

Encouraging Women Entrepreneurship to Join the Global Market (Case study on Fashion Industry in West Java)

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Abstract

The integration of global market has opened today for the foreign products to entry any countries and has threatened the future of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs have to compete with foreign businessmen who have superiority in terms of funds, technology, infrastructure, market information and government support. Indonesia is one of developing country who encourages the development of rural areas. Women entrepreneurship in rural areas indicated will increase the local economy, creating employment opportunities, and decreasing the poverty currently. One province in Indonesia that successfully promotes the fashion industries to the local and international tourist is West Java. This study aims to analyze the effect of network development strategy toward the women entrepreneurs' satisfaction. The hypothesis was tested by multivariate statistics-Partial Least Square. The population is owners or managers of SMEs in fashion or garment industries. Stratified random sampling is occupied to get 78 women entrepreneurs in West Java. This study shows that network strategy is significantly influenced the women entrepreneurs' satisfaction proactive entrepreneur is proved to positively strengthen the impact of network strategy on the women entrepreneurs' satisfaction. This result becomes a guide for SMEs, especially in fashion or garment industry to support the tourism of West Java.

Keywords

SMEs, fashion industry, network strategy, satisfaction

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Introduction

One of the indicators for showing how a country's economy is almost prosperous can be seen from the number of entrepreneurs reaches 2 % of the total population (Yuyus and Kartib, 2010). Entrepreneurship is able to move people and products to penetrate the international

market. In 2011, Indonesia in only had 1.56 million entrepreneurs (from 3.71 million people of the total population) which are still far behind compared to other countries such as Malaysia 2.1 %, Singapore 7.2 %. Japan and South Korea 10 % 4 %. From that percentage, the number of women entrepreneurs is still

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lower than male entrepreneurs (45%), and they mostly involved in small and medium-sized businesses (labor-intensive industries) such as fashion and garment (Tambunan, 2011). Women entrepreneurs play an important role in strengthening the economy of a country, especially in developing the social and economic in rural areas of Indonesia. Creating entrepreneurial women, especially in rural areas will encourage various businesses that can enhance local capabilities to boost economic growth, create jobs and reduce poverty number.

Market globalization and trade liberalization, has opened up business opportunities for women entrepreneurs to perform various international activities, among others, through exports (Daft, 2010). Besides the opportunities, the integration of global markets makes women entrepreneurs in SMEs are facing the reality of the entry of low price- foreign products. Woman entrepreneurs are facing a situation that requires on ability to compete with foreign businesses that have better access to the fund, technology, infrastructure, market information and government support.

Women entrepreneurs claimed to be able to increase their global competitiveness by building the management capability to meet international quality standards, using information technology, access to information resources capitalization and international market opportunities. However, women entrepreneurs in SMEs is still facing a difficult global competition, because it is still plagued by various factors such as the limitations of the network and has yet to develop a proactive market leverage (Wisniarski et al., 2008). Small and medium enterprises in Indonesia where women entrepreneur is involved, face some major obstacles,

such as lack of working capital to finance the exports, limited resources, and limited access to key infrastructure (OECD, 2009).

Various constraints faced by women entrepreneurs make the non-financial performance has not been optimal yet. The business can not give satisfaction in conducting international activities that may have an impact on international business survival. The low performance in the international activity is indicated by the still not optimal contribution of entrepreneurs in SMEs (including entrepreneur of women) against the non-oil exports have reached 17%-19%, still far from achieving the standard of non-oil exports, announced the government, amounting to 40% in 2014 (Ministry of Industry, "Strategic Plan: 2010-2014" 2010).

Some limitation in building a network strategy may cause the international business of women's entrepreneur is not optimal. They are access to knowledge and resources as well as to entry the international market (Cerrato and Piva, 2008). Network plays an important role in the internationalization as stated Zain and Ng (2006). "SMEs use their network to facilitate their internationalization process. The same opinion also stated by Chen et al., (2011), "It has been recognized that long-term relationship SMEs form with network partners offer strategic benefit because they provide direct and indirect access to key resources, skills, and knowledge controlled by other members of the network". To sum up, this opinion stated that building a long-term relationship with business partners may offer the SME's women entrepreneurs strategic benefit since it opens direct and indirect access to crucial resources, knowledge, and skill, under the supervision

of network partner. The network plays a strategic role for the development of SMEs as it is stated by Awuah dan Amal (2011), "To increase their competitiveness to face with globalization, SMEs have to establish network with other organization, where they complement each other through resources and activity sharing and joint learning to boost international intensity".

Several important issues are still an obstacle for SME's women entrepreneurs to build the network are: the reluctance of actors in the network to connect with each other except the owner or manager; lack of trust and confidence in the ability of the employee; and less competent in building networks (Gilmore et al., 2008). The problem that is thought to inhibit the capability of women entrepreneurs in SMEs to build networks in international activities is the lack ability on the aspects of professionalism (formal, has an investment value, logic, and calculations). The condition causes the existing network cannot be optimally overcome the limitations to access resources, knowledge, and market in doing international business. The problems have become an interesting phenomenon of the need for further research into how the role of network strategy in overcoming the barriers to access to knowledge and resources of the network partners.

Disability of women entrepreneurs in increasing the competitiveness is because they have not yet proactive not to use the international market opportunity. Proactive is a tendency to use the opportunity, show initiative and take a reactive and anticipatory action toward the environment. As stated by Kickul et al., (2002) "proactive personality is Relatively unconstrained by situational forces in the daily environment. " A

number of empirical studies (Gupta and Bhawe 2007, Michael 1996) points out that proactive affecting women entrepreneurial orientation. The proactive character of the entrepreneur can impact the innovative organizational systems so as to support the development of new ideas (products, technologies, services), do experimentation and the drive creative process to be better than competitors (Kickul et al., 2002). For proactive and innovative entrepreneurial women can not be offered to be able to survive in the market. Limitations of SME's products to compete in global markets/ international is caused by their disabilities to be proactive in capitalizing the international markets opportunity (Tambunan, 2011).

The previous research on network strategy, proactive and satisfaction (performance) is done partially. Some research on the relationship between strategy and performance can be identified by several empirical studies (Human and Naude 2009; Kenny and Fahy 2011; Ural 2008; Babakus et al., 2006) that showed an influence on performance. Some studies (Gupta and Bahwe, 2007; Kickul 2002) showed that proactive influence the performance (behavioral intention and prospector strategies) Some of these findings may indicate research disparities, namely: first, the previous research was done partially, a comprehensive model that describes the relationship of network capability and proactive towards entrepreneurs satisfaction has not been done yet. Second, the discussion about women entrepreneurs in SME, especially the effect of network strategy and proactive towards women entrepreneurs' satisfaction is still limited. This research focuses on export-oriented SMEs in the garment and fashion industry, who becomes the favorite with excellent prospects are excellent (Directorate of National Export Development" Data

of Export Commodities” Ministry of Commerce, 2012.

Literature Review

Network Strategy

In ongoing attempts to understand the effect of network development strategy toward the women entrepreneurs' satisfaction, network strategy is a concept that evolves with the concept of the inter-firm network of Gulati (1999). The company should enter a new form of alliance, the inter-organizational strategic alliances: dependence and strong connection. According to Human and Naude (2009) network strategy as a one of firms strategy for developing and utilizing the inter-organizational relationships. To be able to develop a network strategy must be supported by the ability to build a network (network capability). The companies capability (SMEs) to build a professional network is crucial to access the resources and knowledge of other businesses. Emphasis on professionalism aspects should be supported by some important things, namely “economic, calculative network, and relationship investment by the firm” (Huggins, 2010). The point is the ability of women entrepreneurs in SMEs in leveraging relationships with various parties on the network plays an important role in the development of international business. The success of SMEs entrepreneurs to build a relationship through a network will give a positive impact to the company. Chen et al., (2011) stated that building relationships with network partners will be able to access important resources, expertise and knowledge that is under the control of members of the network. The SMEs who can build a resource advantage through networking is difficult to imitate.

To conduct an international activity, women entrepreneurs in SMEs must access resources and knowledge that they do not

possess, as stated by Chetty and Holm (2000), “Network can help firms to expose themselves to new opportunities, obtain knowledge, learn from experience and benefit from the synergistic effect of pooled resources.” A similar opinion is also stated by Chetty and Hunt (2003) the limited growth of SMEs who conduct international activities lies on the resource constraint. To overcome it, the SMEs entrepreneur must build a network to get greater benefits from the network. Chetty and Holm (2000) also say that “The activities in the network allow the firm to form a relationship, which helps a firm to gain access to resources and market”. Building relationship with the network may positively increase the competitive advantages, get resources and access to the international market (Grimes et al., 2007). Network strategy must be supported by relational capability.

Beside relational capability, network strategy should be lead to the development of collaboration capability which can show the ability of women entrepreneurs in SMEs to build a relationship in relational perspective. Blomqvist and Levy (2006), collaboration capability is the ability of businesses to build and manage relationships in a network based on trust, communication, and commitment. This concept emphasizes the relational orientation (not transactional) relating to: a) a high confidence level, b) communication and commitment that leads to economic logic and critical to creating knowledge and collaboration, c) is important in understanding the activity on the network. Further, Carson et al., (2004) suggested a relational dimension (commitment, and co-operation) as an important component in improving the network linkage strategy is a strength enterprise (SME). According to Prashantham and Balachandran (in Jones et al., 2009), the relationship in the network plays an important role in facilitating and

accelerating the international activities of SMEs. Build a relationship network of strategic actions that provide an opportunity for companies to access to information, resources, markets, and technologies (Gulati et al., 2000).

In this study, the constructs of network strategy relational capability and collaborative capability. Relational capability shows the ability to create, to build a relationship with business partners. Relationship capability is a construct that shows the ability of women entrepreneurship in SMEs in building network strategy. The dimensions used in this research are access to resources, knowledge, international market opportunity and co-innovation (O'Toole and Mc Grath 2008; Carson et al., 2005). Besides the ability to utilize relationship, another ability which becomes the basis of network strategy is to build and maintain relationships in the network. Therefore, collaborative capability needs to be utilized to show the abilities of women entrepreneurs in SMEs to build and maintain the relationship with the business partner (Blomqvist and Levy, 2006). The indicator was commitment, a trust, and collaboration (Blomqvist and Levy, 2006; Carson et al., 2004).

Proactive

Proactive is a quick action to take initiative as an effort to use new opportunities to succeed in business. Based on the entrepreneurship perspective, some experts (Rauch et al., 2009; Kropp et al., 2008; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996) propose a definition of proactiveness. According to Rauch et al (2009), proactiveness is an opportunity to seek, a perspective to see the future which is characterized by introducing new products and services that are better than competitors and anticipate the future demand. Then Kropp et al., (2008) state that the proactiveness is

related to the identification and evaluation of new opportunities and monitors the market trends. By doing this activity (proactive), some studies have found that companies that being proactive by introducing new products in the market will win the competition. Proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness are often used to replace each other. However, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) distinguishes them by stating that proactiveness reflects the company's reaction toward the market opportunities, whereas competitive aggressiveness shows the company's response to the competitor's challenge.

The behavioral perspective defined proactive "as the personality of one who takes action to influence environmental change" (Grant, 1996). Proactive behavior is important to anticipate the future demand by changing the business strategy in order to survive in the competition (Kickul et al 2002). Some empirical research on proactive personality shows that the more proactive someone, tend to have a greater sense of self-determination in their work. They are motivated to do well on the task and seek to improve their work outcomes (Gupta and Bhawe 2007)

In this study, the constructs of proactive is to measure how far the reaction of women entrepreneurs in SMEs to anticipate the future demands of doing business by changing the business way to survive in the competition. Dimensions which are used to measure proactivity are the effort to take advantage of international market opportunities and actions to respond the international market competitor.

Satisfaction

The concept of satisfaction has traditionally been widely used in marketing the area as one of the important variables that can affect behavior. Most of the studies about satisfaction on marketing literature

are based on the disconfirmation theory that describes satisfaction as “feeling satisfaction is a result of the comparison between a perception of performance and expectation” (Lee and Joshi 2007). Kotler (2006) describes satisfaction “Satisfaction is a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his/her expectation”. Satisfaction is one thing that is always expected by every business, which eventually occurred re-purchase the product and is used to maintain existing customers. Basically satisfaction is a comparison between the received performance and the people expectations, in this case only if : 1) Performance < Expectation : Dissatisfied; 2) Performance = Expectation : Satisfied; 3) Performance > Expectation : Highly satisfied or delighted.

Some theories also stated that satisfaction is not used only to measure consumer’s satisfaction, but also consequence/dependent variable as a result of a strategic decision in developing business. Satisfaction as a construct has been used to measure the non-financial performance in many studies and known as a multidimensional measurement. The main difference between financial and nonfinancial measurement was financial measurement refers to many factors measurements such as sales growth and a return of the investment. Zeng et al., (2009) states performance generate information that enables companies to determine strategies that can be affected by various factors such as the expansion of overseas markets, trademark awareness, availability of labor, experienced senior manager, financial capabilities, international business experience, management systems, ability to innovate, control costs, and the level of technology. Furthermore, in the recent

literature Nayebzadeh et al., (2010) stated performance refers to a comprehensive set of performance measurements that are divided into three categories of performance, namely economic, market, and financial satisfaction in the context of small and medium enterprises.

In this study, the constructs of owner satisfaction used are the achievement (success) resulting from a strategic activity carried SMEs through a non-financial approach that is satisfaction. Satisfaction, as the dependent variable, is based on the consideration that the decision to undertake international activities for women entrepreneurs is a difficult thing to do and needs the right strategy. Therefore, success in doing this activity can satisfy the owners to keep motivated and to develop the business. Indicators used to measure the satisfaction of women entrepreneurs are: the desire to develop business in the international market and whether the results achieved in international business is already in line with expectations.

Methodology

The method in this study used the verificative method (Cooper and Schindler 2011). The verificative method is used to describe the nature of causal relationship through hypotheses testing, it is applying the explanatory research. This study is conducted the survey method with SMEs international business (export-oriented) as the units of analysis. In addition, the units of observation are owners, directors, vice directors, and managers in garment-fashion industries which are owned by women entrepreneurs in West Java, Indonesia.

Variable of network strategy is measured by using 11 questions, and satisfaction is measured by using 3 items of a question and proactive using 8 item of the questi-

on, with Likert scale. In this study, structural equation modeling (SEM) based on variance structure, known as Partial Least Square (PLS-PM). Sampling of this study is conducted by applying the technic of

stratification random sampling and the method of sample selection is done by proportional-random sampling (Sekaran 2009, Cooper and Schindler 2011).The Structural model of the study:

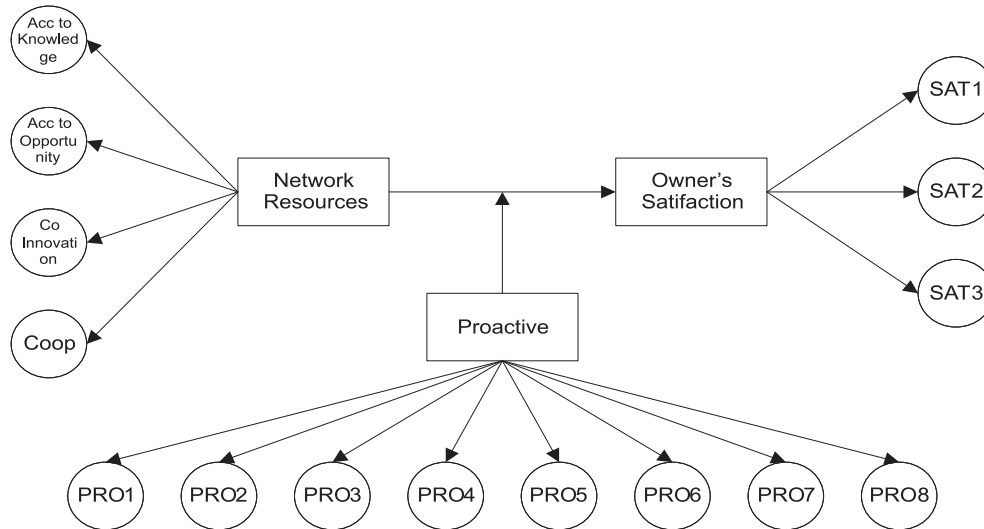


Figure 1. Structural Model

Findings

In the analysis of the structural model, casualty testing between network strategy

to the owner satisfaction is conducted (proactive as a moderating variable), as described below:

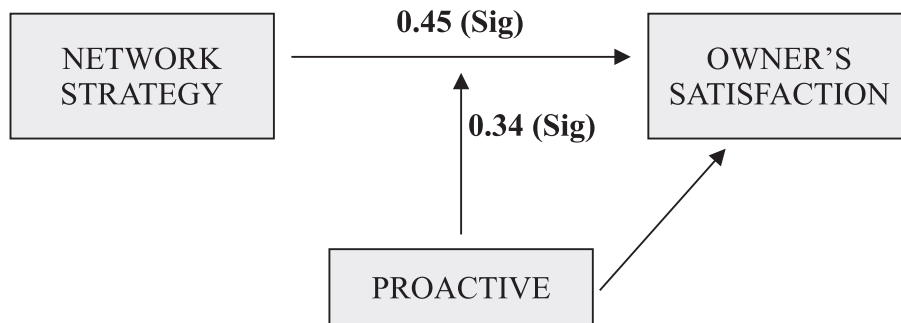


Figure 2.

Formulations of statistical hypotheses can be written as follows:

Hypotheses 1:

$H_0: = 0$ Owner's satisfaction is not influenced significantly by network strategy

$H_1: \neq 0$ Owner's satisfaction is influenced significantly by network strategy

Hypotheses 2:

$H_0: = 0$ Proactive can not strengthen the influence of network strategy to owners satisfaction significantly

$H_1: \neq 0$ Proactive can strengthen the influence of network strategy to owners satisfaction significantly

To test these hypotheses, a statistical test of t student is conducted with the results as follows:

Table 1.
Hypotheses Testing Result Effect of Network Strategy to the Owner Satisfaction (Proactive as Moderator)

Latent Variable	Path Coefficient	T	t-table	Description
Network Strategy	0.45	2,05	1.96	Ho is Rejected (Significant)
Proactive	0,48	6,31	1.96	Ho is Rejected (Significant)
Proactive x Network Strategy	0.34	2,34	1.96	Ho is Rejected (Significant)

Source: Data Processing Result

Table 1 shows the information of network strategy on owner satisfaction is 0.45. In other words, the changes that occur in owner's satisfaction are influenced strongly by the changes made in network strategy. So, owner's satisfaction will be determined by network strategy. Through hypotheses testing with t-student statistic, there was an effect of network strategy to the owner satisfaction, it can be concluded that null hypothesis is rejected with t-value greater than the value of t-table. These results indicate that network strategy influences positively and the significantly to the owner satisfaction. Proactive has significant effect that modifies the influence of network strategy to owner satisfaction. This result shows that positive proactive of woman entrepreneur in using the international market opportunity will strengthen the network strategy and moreover will influence owner satisfaction. Proactive directly influence the owner's satisfaction significantly and strongly.

Discussion

The research findings that network strategy can influence the women entrepreneurs' satisfaction in SMEs. We can approve that network strategy refers to any network that is built with the partners to overcome the constraint in international business. Access to resources and knowledge is very useful to get a market opportunity, access to market opportunity is for getting information, and co-innovation to the development design and product quality as dominant dimension informing network strategy. Owner's satisfaction indicates that nonfinancial performance may become a success key to conduct international business. Thus, ability to build network strategy support the women entrepreneurs in SMEs to get access to resources, knowledge and market opportunity.

The network that is built by women entrepreneurs in the garment and fashion industry with the buyers, suppliers,

agents, and association has a big role in getting the access to resources and knowledge. Business partners can give support in the form of exhibition facility, raw materials, market opportunity, quality improvement and product design. In addition, the network also increase the market opportunity access in marketing and promoting the product, offering competitive price and getting information about the competitor. It is similar to the statement of O'Toole and Mc. Grath (2008), "Building a network with supplier and buyer is a method to get access on market opportunity, that is, able to offer a product flexible and able to respond the market demand on price and quality.

One of the benefits of building business network for women entrepreneurs in SMEs is the association and government facilitate them to join international exhibition in many countries. It definitely opens the opportunity to meet potential buyers. Business partners gives support in the form of : a) offering down payment from the buyer, until 40% of the total order, that is useful to pay the working capital, b) technology development from the government by increasing production capacity, c) opportunity to join domestic and foreign exhibition, d) getting information on the international market opportunity, especially about buyer profile, commodity, market and export procedures, e) input to develop design and quality of the product in the aspect of creativity, uniqueness, and environmental issue adoption.

Networking that supports the business can be optimized by any effort to maintain the relationship. Maintaining the trust, keeping the promise, believing the benefit, are important things to maintain the mutualism cooperation, according to women entrepreneurs in SMEs. As it is

stated by Carsn et al., (2004) relational dimensions: trust, commitment, and cooperation, are important components to increase network linkage as a company power. For example, principles to keep truth and building cooperation has been applied by the women entrepreneur in SMEs by focusing on three things: quality, product design and continuity to fulfill the order. Repeat order from the buyer is very important reaction to make business continues, thus, woman entrepreneurs must maintain the relationship with buyers. Some women entrepreneurs are able to do this for more than 10 years.

Proactive means active behavior to anticipate the development of future demand for international business which can be done by doing a change, in order to survive from the competitors. Women entrepreneur in SMEs has performed proactive behavior by anticipating the new market trend. One of the ways is by creating unique and special products. Developing the business that focuses on consumers is an effort to create satisfaction and loyalty (Best, 2009). The product of SME's fashion and garment possess competitive advantage because it is the best product in the industry and foreign consumers love it. Potential market opportunity can be utilized if the SMEs is offering the product based on consumers' desire. In the globalization era, the product cycle becomes shorter, so the SMEs entrepreneurs must have access to get information on market demand.

Beside anticipating new market trend, SME's entrepreneurs also try to get information on the international market opportunity. Some information is related to the consumer's preference, culture, important regulations, especially for SME's who want to enter the international market. To go international, women entrepreneurs starts to use some valuable

source of information like internet. The internet can be used as a media to promote the product and to get information about the exhibition. In responding the competitors, women entrepreneurs develop new products based on the consumer's desire. They get information about the consumer's desire from exhibition, buyer and based on their experience. That is why, it is necessary to follow the international exhibition because it is the best event to get a lot of information, to get a potential buyer, and to do the market test, that can be a good input for making improvement to develop the products.

Proactive action can also be done by maintaining the product quality to respond the competition. This research found that this has been done well by the women entrepreneurs in SMEs. To maintain product quality is not an easy thing to do. It requires commitment, awareness, and consistency. Quality does not only mean good quality control but something which is also related to culture, quality centered culture, that becomes the customer-driven organizational system (process, journey, and logical thinking) to do sustainable quality development (Susanto, 2010). By maintaining the product quality, SMEs entrepreneurs can sell their product at a higher price than competitors. The research found that the export of Muslim fashions to Asia and Europe steadily increase due to its good quality. The role of the Government to build the entrepreneurs' competencies is important to make the entrepreneurs have quality standard guidance to improve their competitive advantage.

The response of woman entrepreneurs in fashion and garment to participate in the Internasional exhibition is very good. They use the event to promote their product actively. According to them, the exhibition is an effective media for promotion. They

can meet their potential buyer directly, that hopefully will continue to the business transaction. They can also do the market test and improve their negotiation skills with the buyer. In the last few years, either government or association has actively conducted the exhibition in many places. Most of a respondent of this research stated that they get the order from buyer during the event, even though exhibition itself is not interesting to the buyer. For example, Inacraft Trade Show, which is aimed to encounter the SMEs entrepreneurs with the potential buyer, has changed into an exhibition for small retailers to sell their product. This makes the potential buyer not interested to come. The same condition also happens to the international exhibition which was conducted in another country by the government. One of the respondents said that the Indonesian government can not manage the Indonesian's standing Germany. The stand looks awful than other countries, such as China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam. Based on the interview, the respondent also informed that government, through Directorate General of SMEs, Ministry of Industry did not fully support the SMEs. SMEs entrepreneurs who joined the exhibition still have to pay money costs, such as rent a stand and transportation. This is very hard for SMEs because the costs was very expensive and they do not always get an order from the buyer. The government did not give enough information on the type of exhibition, the kind of product to exhibited and what kind of buyer will come to the exhibition. In addition, the government did not give assistance in marketing the product.

In summary, this research shows that network strategy has a significant influence on owner's satisfaction. In other words, building network with partners is proven as the best strategy for women entrepreneurs in SMEs, especially those who develop

fashion and garment industry. The network supports the women entrepreneurs to do the International activity that strongly influences the owner's satisfaction. This result supports the previous study of Babakus, Ural (2008) which found that the quality relationship which was built through network positively impact the entrepreneurs' satisfaction. It is also similar to the research of Kenny and Fahy (2011) toward 154 SMEs in Ireland, that network strategy (relationship, synergy and capability) positively impact the nonfinancial performance.

Conclusion and Further Research

Overall, this study proved that network strategy significant influence the owners' satisfaction, where the changes in the owners' satisfaction are influenced by the changes in network strategy. Network strategy has an important role for women entrepreneur of SMEs to be able for supporting the intensity of activities in accessing resources and knowledge, accessing the market opportunities and for conducting the co-innovation. The ability to build collaboration with business partners based on trust, cooperation, and a high commitment will provide advantages in maintaining a relationship. Proactive behavior can strengthen the influence of network strategy toward women entrepreneurs' satisfaction. It means an effective network strategy requires proactive behavior of women entrepreneurs to use the international market opportunity that affect the satisfaction to run the business, as well as maintain it.

Limitations in this study still need attention in the development for the future research. The units of analysis have not been able to affect directly the activities of network strategy, and owners' satisfaction. To develop future research, it is necessary to distinguish between the characteristics of

small and medium-sized enterprises. This is important because the characteristics of each group of firms vary widely in terms of size, stage of internationalization and the ability to manage the business.

For scientific development, primarily related to the internationalization of SMEs, then further research can be done using the variables in this research model that greatly have important affect the performance of the company, namely international knowledge and experience as variables, which are important factors for SMIs women entrepreneurs to be able to actively influence the international business.

Notes on Contributors

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