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**Research article** 

# From surviving to thriving: A catalyst for MSME creativity

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study delves into the vital role of creativity in empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to survive and flourish in an increasingly competitive market landscape. The authors present a comprehensive framework designed to cultivate creativity and innovation within MSMEs, which includes key components such as fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, building robust networks, and ensuring access to essential resources. By implementing this framework, MSMEs can effectively navigate the challenges posed by limited resources and rapidly evolving market conditions. The research underscores the significance of creativity as a driving force behind MSMEs' growth and competitiveness, illustrating how innovative approaches can lead to enhanced performance and sustainability. Furthermore, the study offers valuable insights for a diverse audience, including entrepreneurs seeking to enhance their business strategies, policymakers aiming to create supportive environments for MSMEs, and academics interested in the dynamics of small business development. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how fostering creativity can catalyze the advancement of MSMEs in Indonesia, promoting economic resilience and innovation in the region.

**Keywords:** MSMEs entrepreneurship, thriving, creativity, Depok, Growth.

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## **Abstrak**

Studi ini mengkaji peran penting kreativitas dalam memberdayakan Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) untuk bertahan dan berkembang dalam lanskap pasar yang semakin kompetitif. Para penulis menyajikan kerangka kerja komprehensif yang dirancang untuk menumbuhkan kreativitas dan inovasi dalam UMKM, yang mencakup komponen-komponen utama seperti menumbuhkan pola pikir kewirausahaan, membangun jaringan yang kuat, dan memastikan akses ke sumber daya penting. Dengan menerapkan kerangka kerja ini, UMKM dapat secara efektif menavigasi tantangan yang ditimbulkan oleh sumber daya yang terbatas dan kondisi pasar yang berkembang pesat. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya kreativitas sebagai kekuatan pendorong di balik pertumbuhan dan daya saing UMKM, yang menggambarkan bagaimana pendekatan inovatif dapat mengarah pada peningkatan kinerja dan keberlanjutan. Lebih jauh, studi ini menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi khalayak yang beragam, termasuk pengusaha yang ingin meningkatkan strategi bisnis mereka, pembuat kebijakan yang ingin menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung bagi UMKM, dan akademisi yang tertarik pada dinamika pengembangan usaha kecil. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang bagaimana menumbuhkan kreativitas dapat mengkatalisasi kemajuan UMKM di Indonesia, mempromosikan ketahanan ekonomi dan inovasi di kawasan ini.

Kata Kunci: MSMEs entrepreneurship, thriving, creativity, Depok, Growth

## 1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive global economy, creativity is essential for entrepreneurs to stay ahead and succeed (Amabile, 1988). Creative entrepreneurs are more likely to innovate, take risks, and adapt to changing market conditions—all critical skills for survival and growth (Schumpeter, 1934; Thawil & Sari, 2018). Furthermore, creativity is a key driver of economic growth, leading to new products, services, and business models that create new opportunities and jobs (OECD, 2015). Therefore, entrepreneurs must cultivate creativity to remain competitive and thrive in the market (Thawil & Sari, 2018).

In Indonesia, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) play a vital role in the economy, accounting for more than 90% of the country's businesses and employing millions of people (BPS, 2020). However, many MSME entrepreneurs in Indonesia still lack the creativity and innovation needed to compete with larger companies and foreign competitors (Sari & Kusumawati, 2022). This is because they often face challenges such as limited access to resources, inadequate infrastructure, and poor business skills, which hinder their ability to innovate and grow (Budiarto et al, 2018).

Research has shown that thriving, which refers to the ability to flourish and grow in the face of challenges, is a critical factor in enhancing creativity (Spreitzer et al., 2005). When entrepreneurs thrive, they are more likely to take risks, experiment with new ideas, and pursue opportunities that others may see as too difficult or uncertain (Bullough, & Renko, 2013; Ryff, 2019). Moreover, thriving entrepreneurs are more resilient and adaptable, which enables them to bounce back from failures and setbacks and learn from their experiences (Luthans et al., 2007; Battisti et al., 2019).

Studies have consistently shown that thriving is a key driver of creativity and innovation (e.g., Amabile, 1996; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Entrepreneurs who thrived were more resilience and likely to engage in creative activities and develop new products and services (Chadwick & Raver, 2020). Another study by Luthans et al. (2007) found that thriving entrepreneurs were more likely to exhibit creative behaviors such as taking risks and experimenting with new ideas.

The mechanism of thriving can be explain by self-determination theory (Mahoney, 2014; Spreitzer, & Porath, 2013). Theories such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Positive Organizational Behavior (Luthans, 2002) suggest that thriving is a key driver of creativity and innovation. According to these theories, when entrepreneurs feel motivated, autonomous, and competent, they are more likely to engage in creative activities and pursue opportunities that align with their values and interests (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Training and developing thriving skills are essential for entrepreneurs to enhance their creativity and innovation (Luthans et al., 2007; Sari, 2017). This can be achieved through programs that focus on building strengths, promoting positive emotions, and fostering a sense of purpose and meaning (Seligman, 2011). By developing thriving skills, entrepreneurs can overcome obstacles, take risks, and pursue opportunities that others may see as too difficult or uncertain.

Therefore, it is essential to provide training and development programs that focus on building thriving skills among MSME entrepreneurs in Indonesia. By doing so, we can enhance their creativity, innovation, and competitiveness, which can ultimately lead to economic growth and development. This is the main objective of this community service project, which aims to provide training and development programs on thriving and creativity for MSME entrepreneurs in Depok, West Java. The purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of a thriving-based training program in enhancing creativity among MSME entrepreneurs in Depok, West Java. By doing so, we hope to contribute to the development of MSME entrepreneurs in Indonesia and promote economic growth and development in the country.

# 2. Theoretical background

# 2.1. The self determintation theory and thriving

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a fundamental concept in understanding human motivation and behavior. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), SDT posits that individuals have three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are met, individuals are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, which in turn, leads to increased creativity, innovation, and well-being. In the context of entrepreneurship, SDT suggests that entrepreneurs who experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness are more likely to engage in creative activities, take risks, and pursue opportunities that align with their values and interests (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Research has consistently shown that SDT is a key driver of creativity and innovation. For instance, a study by Amabile (1996) found that autonomy, competence, and relatedness were significant predictors of creative behavior. Another study by Liu et al. (2020) and Bilal et al. (2021) found that thriving, which is a key component of SDT, was a strong predictor of innovative behavior.

In the context of MSME entrepreneurs in Indonesia, SDT can play a crucial role in enhancing their creativity and innovation. By providing training and development programs that focus on building autonomy, competence, and relatedness, MSME entrepreneurs can experience increased intrinsic motivation, which can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and competitiveness.

A person's thriving power plays an important role in forming networks and developing a positive mindset. When individuals experience success, they tend to be more open to opportunities and collaborations, which allows them to build stronger relationships with others. This is in line with research showing that external networking behavior can improve entrepreneurial performance, where individuals who have integrity and the ability to maintain business relationships will benefit more from the collaboration. As stated by Wolff & Moser (2009), "external networking behavior provides voluntary access to resources and increases mutual benefits," indicating that the ability to interact and collaborate with others is key to creating an ecosystem that supports individual and business growth. In addition, a mindset that grows through growth experiences also facilitates innovation and adaptation in a dynamic environment. Individuals who have a positive mindset tend to be more proactive in seeking new information and opportunities, which in turn strengthens their networks. Thus, thriving power not only influences network formation, but also becomes a key driver in the development of an adaptive and innovative mindset, which is very necessary in facing the challenges of today's business world.

Furthermore, SDT can also help explain the relationship between thriving and creativity. According to Spreitzer and Porath (2013), thriving is a key component of SDT, which includes two main components: learning and vitality. Learning refers to the ability to acquire new skills and knowledge, while vitality refers to the energy and enthusiasm to engage in creative activities. When MSME entrepreneurs experience thriving, they are more likely to engage in creative activities, take risks, and pursue opportunities that align with their values and interests.

In conclusion, SDT provides a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between thriving, creativity, and innovation. By applying SDT to the context of MSME entrepreneurs in Indonesia, we can develop training and development programs that focus on building autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which can ultimately lead to increased creativity, innovation, and competitiveness.

#### 2.2. The Training material

Based on the literature review and the concept of Self-Determination Theory, it is clear that the development of thriving among MSME entrepreneurs requires a comprehensive approach that addresses their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. To achieve this, a training program should be designed to provide a deep understanding of the concept of thriving and its components, including learning and vitality. The program should also include practical exercises and case studies that enable participants to develop their skills and strategies for enhancing thriving in their business. Furthermore, the program should provide a supportive environment that fosters learning, creativity, and innovation, and encourages participants to share their experiences, challenges, and ideas for applying the concept of thriving in their business. By doing so, the program can help MSME entrepreneurs to develop a growth mindset, increase their motivation and creativity, and ultimately improve their business performance.

The training material for community service activities (PKM) is organized into three comprehensive sections, each designed to enhance participants' understanding and application of learning and vitality in their personal and community engagements.

The first section introduces participants to essential concepts of learning and vitality, highlighting their importance in achieving personal and communal well-being. This section addresses the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are crucial for creating a supportive learning environment. It also explores the role of intrinsic motivation and self-determination, demonstrating how these factors contribute to sustained engagement and vitality. Participants will learn how fulfilling these psychological needs can enhance their well-being and effectiveness in community service.

The second section focuses on equipping participants with strategies to improve their learning agility. Here, they will learn about the significance of adopting a growth mindset, which encourages viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. The training will include practical approaches for seeking new learning opportunities and embracing continuous improvement. Engaging exercises will prompt participants to reflect on their learning styles and preferences, helping them identify specific areas for development. By fostering a culture of adaptability and resilience, participants will be better prepared to navigate the complexities of community service work.

The final section emphasizes cultivating vitality in personal and professional contexts. Participants will explore strategies for developing positive habits that promote well-being, such as effective stress management techniques and resilience-building practices. Interactive exercises will guide participants in identifying their unique energy patterns and rhythms, enabling them to create personalized strategies for maintaining energy and focus throughout their daily activities. By prioritizing vitality, participants will enhance their ability to contribute meaningfully to their communities while ensuring their well-being. This training material aims to empower participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in their community service roles, fostering a holistic approach to learning and vitality that benefits individuals and their communities.

#### 3. Methods

The community service activity involved 26 training participants who were MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors from the Depok area of West Java. Among these participants, 18 were women and 8 were men. The age distribution showed that 8 participants were between 27 and 30 years old, 13 were between 31 and 40, and 5 were over 40. The majority operated micro-scale businesses, with 21 classified as micro, three as small-scale, and two as medium-scale.

The training program lasted four days. The first day focused on introductions and distributing questionnaires designed to assess the participants' understanding of thriving and their current levels of thriving. On the second and third days, participants engaged with training materials related to thriving. The final day included a follow-up questionnaire, divided into two sections: one measured thriving to evaluate any changes before and after the training, while the second assessed creativity.

To analyze the data and test for differences in thriving levels before and after the training, paired and independent sample tests were conducted using SPSS 26. Following this, a regression test was performed to determine whether thriving influenced creativity, utilizing the data collected from the questionnaires after the training. This comprehensive approach aimed to evaluate the impact of the training on both thriving and creativity among the MSME participants.

# 4. Results and implications

#### 4.1. Results

The study's results indicate that the thriving training for MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors had a significant positive impact. Among the 26 participants, a notable difference was observed in their assessment scores before and after the training. Before the training, the average score for the measured variables was 5.115. After completing the training, this average score increased to 5.842, significantly improving by 0.727 points. This change highlights the training's effectiveness in enhancing the participants' understanding and application of thriving concepts, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean and Correlation

Variable	N	Mean	pre
pre	26	5.115	
post	26	5.842	0,717**

Source: output from SPSS data processing.

The observed difference in assessment scores indicates that the thriving training has successfully improved participants' evaluations of the studied variables. The significant increase in the average score suggests that participants have made positive strides in understanding and applying the concept of thriving within their business contexts. These findings reinforce the effectiveness of the training in enhancing participants' perceptions and skills, providing empirical evidence of the benefits of thriving training for MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors.

In addition to assessing the differences in training outcomes, the study also explored the relationship between thriving and creativity among MSME actors. The regression analysis results, as presented in Table 3, reveal a notable correlation between thriving and creativity, with an R-value of 0.526. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the F value of 9.170, with a significance level of 0.006, confirms that the regression model, which considers thriving as a predictor of creativity, is statistically significant. Additionally, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.246 suggests that the thriving level among MSME actors can explain approximately 24.6% of the variability in creativity levels. This underscores the importance of fostering thriving to enhance creativity in business practices.

**Table 2**. Difference test before and after training

	sig	Sig
	in paired In one sample test	
	sample test	
pre		0,000
Post		0,000
Pair pre-post	0,000	

Source: output from SPSS data processing.

**Table 3**. Relationship test

	R	Adj R-square	F	t
Thriving	0.526	0.246	9.170**	3.028**

<sup>\*\*</sup>p<0,01; \*p<0.05

Source: output from SPSS data processing.

These findings provide strong empirical evidence that thriving significantly enhances the creativity of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The results from the regression analysis show that thriving training not only has a direct positive impact on creativity but also serves as a relevant predictor of increases in creativity within the MSME business context. This highlights the potential of thriving as a fundamental element in nurturing creative capacities among MSME stakeholders. In light of these insights, there is a compelling case for the ongoing development of training programs to enhance the thriving among MSMEs. Focusing on improving thriving, such programs can foster creativity and innovation within these businesses, ultimately contributing to their growth and sustainability. This strategy benefits individual MSMEs and has broader economic development and regional competitiveness implications.

#### 4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study support the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which suggests that human behavior is motivated by three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are met, individuals experience a sense of thriving characterized by vitality, motivation, and creativity. For entrepreneurs in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), thriving is essential for business success, enabling them to innovate, adapt to changes, and maintain competitiveness in the market.

Previous research has also established a positive relationship between thriving and creativity (Amabile, 1988; Hennessey, 2015). For instance, Amabile (1988) found that individuals who feel a sense of autonomy and competence are more likely to engage in creative behaviors. Similarly, Hennessey (2015) identified intrinsic motivation—a crucial aspect of thriving—as a strong predictor of creative performance.

The results of this study provide empirical evidence that thriving training can enhance the creativity of MSME entrepreneurs. The significant increase in thriving levels after the training, as shown by the pre-and post-test results, indicates that the training effectively promoted participants' psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This improvement in thriving subsequently led to enhanced creative performance, as evidenced by the regression analysis.

Furthermore, these findings reinforce the notion that thriving is vital to entrepreneurial success (Baum & Locke, 2004). By equipping MSME entrepreneurs with the skills and strategies necessary to thrive, they are more likely to experience increased autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This can foster greater creativity, innovation, and overall business performance. These insights highlight the importance of incorporating thriving-focused training programs into the development strategies for MSMEs to enhance their potential for success in a competitive landscape.

#### 4.3. Implication

The study's results indicate that thriving training is effective in enhancing the creativity of actors within Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This suggests a clear need for the

development of sustainable training programs that focus on strengthening psychological aspects such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These programs can lead to a sustained increase in creativity and innovation within MSME businesses.

Furthermore, the findings can provide a foundation for integrating thriving and psychological approaches into government support policies and programs for MSMEs. By emphasizing the psychological factors that drive creativity, the government can create an environment that fosters growth and innovation in the MSME sector.

Additionally, stakeholders involved in MSME development in Depok and surrounding areas should consider adopting a psychology-based approach, such as Self-Determination Theory, when designing development and training programs for MSME actors. By understanding and addressing the basic psychological needs of these entrepreneurs, creativity and innovation in their businesses are anticipated to significantly improve.

Moreover, collaboration with educational institutions and psychology experts can enhance the development of more targeted and practical training and mentoring programs. Such partnerships help reinforce the psychological aspects of MSMEs, thereby supporting their sustainable business growth. This collaborative effort can lead to a more holistic approach to MSME development, prioritizing psychological well-being alongside traditional business skills and knowledge.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study provide compelling evidence that thriving training can significantly enhance the creativity of MSME entrepreneurs in West Java. These findings align with the principles of Self-Determination Theory and corroborate previous research highlighting the positive relationship between thriving and creativity. The implications of this study are substantial, suggesting that the development of targeted training programs focused on fostering psychological aspects such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential for promoting the growth and success of MSME entrepreneurs. By prioritizing these elements, stakeholders can create an environment that supports individual creativity and drives innovation and sustainability within the MSME sector.

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Data sharing does not apply to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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