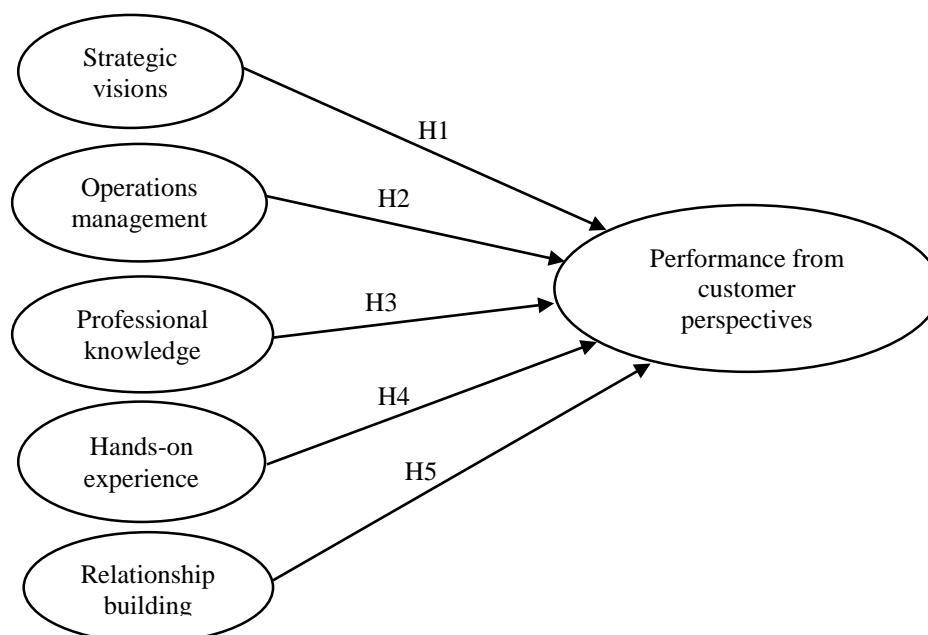


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Created by Authors

## FINDINGS

### Validity test

Construct validity test is done by looking at the value of convergent validity which aims to measure how much correlation between variables. In addition, a discriminant validity test was also carried out to measure the correlation of latent variables with constructs by looking at standardized factor loading. Validity test requirements provided that the loading factor value is  $> 0.7$  (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of the validity test in this study indicated that the instruments used were tested valid. This is shown in Table 1.

### Reliability Test

Based on the reliability test used to perform construct analysis on the Female Leadership Competencies variable to determine the consistency of each item used to measure latent variables. The provisions for Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values are expected to be more than  $> 0.7$  (Djakasaputra et al., 2021). The results of the reliability test are described in Table 1. Showing that the indicators are reliable.

Table 1. Test Results

Variable	Item	Loading Factor	Cronbach Alpha	Com. Reliability
Female leadership competencies			0.894	0.923
Strategic visions (SV)	SV1	0.729	0.797	0.868
	SV3	0.726		
	SV4	0.853		
	SV5	0.840		
Operations management (OM)	OM2	0.740	0.928	0.944
	OM3	0.841		
	OM4	0.855		
	OM5	0.848		
	OM6	0.940		
	OM7	0.921		
	Professional knowledge (PK)	PK1		
	PK2	0.870		
	PK3	0.895		
	PK4	0.780		
	PK5	0.820		
	PK6	0.786		
Hands-on experience (HE)	HE1	0.895	0.923	0.951
	HE2	0.966		
	HE4	0.931		
Relationship building (RB)	RB1	0.924	0.888	0.923
	RB2	0.902		
	RB3	0.846		
	RB4	0.786		

Source: Authors analysis

Table 2. Correlation Test Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strategic visions	-0.088	0.070	0.101	1						
Operations management	0.023	0.092	0.013	0.631**	1					
Professional knowledge	-0.049	0.030	0.012	0.801**	0.634**	1				
Hands-on experience	-0.015	0.177	0.063	0.771**	0.631**	0.670**	1			
Relationship building	0.056	0.117	-0.104	0.521**	0.508**	0.752**	0.358**	1		
Competencies and performance to competitors	0.027	0.080	0.092	0.714**	0.256*	0.514**	0.665**	0.385	1	
Competencies and performance from a customer perspective	-0.051	0.057	0.076	0.794**	0.661**	0.784**	0.739**	0.444**	0.658**	1

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors analysis

### Correlation Test

The correlation test results in [Table 2](#) show that the five indicators are Female leadership Competencies have a strong correlation with SME Competitiveness and Performance. Strategic vision is an indicator that has the strongest relationship with SME Competitiveness and Performance. The correlation between variables helps us conclude that if there is a positive correlation, it causes the variables or circumstances to grow together positively. Therefore, women's MSMEs with Leadership Higher Competencies have Competitiveness and higher Performance, which will direct them to business performance.

### Multiple Linear Regression

Table 3 shows that each independent variable has a significant effect with a positive coefficient on the dependent variable. The independent variable contributes 75.5% to the dependent variable. Other variables outside the research model affect the remaining 24.5%. Based on table 3, it is known that the dimension of female leadership, namely strategic vision, operations management, professional knowledge, hands-on experience, and relationship building has a significant effect with a positive coefficient on performance from the customer perspective, because the significant value is less than 0.05.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression

Model	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.881	1.547	0.125
Strategic visions	0.318	2.433	0.017
Operations management	0.153	2.551	0.012
Professional knowledge	0.576	4.781	0.000
Hands-on experience	0.279	2.685	0.005
Relationship building	0.333	3.035	0.003
R square	0.755		
Adjusted R square	0.793		
F	47.735		
Sig. F	0.000		

Source: Authors analysis

## DISCUSSION

### The Effect of Strategic Visions on Female Leadership Competencies to Performance from Customers' Perspectives

The results of the study show that a strategic vision can have a significant effect on competence and performance from a consumer perspective. MSMEs prepare a strategic vision to improve employee performance with their competencies. Previous research that supports this research is [Nurcahyo \(2015\)](#); [Cong & Hai \(2015\)](#); and [Cong & Thu \(2021\)](#). Vision is a statement containing clear directions about what the organization should do in the future, providing targets and identifying opportunities. A clear vision that remains in line with the organization's needs will grow: employee commitment to work and foster employee morale, a sense of meaning in employee work life, and excellent work standards bridging the present and future organizational conditions ([Nanus, 1992](#)). Vision is seen as a strategy. Competency development is an idealism lacking and must be realistic, meaning it can be achieved. Ability to take on challenges that all human resources have that is every employee must have intellectual capital or knowledge, moral capital, and social capital character ([Chuang & Eversole, 2022](#)).

So that a business strategy that positions itself as a competency development base strategy and upholds values or moral values as a support for the implementation of knowledge management is able to form creativity (mindset), openness, honesty, and trust in each individual in all human resources, in the end, can be free from bureaucratic stigma ([Mathis et al., 2017](#)). Failure to translate the vision into operational activities must be avoided in the organization. Therefore it must be emphasized how everyone involved in the organization can implement the vision as a centerpiece of its operational planning. The success of the vision can be achieved if everyone in the organization is able to describe the same intentions among colleagues regarding the meaning contained in the formulation of the vision and make the vision a strategy for the work activities carried out. The importance of vision, mission, and values for companies in managing their business: the strategy for managing a business form must be guided by the vision, mission, and values that must be understood and understood by everyone involved in the organization ([van Raaij, 2001](#)).

Vision and mission require assistance and support from each employee who has commitment and competence that can be relied upon. Commitment, in the perspective of behavioral science, starts from the values developed in the organization that make the basis for creating a work culture ([Mudhar et al.,](#)

2023). These values are the basis for the performance of employees involved in MSMEs. Support for organizational structure, organizational culture, appraisal, and compensation systems to create an individual commitment to the vision, mission, and values is very important. Therefore, it is necessary to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of organizational culture, appraisal systems, and compensation systems (Nurcahyo, 2015).

### **The Effect of Operations Management on Female Leadership Competencies to Performance from Customers' Perspectives**

Operational management's relationship to competence and performance based on a consumer perspective (customer perspective) proved to have a significant effect. This means that operational management, which is arranged systematically, will improve performance. Today the focus of the MSME development strategy is more directed at the customer (customer drives strategy). In other words what MSMEs must meet the community needs. Minimum MSME performance must be the same as what is perceived by the community (Winarto, 2020). The reality in the field is that every MSME has a dilemma, including the lack of product quality, causing people to move to other MSMEs. The high quality of MSMEs will cause MSMEs to lose money because they lose high-profit potential, and conversely, consumers feel lucky because they get high-quality products with standard finance (Alshammari et al., 2023).

The main calculation is the balance between quality and cost, so there must be a match to get the maximum profit. MSMEs must be able to perceive the quality of competence desired by customers (Anton et al., 2015). The organizational side of customer performance consists of market share, consumer acquisition rate, ability to retain customers, customer satisfaction levels, and customer profitability levels. Further, this customer performance will interact with one another (Chawla et al., 1997).

### **The Effect of Professional Knowledge on Female Leadership Competencies to Performance from Customers' Perspectives**

There is a significant influence between professionals' knowledge and competence performance based on the consumer perspective. Professional knowledge as part of the competence possessed by women's leadership must continue to be improved so that performance also increases. The results of the research are in line with this study, stating that ability has a significant effect on performance, namely showing the potential of people to carry out tasks/jobs (Wahjudewanti et al., 2021). The ability of employees to carry out their duties is a manifestation of the knowledge and skills possessed (Baum & Locke, 2004; Kohli et al., 1998). Because the company provides opportunities for employees to use their abilities, the ability is very supportive of a company's performance so that the company can run well by the goals of the company. Professional competence significantly affects performance (Aisyah et al., 2023; Megantoro, 2015).

Competence is a person's ability to do his job to get good results. Competence can be knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, or personal characteristics. Competence is a series of activities, an accumulation of collective learning processes (Supriyanto et al., 2023). Knowledge results from understanding, which occurs after someone senses a certain object (Megantoro, 2015). One management system that offers a discipline that treats intellectual property as a managed asset is knowledge management (Hanifah et al., 2019), measured by three dimensions: personal knowledge, job procedures, and technology. Knowledge management is a management tool that can be used to support the achievement of organizational goals and demonstrate competitive advantage (Anggraini & Susanto, 2018). Knowledge management is a driving factor in improving organizational performance (Khan, 2012). The higher the ability possessed by business actors or the more knowledge that exists in business actors and a good understanding of standard operating procedures (SOP), the better the organization's performance (Saraswati & Widiartanto, 2016). MSME performance grows with increased knowledge management (Utami & Ferdiansah, 2017). What is needed to develop an MSME that has competitive Power and becomes a superior MSME (Winarto, 2020).

### **The Effect of Hands-on Experience on Female Leadership Competencies to Performance from Customers' Perspectives**

The study results show that a female leader's work experience in managing MSMEs significantly affects performance and competence from a consumer perspective. Employee work experience reflects the mastery of knowledge and skills that an MSME leader has, which can be measured by years of service and the type of work done. This is in line with the opinion of [Aristarini et al. \(2014\)](#), which states that work experience is based on years of service or the length of time employees have worked. The amount of work experience a person has is determined by the length of work or time a person has worked ([Love et al., 2016](#)). The more experienced female MSMEs leaders have, the better their performance will be. The performance will increase because they have had a long work period, higher knowledge and skills, and mastery of work ([Anggraini & Susanto, 2018](#)). For example, during the employee recruitment process, provide provisions regarding minimum years of service, special knowledge and skills related to the type of work to be filled, and experience in sales to make it easier to master the job ([Anggraini & Susanto, 2018](#)).

The level of entrepreneurial experience has a significant influence on the performance of MSMEs. Work experience can be obtained from parents who previously owned businesses, previous workplaces, and the environment ([Megantoro, 2015](#)). This environment can be from fellow business actors or consumers. Usually, business actors and consumers will provide input or criticism so that the more entrepreneurs have more experience, the better the performance of MSMEs ([Wahyuni et al., 2015](#)).

These results are also relevant to the research by [Wahyuni et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Purwaningsih & Kusuma \(2015\)](#) that the level of entrepreneurial experience has a positive and significant influence on the performance of MSMEs. The experience possessed by entrepreneurs will have a good impact on the performance of MSMEs. The better the experience, the better the performance of MSMEs; conversely, if the entrepreneur has less experience, then the performance of MSMEs will not increase ([Junaidi et al., 2022](#)).

Experience in running a business is the best predictor of success, especially if the new business is related to previous business experience ([Selase Asamoah, 2014](#); [Yim et al., 2022](#)). Business processing experience is increasingly needed with increasing environmental complexity ([Wahyuni et al., 2015](#)). In this study, the level of entrepreneurial experience can have a good impact on business development. The better the level of experience that exists within the female leaders of MSMEs, the better the business development is carried out, and vice versa. The worse the level of experience in entrepreneurs, the more reluctant entrepreneurs are. to develop a business ([Purwaningsih & Kusuma, 2015](#)).

### **The Effect of Relationships Buildings on Female Leadership Competencies to Performance from Customers' Perspectives**

Building a good relationship from the leadership of MSME women to performance based on the consumer perspective obtains effective and significant results. A good relationship between the owner and the customer must always be maintained and improved in good condition. Direct relationships are given, and they accept all customer suggestions, such as improving the ordering system ([Muhtarom et al., 2022](#)). There needs to be cohesiveness between employees and leaders so that the resulting performance is positive for the office and the general public ([Talumantak, 2016](#)).

Human relationships are all forms of relationships, both formal and non-formal, carried out by leaders to subordinates and by subordinates to fellow subordinates to foster intimate and harmonious cooperation to achieve the goals set ([Anning-Dorson, 2021](#)). Research results consistent with Human relationships have a positive and significant effect on performance ([Asrifah, 2015](#); [Talumantak, 2016](#)). One of the modern business approaches is to pay attention to customer factors, not only before the transaction but no less importantly after the transaction ([Rosalina et al., 2017](#)). MSME women leaders in managing relationships with customers can increase competitiveness against other MSMEs and



maintain the business they run to obtain a wider new market (Asrifah, 2015; Rosalina et al., 2017). One is collaborating with customers, suppliers, and other companies (Zeng et al., 2010).

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that women's leadership competence with five dimensions (strategic vision, operations management, professional knowledge, direct experience, building relationships) has a positive and significant effect on consumer perspective performance. This research can provide an understanding of women's leadership, that the spirit of competence within needs to be developed so that the business that is built can progress and develop rapidly. The practical implications of this research can have a positive impact in various aspects of the organization and the surrounding community. Such as, improving organizational performance, innovating and competitive advantage, improving team relationships and employee satisfaction. This study has some limitations. This study only uses MSMEs located in Batu, East Java. This limits the scope of the study area geographically. This study recommends future research to be conducted by considering the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a broader spectrum in understanding the research problem. In addition, including MSMEs in other regions in Indonesia, not just in East Java, in future research will help provide a broader picture of the phenomenon.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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