

Digital Entrepreneurship: Opening Opportunities, Highlighting Challenges, and Mapping Start-Up in Palembang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study specifically aims to analyze the opportunities, challenges, and mapping of Startups in Palembang. The object of this research is divided into two, namely founders and digital consumers. This research used a Mixed method, combining quantitative research methods and qualitative. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to founders and digital consumers in Palembang. The study found that there were 40 start-ups in Palembang, but only 16 are active. Many start-ups in Palembang are engaged in the service sector. Opportunities for products and services for local start-ups in Palembang are as follows: (a) From the founder's point of view, they already have a workforce that is quite capable, high enthusiasm, creativity, and quality to innovation; (b) From the user side, the generation that is more interested in technological advancements and internet use is Generation Z; (c) From the non-users side, those who have not enjoyed the products and services offered by local start-ups in Palembang do not know for sure the existence of start-ups. The challenges in the form of obstacles that must be resolved by start-ups are as follows: (a) the digital business sector that is occupied by the majority is in the form of general commodities, especially in the service sector. They have obstacles in the form of capital assistance and support, facilities, clarity of regulations and laws from the government; (b) the products and services offered have attracted the attention of users from Generation Z.

Keywords: Digital Consumers, Digital Entrepreneurship, Founder, Start-Up.

INTRODUCTION

The era of the industrial revolution 4.0 is marked by the ease of accessing the internet which has changed every element of society in carrying out activities in various fields, including entrepreneurs in running their businesses and in interacting with their consumers. Entrepreneurship that uses the internet which is a product of technology to turn innovative ideas into business opportunities is called digital entrepreneurship and businesses that are built with the concept of digital entrepreneurship are known as start-ups (Kalyanasundaram, 2018). Based on the way technology is used, Startups have two types namely the products offered are entirely related to technology (web design, e-retail) and only use technology to operate marketing and communications (Samara & Terzian, 2021).

Digital-based businesses or start-ups are always developing following the increase in internet users every year. Start-ups in Indonesia have shown good development by utilizing the information technology infrastructure, the start-up can issue products that make it easier for people to meet their daily needs. The rapid development of start-ups in Indonesia can be proven by the existence of four unicorn start-ups that, although they have not yet entered the stock market, have reached one billion dollars, namely Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Go-Jek, and Traveloka (Suwarni et al., 2020). Following the good development of national start-ups, local start-ups in Indonesia have also experienced a rapid increase, seen from the number which has reached more than 900 Indonesia.

However, the development of start-ups does not necessarily run smoothly. There are many challenges that must be faced by start-ups, such as intense competition due to expansion from foreign companies (Lengyel et al., 2016). Moreover, funding problems caused by lack of investor confidence to put capital because several factors such as the unpreparedness of local start-ups to receive large amounts of funding coupled with the characteristics of consumers in Indonesia and the lack of support for existing regulations (Gunawan & Hazwardy, 2020). Another reason is internal conflicts that arise both from the lack of team cohesiveness and bad company patterns which has an impact to predict market needs (Jaya, Ferdiana, Fauziyati, 2017). An unsupported digital ecosystem can also be a factor in the difficulty of start-ups to develop. It is feared that instead of achieving success, these start-ups will have to go out of business because they fail to deal with these problems.

However, start-ups can help the economy in Indonesia by creating new jobs. The Creative Economy Agency (Bekraf) noted that start-ups can absorb 13 million workers and contribute 12% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Therefore, this research was conducted to see the opportunities and challenges faced by start-ups, especially in the city of Palembang, considering that the city of Palembang has the potential to further develop start-ups considering the high proportion of internet users in South Sumatra is dominated by the city of Palembang. It can be a market opportunity even though the existing digital ecosystem is less supportive so it can hinder the development of existing start-ups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The early emergence of the internet digital entrepreneurship is a concept applied to companies that develop their business in the online world by establishing a personal website (Beliaeva, Ferasso, Kraus, & Damke, 2020). Nowadays, the definition of digital entrepreneurship has expanded, starting from the merging of business and technology whose main activities are carried out through digital technology (Hamburg, 2020) and

adapting traditional entrepreneurship in the digital era in new ways in order to create and run a business that is in accordance with the era (Le Dinh, Fu, & Ayayi, 2018). Start-ups emerged in the era of 1998-2000 due to the bubble dot-com phenomenon, namely the phenomenon of many companies being founded because people began to get to know the internet and personal websites for companies were opened. Start-ups have long appeared in civilized society, but the standard definition is still uncertain, even though many researchers have defined start-ups. Jaya et al. (2017) describe a start-up as a company that was initiated with the aim of finding a suitable business model so that it can survive even in uncertainty or extreme conditions. Meanwhile, according to Suwarni, Noviantoro, Fahlevi, and Abdi (2020) start-up is a form of embodiment of a business plan that has been carefully designed and well projected. Ghezzi (2019) has concluded that start-up is a term used to define companies that are still at the stage of establishment and development and are often associated with technology.

According to Samara and Terzian (2021), the barriers to entry to start-up are very low because they are constantly developing. So it can be said that establishing a start-up is easier than building a traditional company due to low entry barriers. Biclesanu Anagnoste, Branga, and Savastano (2021) also state that digital businesses are easier to set up than traditional businesses when viewed from the initial investment needs, research, knowledge, time, and number of employees needed to set up a business and also from a legal point of view and the level of risk. In India, the driving factors for setting up start-ups are past economic reforms and current market trends, as well as the impact of technological change and changing attitudes on the part of the government, large corporations, and society (Korreck, 2019). Based on gender, women entrepreneurs are more likely to start a business as a means to balance work and family demands which tend to be a problem for men and also they believe that their existing experience can help them succeed in business (Hazudin, Kader, Tarmuji, Ishak, & Ali, 2015).

Start-up founders have different characteristics. Kalyanasundaram (2018) found the common characteristics of founders in Bangalore namely founders have at least one professional degree, have a passion for technology-based product and service development, ambitions for success and partnerships. all startups have high technical staff strength, their salary costs are higher and deductions have no impact on them, B2B founders have key connects in company boardrooms, B2C founders have high social connections and all founders together are immigrants to Bangalore. Meanwhile, successful start-up founders share the same characteristics as setting up a startup at an early age with the required domain expertise, having financial stability, focusing on ensuring the market fit of their offerings early by avoiding big product approaches, seeking regular and periodic assistance from the right mentors and their ideas and actions are reviewed and validated, average ESFP personality, not emotionally attached to their startup, and they are ready to explore exit options.

Salamzadeh and Kawamorita Kesim (2017) stated several challenges faced by start-ups in Iran namely lack of IPO possibilities, intense competition with other companies, lack of legal support, securing intellectual property rights, lack of organizational skills, gaps between technical and market teams, and lack of sufficient capacity to respond to market demands. Whereas in India according to Korreck (2019) the challenges are building and scaling Indian startups, digital diversity and division, bringing products to market and low willingness to pay, hiring quality employees, and a complex regulatory environment.

The results of research conducted by Kaur (2017) explain the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strengths include a mindset of collaboration and openness, unyielding and entrepreneurial spirit, easy access to capital, high-quality education, and technical skills. Weaknesses include being far from the target market, too focused on

technology, having no local market, and too many inexperienced people. Opportunities are new fields, developing markets, and education for new entrepreneurs while threats are in the form of conflict, competition, quantity and quality, education, and demographics.

Indonesian start-ups are difficult with the few available incubators. According to Wahyuni and Noviaristanti (2022), there are only a few business incubators in Indonesia, and most of them are on the island of Java. This situation makes entrepreneurs from outside the island increasingly hesitant to join the incubation program and prefer to start their business without incubation. Samara and Terzian (2021) find that digital entrepreneurs face weak institutional infrastructure and an environment characterized by corruption that hinders their operations. This weak infrastructure results in inaccessibility of the necessary initial funds, a lack of policies and regulations that protect and support e-commerce, a weak digital infrastructure, and a lack of digitally competent and experienced workforce capital. At the same time, they found several opportunities stemming from the unique institutional settings in which digital entrepreneurs operate, the use of family wealth as a source of initial financial capital, the use of personal connections as a source of social and human capital, as well as from increased education about digital entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH METHOD

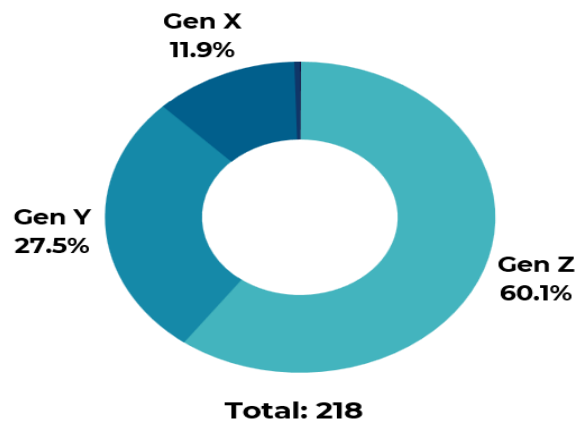
The research method is structured to answer the problem formulation and research objectives that have been described in the introduction. The object of this research is divided into two, namely founders and digital consumers. The method used in this research is the mixed-method by combining quantitative and qualitative research methods (Segura, Morales, & Somolinos, 2017). The analytical method used is descriptive analysis. Primary data was obtained from filling out questionnaires and focus group discussions. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to the founders of 18 digital start-ups in Palembang. Furthermore, to obtain more accurate information, we held two focus group discussions. This activity presents start-up actors, policy makers, and stakeholders. Meanwhile, the distribution of questionnaires to start-up founders was assisted by research partners, namely the Communications and Information Office of South Sumatra Province and Digital Palembang. Palembang Digital is the first digital community platform from and for the entire people of South Sumatra.

The second object of research is digital consumers. Furthermore, data collection was also carried out by distributing questionnaires to digital consumers in the city of Palembang. The population taken in this research is the baby boomers generation, generation X, generation Y, and generation Z in Palembang City. This is based on the demographic bonus where the proportion of working age (15-65 years) is greater than the proportion of non-working age (0-14 years and >65 years). The distribution of the working-age population has an influence on digital-based startups. The increase in the population aged 20-30 has a positive effect on the number of technology startups in a region or country. Sampling in this research is based on the Stratified Random Sampling method. This method divides the population into homogeneous groups (called strata), and a random sample is taken from each stratum. Sampling from members of the population is random and stratified, but some have a less proportional distribution. This sampling is carried out if the members of the population are heterogeneous (not the same). Stratified sampling is often used where there is a great deal of variation within a population (Taherdoost, 2018)

RESULTS

To describe the potential and opportunities of local start-ups using data obtained from distributing questionnaires to digital consumers in Palembang City with a sample of 400 people. A total of 54.5% of respondents stated that they were local start-up users. This means that the interest of the citizens of Palembang City in the consumption and use of local start-up products and services is quite high because it has exceeded 50 percent of its users.

Figure 1. Startup User Based on Generations



Based on figure 1, 218 respondents who declared themselves to be local start-up users in Palembang City, 60.1% were dominated by Generation Z with the year of birth (1995-2010). It supports that the Z Generation as the generation that dominates the use of gadgets and the internet in their daily lives. They knew information about the existence of local start-ups even though they did not necessarily use them. In addition, it can be used as input for new market share opportunities for local start-up managers in Palembang City to make new product and service breakthroughs that are more millennial so that the reach of the quantity of users is more and more targeted. However, in contrast, if we see from the unequal generation of users of local start-up products and services, it means that the types of products offered on average are only attractive and needed by Generation Z. it can be a good correction and input for local start-up managers in Palembang City to be able to make new breakthroughs that are in accordance with the wishes and needs of generations X and Y as well, because it does not rule out the generation that should have a more stable and more established income. Thus, every local start-up that is still running must be able to classify its product target market well and evenly to attract more users and profit.

This study found that women respondents dominated local start-up users in Palembang City. This can be caused by several factors, including interest in a product, the role of women in managing needs, and adequate information. Women generally prioritize satisfaction with fulfilling their needs at affordable prices but guaranteed quality. It can be a good assessment for start-ups because it managed to attract the attention of more women. However, this can be criticism and input for all local start-up managers in Palembang City because their products and services have not really succeeded in attracting the attention of many men to become part of their consumers.

Figure 2. Job Distribution Local Startup Users in Palembang City

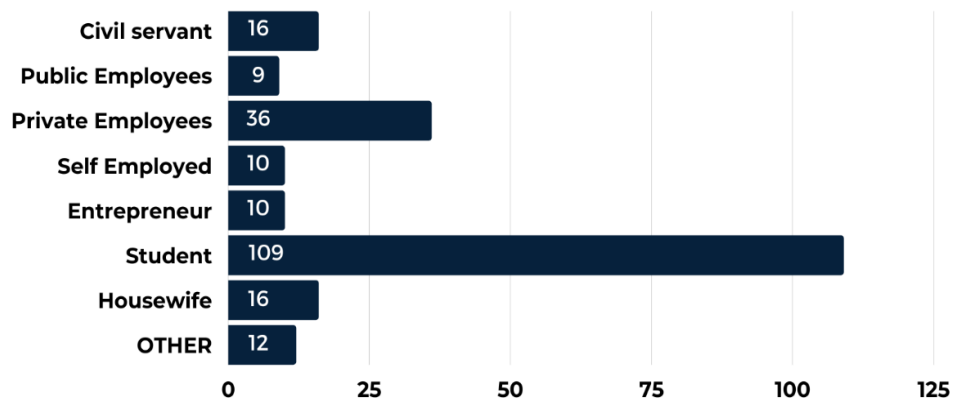


Figure 2 shows the job distribution of local startup users in Palembang city where the majority of users are students and college students. Generally, students and college students are more updated with the latest digital product information. So that in their daily life, the products and services offered by local start-ups in Palembang are more widely used by students. Moreover, products and services that are currently viral and famous can become a place to compete for prestige in their group. However, the obstacles are still getting limited income from their parents or part-time jobs. Meanwhile, other professional groups with more and more stable incomes still take advantage of technological advances in this field of entrepreneurship. Moreover, if these products and services have advantages such as practicality, ease of use, good service, and flexible prices. So, it can be an advertising field for free and can increase the chances of increasing the quantity of quality consumers.

Figure 3. Start-up User based on Business Fields

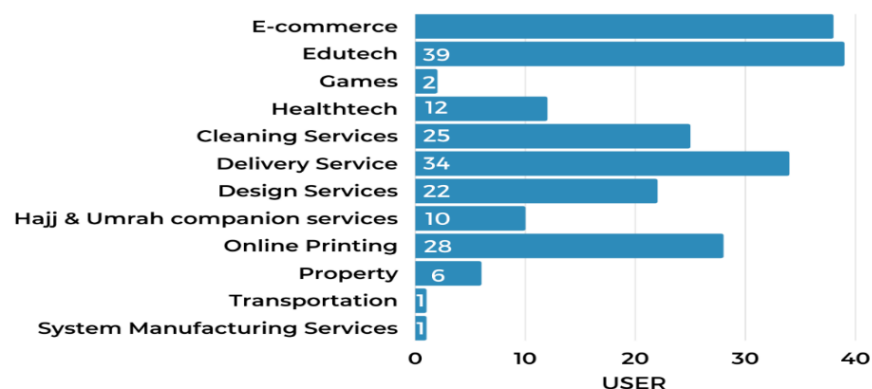


Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of start-up users based on the business fields of interest. Of the 18 local start-ups that are still operating in the city of Palembang, there are 5 local start-ups that are in great demand by digital consumers. Local start-ups engaged in e-commerce have the highest number of users. Therefore, this can be an input for the division of product and service development of local start-ups in the city of Palembang to conduct research comparing the level of satisfaction with their own products and services with their substitutes (substitutes). Furthermore, start-ups in the fields of education, cleaning services, and delivery services have also become prima donna among the residents of the city of Palembang. If all start-up users use more social

media applications, it can be an appeal for start-ups to be able to massively promote their products through applications that match their market share. The results also show that the majority of start-up consumers receive product and service recommendations through social media. Thus, later targeted promotions can attract the attention of other potential consumers who lack or are limited in using gadgets and the internet in their lives through mouth-to-mouth media. The concept of mouth to mouth and recommendations for voluntary assessment of good or bad among consumers within the circle of the group is very likely to occur. Therefore, the quality and suitability of products and services can be improved and developed further.

This study also found that 182 respondents stated that they had not used local start-up products and services in Palembang City. Non-user groups, the majority of women, have different income levels and occupations. The management of start-ups can develop new targets to educate and introduce the products and services offered. Gradually, business actors can introduce local start-ups widely per region in the city of Palembang. Bekraf (2018) recorded 3 start-ups in Palembang City. It means that for at least 4 years the existence of start-ups continues to grow to become 18 companies. The age of local start-ups in the city of Palembang is still very young. Two of these companies were founded in 2017. If you look at the development of the 3 unicorns in Indonesia, namely, Gojek, Tokopedia and Traveloka, it took approximately 7 to 8 years to reach out the point.

Figure 3. Form of Business Entity Local Startup in Palembang City

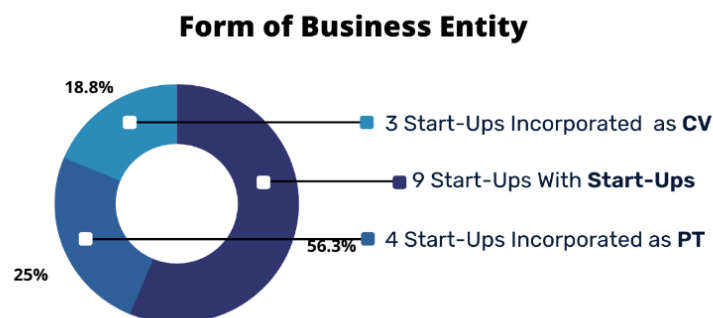
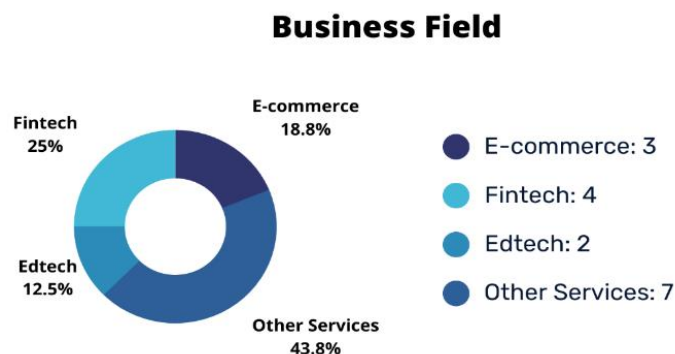


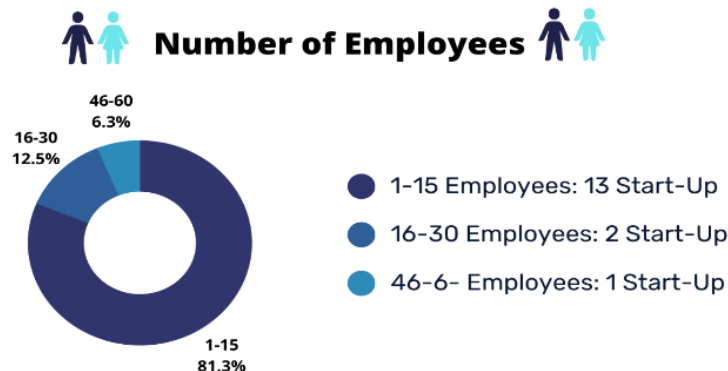
Figure 3 shows that there are 9 start-ups that are still in the form of pilots, meaning that this business is still in its infancy and undergoing many trials. If you don't get good support from internal and external, it might not last long or go out of business. The existence of business incubators and accelerators greatly affects the lives of these start-ups. Unfortunately, incubators in Indonesia are currently limited in number, only around 130, and do not accommodate the growth of new start-ups. The incubator itself focuses on the process of perfecting ideas and products, while the accelerator helps validate more mature products to enter the market.

Figure 4. Business Field of Local Startup



In Palembang City, there is a start-up that has successfully entered the category of large-scale business. Based on the point of view of the start-up founders in Palembang, the problems faced by start-ups are 38.82% Capital, 29.41% Human Resources, 15.00% Facilities, 8.82% Regulations and Laws, and 7.94% Market. Capital and the quality of human resources are the main challenges for startup business actors in the city of Palembang. The initial capital owned and issued by local start-ups in the city of Palembang is still included in the basic category of start-up level valuation based on capital or called "Cockroach", because of 10 million us dollars.

Figure 5. The Number of Employees



Based on figure 5, there is one start-up company that has 46-60 employees. According to the data obtained, the average age of employees employed by local start-ups in Palembang City is from Generation Z, aged 13-30 years. It means that if the quality of human resources is good and local start-up companies develop, there will be more opportunities for young workers to be employed. Therefore, the procurement of good quality human resources, as well as the provision of a good and positive ecosystem deserves special attention from local governments and local residents. According to gender, the number of male workers at local start-ups in Palembang is more than females. However, it is hoped that the presence of female workers in the start-up environment can balance teamwork and become an opportunity to increase income for more households in Palembang City.

DISCUSSION

According to the founders and start-up managers, the main challenges are the existence of business incubators and accelerators in Palembang City. Wise and Valliere (2014) find evidence to suggest that increased knowledge of accelerator managers reduces the risk of firm failures and that this reduction can be attributed more to differences in the amount of direct experience the accelerator management team has as founders in startups than to differences in connectedness to the ecosystems. Likewise with the existence of incubators which can be seen from their positive influence on start-ups in the long term, but also their collaborative effect on employment and the economy because there needs to be a commitment to remain consistent in the role of accelerators and incubators and for the local government of Palembang City.

The development and improvement of products and services being sold is quite difficult and validation of products and services, in order to be recognized and enter the market is hampered. The digital business sector that is occupied by the majority is in the form of general commodities, especially the service sector so it cannot yet offer uniqueness and become a characteristic of the city that can be a special attraction for consumers as an element of pride and satisfaction when using it and can be a distinct advantage compared to start-ups. They have obstacles in the form of capital assistance and support, facilities, and clarity of regulations and laws from the government. Especially advertising support and links from the government to get investors and branding that is wider in reach (Jo & Jang, 2022). Lack of a forum to establish communication between start-up managers, so that they can exchange information that can be a provision to develop and collaborate or simply to equate the movement and vision and mission of local start-ups in Palembang City.

Opportunities in the form of good judgments and expectations from users and non-users as input for the adjustment and development of products and services for local start-ups in Palembang City. From the founder's perspective, start-up founders already have a workforce that is quite capable because the majority are Generation Z who certainly have high enthusiasm and quality that can be utilized to innovate with fresh ideas. Therefore, it must be utilized and shaped more observantly by the workforce that is owned so that it is not only utilized for its energy but also for its thoughts and expertise. This generation is also able to build a good network and communication within the community, so this can be a good promotional opportunity (Vieira, Frade, Ascenso, Prates, & Martinho, 2020). Startups can provide innovative services or products that can reach the interests of Generations z and y.

Founders must be able to learn more about digital advertisements, both in terms of which applications have more users or effective special hours. Because armed with online promotions, there can be opportunities for offline promotions or voluntary word of mouth. However, all of this requires a reliable workforce for research who can understand, study, and find out the characteristics of consumers in each different coverage area. Therefore, this study provides some suggestions and inputs that can be considered and studied by experts who design local start-up business innovations in Palembang City.

Lukeš, Longo, and Zouhar (2019) suggest that digital entrepreneurship did not work automatically and developed well. It still needs government assistance and support in the form of ease of regulation, network services, capital support, training programs, or other facilities. It is also supported by Colombo, Giannangeli, and Grilli (2013) show that government support can have a positive impact on the sustainability of start-ups, which can have the opportunity to open new jobs and improve the quality of people's incomes. Unfortunately, the local government of Palembang City, according to local start-up

founders, has not seen this opportunity so it does not provide significant assistance, both physical and non-physical.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to discuss the opportunities and challenges of Startups in Palembang. Founders and digital consumers are the objects of research. Using mixed-method analysis, we found that there were 40 start-ups in Palembang, but only 18 are active. Many start-ups in Palembang are engaged in the service sector. Opportunities for products and services for local start-ups in Palembang are as follows: (a). From the founder's point of view, they already have a workforce that is quite capable because the majority are Generation Z who certainly have high enthusiasm, creativity, and quality to innovation; (b) From the user side, the generation that is more interested in technological advancements and internet use is Generation Z, so start-ups can take advantage of this as a form of market segmentation adjustment so that their products and services can be more millennial, the majority of users are women who basically have a higher enthusiasm in exploring the existence of the desired and needed products and services; (c) From the non-users side, those who have not enjoyed the products and services offered by local start-ups in Palembang do not know for sure the existence of start-ups, which means that more massive online promotion is needed. The challenges in the form of obstacles that must be resolved by start-ups are as follows: (a) From the founder's perspective, the digital business sector that is occupied by the majority is in the form of general commodities, especially in the service sector, behind the performance of local start-ups, the majority of which are profitable, but according to the founders they have obstacles in the form of capital assistance and support, facilities, clarity of regulations and laws from the government; (b) From the side of start-up users, so far the products and services offered have attracted the attention of users from Generation Z.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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