

# EFFORTS TO IMPROVE HR PERFORMANCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY TRAINING IN THE PANDEMIC TIME COVID-19

Herman Sofyandi

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37178/ca-c.23.2.014>

-----  
**Herman Sofyandi**, Widyatama University  
[herman.sofyandi@widyatama.ac.id](mailto:herman.sofyandi@widyatama.ac.id)  
-----

## **Abstract**

*This research aims to identify how efforts to improve human resource performance through technology training during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research design uses multiple case studies to explore the use of networks that support the capabilities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Data analysis shows that with the support and technology training provided by SME owners to their employees, they get a number of benefits, including making SMEs able to compete and increasing sales sales, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Therefore, this study suggests that SME managers should strive to provide training to their employees in the context of technology, especially digital marketing.*

**Keywords:** SMEs, HR Performance, Application of Technology

## **Introduction**

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are a very diverse part of economic activity, and their characteristics vary depending on the business sector in which they operate, the markets they serve, the products they produce [1]. Previous studies have noted that SMEs are generally not involved in formal strategic planning [2] and that even SMEs that attempt to plan strategies tend to do so only inconsistently. However, in current conditions, with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact is very much felt on the economy, as well as the increasingly intense competition in SMEs demands that every business actor thinks of the right strategy to remain competitive [3].

Management skills in managing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) require adopting a more formal approach in managing business activities. Therefore, considering the current facts, every business actor needs the right strategy so as to produce a competitive advantage. On the other hand, the infrastructure support offered by the government does not necessarily have a positive impact on the success of SMEs themselves [4]. Existing research shows that SMEs use networks to acquire resources to improve business performance [5]; However, the network that is built cannot be realized properly if it is not accompanied by knowledge of the technology that is currently being felt. Therefore, this research is intended to gain a better understanding of efforts to improve HR performance through technology training so that it is hoped that each UKM can be competitive in running its business. To achieve this, the research formulation is How technology training is provided by UKM owners in an effort to improve human resource performance, especially in the city of Bandung?

This paper is divided into five sections. The next section will be presented on Network related literature especially in the context of SMEs. The third part will discuss the research design adopted in this research, the case studies are presented in Section 4 and section 5 will present the results of the analysis of each case. The

final section will discuss the conclusions, where the insights gained from this research will be summarized, and the research limitations and recommendations for future research.

**Literature Review: Technology Training**

According to the concept of HR, training refers to the ability of a company or organization to build internal competencies to cope with a rapidly changing environment. Thus, training can be defined as a series of company activities in using its resources to obtain and improve business performance. Research [6] states that technology training can positively improve business performance [7]. Through an understanding of technology, an employee can manage his business activities well [8]. The training provided by the owner to employees is proven to increase sales turnover [5]. Current technological developments greatly contribute to the success of SMEs, especially the ability to explore the market widely [9]. This is because the characteristics of SMEs that have successfully pursued growth are closely related to the network capabilities that are built [10].

In the context of SMEs, the application of technology in business is defined as a company's ability to explore to obtain information on trends in new products and services, as well as to get suppliers to meet their targeted needs in developing solutions to problems that arise. The function of technology in business activities demands that the company or organization be proactive in initiating, anticipating, and looking for new opportunities, anticipating changes in the market, and responding actively to changes. [11] states that the concept of a company's ability to develop its HR performance lies in how companies integrate, build and configure internal and external competencies to cope with a rapidly changing environment. Through understanding technology, managers can better manage HR. Technological developments in the context of SMEs contribute to successful performance, especially in the ability to increase market share [12].

**Research Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach using case studies, which do not use statistical calculations but with a logical approach [13]. This study aims to develop a theory in the application of networks in the application of SMEs which are considered as a phenomenon that is not widely understood. This method is capable of analyzing new phenomena where there are complex interactions between entities [12, 13]. This study follows Eisenhardt [12] recommendation that selected cases must have a certain degree of variation to allow logical replication [13]. A brief summary of the case firms included in this study is as follows:

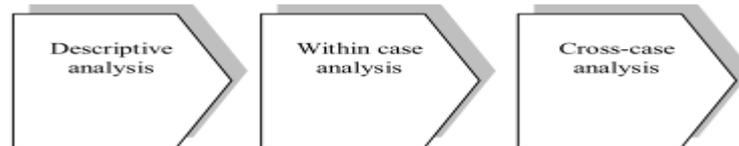
Table 1

Characteristics of Case Studies

Characteristics of	Case Study	
	UKM A (Binong Jati)	UKM B (Cihampelas)
Size of	20 workers	23 workers of
products	industrial, masks craftsmen and materials.	Manufacture of masks and materials
Market	Local	Local
Owners	Private	Joint
Network	Developed by the owner of the	Joint
Business Owner Profile The	owner previously worked in a textile company, graduated from high school The	owner does not have much experience, all of his experience comes from friends and relatives.

To analyze the questions posed, interviews were conducted with 15 participants, and a focus group / group discussion was conducted. This was carried out in November 2020. This approach is considered to be helpful in building an understanding of how SMEs in Bandung apply technology to seek competitive advantages during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The analysis was carried out in three stages, namely: descriptive analysis (analyzing the results of research conducted on cases in general), in-case analysis (analyzing all findings in each case), and cross-case analysis (analyzing and comparing findings between cases [14]. Further analysis can be carried out by comparing the findings of each sample and then identifying patterns for generalization [13]

**Figure 1. Three Stages of Analysis of**



source: Eisendhart (1989)

**CASE STUDY**

**SMEA The**

owner or manager of UKM A has a long experience working in the handicraft industry. , he has held a variety of different positions, from production to marketing to supervision. In his last position, he traveled frequently with the aim of expanding market size. From here, he gained rich experience especially understanding of social media, identifying business opportunities, and maintaining the network to find relationships the size of this network is obtained through introductions located in West Java, only a few are outside West Java. In reaching the market segment, the company is supported by two distributors, while fulfilling market demand.

**UKM B**

Owners of UKM B as much as 90% of their products are marketed in the city of Bandung, especially the South Bandung area. And suppliers to agents around South Bandung, and take advantage of direct sales. The owner and founder, too, has extensive experience. The owner holds a bachelor's degree in Bandung City, and pursued a career in marketing before deciding to set up his own business. As a marketer, he also has a lot of experience meeting people from various companies during his university years and in different areas of expertise.

**EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

This section describes the important findings from the analysis. This matching was obtained from the analysis to reveal the findings presented in Table 2 as well as the description:

*Table 2.*

Findings Regarding SME Networks A

Variable	Implementation Forms
Increase market penetration	Relying on owner-owned social media networks to gain market knowledge.
Manager's Ability in Managing the Network. The	quality of the network built through business information technology developed by the manager greatly determines the success of market penetration.
Facilitating the acquisition of network information and knowledge	Transfer of knowledge through the use of social media from other parties can support companies in the market
Reach customers in various regions	Customers in various regions offer opportunities for companies to create unique products through social media
Compatibility with network assistance	Utilization of technology supports companies to synchronize internal and external resources

**Technology Implementation:*****Finding Customers in theMarket***

SME relies on their production and marketing capabilities to serve market demands and to be able to compete by relying on the experience they have. However, the ability to manage technology is very limited. On the other hand, the owner's business experience greatly affects the management of his human resources so that it has an impact on the performance of the business he is engaged in. UKM A has an advantage compared to UKM B due to the owner's extensive experience as a manager. His personal experience has obtained a lot of information about the market. On the one hand, SME B has several obstacles in understanding market needs. Even though the owner of UKM B has extensive management knowledge, because he is a graduate in management, this is not a guarantee to be able to expand his business network. This obstacle is in the form of difficulty in identifying the products needed by customers. In this case, UKM B can do website development to improve business performance because many competitors use a similar strategy. In particular, many customers today make purchases via the internet.

**Technological Capability in an Effort to Improve Human Resource Performance**

Every SME in running a business cannot be separated from relying on its ability to penetrate the market. Managers of the two companies, demonstrated proficiency in the application of different technologies, and had different levels of experience. The success of UKM A in entering the market is supported by the experience of its managers who have worked at the company. The manager's experience affects the dependability and reliability of the buildable network. Managers of UKM A and business networks built through social media have the same understanding, so that trust during collaboration is not a problem for either party. In short, SME A has a better relationship quality than SME B. On the other hand, the owner of UKM B has little experience in his business career, and he develops business for the company by relying on his knowledge and closest friends. As a result, the performance process of UKM B is less structured, the company is trying to find opportunities in any way.

**Facilitating the acquisition of information and knowledge through information technology**

Information obtained and knowledge can also help SMEs to develop their relationships. For example, the manager of UKM A has several relationships that run businesses that produce different products in certain areas. Although the company produces different products from SME A, the company has greater knowledge and experience about the market and can manage its human resources well. If the relationship is willing to provide information and knowledge about customers in a particular area, this will be very valuable for the company in helping to understand the outside market.

***Reaching Customers in Different Regions***

For both companies, the geographic proximity of customers is not a high priority in terms of selecting target markets. The availability of social media to be reached in the target market is more important than the proximity of the area. The literature suggests that it is easier for companies to enter similar areas. However, the findings of this study differ that SME B provides a unique and innovative product when compared to SME A.

### **Compliance with technology assistance**

The ability of human resources to apply technology has supported the two SMEs to improve the suitability between internal and external conditions. Through the use of technology, companies can access additional resources, and therefore, management can design better strategies. For example, SME A has improved its ability to meet product demand. In short, these SMEs can develop greater flexibility to adapt to different customer orders. External suitability, which refers to the suitability between company resources and the environment, is shown in the ability of human resources (employees) to adapt to different or changing environments, and facilitate the learning process. Achieving internal and external conformity is not necessary in all situations. With limited resources, SME B prefers to focus on its internal business by providing creative and innovative products, even though they do not adapt to consumer desires. Therefore, SMEs experience challenges in achieving these two types of strategies, due to limited resources. However, the role of technology can be used to overcome this limited resource.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions The**

purpose of this study is to find out how SMEs are trying to improve the performance of human resources through the application of technology to support HR performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. Empirical evidence shows that the ability to manage technology can improve a company's ability in this case is the context of SMEs to adapt to dynamic business environments. In particular, the quality of human resources when understanding the application of technology in business can exploit the market and obtain information as well as knowledge and resources. The success of SMEs in acquiring knowledge increases their organizational capabilities, which in turn increases their ability to adapt to changing environments. Despite facing undeniable resource constraints, the ability of managers to develop quality human resources is highly dependent on their previous work experience and it is not the result of training or other forms of formal education.

To reduce dependence on managers, UKM has tried to make network development routines, but the results have not been satisfactory. This is because knowledge of information technology occurs at the individual level, not at the organizational level. This study has several limitations, which also indicate opportunities for further research. This research was conducted on SMEs located in the city of Bandung. Therefore, the results of this study can be validated in the context of other cities that have different characteristics. If subsequent research conducted in a different context yields similar or the same conclusions, the generalizability of this study will be confirmed. On the other hand, if the results are different, this will give researchers new directions in developing new theories.

### **Bibliography**

1. Kutllovci, S., Venet, Enver, and B. Troni, *Business Strategy, the key determinants of SME growth in Kosovo*. International Journal of Advances in Agriculture Sciences, 2018.
2. Hidde P, M., Enno and Smit., *Planning behavior of small firms in central Vietnam*. Journal of small business management, 2000. **38**(2): p. 95.
3. Duta, M., et al., *Covid-19 pandemic: What are the challenges and opportunities for e-Leadership?* Fisceoconomia, 2020. **4**(2): p. 483-497 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25295/fsecon.2020.02.011>.
4. Bogoviz, A.V., et al., *Infrastructural provision of international entrepreneurship: theory and practice*. International Journal of Trade and Global Markets, 2018. **11**(3): p. 190-199 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTGM.2018.095815>.
5. Senik, Z., et al., *Networking and internationalization of SMEs in emerging economies*. Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 2011. **9**(4): p. 259-281 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-011-0078-x>.
6. Burnes, *Efforts To Improve Hr Performance Through Technology Training In The Pandemic Time Covid-19*. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 2009. **17**(10): p. 1340-1346.

7. Moran, J.W. and B.K. Brightman, *Leading organizational change*. Career development international, 2001. **6**(2): p. 111-119 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000005581>.
8. Teece, D.J., *Dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurial management in large organizations: Toward a theory of the (entrepreneurial) firm*. European Economic Review, 2016. **86**: p. 202-216 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2015.11.006>.
9. Prange, C. and S. Verdier, *Dynamic capabilities, internationalization processes and performance*. Journal of World Business, 2011. **46**(1): p. 126-133 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2010.05.024>.
10. Pairo-Castineira, E., et al., *Genetic mechanisms of critical illness in Covid-19*. Nature, 2021. **591**(7848): p. 92-98 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-03065-y>.
11. Xiang, M., Z. Zhang, and K. Kuwahara, *Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents' lifestyle behavior larger than expected*. Progress in cardiovascular diseases, 2020. **63**(4): p. 531 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcad.2020.04.013>.
12. Eisenhardt, K.M., *Building theories from case study research*. Academy of management review, 1989. **14**(4): p. 532-550 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308385>.
13. Yin, R.K., *Case study research: Design and methods*. Vol. 5. 2009: sage.
14. Mingozzi, F., et al., *Modulation of tolerance to the transgene product in a nonhuman primate model of AAV-mediated gene transfer to liver*. Blood, The Journal of the American Society of Hematology, 2007. **110**(7): p. 2334-2341 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1182/blood-2007-03-080093>.