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Self-Efficacy as a Mediator of the Impact of Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Orientation: A Case of Dayak Ethnic Entrepreneurship

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Abstract: Amid global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurship is more important than ever before, believed to be a key driver of economic development and recovery as well as poverty alleviation. However, although research on entrepreneurial benefits is becoming well-established, our understanding of the effects of specific social processes on entrepreneurial orientation is fairly limited. The research gap is even larger in an ethnic entrepreneurship setting. This study, therefore, aims to understand the impact of social capital on entrepreneurial orientation through self-efficacy in Dayak, the indigenous ethnic, non-Malay people of Borneo. Utilizing a survey, we found that social capital is positively related to entrepreneurial orientation, and self-efficacy was found to mediate this relationship. Kinship or regional ties among Dayak group members foster social capital in the form of trust, solidarity, and reciprocal obligations. However, although Dayaks are willing to learn and participate in economic activities, including becoming entrepreneurs, they are unlikely to take initiative due to both financial and non-financial obstacles. For these reasons, we suggest an institutional economic approach, designing a specific educational program to help improve the Dayak's self-efficacy in escalating their entrepreneurship commitment. Local universities and vocational schools can develop an effective curriculum to tap the potential of Dayak in business and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: personal social capital; individual entrepreneurial orientation; indigenous entrepreneurship; indigenous Dayak; Dayak tribe



Citation: Sulistyani, N.W.; Suhariadi, F.; Fajrianthi. Self-Efficacy as a Mediator of the Impact of Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Orientation: A Case of Dayak Ethnic Entrepreneurship. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 5620. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14095620>

Academic Editors: Melissa Nurse-Bray and Piotr Prus

Received: 16 March 2022

Accepted: 2 May 2022

Published: 6 May 2022

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been long identified as a key driver of economic development and recovery, as well as poverty alleviation [1]. As one poverty reduction method, entrepreneurship helps many individuals to be self-employed and, at the same time, creates job opportunity for others. With these roles of driving sustainable development and tackling inequality, it is believed that entrepreneurship with a social purpose can address the challenges targeted by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [2]. Therefore, amid global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurship is more important than ever before and is believed to provide solutions to economic, environmental, and social issues [3].

However, although research on entrepreneurial benefits is becoming well established, our understanding of the effects of specific social processes on entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is fairly limited [4]. Identifying the impacts will help entrepreneurs to enhance their business performance, resulting in greater contribution to economic development both locally and nationally.

Previous studies have mentioned that EO is positively related to business performance. Nevertheless, little is known about what urges small–medium enterprise (SME) owners to be entrepreneurial, including the mediating factor of self-efficacy [5]. Self-efficacy is defined as people’s beliefs about their capabilities to perform a task [6]. This means that people with a greater sense of self-efficacy will set higher goals and have higher commitment to pursuing them.

According to Bandura’s social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is an important cognitive characteristic that affects entrepreneurship [6,7]. Taking a psychological perspective, this theory in general and self-efficacy in particular can lead to a better understanding as well as the more effective development and practice of entrepreneurship in less developed economies [8].

With respect to demography, most studies on social capital (SC) and EO have been conducted in Western countries. Although there are dissimilarities among the exact definitions of SC, the concept was initially defined as features of social life (e.g., networks, norms, and trust) that enable people to act together more effectively to pursue their shared objectives [9]. To assess the generalizability of research findings, a systematic investigation of relationships across cultures is needed. The research gap is even larger in ethnic entrepreneurship settings [10]. Essentially, the traditional sociological approach to ethnic entrepreneurship focuses on the specific characteristics of a given ethnic group [11].

As a multicultural, multi-ethnic country and one of the emerging market economies of the world, Indonesia provides a good research setting for studying ethnic entrepreneurs’ EO. Indonesia also has a unique circumstance in that, although SMEs contributed 22% of its gross domestic product [12], it ranks 94th among 137 countries for the health of its entrepreneurship ecosystems based on the 2018 Global Entrepreneurship Index [13].

Following Wang and Altinay’s suggestion [10], we specifically studied the Dayak ethnic group. Dayak, meaning “people of the upstream” in English, are the indigenous ethnic, non-Malay people of Borneo (Kalimantan in Indonesia and Sabah dan Sarawak in Malaysia) [14]. In Indonesia, Kalimantan is one of the largest islands and a home for the new national capital city.

Based on empirical findings [15], although the Dayaks are natives and make up a major population of Kalimantan, indicating high SC among them, most of the businesses in this region are dominated by other ethnicities. Is this low level of entrepreneurship affected by a cognitive characteristic? A study of Dayak in Malaysia (Indonesia’s neighbor) found that their respondents have limited knowledge of business and a low level of self-confidence regarding becoming entrepreneurs [16]. This study, therefore, aims to understand the impact of SC on the Dayak’s EO through self-efficacy as a mediator.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Developments

2.1. Social Capital (SC) and Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)

As a socio-economic process [17], entrepreneurship is perceived as inseparable from social relationships [18]. It can be either facilitated or constrained by entrepreneurs’ positions in their social networks [19]. The constitution of a network of relationships as a valuable, both actual and potential, resource for the conduct of affairs is the central proposition of SC theory [20]. The theory implies that to succeed, firms should focus on the development of valuable networks with resource holders [21].

Despite dissimilarities among the exact definitions of SC, a consensus has been reached that there is no SC without network connections [22,23]. From these connections, SC as well as information, influence, and solidarity are derived [24]. SC is beneficial in the development of shared visions and shared languages for advancing knowledge sharing in learning networks [25].

SC plays an important role in developing entrepreneurial behavior as well as assisting entrepreneurs in gaining access to potential customers [26], critical information, and essential resources [27]. A study found that successful entrepreneurs are particularly active in networking with businesspeople and regulators [28]. This means that SC provides a com-

petitive advantage over entrepreneurs' rivals [29]. Hence, SC can be considered a strategic resource since it is unique, relatively difficult to imitate, and invisible to competitors [30].

In line with a study by Chen et al. [31], our theoretical development is based on two subtypes of SC: bonding and bridging capital. Bonding capital focuses on internal ties foregrounded within collectives, whereas bridging capital focuses on external relationships [24]. These concepts are used as the framework for understanding the dynamic nature of relationships between SC and EO.

The presence or shortage of SC highly influences the nature of a business [18]. When firms lack SC, they may not benefit from their EO, as entrepreneurial networks have been found to be positively related to organizational growth [32]. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1. *Social capital is positively related to entrepreneurial orientation.*

2.2. Self-Efficacy as a Mediator

Derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory [6], self-efficacy plays an influential role in individuals' determination in making choices, as well as their level of effort and perseverance [33]. They are also more likely to pursue and persist than are individuals who possess low self-efficacy [6]. The concept of self-efficacy explains why people with equal abilities can perform differently [34]. Individuals with a high self-efficacy will make great efforts, persist through difficulties, set high goals, and develop effective plans and strategies [34]. They are also believed to take negative feedback in a more positive manner and even use that feedback to improve their performance [34].

This study used the general self-efficacy construct, a relatively stable, trait-like, generalized competence belief [35,36]. This construct is defined as individuals' perception of their capability to perform a task [37], capturing individuals' tendency to view themselves in terms of whether they are capable or, in contrast, incapable of meeting task demands in varied situations [35].

The relationship between self-efficacy and SC can be explained by two theories: social information processing [38] and interpersonal attraction [39,40]. Social information processing theory is based on a belief that individuals use information gathered from themselves and similar others in order to understand a variety of circumstances and thus make comparisons and judgments about them [41]. As adaptive organisms, humans adapt their attitudes, behavior, and beliefs to their social contexts [38]. Thus, this theory, in assessing the effects of social networks on individual attributes, suggests that a network member can influence other members' attitudes and behaviors by providing relevant and credible information.

Advocates of the theory of interpersonal attraction hold that individuals who have similar beliefs tend to attract each other. This, therefore, strengthens the set of attitudes and behaviors that they share with each other. Inferring from both theories, individuals who are involved in close-knit social networks tend to have a high level of self-efficacy [42].

Since business situations are often ambiguous circumstances in which effort, persistence, and planning are important, the attributes of self-efficacy are influential in the entrepreneurial process [34]. For example, despite the low probability of success in the entrepreneurial process, only people who are optimistic or high in self-efficacy will be willing to proceed further [34]. Extending Bird's model of entrepreneurial intentionality [43], Boyd and Vozikis [44] found that self-efficacy influences the development of both entrepreneurial intentions and actions or behaviors. Self-efficacy is also said to be a factor that distinguishes entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs [45]. Studies on small-scale Malay entrepreneurs found that self-efficacy is significantly related to EO, which means that individuals with a higher self-efficacy also have a higher EO [5,46,47].

Based on the above studies, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2. *The relationship between social capital and entrepreneurial orientation is mediated by self-efficacy.*

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and Procedure

Data were collected from small business/SME owners (in Indonesia, one specific term is *Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Menengah/UMKM*) located in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. Because our population was Indonesian Dayaks, we followed the cross-cultural translation and adaptation method suggested by the International Test Commission [48]. Questionnaire translators and reviewers were carefully chosen based on their expertise in English and psychology. During the multiple steps of translation and adaptation, divergences of language clarity (e.g., potential ambiguous items) were discussed and corrected.

The sample was selected from a list of home industry clusters with its business core Kalimantan handicrafts generated by the Industry, Trade, and Cooperative Service, a local government agency in East Kalimantan. This business core was chosen since the Dayaks have inherited craftsmanship such as handicrafts, weaving, and wood carvings/totems [49,50]. An example of their handicraft products can be seen in Figure 1. Based on suggestions and discussion with the agency experts, we limited our respondents to individuals who had at least one year of having their own business and who had capital below IDR 50 million.



Figure 1. Dayak handicrafts (personal collection).

Data collection was conducted between August and October 2021. Although this research step was conducted during a pandemic, the structured paper-and-pencil questionnaires were administered on-site in the respondents' workplaces with strict health protocols. The strategy was chosen since our targeted respondents were SME owners with limited resources. This method was supported by Richman et al. [51].

Since the generated list only contained the village clusters, the surveyors first asked for permission from the heads of the villages, who then directed them to potential respondents. Before filling out the questionnaire, the respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and assured that their survey responses would be treated strictly confidentially. The average time to complete the questionnaire is 10–15 min.

Respondents completed the questionnaire measuring SC, EO, and self-efficacy. In total, questionnaires were distributed to 251 respondents. We obtained 175 usable questionnaire responses after excluding 76 incomplete questionnaires. Our respondents were mostly female entrepreneurs (66.9%) aged more than 50 years (29.7%), their latest educational background was high school (48.6%), and they had been running their own businesses for more than 5 years (34.9%).

3.2. Measures

To obtain high content validity, all measures were derived from established literature (can be found in Supplementary Materials). All survey items were administered in *Bahasa*. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine whether the scales were reliable or not, with preferable scores above 0.80. However, a score of 0.60–0.70 was deemed acceptable. This number indicates the scales' high internal consistency with this specific sample [52].

Social capital was measured with 14 items developed and adapted from 10 items on the Personal Social Capital Scale of Chen et al. [31], rated on a 5-point scale (e.g., 1 = a few to 5 = a lot). This scale was developed to clearly distinguish between “what social capital is” and “what social capital does” [31]. A sample item is, “How many friends do you have?” In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the items was 0.902.

Entrepreneurial orientation was measured with 10 items known as Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation, developed by Bolton and Lane [53] and rated on a 5-point scale (e.g., 1 = I completely disagree to 5 = I completely agree). A sample item is “I am willing to invest a lot of time and/or money on something that might yield a high return”. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the items was 0.783.

Self-efficacy was measured with eight items called New General Self-Efficacy, developed by Chen et al. [36] and rated on a 5-point scale (e.g., 1 = I completely disagree to 5 = I completely agree). A sample item is “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them”. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the items was 0.898.

Demographic control variables. This study included age, educational background, gender, and business tenure as control variables to consider potential confounding effects on dependent variables.

4. Results

4.1. Validity Tests

Principal component analysis with the varimax rotation method was performed to ensure that all items reflected each of the three concepts: SC, EO, and self-efficacy. The maximum likelihood method of extraction was used in this study. We employed Bartlett's test of sphericity, for which the result was significant ($\chi^2(496) = 2584.9, p < 0.0001$). We also performed the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.88), which was higher than the suggested value (0.6). This finding revealed that the link between the variables was very high.

Items that loaded lower than 0.50 on their general factors were omitted from further analysis [54]. In total, four EO items were omitted from further analysis.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 demonstrates the correlation coefficient descriptive statistics in this study. The results showed that no demographic variable was significantly correlated. Meanwhile, SC correlated to EO ($r = 0.50, p < 0.01$) and self-efficacy ($r = 0.59, p < 0.01$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations of variables.

| | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|----------|---------|----------|-------|---------|---------|---|
| Age | 3.42 | 1.31 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Educational background | 2.31 | 0.74 | −0.13 | 1 | | | | | |
| Gender | 1.67 | 0.47 | −0.61 ** | 0.16 * | 1 | | | | |
| Business tenure | 3.82 | 1.18 | 0.82 ** | −0.14 * | −0.45 ** | 1 | | | |
| Social capital | 3.88 | 0.39 | 0.15 * | −0.14 | −0.10 | 0.11 | 1 | | |
| Self-efficacy | 3.92 | 0.46 | 0.06 | −0.05 | −0.10 | 0.06 | 0.30 ** | 1 | |
| Entrepreneurial orientation | 3.83 | 0.40 | 0.04 | −0.05 | −0.08 | −0.03 | 0.50 ** | 0.59 ** | 1 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

To test Hypothesis 1, we first performed a regression analysis. We predicted that SC would be positively related to EO. As shown in Table 2, the correlation was positive and significant ($B = 0.50$, $SE = 0.09$, $t = 5.59$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 2. Regression analysis for the mediation of self-efficacy between social capital and entrepreneurial orientation.

| Variable | B | SE B | β | 95%CI |
|--|----------|-------|----------|---------------|
| Step 1 | | | | |
| Constant | 1.95 *** | 0.447 | | [1.07, 2.83] |
| Social capital–entrepreneurial orientation | 0.50 *** | 0.09 | 0.39 *** | [0.32, 0.68] |
| $R^2 = 0.178$, $F(5, 169) = 7.32$, $p = 0.000$ | | | | |
| Step 2 | | | | |
| Constant | 2.74 *** | 0.43 | | [1.89, 3.59] |
| Social capital–self-efficacy | 0.35 ** | 0.08 | 0.30 ** | [0.17, 0.52] |
| $R^2 = 0.09$, $F(5, 169) = 3.71$, $p = 0.032$ | | | | |
| Step 3 | | | | |
| Constant | 0.49 | 0.42 | | [−0.35, 1.33] |
| Social capital–entrepreneurial orientation | 0.31 ** | 0.08 | 0.25 | [0.15, 0.47] |
| Social capital–self-efficacy | 0.53 *** | 0.06 | 0.49 *** | [0.39, 0.66] |
| Total (a) \times (b) | 0.18 | | | [0.09, 0.28] |
| $R^2 = 0.39$, $F(6, 168) = 18.26$, $p = 0.000$ | | | | |

** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Second, to determine the mediation effect predicted in Hypothesis 2 in this study, we utilized the Process Macro developed by Hayes [55]. We computed the unstandardized indirect effects and 95% confidence intervals for each of the 5000 bootstrapped samples. The findings demonstrated a significant total effect [0.32, 0.68]. The results showed that SC is associated with the mediator (self-efficacy) ($b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.08$; 95% CI [0.17, 0.52]). Sequentially, self-efficacy is associated with EO ($b = 0.53$, $SE = 0.06$; 95% CI [0.39, 0.66]), with a total explained variance of 0.10. We also found that the confidence intervals CIs for the indirect effects of SC on EO through self-efficacy did not contain zero [0.09, 0.28]. This finding indicated the presence of mediation, which supported Hypothesis 2. Visual relationships are provided in Figure 2.

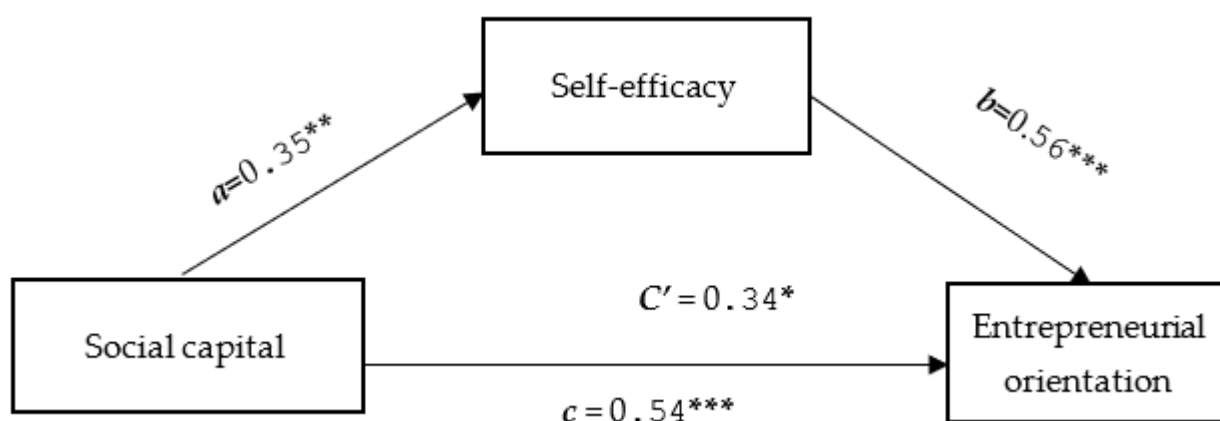


Figure 2. The mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurial orientation (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$).

5. Discussion

Our results support both hypotheses. SC is positively related to EO, and self-efficacy mediates this relationship. These findings are in line with those of previous studies. Kinship or regional ties among the same ethnic group members foster SC in the form of trust, solidarity, and reciprocal obligations [11]. The SC stemming from kinship ties

generates economic resources such as unpaid family labor, informal business information, and intra-family loans [11]. These valuable SC resources encourage both social and ethnic entrepreneurship, since social entrepreneurship aligns closely with the social expectations of indigenous people [56].

Since most governments around the world (including Indonesia) are financially stressed, there is a need for different approaches to embracing the UN SDGs. This is where entrepreneurship, especially social entrepreneurship, is considered to have a vital role. Rather than only one or two SDGs goals, social entrepreneurs are believed to be able to pursue nine goals of SDGs: #1 no poverty, #3 good health and well-being, #6 clean water and sanitation, #10 reduced inequalities, #11 sustainable cities and communities, #13 climate action, #14 life below water, #15 life on land, and #17 partnerships for the goals [57].

With their solution-oriented work, social entrepreneurs can be viable agents of change for solving business and social problems to navigate an increasingly complex and uncertain world [58]. They are believed to be able to convert adversities into opportunities [59]. Similarly, social entrepreneurs are identified as the drivers of transformation in society as well as the transformers of unjust and unsustainable systems into entirely new sustainable systems [60].

Social entrepreneurship can be strongly driven by the inherited indigenous tradition [61]. Involving indigenous people and their traditions will be beneficial for building a sense of ownership and achieving potential economic benefits. Indigenous tradition-based social entrepreneurship, therefore, represent an alternative and promising model for development in impoverished communities.

Historically, Dayak communities live together in communal longhouses, called *Lamin*, and have a strong relationship with their Creator God, called *Jubata*, and their territory [14,15,62]. With respect to other communities, their spiritual devotion to *Jubata* and the state of being interwoven with surroundings have developed a complex system of cultural aspects, shared values, and norms in relation to the natures that they depend on for survival [15,62]. This communal social network is referred as bonding SC [24].

However, although Dayaks are willing to learn and to participate in economic activities, including becoming entrepreneurs, they are unlikely to take initiative due to both financial and nonfinancial obstacles [16,63]. It is said that among Dayak communities, moral principles are, most of the time, more dominant than economic rationality [15]. Decisions in economic transactions are often based on the values of living as a community member [15]. Dayaks believe that even though humans must meet their daily needs, they must also ensure that the resources on which they depend are not destroyed [14].

Despite the above beliefs, the Dayak cultural identity, embodied in its cooperative traditions, can be a driving force of its community-based entrepreneurship [64]. These characteristics can be elevated as an appropriate response to the problems it is meant to address. Due to its holistic nature, integrating many different economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political aspects, Dayak tradition-based entrepreneurship can offer a competitive advantage. In other words, this type of entrepreneurship will emerge as a prospective strategy for the sustainable alleviation of poverty, with the aim of pursuing the UN SDGs.

6. Conclusions

Since the Dayaks' contribution to economic development is still questionable [65] despite their high potential to address the SDGs, their entrepreneurial orientation can be developed through an institutional economic approach [15]. We believe that this approach can overcome the discussed obstacles. However, although the government of Indonesia has provided mentoring, training, and financial assistance to ethnic Dayak entrepreneurs, more entrepreneurial exposure is still needed, especially for the youths [16].

Educationally, a specific program can be designed to help improve the Dayaks' self-efficacy in escalating their entrepreneurship commitment [66]. There is also a need to focus on enhancing Dayaks' entrepreneurial attitudes, particularly their ability to take

risk, as this seems to be their biggest obstacle to becoming entrepreneurs [16]. These entrepreneurship courses can influence students' entrepreneurial attitudes towards the intentions of entrepreneurship [67].

A lesson learned from the neighboring country of Malaysia found that entrepreneurship education can be ineffective, as there is no correlation between students' skill expectations and their skill acquisition [68]. A study examining entrepreneurial teaching models of Maori, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand, found some pedagogical challenges [56]. Since New Zealand has twin streams of history and values between white colonial and Maori indigenous peoples, pedagogical entrepreneurship is mainly understood as a Western epistemological context. This has a direct, but not necessarily positive, influence on the Maori community [56]. This paper, therefore, recommends that more efforts should be made to tackle the colonial bias within the pedagogical delivery to indigenous Maori. Based on these studies, local universities and vocational schools in Kalimantan can develop an effective curriculum, intertwined with indigenous knowledge, to tap the potential of aspiring entrepreneurially minded young Dayak.

7. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We acknowledge two limitations to this study. First, given the nonrandom and purposive sample as well as the fact that the survey was conducted in one region in Indonesia, we cannot readily generalize our findings. Future studies can be conducted on a larger scale by increasing the sample size and regions as the study locus. However, despite these flaws, it is reasonable to consider the transferability of this study's findings to the broader population based on the consistency of the survey response patterns as well as by the extent to which the results of previous studies are supported [69].

Second, we are aware of the common method variance issue associated with self-reported measures. To mitigate the potential problems, all variables were interspersed in the questionnaire so that respondents were unable to recognize any direct relationship between the three measured variables: SC, EO, and self-efficacy.

Future research can be directed toward preparing the proposed educational program. This can incorporate an investigation of financial assistance, including from the government of Indonesia. How much assistance is actually needed to develop an effective curriculum?

We also propose to investigate more social aspects of Dayak entrepreneurship. One idea is to explore Dayaks' social entrepreneurship, as it is believed to be able to foster innovative abilities, proactive development, and the courage to take risks [16,70]. What is the Dayaks' motivation to become social entrepreneurs [71]?

Another idea is to study whether Dayaks' cultural heritage can inspire their social entrepreneurship. A study of cultural tourism in Czech Republic showed that, although historical monuments and cultural events are attractive to tourists, there is still much room to improve their tourism business [72]. Such efforts include improving services in accommodation, transportation, and food catering. These needs can be met by encouraging local entrepreneurship.

Future research can also be directed towards exploring the culture-based workplace changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic [73]. With no sign of the end of the pandemic and new virus variants emerging over time, are Dayak entrepreneurs ready to adapt to the dynamics of pandemic economics? Can digitalization be the answer, for example, in utilizing recommendation systems in mobile-based marketing applications [74]?

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/su14095620/s1>, Table S1: Survey Measurement.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, N.W.S.; methodology, F.; software, N.W.S.; validation, N.W.S.; formal analysis, N.W.S.; investigation, N.W.S.; resources, N.W.S.; data curation, N.W.S.; writing—original draft preparation, N.W.S.; writing—review and editing, F.S.; visualization, N.W.S.; supervision, F.S. and F.; project administration, N.W.S.; funding acquisition, N.W.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of University of 17th August 1945 Samarinda.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable critiques, comments, and encouragement to the early version of manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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