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Review Article

# Pilot Study: Determinants of Small and Medium Business Performance

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**Abstract**

Practitioners and academics alike have been focused on the performance of SMEs. However, the factors affecting SME performance are still a hot topic. The goal of this study is to identify the factors that influence SME performance; in the pilot study, these components include knowledge, skills, ability, and government policy. As a result, prototype research was carried out to evaluate the measuring instrument's validity and reliability. The population in the present investigation is the entire small business in Padang City, and the sample size is set at 30 SMEs using a simple random sampling technique. The questions were distributed via Google Forms, which were created based on earlier studies on the same topics utilizing surveys. The study applied validity and reliability to all parameters to verify that participants' replies were consistent. The experts validated the legitimacy of the content and dependability, and the data was analyzed using SPSS version 23. The study's findings revealed that all indicators of knowledge, skills, abilities, and government policies with such measurements are accurate, and data for pilot studies indicate that the data is statistically significant. The concluding part illustrates how this research contributes significantly to the development of SMEs in Padang City. The government can use the findings of this study, SMEs, and academics to improve the performance of SMEs.

***Keywords**: Human Resources; Reability SMEs; Validity*

## Introduction

MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized firms) are an important element of the Indonesian economy. MSMEs have an important role in overcoming unemployment (Amoah & Amoah, 2018), economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation (Al-Haddad *et al*., 2019; Ali, 2014; Iqbal, Rahman & Nam, 2020), role in development (Mualla, 2018), job creation (Mendoza & Tadeo, 2023), role in rural development (Kubíčková *et al*., 2017) and equitable development (Erdin & Ozkaya, 2020).

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of MSMEs in Indonesia in 2022 will reach 64.2 million business units or 99.7% of the total businesses in Indonesia. MSMEs also make a significant contribution to the Indonesian economy, namely 60.34% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb 96.2% of the workforce. Kemenkop UKM, 2021. This means that MSMEs constitute the majority of total businesses in Indonesia, produce around two-thirds of the total added value of the Indonesian economy and are able to absorb around nine out of 10 workers in Indonesia.

Similarly, in Padang, the capital of West Sumatra, small, micro, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have

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emerged as an important part of the West Sumatra economy. MSMEs play a critical role in job creation, economic growth, and equitable development. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of MSMEs in West Sumatra in 2022 will reach 593,100, accounting for 46.2% of all enterprises in the province. MSMEs also contribute significantly to the West Sumatra economy, accounting for 27.2% of the GRDP and employing 43.8% of the workforce.

Along the way, SMEs also have various kinds of problems (Hove & Tarisai, 2013). The results of his research state that there is still a lack of management attention to the presence of human resource management, a lack of capital and financial management, marketing strategy and strategy in general. Apart from that, it is also caused by external problems, namely poor managerial skills (Fatoki, 2014). Furthermore, individual factors and non-individual factors consisting of external factors and external factors are also indicated as causes of SME failure (Nikolić *et al*., 2015), marketing (Vaikunthavasan, Velnampy & Rajumesh, 2019), differences in opinions of SME owners and managers (Milošević, Mihajlović & Stojanović, 2019) and gender, age and experience factors (Mayr *et al*., 2020).

Similarly, the problem faced by SMEs in Padang City is not much different from previous research in developing countries, as there is still a lack of UMKM construction from the related service (Florita, Jumiati & Mubarak, 2019), as evidenced by the absence of socialization and training provided for SMEs perpetrators, as well as a lack of government support in terms of licensing, marketing, and funding. The limited marketing area is also a perceived problem (Yuanita, Nurhayati & Yoyet 2018), where there is still a lack of knowledge among SMEs about digital marketing, as well as strict competition from large business operators and minimal use of technology (Nurlaila *et al*., 2022) due to a variety of factors, including funding constraints, UMKM operators' lack of skills, and a lack of access to technology. Other sensed phenomena are related to invention (Lita & Ma, 2022). This is due to a variety of circumstances, including funding limits, UMKM stakeholders' lack of understanding of innovation, and a lack of government backing. Meanwhile, Egim *et al*. (2021) discuss how access to funding, such as government fund limits, high interest rates, and high credit standards, affects the increasing difficulties of SMEs.

There are many variables that influence the performance of small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship, workforce skills, infrastructure, finance, leadership skills (Abebaw, Mulate & Nigussie, 2018), and innovation (Iqbal & Yuliandari, 2019) entrepreneurial characteristics (Indarto & Santoso, 2020), entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation (Septrizola, 2021), Entrepreneurial Orientation and skills (Zaato *et al*., 2020), entrepreneurial skills (Mutuku *et al*., 2022), entrepreneurial orientation and religiosity (Sefnedi & Yadewani, 2022), human resource skills and capabilities (Wijaya, Yadewani & Karim, 2022), quality of business strategy, ethical seller behavior, process innovation, entrepreneurial orientation perspective, business environment adaptability, and partial competitive advantage ( Asyhari, Pudjihastuti & Kurdaningsih, 2018) skills and experiences (Yadewani, 2023) knowledge and government policies (Yadewani *et al*., 2023a), innovation and technology (Yadewani *et al*., 2023b),

According to Aliyu and Rosli (2014), trials are considered to be trials in which a small-scale study is conducted before the actual full-scale study. A pilot study was carried out with the goal of achieving numerous objectives. The primary goals of trials are validity and reliability. The pilot test attempts to collect data on the actual conditions of full-scale research, allowing researchers to anticipate and adjust to problems that may arise during full-scale research (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2018). The validity of an instrument is defined as the amount to which it measures what it is designed to measure, whereas the reliability of a measure is defined as the extent to which a measuring instrument is error-free and constant throughout time as well as across different items on the scale (Hair, Wolfinbarger & Bush, 2007). However, this paper gives the findings of a study that looked at the impact of knowledge, skills, willingness, and government policy on the performance of SMEs.

**Methodology**

Sample sizes for trials are usually small, ranging from fifteen to thirty respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). As a result, it is envisaged that with a valid and reliable instrument, measurement error can be greatly minimized. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most widely used inter-item consistency and reliability measure. As a result, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized in this study to assess the instrument's internal consistency (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). After the data was run using SPSS version 23, all measures were discovered to have excellent reliability criteria ranging from 0.736 to 0.933. According to the standard, an instrument with a coefficient of 0.60 is regarded as having moderate dependability (Hair *et al*., 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013)**.**

*Instrumentation and Measurement of Variables*

In the pilot survey, a structured questionnaire consisting of closed multiple-choice questions was used because, in addition to being the most efficient and reliable tool for data collection, this tool was able to reduce ambiguity regarding questions and also gave respondents the freedom to express their output more efficiently. Furthermore, data analysis can be easily coded. (Sekaran & Bougie**,** 2016)

Scales represent the ways in which individuals are differentiated regarding their differences from each other on variables of interest in a particular study (Hair *et al*., 2010). Although various Likert scales are used in some research, a five-point Likert scale will yield the expected results. Previous studies have claimed that utilizing a scale with a midway produces better and more accurate findings (Schuman & Presser, 1981).

*Knowledge*

The conceptualization and instrument for knowledge were adapted from (Ardiana, Brahmayanti & Subaedi, 2010). In her definition, knowledge is defined as a person's grasp of science and technology gained via the learning process as well as life experiences. The variable of knowledge is measured by five items that consist of 1) business management knowledge, 2) product or service knowledge, 3) consumer knowledge, 4) promotion, and 5) marketing strategy.

*Skills*

Skill is defined as the ability to physically manipulate an object (Ardiana, Brahmayanti & Subaedi, 2010). The seven items are used to measure: 1) production skills, 2) communication, 3) cooperation and organization, 4) supervision, 5) finance, 6) administration, and 7) accounting.

*Abilities*

The ability conceptualization and instrument were adapted from (Ardiana, Brahmayanti & Subaedi, 2010). Knowledge is defined in her conceptualization as an individual's ability to accomplish numerous job responsibilities. This variable is divided into seven items that maintain the ability to: 1) manage business, 2) make decisions, 3) lead, 4) control, 5) innovate, 6) situation, and 7) changing business environment.

*Government Policy*

Government policy is a policy that assists in the development of industry, particularly small and medium-sized firms, by providing actual activities such as training frequency, finance availability, and business partnership (Stuart, 2019). The three items are used to measure government policy: 1) training frequency, 2) capital access, and 3) business partnerships.

*Performance of SMEs*

The extent to which SMEs' ability to carry out work in order to achieve goals in accordance with their capabilities, programs, and policies, as well as the declared vision and mission (Darmanto & Yuliari, 2018). Variable SMEs performance is measured by nine (nine) items adapted from Hunjra et al. (2021) that consist of: 1) Profitability, 2) Growth of sales and revenues, 3) Return on assets, 4) Trend of return

on assets, 5) Market share, 6) Operationa and cost efficiency, 7) Productivity, 8) Return on sales, and 9) Trend of return on sales.

**Results and Discussion:**

*Content and Face Validity*

The process of interviewing a small sample of experts to examine the adequacy of selected items to measure a construct is known as content validity (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Based on this, the design of this instrument was presented to supervisors who were experts in their field of study, as well as management doctors who were familiar with the human resources context, and the results of this research were consulted to check the clarity and specificity of the instrument in the context of Small and Medium Enterprises. The questionnaire was distributed in a total of 30 copies, and all 30 copies were distributed. Researchers individually distribute questionnaires and explain to respondents any issues that need further clarification. The process takes about a full month, which is carried out in the first month of September 2022.

The instrument in this study is regarded as valid if it can consistently measure what it seeks to assess and expose the data and variables analyzed. Validity refers to an indicator's level of accuracy in measuring the target variable. The accuracy of the scale on the measurement of the instrument employed with the purpose of verifying that the measuring instrument used, in this case the questionnaire questions, matches the item to be measured is referred to as a validity test. The term validity refers to how accurate and precise a measuring device is when performing its measurement function. The validity test should be carried out on each question item in the validity test. We compare the results of the r count with the r table, where the degree of freedom (df) is n-2 with a sig of 5%. If r table < r count, then it is valid. The following is a summary of the results. The validity test of the research instrument is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Recapitulation of Research Instruments Validity Test Results

| Variables | Indicators | Question Items | Corrected Items | r table | Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge (X1) | Business management knowledge | X1.1 | 0.832 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Product knowledge or services | X1.2 | 0.879 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Consumer knowledge | X1.3 | 0.879 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Promotion | X1.4 | 0.812 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Marketing Strategy | X1.5 | 0.802 | 0.361 | valid |
| Skills(X2) | Production skills | X2.1 | 0.526 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Communications | X2.2 | 0.724 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Cooperation and organization | X2.3 | 0.825 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Supervision | X2.4 | 0.842 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Finance | X2.5 | 0.897 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Administration | X2.6 | 0.842 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Accounting | X2.7 | 0.792 | 0.361 | valid |
| Abilities(X3) | Manage business | X3.1 | 0.769 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Make a decision | X3.2 | 0.942 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Leads | X3.3 | 0.880 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Controls | X3.4 | 0.880 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Innovate | X3.5 | 0.867 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Situation | X3.6 | 0.822 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Changing business environment. | X3.7 | 0.533 | 0.361 | valid |
| Government Policy | Training frequency | Z1 | 0.801 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Capital access | Z2 | 0.880 | 0.361 | valid |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (z1) | Business partnerships | Z3 | 0.838 | 0.361 | valid |
| Performance of SMEsY | Profitability | Y1 | 0.581 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Growth of sales and revenues | Y2 | 0.818 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Return on assets | Y3 | 0.637 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Trend of return on assets | Y4 | 0.708 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Market share | Y5 | 0.812 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Operation and cost efficiency | Y6 | 0.249 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Productivity | Y7 | 0.109 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Return on sales | Y8 | 0.191 | 0.361 | valid |
| | Trend of return on sales. | Y9 | 0.009 | 0.361 | valid |

Source: *SPSS processed results 2022*

Based on the findings of the analysis, it is known that each indicator is valid for measuring the construct because the corrected item-total correlation value is greater than 0.235.

By using the number of respondents as many as 30, the value of r table can be obtained through Pearson's r product moment table with df (degree of freedom) = n-2, so df = 30-2 = 28, then r table = 0.312. Question items are said to be valid if the value of r count > the value of r table.

*Reliability Test*

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most widely used inter-item consistency and reliability measure. As a result, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized in this study to assess the instrument's internal consistency. After analyzing the data with SPSS version 23 for Windows, it was discovered that all measures had high reliability standards ranging from 0.736 to 0.933. This is consistent with the benchmark, which states that an instrument with a coefficient of 0.60 has moderate reliability, while a coefficient of 0.70 and above shows that the instrument has a high level of reliability (Hair *et al*., 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A reliability test is a measure of an indicator's internal consistency, a concept that indicates how well each indicator variable detects a common latent element. The purpose of a reliability test is to determine the measuring instrument's reliability or consistency if it is used to measure the same thing more than once. In other words, this reliability test can assess the level of confidence in the measurement data. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to examine the reliability of the statement items utilized in this study. Although not an absolute standard, the sternal cut of points for Cronbach's alpha level is > 0.60 (Sekaran, 2003).

The instrument is considered to have an acceptable level of reliability if the value of the measured reliability coefficient is > 0.60. An instrument is declared reliable if it can be used to measure variables repeatedly, which will produce the same data or only slightly vary (Supranto, 2005). The summary of the results of the research instrument reliability test is presented in table 2 below. Based on the analysis process of the alpha cronbach method, the reliability of the calculation results for the four research variables, namely Knowledge (X1), Skills (X2), ability (X3), Government Policy (Z) and UKM performance (Y) can be accepted with a level of reliability value between 0.713 — 0.915, because if the alpha value is greater than 0.6, it indicates the instrument is reliable (Malhotra, 2004). The summary of the results of the research instrument reliability test is presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Recapitulation of Research Instruments Reliability Test Results

| **Variables** | **Indicators** | **Croanbach's Alpha. scores** | **Information** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge (X1) | Business management knowledge | 0.929 | Reliable |
| | Product knowledge or services | 0.921 | Reliable |
| | Consumer knowledge | 0.921 | Reliable |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Promotion | 0.933 | Reliable |
| | Marketing Strategy | 0.935 | Reliable |
| Skills(X2) | Production skills | 0.943 | Reliable |
| | Communications | 0.921 | Reliable |
| | Cooperation and organization | 0.912 | Reliable |
| | Supervision | 0.910 | Reliable |
| | Finance | 0.905 | Reliable |
| | Administration | 0.910 | Reliable |
| | Accounting | 0.915 | Reliable |
| abilities(X3) | Manage business | 0.924 | Reliable |
| | Make a decision | 0.909 | Reliable |
| | Leads | 0.914 | Reliable |
| | Controls | 0.914 | Reliable |
| | Innovate | 0.915 | Reliable |
| | Situation | 0.919 | Reliable |
| | Changing business environment. | 0.961 | Reliable |
| Government Policy (z1) | Training frequency | 0.801 | Reliable |
| | Capital access | 0.880 | Reliable |
| | Business partnerships | 0.838 | Reliable |
| Performance of SMEs(Y) | Profitability | 0.750 | Reliable |
| | Growth of sales and revenues | 0.707 | Reliable |
| | Return on assets | 0.740 | Reliable |
| | Trend of return on assets | 0.729 | Reliable |
| | Market share | 0.713 | Reliable |
| | Operation and cost efficiency | 0.792 | Reliable |
| | Productivity | 0.805 | Reliable |
| | Return on sales | 0.797 | Reliable |
| | Trend of return on sales. | 0.817 | Reliable |

Source: *SPSS processed results 2022*

Based on the results of the above data analysis, the questionnaire about the things that affect the performance of small businesses (in this case, just knowledge, skills, abilities, and government policies) passed the validity and reliability tests Previous studies have shown that knowledge management variables have a negative impact on the development of SMEs from both technical and managerial perspectives (Alawi *et al*., 2018). Similarly, managers and owners of small and medium-sized firms have limited capabilities (Khan, 2015). Meanwhile, Kareem *et al*. (2019) asserted that the inability of small and medium-sized firms to exchange knowledge is the root cause of their poor performance. Furthermore, government initiatives are still viewed as incapable of improving the performance of small and medium-sized businesses ( Yuzaria, Rahmi & Rias, 2021). Therefore, this research shows that this questionnaire is valid and reliable for measuring knowledge variables consisting of (1) business management knowledge, 2) product or service knowledge, 3) consumer knowledge, 4) promotion, and 5) marketing strategy. Skills variable consisting of (1) production skills, 2) communication, 3) cooperation and organization, 4) supervision, 5) finance, 6) administration, and 7) accounting. The ability variable consists of (1) managing business, 2) making decisions, 3) leading, 4) controlling, 5) innovating, 6) situation, and 7) changing the business environment. and the government policy variable consists of 1) training frequency, 2) capital access, and 3) business partnerships to improve the performance of small and medium enterprises.

**Conclusion**

The primary goal of this pilot study is to evaluate the measuring instrument's validity and reliability on a smaller scale before performing full-scale empirical research. After the main investigation is completed, the consequences of the constructs being measured will be known. Experts evaluated the measuring instrument's content and face validity, resulting in a revised instrument. The inter-item reliability test demonstrates that all items are reliable, with Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70; hence, no items need to be deleted.

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**Conflict of Interest:**

The authors state that they do not have any conflicts of interest.

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