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Pivot Strategy in Entrepreneurship: Strategy of Managing Business During Coronavirus Pandemic

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Abstract

The spread of the Corona Virus in Indonesia has an impact on changes in various aspects of life, including the economic sector. Pivot strategy is a strategy to change the business model to survive even in difficult times. This study aims to (a) analyze the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the sustainability of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (b) analyze the strength, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT) factors to determine the business position of MSMEs (c) develop a MSME business Pivot strategy to survive the pandemic. This type of research is applied, which provides practical alternative solutions to certain problems faced by research subjects. The research subjects are MSMEs in Tulungagung district, East Java, which are engaged in food and crafts. The research instruments were interview guides, observation sheets and documentation. The results showed that (1) the impact of the pandemic on MSMEs was a 40% decrease in sales (2) based on the results of the SWOT analysis showed that the position of MSMEs in Tulungagung district was aggressive, meaning that it had the potential to survive even during the pandemic. MSME managers have a fairly good ambidexterity ability, so they are able to develop pivot strategies to stay afloat during the pandemic. (3) The pivot strategy created by MSMEs in Tulungagung district does not only depend on local government assistance but is also self-reliant.

Keywords: Pivot Strategy; Coronavirus Pandemic

Introduction

Since March 2019, Indonesia has experienced an unexpected period, namely the Corona virus 19 pandemic. Until now, Indonesia has not been free from the pandemic, which has an impact on changes in various aspects of life, starting from the educational, social, cultural and economic aspects. With regard to economic problems, the impact of the corona pandemic on the survival of small businesses is very much felt. Many businesses are facing the problem of declining sales so that they are unable to cover operational costs. In April 2020, the MSME Community Upgrading survey stated that 83% of MSMEs have the potential to go bankrupt. The fourth survey was conducted in August 2021, the results of which were released this September. There are 19% of MSMEs that have gone bankrupt, or 11 million MSMEs that have closed their businesses, and there are still 21.4% of MSMEs that have the potential to go bankrupt.

The research results of Shen, et al. (2020) showed that the pandemic has a negative effect on business performance, which means that the more severe the pandemic, the lower the business performance. The results of this study are also supported by Chowdhury, et al. (2020) which stated that the business

sector needs to make a deal strategy with the coronavirus pandemic. This means that the business sector can continue to run during the pandemic as long as the community is willing to comply with health protocols.

Pivot strategy is a strategy to change the business model so that the business can continue to run even in difficult times. The term pivot is taken from the basketball movement that changes direction while staying on one foot. Pivot is also one of the business strategies that founders can do when they meet a "dead end". Especially when the product being executed is not in accordance with what the market wants (Kelly Bertog, 2020).

The general objective of this research is to solve the problems faced by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) during the covid 19 pandemic. While the specific objectives of this study are to (a) analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the MSME business (b) analyze the the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on MSME business performance (c) developing a Pivot strategy so that MSME businesses can survive during the pandemic. The urgency of the research is to implement the Pivot strategy to assist MSME businesses in solving problems faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

Pivot Strategy in Business

Businesses that do not develop usually have two choices, namely to stay afloat or go bankrupt because of business competition. A business pivot is a business development activity by changing the business model itself, but still based on the business vision you have. This term is taken from the basketball movement that changes direction while keeping the foot on one foot. A business pivot usually occurs when a company makes fundamental changes to their business after determining (usually through market research) that their product does not meet a desired market need.

Pivot has also become one of the business strategies that business people can do when they meet a "dead end". For example, when the product that is run is not in accordance with what the market wants. Or when the developed business model is not profitable. After deciding to pivot, there are also many things that must be prepared until finally the product is really ready to be marketed. Every business person will realize that there is a long journey to success. But sometimes it is difficult to be a patient person in going through a long process, because everyone wants it to go fast even though the business foundation has not been solidly formed. Some things that must be considered before doing a business pivot include (a) is the analysis of the consumer correct? (b) Are resources adequate when changing compass directions? (c) Is the market response ahead a response to be expected?

Here are 5 ways to do business PIVOT suggested by Bertog (2020) during the pandemic. *First*. Offer more (Offer more). For some businesses, survival requires offering more than you've ever had before. Take the fancy Italian restaurant just down the road (we all have one). With their dining room closed for the foreseeable future, their go-to solution is likely to offer takeout and delivery, keeping their fingers crossed that things will get back to normal soon. Of course, by offering takeout and delivery, they can continue to serve delicious food to hungry people. But their average order value takes a huge hit, as no live dining means no alcohol sales, no ups and downs of appetizers and desserts, and of course, no tipping for their staff. So, what can businesses like this do to address these unexpected challenges? Offer more. To survive the extended blow to their traditional business model, they needed to think of ways to offer their customers more, pushing average order values back to where they were when guests dined in person.

Second, offer less (Offer less). For some businesses, the best way to survive these difficult times is to scale back their products or services, and focus exclusively on the customer segments that make the most profit. Companies like this need to look closely and for a long time which of the two segments is driving more profit, growing faster, and is most likely to continue to grow (or at least survive) during the coming

recession. Based on what they find, businesses will have a game plan about which segments (and appropriate product features) to prioritize, and where they can offer less. Now, that doesn't mean that they need (or should) fire a lot of customers from less valuable segments. It simply means that they have to reevaluate the time and money invested in areas such as product development, marketing and customer service related to this segment. Now is the time to focus, and the best way to do that is to offer less.

Third, solve a new problem (Solve a New Problem). While it's easy to forget, the core reason businesses exist is to solve problems for their customers. But what happens if the problem you solved is no longer relevant? Hotel businesses in normal times are luxuriously designed with comfortable facilities, but during a pandemic, consumer tastes change because what they are looking for is a healthy room that has air in, spacious so that meeting activities can keep their distance, provide hand sanitizer facilities or running water plus soap. Seeing these conditions, hotels need to pivot their business (at least temporarily) to adjust to the current consumer desires. Thus the type of business is the same, the product is the same, but the problems of different customers can be solved.

Fourth, redefine the market (Redefine Market). When there is an overnight shift in the global economy, it is not uncommon for businesses to also see a shift in their target market. The core customer base may disappear overnight. However, there may be one waiting in the market wing that you never expected to serve. For businesses that notice and act quickly, this means opportunity. Not only to stay afloat during a crisis but perhaps emerge stronger than ever.

Fifth, update the Business Model (Update Business Model). For some entrepreneurs, the changes brought about by the coronavirus will drive needed changes in their business models. This means that the business model used depends on the customer's wishes. If the restaurant business so far has handled a lot of direct purchases on the spot with excellent service plus live music entertainment and a comfortable atmosphere. During the pandemic, of course, the number of direct purchases is reduced and ready to serve take away. Business collaboration with delivery services such as gojek or grab is very much needed, without reducing the quality of taste and appearance. By re-evaluating the business model, we get positive results from the dire situation as a result of the pandemic.

Several research results related to the pivot strategy include the results of research by Gherghina, L. (2013) which shows that market strategy is considered the pivot of marketing policy, because it involves and ensures the direction of the other four strategies, more precisely the strategy product, pricing strategy, place or distribution strategy, and promotion strategy. Marketing strategy is considered the pillar of the organization because it supports the deployment of activities under optimal conditions, indicating the path that the organization should take to achieve the set goals.

Next up is Cooper, R.G. (2020) who states that the ability to spin and innovate quickly holds the key to the future as the world recovers from the pandemic and a new normal begins to take shape. In the face of the pandemic pivot, management faces two fundamental questions, one strategic, the other more tactical or execution. First is Strategy. Must rotate the business to survive, and if so, which market to target, with what type of product or service? how can this market be reached? Second is tactics. How can businesses respond or spin more quickly to new opportunities and changing markets? What factors can speed up this spinning process? Furthermore, Cooper, R. G. (2020) suggested several ways to find Pivot opportunities during a pandemic. (1) Start with VoC: start a search with customers and their needs. (2) Leverage strengths and assets: use business assets to identify potential pivot opportunities. (3) Do due diligence: In assessing new opportunities, make sure the segments are clear and prospects are good; don't just jump in because that sounds like a good idea. (4) A new way to reach customers, meaning that apart from being offline, communication with potential customers can be done online.

Ambidextrous Leadership

Ambidexterity is defined as the company's ability to pursue innovation, exploitation and exploration (Tushman & O'Reilly, 2004). Exploits are intended to extend current knowledge, seeking

greater efficiencies and improvements to enable additional innovation. While exploration involves developing new knowledge, looking for variety and novelty needed for more radical innovation (Atuahene-Gima, 2005). Companies need exploration and exploitation management so that tensions between organizations that think rationally and creative teams that have creative thinking can be managed properly. To be able to manage these exploration and exploitation activities requires ambidexterity. The outputs resulting from this ambidextery leadership are good management, competitive advantage, innovation, and firm performance.

Ambidextrous entrepreneurs are defined as entrepreneurs who are able to simultaneously explore (innovate) and exploit (operational) to compete in environmental conditions that require flexibility and innovation. Ambidextrous capability is needed to produce better business performance. Ambidextrous abilities must be formed in an entrepreneur to face the current pandemic, consisting of managerialship, leadership, and intrapreneurship. Managerialship is the ability to plan, budget, control, and solve various challenges that occur in the company. Leadership is the ability to provide direction, maintain team balance, build synergy, and motivate team members. Intrapreneurship is the courage to make breakthroughs, innovations, and new things needed to accelerate the pace of business. A mandatory requirement for someone to have managerial and leadership skills, but to face competition in a disruptive era, a leader must also have intrapreneurship abilities.

Therefore, by combining these three abilities, one is believed to be able to face dynamic changes and can motivate other employees to be open-minded which has an impact on improving company performance. The results of research on ambidexterity, among others, were put forward by He & Wong (2004) which confirmed a strong relationship between organizational ambidexterity and various aspects of company performance such as sales growth, innovation (Adler et al., 1999) and survival (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2014).) and the company's overall performance (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004). Meanwhile, the research results of Xie, X., & Zhu, Q. (2020) show that green training in 231 manufacturing companies in China is positively correlated with the company's sustainability performance through the indirect effect of green innovation behavior. The key to spurring corporate sustainability performance through green training lies primarily in advancing the green innovation behavior of companies and continuously increasing their capacity for ambidextrous learning. The following are the stages of ambidexitery according to Simsek (2009).

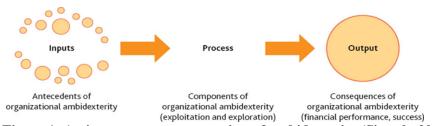


Figure 1: An input-process-output view of ambidexterity (Simsek, 2009).

In Figure 1 above, it is stated that to improve organizational performance, an ambidexitery process is needed which consists of exploitation and exploration components. This is also supported by the results of research by Lubatkin, et al. (2006) which shows that the ability of companies to pursue exploitative and exploratory orientations has a positive performance effect on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as a consequence of ambidexterity.

Research Method

This type of research is applied research, namely research that aims to provide practical alternative solutions to certain problems faced by research subjects. While the type of research is action research, namely applied research that focuses on social action to develop the conditions and lives of research subjects. The research subjects were 21 informants who came from 7 SMEs in Tulungagung district, East

Java, which are engaged in food and handicrafts. Partners of research activities are the Office of Cooperatives and SMEs of Tulungagung Regency which is located at Jl. Dr. Wahidin Sudiro Husodo No. 32, Kenayan Village, Kedungwaru District, Tulungagung Regency, East Java. The research instruments were interview guides, observation sheets and documentation.

Data analysis used SWOT analysis and the formula of Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats) is grouped into internal analysis (IFAS) and external (EFAS). The output of this analysis is in the form of a SWOT matrix that describes strategies that SMEs can do in order to survive the Covid 19 Pandemic. Meanwhile, the Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) formula consists of 4 stages including a) data collection b) data display c) data condensation and d) conclusion drawing/verifying. To increase the level of data accuracy in this study, triangulation was used which included method triangulation, data source triangulation and theoretical triangulation.

Results and Discussion

The Impact of the Pandemic on MSMEs

The Corona Virus pandemic in Indonesia has been going on since March 2019, so it has been more than 2 years now. Many problems have arisen as a result of the pandemic, ranging from health, education, social and economic problems. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the groups most affected by the pandemic. The decline in the number of sales is inevitable in line with changes in people's behavior due to the PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) which came into effect on April 17, 2020. Due to the spread of the Corona virus, the Indonesian government issued a new regulation called PPKM (Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities). PPKM aims to limit interactions, meetings between people and people, people with groups and groups with groups, which are expected to break the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Covid 19 spike, which was getting higher in June 2021, prompted the government to tighten the rules for community mobility by issuing a new regulation called PPKM Mikro. The public is advised to stay at home and implement health protocols. All malls are closed, MSMEs can only open at certain hours. The existence of these government policies certainly has a positive impact on changes in people's behavior and the business sector. The occurrence of many layoffs also has an impact on the decline in people's income. Meeting the needs of the community is prioritized on basic needs, namely food and the need for health. How is the survival of MSMEs in Tulungagung Regency, East Java during the pandemic, will they be able to survive?

Data from the 2018 Tulungagung Regency Diskoperindag showed that the number of MSMEs in Tulungagung Regency is 57,897 units which are engaged in various fields such as handicrafts, food, animal husbandry, agriculture and services. During the Covid 19 pandemic, many MSMEs in Tulungagung district experienced a decline in sales and some of them chose not to operate (closed) because they were unable to bear operational costs. So the number above will certainly experience many changes.

This study took a sample of SMEs in the field of food and crafts. The research subjects were 21 informants taken from 7 MSMEs in Tulungagung Regency, East Java, which are engaged in food and handicrafts. Based on the results of interviews and observations on handicraft SMEs, there was a tremendous decline in the first 3 months of the pandemic, reaching 60%. However, over time, MSME actors began to realize that the pandemic would not end in a short time. For that they have to get up because life must go on and they need to eat. Finally they started trying to revive their business even though they were forced to reduce production volumes and develop online marketing strategies.

This is in line with the call from the President of the Republic of Indonesia that people must practice to live side by side with Corona while still paying attention to the health protocol called the 6 M. The six Ms are (1) Wearing a mask (2) Washing hands with soap (3) Keeping a distance (4) Stay away from crowds

(5) Reduce mobility (6) Avoid eating together. MSME actors in Tulungaagung district have begun to learn digital marketing, both provided by the local government through the Cooperative, Industry, Trade and SME Service as well as independent learning from other training institutions. The provision of the training had an impact on the rise of the MSME sector in Tulungagung district, which slowly the number of sales began to increase even though it had not recovered as before the pandemic. When compared to conditions before the pandemic, there was an average sales decline of 40%. As stated by the following batik business manager.

"At the beginning of the Corona virus pandemic, our sales had dropped by up to 60%. But a few months later we started to switch to online sales such as joining Shopee, Lazada, creating Instagram, Facebook and websites. We sent 4 of our young employees to attend digital marketing training. The result, thank God, can increase sales even though it has not returned to what it was before the pandemic."

However, it is different from what was stated by MSME managers in the food sector who tend to be less proactive in changing consumer buying behavior during the Covid 19 pandemic. As stated by the following food business managers.

"During the corona virus pandemic, the number of tourists visiting Tulungagung decreased, so our sales were also reduced. We do not make online sales media because it has been made by the SME department"

From the two statements above, it can be seen that not all MSME actors are willing to change marketing strategies during the pandemic. Changes in consumer behavior, which during the pandemic switched to online purchases, did not affect the marketing strategies of several MSME actors. These different human resource capacities have an impact on the success of MSMEs. In other words, it can be argued that the ambidexterity of each MSME actor affects the ability to create strategies to survive during the pandemic.

SWOT Analysis

Based on the results of internal and external analysis which includes analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a SWOT matrix can be stated as follows.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis Matrix

Table 1.5 WOT Analysis Wattix									
	S- Strength	W-Weakness							
Internal factors	Better quality than similar	• Even though they have							
	products outside the region	been given training, not							
External factors	Cheaper price	all MSME actors are able							
	Some SMEs already serve	to operate online sales.							
	online and offline sales	•							
O-Opportunity	SO	WO							
• During the pandemic there is an	• Implementing omni channel	 Recruiting young 							
opportunity to increase the number	marketing sales, namely a	millennials who are able							
of consumers from offline to	combination of offline and	to operate online							
combinedoffline dan online	online sales at the same time	marketing							
T-Threats	ST	WT							
• If SMEs do not want to adjust to	• If SMEs want to survive	• Collaborate with partners							
changes in consumer behavior who	during the pandemic, MSME	(local government,							
like online, they will be left behind	actors must be able to	associations,							
	innovate (ambidexterity	marketplaces) to increase							
	entrepreneur)	business enthusiasm							
	_	during the pandemic							

Based on the SWOT analysis matrix in table 1 above, it can be seen that the position of MSMEs in Tulungagung district has a great opportunity to develop even during the pandemic. This can be seen from the various strengths of MSME products whose quality is good but the price is still cheap. Various digital marketing trainings have been carried out by local governments through the Cooperatives, Industry, Trade and SMEs Office and PLUT (Integrated Business Service Center). The desire of MSME actors to survive during the pandemic is very large, but they do not know how. This was conveyed by the following marble craft SMEs.

"I want the business to keep going. But during this pandemic the economy is hard, so customers are also decreasing. There are also no tourists who come to Tulungagung because of PPKM. So what should I do?"

From the statement above, it is clear that the desire to keep the business going is there but the innovation to seek new breakthroughs has not yet emerged. For this reason, intervention from local governments, MSME associations, and PLUT is needed to encourage them to rise again. So the ability of ambidexterity does not always arise by itself, but there needs to be encouragement from other parties to form self-efficacy.

As stated by Tushman & O'Reilly, (2004) and Atuahene-Gima (2005) that ambidexterity is the company's ability to pursue exploitation and exploration innovation. Exploits are used to extend current knowledge, seeking greater efficiencies and improvements to enable additional innovation. While exploration is to develop new knowledge, look for variety and novelty needed for more radical innovation. The results of a similar study were also stated by Lubatkin, et al. (2006) which shows that the ability of companies to pursue exploitative and exploratory orientations has a positive performance effect on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as a consequence of ambidexterity.

Pivot Strategy

Pivot strategy is a strategy to develop the business but still based on the existing business vision and mission. As stated by Bertog (2009) that there are 4 alternative pivot strategies that can be done, including (1) Offer more, (2) Offer less, (3) Solve a New Problem, (4) redefine the market, and (5) Update Business Models. Meanwhile, Garcia & Martinez (2016) stated that this pivot strategy can also be used for start-up businesses, mainly to help develop competitive advantages. For businesses that are already running, such as SMEs in Tulungagung district, the use of the pivot strategy is to solve the problem of declining sales as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The pivot strategy used by several MSMEs in Tulungagung district includes expanding the market from offline to offline and online at the same time, increasing promotions through various online media, recruiting young workers to run online marketing, participating in various digital marketing trainings from Diskoperindag and PLUT. During the pandemic, business actors must completely reorganize their business; they must rotate their business model to be able to deliver products safely or fully deployed to adapt to changing consumer demands.

Of the 10 research subjects on MSMEs in Tulungagung district, those who have implemented the pivot strategy are 7 MSMEs, consisting of 3 batik businesses, 1 marble business and 3 food businesses. Meanwhile, the other 3 MSMEs still feel that the most effective marketing is offline despite the fact that the sales decline is quite large. Another problem is related to the lack of mastery of technology which causes some SMEs to be reluctant to do online marketing.

In running online marketing, there are different strategies for craft and food businesses. For handicraft businesses, SME players collaborate with market place partners Shopee and Lazada. It also uses social media such as Instagram and Facebook. Meanwhile, for the food business, the pivot strategy used is to develop an online business by cooperating with grabfood partners. However, both of them also continue to do offline sales even though the number of sales is low. Thus it can be stated that most MSME actors in

Tulungagung district have developed new innovations as breakthroughs to be able to survive during the pandemic.

The use of this offline and online combination strategy can actually also be interpreted as expanding the market. Initially, the market was only consumers who came directly to the store, but now it is increasing with consumers who shop online. In addition, MSME actors also offer more, meaning that they promote their products to many online media. MSME managers utilize millennial employees to operate online-based marketing. For example, batik businesses use Facebook, Instagram, websites, Shopee and Lazada market places. However, for MSMEs engaged in the food sector, such as food stalls, they use offer less, which is to reduce inventory due to a decrease in the number of requests. Overall the pivot strategy used by the ten MSMEs in Tulungagung district can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Pivot Strategies Used by MSMEs

		The pivot strategy used by MSMEs											
No	Type of MSMEs	Off	F	In	W	S	Bu-	L	То-	G	D	tak	Dif
		line	ac	st	eb	h	kal	a-	ko	ra	e-	ea	ersi
		mar	eb	a-	sit	0	apa	za	Pe-	b	li	wa	fica
		keti	0	gr	e	pe	k	da	dia	fo	ve	y	tion
		ng	0	a		e				0	ry		
			k	m						d			
1	Batik craft 1	v	V	V	V	V	V	V					V
2	Batik craft 2	V	V	V	V	V	V	V					V
3	Marble crafts	V			V				V				
4	Broom craft	V			V				V				
5	Restaurant	V									v	V	
6	Meatball shop	V								v		V	
7	Gift shop	V											

Based on the data in table 1, it can be seen that 5 out of 7 MSMEs (71%) have made a pivot strategy to be able to survive during the Covid 19 pandemic. Experience at the beginning of the pandemic has provided valuable lessons that if you want to survive you have to do something, innovate, make new breakthroughs, to adapt to changes in consumer behavior who switch to online shopping. By opening the online market does not mean that leaving the offline market. Precisely the presence of the online market is to strengthen the offline market. Thus the market becomes wider and opportunities to improve marketing performance are increasingly opened. This is in accordance with the results of research by Lubatkin (2006) which shows a strong relationship between organizational ambidexterity and various aspects of company performance such as sales growth, innovation and company survival. The combination of exploitation and exploration capabilities in the MSME environment can produce extraordinary competitive abilities. Any innovation will be done until it gets a response from consumers.

Hampel et al (2020) in their research results show that new businesses often change drastically in their early years. For this reason, they do a pivot so that their business can continue to run in a sustainable manner. While Shen et al (2020) in their research in China showed that COVID-19 had a negative impact on company performance. Guo et al (2020) empirical results show that digitalization has enabled SMEs to respond effectively to public crises by leveraging their dynamic capabilities. In addition, digitization can help improve the performance of SMEs. Kirtley et al. (2020) states that strategic pivots or strategic reorientations, are not achieved by a single decision, but by gradually exiting or adding strategy elements over time, accumulating into a pivot. Garcia et al. (2016) states about the Innovation Pivot Framework, which is a practical tool that aims to help entrepreneurs identify the use of innovation to formulate sources of competitive advantage.

Leatherbee et al.(2017) stated that the finding that business model refinement is a consequence of search, experimentation, and team characteristics. These procedures, behaviors and characteristics might be considered as managerial dynamic capabilities which, perhaps, assist in the discovery of a viable and high-value business model. Nkuda (2019) examines the role of the case methodology as a pedagogical pivot for business/strategic management policies. It briefly traces the roots of strategy and advocates the need for intensified use of case methodologies in the teaching and learning of strategic management in colleges and business schools where courses can be maintained. Cooper (2020) states that the pandemic and economic depression facing the world are dark times for all businesses, but there are also opportunities. Companies that seize opportunities, and pivot to take advantage of them, will succeed, while those that fail to innovate will disappear.

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis shows that (1) The impact of the pandemic on MSMEs in Tulungagung district is a decrease in sales by 40% (2) based on the results of the SWOT analysis shows that the position of MSMEs in Tulungagung district is aggressive. MSME managers have a fairly good ambidexterity ability, so they are able to develop pivot strategies to stay afloat during the pandemic. (3) The pivot strategy used by MSMEs in Tulungagung district includes expanding the offline market into a combined offline and online market, increasing promotions through various online media, recruiting young workers to run online marketing, participating in various digital marketing trainings from the local government as well as self-training.

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