

## COMPETENCY-BASED PASSION AND VALUE-BASED DEDICATION INDONESIAN ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSISTENCE AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Fransiskus Xaverius Husni**  
Universitas Pelita Harapan  
[fxhusni@gmail.com](mailto:fxhusni@gmail.com)

**FX Suwanto**  
Universitas Esa Unggul  
[fx.suwanto@yahoo.com](mailto:fx.suwanto@yahoo.com)

**Evo Sampetua Hariandja**  
Universitas Pelita Harapan  
[evo.hariandja@uph.edu](mailto:evo.hariandja@uph.edu)

**Jacob Donald Tan**  
Universitas Pelita Harapan  
[jacob.tan@uph.edu](mailto:jacob.tan@uph.edu)

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**Abstract-** In 2021, Indonesia's national income significantly decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, a large number of SMEs failed, although some managed to recover. The goal of the research is to acquire experience with entrepreneurial tenacity and turn it into explicit knowledge. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to analyse the persistence experiences of ten entrepreneurs with COVID-19 bounce-back experience. Informants are selected with purposive sampling based on multiple perspective approach. In-depth interviews were conducted for data collection. Two stages of coding is used for theming process, which are followed by conceptualization process. Confirmation of notions is achieved by elaborate coding. Research indicate that the drivers for the perseverance of Indonesian entrepreneurs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic can be attributed to Competencies-based passion and Value-based dedication. Entrepreneurs persevere because they are passionate about their industry and have faith in their ability to thrive. Another motivator is their commitment to enduring because of the beliefs or principles they cherish. Entrepreneurs that are persistent will have greater opportunities, particularly since they would have more time to become familiar with the challenges posed by COVID-19. The effects of COVID-19 are also diminishing over time. It is their competency- based passion and value-driven determination that enable entrepreneurs to persevere in the face of adversity. Perseverance and resilience must be combined when business transformation is mandatory.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Pandemic; Indonesia; Competency-Based Passion; Persistence Experience; Value-Based Dedication

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

For Indonesian business people, the COVID-19 pandemic period presents a significant challenge. According to IMF projection, the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce Indonesia's GDP growth from 5% to 0.5% (Olivia et al., 2020). In 2020, the economic growth rate slumped to minus 2.1% (Miranti et al., 2022). The UN predicts that Indonesia's foreign direct investment flows could decrease by 5% to 15% as a result of the slump in activity, bringing them to their lowest level since the 2008–2009 global financial crisis (<https://www.csis.org/analysis/global-economic-impacts-COVID-19>). The revenues of SMEs decreased in up to 84% of cases (Sri & Afriza, 2021). Revenues declined for up to 84% of SMEs (Sri & Afriza, 2021).

The contribution of SMEs to GDP fell from 60% to less than 30%. (<https://dailysocial.id/post/tren-digitalisasi-umkm-di-Indonesia-2023-tantangan-danpeluang>). About 30 million MSMEs filed for bankruptcy in 2020 as a result of cash flow issues brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. With 64.7 million MSMEs in total in 2019 (<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20210326144212-4-233127/sad-30-juta-umkmroll-tikar-because-corona>), this figure represents nearly 50% of MSMEs overall.

Entrepreneurial persistence is essential for those who must deal with financial restrictions, supply chain disruptions brought on by lockdowns, and market uncertainty. It is a fact that many business owners experience significant losses but manage to survive. Research on the experiences of Indonesian entrepreneurs who have demonstrated great endurance throughout the COVID-19 outbreak is lacking. This is in line with the claim made by Doern et al. (2019) that there is a dearth of research focusing on internal crises and the personal crisis experiences of entrepreneurs. Changes in consumer behavior during this time period also helped some entrepreneurs, according to several studies conducted during COVID-19 in the context of Indonesian entrepreneurs (Hartini et al., 2021). According to study, there is hope for the survival of small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia (Sri & Afriza, 2021). alterations to business models and initiatives to foster innovation (Morgan et al., 2020; Sari, 2020; Scheidgen et al., 2021). To gain experience with entrepreneurial tenacity and transform it into explicit knowledge is the aim of the research.

### 1.2 Literature Review

Persistence is a crucial element of successful entrepreneurship because it allows one to keep going in the face of numerous challenges and alternate business opportunities (Caliendo et al., 2020). Persistence can be grouped into persistence despite difficulty, persistence despite fear, and inappropriate persistence (Howard & Crayne, 2019).

The research objective is to gain detailed knowledge about entrepreneurial persistence during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Entrepreneurial persistence is related to several important management theories, such as Resource Based View (Estensoro et al., 2022), Psychological Capital (Tang, 2020), Social Cognitive Theory (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020), Effectuation Theory (Donizete, 2023), Motivation Theory (Kaufman, 2023) and Goal Theory (Brandstätter & Bernecker, 2022).

In the Resource-Based View (RBV), entrepreneurs leverage specific qualities such as passion, dedication, including persistence as important company resources. Treating entrepreneurial persistence as a competency (Bird, 2019) is a resource-based view approach. Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is a psychological advantage that provides benefits in the future. Passion and dedication can be associated with components of PsyCap, such as resilience and optimism. The discussion of self-efficacy which contributes to motivation (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021) is in the context of psychological capital, as is the discussion of passion as

a predictor of entrepreneurial persistence (Kiani et al., 2021). The decision to persist is based on the level of anticipated adversity (Holland & Shepherd, 2013) and business operations typically in the form of cognitive planning and creating styles, enhancing persistence (Adomako et al., 2016) is effectuation theory research. Cognitive knowing style (Adomako et al., 2016), and assessment (Syed & Mueller, 2014) reduce persistence related to motivation theory. Concerning achievement and commercial objectives (Sibin et al., 2007) and Anticipated regret (Huang et al., 2022) which influence persistence are related to goal theory.

This research focuses on the experience of entrepreneurial persistence, so the relevant concepts are entrepreneurial persistence (Caliendo et al., 2020) and the theory of form and process in experiencing (Paulsen, 2020).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The application of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis sheds light on the resilience of entrepreneurs within the COVID-19 pandemic. The phenomenological branch of IPA investigates the ways in which individuals interpret their experiences. (Starks & Trinidad, 2007), and the idiographic side will provide rich and important information while preserving individual uniqueness (J. Smith, 2018). This is not easy to do because it contains dualism, namely building a theme while maintaining an idiographic approach. (Fiona et al., 2021). What this research seeks to discover will explain why entrepreneurs continue to persist in the Covid-19 pandemic.

The selection of informants was done through purposeful sampling. Based on the criterion of small and medium-sized business owners on the island of Java who had been in operation for over 10 years and had managed to escape the COVID-19 pandemic, informants were chosen. The multiple perspective approach is used by choosing a different type of business for each informant. Informants who are directly involved in the same experience, but are expected to provide views that tend to vary, as one of the metaphors in a multi-perspective approach, namely "all surf the same wave" (Larkin, Shaw & Flowers, 2019).

IPA studies usually have a small number of participants, and the goal is to reveal something of the experience of each individual (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Samples in IPA studies are usually small, which enables a detailed and very time consuming case-by-case analysis. According to Turpin et al. (1997) the clinical psychology doctoral programs in Britain recommend that six to eight participants is appropriate for an IPA study, as this sample size gives an opportunity to examine similarities and differences between individuals. (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Table 1 shows informants of this study.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in-depth. Interviews centre on the following question: Why do you continue during the COVID-19 pandemic? In April and May of 2022, interviews lasting roughly an hour were done. The analysis procedure, which comprised coding, theme creation, idea elaboration, and concepts formation, was conducted using the researcher's perceptions as well as the transcripts of the interviews.

**Table 1. Informants' Profiles**

No.	Informant	Business	Market	Operation
1	Amin	Metal casting and fabrication	Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
2	Asiang	Original design manufacturer	Indonesia & International	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
3	Bin	Agricultural machinery	Indonesia & International	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19

No.	Informant	Business	Market	Operation
4	Bob	Financial software	Indonesia & International	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
5	Hadi	Rural banking	Central Java, Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
6	Lili	Hotel and property	Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
7	Mey	Dentist and medical clinic	Bogor, West Java, Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
8	Steve	Helment spare manufacturer	Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
9	Sugi	Eco-friendly plastic manufacturer	Indonesia & International	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19
10	Yusuf	Housing contractor	Indonesia	More than 15 years, bounce-back from COVID-19

As shown in the Data Analysis Process (Figure 1), Content analysis of interview transcription (stage one) and narrative interpretation of the author (stage two) using descriptive, axial and theoretical coding with NVivo 12. Themes resulted from these analysis are positive emotions, passion, personal competence, negative emotions, and value orientation as shown in Table 2. Description of Themes and Sub-themes

**Table 2. Description of Themes and Sub-themes**

Names	Description
Positive emotions enthusiastic proud grateful hope optimistic	Positive emotions caused by a business condition Great interest in something, full of passion and enthusiasm Feel happy and heartened Giving thanks or receiving gratitude for God's providence Expect with confidence Hopefull and confident about the future
Passion goal orientation job fit needs	Likes and enthusiasm for what one does Persevering because of the goals you want to achieve The suitability of a job with abilities Things to live everyday life
Personal competence learning experience effective behavior skills	Competence in the form of behavior, potential and performance The experience of learning The habit of doing effective work Skills to do something special
business strategy vision	Planned activities to achieve goals The ability to determine the big picture and goals for the future
Negative emotions confused concerned depression worry embarrassed panic	Negative emotions that arise in the process of facing various business difficulties Don't know for sure what to do Feeling concerned about something that is happening Feelings of anxiety due to excessive pressure Feeling anxious about a situation Feelings of discomfort about the conditions faced The sudden appearance of excessive fear or anxiety

Names	Description
sad	Emotion of a sense of misfortune, loss and helplessness
tense	An uncomfortable feeling as if under threat
Value orientation	Persevering because of the values you believe in

Note: Themes are developed from 70 codes

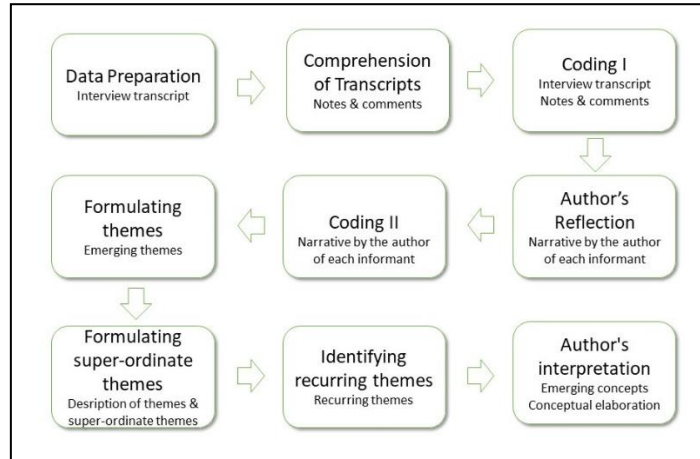


Figure 1. Data Analysis Process

Themes are synthesising into two concepts Values-based dedication and Competencies-based passion. Elaborative coding is used to analyse competencies-based passion and values-based dedication, breaking it down into sub-concepts. Figure 2. Conceptual Synthesis Process shows the concepts of Personal competence, Positive Emotion and Passion with synthesis analytic process are transformed into a new concept, namely Competencies-based passion. According to the Competency-based passion concept's intuitive reasoning, entrepreneurs persist because they have a positive outlook, enjoy the challenges they face, and believe they can solve problems. The same process produces the concept of Value based-dedication from the concepts of value orientation and negative emotion. Value-based dedication describes entrepreneurs who don't like the challenges they face, but are dedicated to not giving up because of the value system they believe in and practice. The claim that Value-based dedication and Competencies-based passion will carry the research to this point is essentially an example of abductive reasoning.

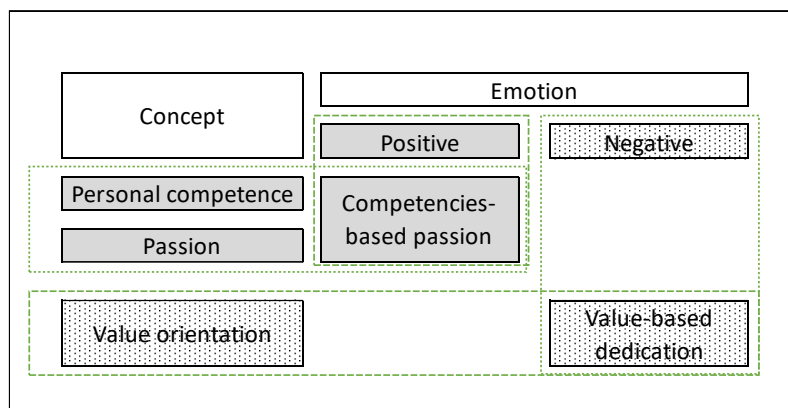


Figure 2. Conceptual Synthesis Process

Elaborative coding is done to verify that the assertions made by informants align with the reasoning's conclusions. Table 3 and Table 4 shows the results of the elaborative coding

**Table 3. Competency-based Passion**

<b>Competency-based passion:</b>	
High enthusiasm (passion) based on experience and competence encourages informants not to stop trying	
<p><b><u>Dreams</u></b>                      Dreams since childhood gave the informant great encouragement when he had to face a crisis. Survive because you don't want to lose your dreams.</p>	<p>From the start I wanted to do business, but I also wanted to gain knowledge in financial institutions <b>(Amin)</b>                      Call you Laupan, then you decide whether you have time, you have fate and you have life <b>(Steve)</b>                      In addition to not being practical, 97% of inventions worldwide fail to obtain a successful patent. That means that not only is it impossible to profit from the patent to market it, the revenue earned is insufficient to cover the cost of the patent. My research's patentability and viability make me proud. <b>(Sugi)</b></p>
<p><b><u>Execute the concepts</u></b>                      Apply the ideas of beliefs, routines, or behaviours that the informant considers useful for resolving issues or adding value.</p>	<p>How self-governing. Since we are all in the corporate world, it is important for us to put leadership above all else and recognise our humanity. We can comprehend taking care of things when we comprehend being a new person. I believe that after you have mastered it, it will become evident to you that entering the corporate world will be much simpler.. <b>(Asiang)</b>                      Each week, the work team meets to investigate new concerns that need to be handled. <b>(Bin)</b>                      Making settlement schemes is something I know how to do.                      Restructuring the firm while implementing a financial plan. <b>(Lili)</b></p>
<p><b><u>Feelings of like or pleasure.</u></b>                      Having a feeling of joy and enthusiasm is a driving force for surviving a crisis</p>	<p>When things grow uncomfortable, we'll consider leaving if we don't enjoy what we're doing. However, if we're content, then this field is great, man. <b>(Bob)</b>                      However, the doctor instead talked enthusiastically about the various new activities being carried out and how they had an impact on customers. <b>(Mey)</b></p>
<p><b><u>Challenges</u></b>                      Viewing challenges as the other side of opportunities increases creativity and competitiveness</p>	<p>It makes us proud. Our natural tendencies are such that we become more creative and energetic when faced with new problems. Thoughts and strength of will will be shown. Our creativity and enthusiasm are heightened by the presence of competition <b>(Hadi)</b>                      Now let us examine the case study. How many decades before success, Ciputra? Taher, William Suryajaya, and Sudono Salim all took the same action. It takes time, therefore it does need to be done gradually. It will fall fast if we hurry. <b>(Bob)</b></p>

**Table 4. Value-based Dedication**

<b>Value-based dedication:</b>	
Dedication in the context of doing something that is not very popular, but is still done because of the importance of the work and also the values adhered to	
<b>Religion.</b> The impact of religious doctrine on perceptions of one's career and actions	In business, I emphasize the importance of money ( <b>DUIT</b> ), namely <b>d</b> for prayer ( <b>Doa</b> ), <b>u</b> for business ( <b>Usaha</b> ), <b>i</b> for charity ( <b>Infaq</b> , <b>sadakah</b> , <b>Jariah</b> ). And <b>t</b> is faith ( <b>Tawakal</b> ). ( <b>Amin</b> ) Blessings. Many things can be completed because of blessing ( <b>Yusuf</b> )
<b>Improvement</b> Efforts to become better are an important trigger to keep trying and persist	Naturally, there have been issues for the previous 23 years at every turn, at every phase. The challenge lies in the fact that we are aware of what needs to be done in the future to prevent this from happening. ( <b>Asiang</b> )
<b>Culture</b> A group's habits and values influence many things, including work	I feel called. I have to fight until the end, I will not back down. ( <b>Mey</b> )  Since no business can exist without risk; burdensome business practises, fierce industry competition, and narrow margins are inevitable outcomes. ( <b>Yusuf</b> )
<b>Pride</b> The need to maintain pride and self-respect is what triggers people to persist in work	There was a time when I wanted to jump off a tall building and kill myself. I reasoned that if I leaped, people would probably view it as unfortunate that he had failed. Maybe my gravestone will read, "He failed, he failed." I would like my gravestone to be engraved HE DID IT, AT LAST. ( <b>Bob</b> )  My goal is to achieve in whatever is given to me as it makes me proud.a ( <b>Hadi</b> )
<b>Ethics</b> The choice to do better according to the values of a group or organization	It makes us proud. Our natural tendencies are such that we become more creative and energetic when faced with new problems. Thoughts and strength of will will be shown. Our creativity and enthusiasm are heightened by the presence of competition. ( <b>Hadi</b> )  I think you have to be tenacious, persistent and never give up. But even with that, not many people are successful. ( <b>Bin</b> )
<b>Maintaining</b> Maintaining in the context of maintaining long-term sustainability influences dedication	And it turns out I receive the profits now, the harvest now. I wouldn't have gotten this if I hadn't persevered. ( <b>Bob</b> )  With COVID-19, it turns out there are no problems, everything can be done well. ( <b>Mey</b> )  We always maintain the hope that the family must survive, so it must survive until COVID disappears or subsides. The patients will come back in time. So this is all just temporary, soon conditions will be better. ( <b>Mey</b> )

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 5 below displays the sub-concepts that were generated through the process of elaborative coding based on Competency-based passion and Value-based dedication. Competency-based passion stems from the ability that entrepreneurs have to maintain perseverance, particularly since what they do is genuinely a dream come true for them—a challenge that allows them to put their competency into practise. On the other hand, Value-based dedication is more predicated on principles, convictions, and a pride-related desire to assist. Associated with the category of tenacity (DeTienne et al., 2008) Persistence despite difficulty and potentially Persistence despite fear are two categories of entrepreneurial tenacity during the COVID-19 epidemic.

**Table 5. Concepts and Sub-concepts**

Concepts	Sub-Concepts
Competency-based passion	Dreams Execute the concepts Feelings of like or pleasure. Challenges
Value-based dedication	Religion Culture  Ethics Maintaining Improvement Pride

At the concepts synthesis stage, there is a process of leveraging personal competence (passion, dedication) as valuable resources for persistence. Passion, dedication, emotions can be psychological capital and transformed into valuable resources according to the resource based view theory. The sub-concepts obtained can be said to be in line with motivation theory, especially for the sub-concepts pride, dreams, challenges, execution, maintaining and improvement. Self-actualization events often involve qualities such as those described by sub-concepts. The recorded informants' statements also indicate a learning process, so effectuation theory is also relevant.

Since there isn't any precise equivalent research, the comparison between decision-making persistence for underperforming enterprises and entrepreneurial persistence during the COVID-19 pandemic was made. According to research on underperforming businesses (DeTienne et al., 2008), decisions to stay with an underperforming company are influenced by a number of factors, including perceived collective efficacy, personal investment, personal options, and environmental munificence. Competency-based passion is more akin to personal investment, personal options, and prior organisational success. The remaining acts of environmental generosity and group effectiveness are more akin to values-based commitment.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Limitations

Smaller numbers of informants are typically used when using the Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis approach because it necessitates a longer analysis process. With the goal of gathering a variety of viewpoints, the study involved ten informants from various backgrounds. Especially when it comes to discussing themes like persistence experiences, the quality of the informants truly determines the quality of the research. An important factor in raising the quality of research is the researcher's interviewing skills. Another weakness is that there is no standard science research design, each researcher takes a slightly different approach.

A multiple perspective strategy was used to pick informants based on the criteria while also choosing informants who had a good rapport with the researchers, in an effort to mitigate limitations resulting from the quantity and quality of respondents. Because informants are intimate friends of researchers, researchers believe that they can supply high-quality information. Three sources are consulted in the research design, which aims to minimise the limitations of the chosen Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach: 'From bad through good to excellent, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) studies' presenting set of criteria to evaluate IPA papers and to provide high-quality future research (Kacprzak, 2017); 'Entrepreneurial learning from failure: An interpretative phenomenological analysis' (Cope, 2011); and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research



(J. A. Smith et al., 2009) When it comes to the standards for high-quality scientific study or publications, Kacprzak is a researcher who is well regarded. Smith is credited with creating IPA, and Cope is a renowned expert on the subject of crisis management education.

## 5.2. Suggestions for Future Research

It is believed that Competency-based passion and Value-based dedication will offer a comprehensive and holistic picture when it comes to explaining why entrepreneurs are resolute in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic's problems. An overview of the prevalent values among Indonesian entrepreneurs can be obtained through Value-based dedication.

Additional research using a quantitative approach may be able to lessen the issue of generalisation and provide practical consequences for businesses. In times of crisis, perseverance only solves part of the problem. Change-requiring circumstances necessitate resilience. Perseverance and resilience research will yield more insights.

## 5.3 Conclusion

Recent studies indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic was a unique occasion for Indonesian business owners to demonstrate perseverance. Deep understanding gained from consistent experience would benefit entrepreneurs as a guide for handling calamities in the future. Scholarly study hopes that Competency-based passion and Value-based dedication as forms of entrepreneurial perseverance will spark more extensive and in-depth studies.

The Competency-based passion and Value-based dedication concepts are strong because they are straightforward, simple to comprehend, and comprehensive in nature. This means that these concepts embody most of the perseverance involved in overcoming adversity. Because it begins with cognitive activities—knowledge and competency—as well as emotional activities—both good and negative emotions—it is incredibly comprehensive and all-encompassing. But because generalization is a problem, more study is still required.

Much broader ramifications, such as the dark side of persistence, can be expected from the abundance of similar research that yet to be conducted. It is said—and true—that individuals who exhibit excessive tenacity are comparatively hard to modify. More extensive and in-depth studies using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are required to broaden our understanding of related topics. These include entrepreneurial resilience, which is recognized as a parent of entrepreneurial persistence, and the development of the application of the concepts of Competency-based passion and Value-based dedication. Improved practices and theoretical frameworks related to entrepreneurship can be achieved through the comprehensive knowledge provided by the qualitative depth of IPA, which will unveil intricate experiences.

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