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The Role of Creativity and Innovation in Maintaining Business Sustainability Amidst Economic Uncertainty

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Abstract*— The sustainability of digital startups faces significant challenges due to global economic uncertainty and market disruption. This study examines the roles of creativity and innovation as factors related to long-term business resilience. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires from 100 respondents consisting of university students and MSME owners in Indonesia. The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that creativity has a positive and significant effect on business sustainability (β=0.263; p=0.012). However, innovation does not show a significant influence in this sample (β=0.101; p=0.332). Simultaneously, both variables have a significant effect (p=0.006), although the explanatory contribution is limited, with R^2=0.099, indicating the model only explains 9.9% of business sustainability variation. These findings suggest that creativity serves as a direct adaptive ability, while innovation requires a stronger supporting ecosystem to have a real impact.
Keywords: Innovation, Business Sustainability, Economic Uncertainty, Creativity, Startup

I. INTRODUCTION

Business sustainability is a key prerequisite for a company's existence, particularly in economic conditions characterized by high levels of uncertainty, such as crises and market disruptions. In these situations, businesses are required to demonstrate strong adaptability and resilience *original* ideas, is essential for entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses. Research shows that creativity has a positive and significant impact on business success and sustainability.

Meanwhile, innovation is the practical implementation of creative ideas into new products, services, or processes that add value. Innovation is a strategic factor in business development because it has the potential to increase competitiveness, efficiency, and added value. However, the effectiveness of innovation in driving business sustainability depends heavily on resource availability, organizational support, and market conditions.

Given the crucial role of these two elements, this study aims to deeply analyze the synergistic role of creativity and innovation in maintaining business sustainability amidst economic uncertainty. This understanding is expected to provide a strategic framework for businesses in building long-term operational resilience.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Creativity, defined as the ability to generate new, original ideas to solve business problems, is a crucial foundation for startups in navigating market disruption. Previous research has shown that creativity has a positive and significant impact on the sustainability of MSME businesses and is relevant for startups in fostering rapid adaptation.

Innovation is the implementation of creative ideas into new, value-added products or processes, crucial for startups to increase competitiveness amid economic uncertainties such as inflation or recession. Empirical studies show that innovation has a potential role in supporting business sustainability, especially when supported by adequate internal and external factors.

Startup business sustainability integrates creativity and innovation to build resilience, where social capital contributes to strengthening its influence by up to 63.1% collectively. Research hypothesis:

H1: Creativity is thought to influence the sustainability of startup businesses.

H2: Innovation is thought to influence the sustainability of startup businesses.

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III. RESEARCH METHODS

A quantitative approach using a survey method was used to analyze the relationship between creativity, innovation, and business sustainability. The quantitative method was chosen to generate statistical data that could provide an objective picture of trends in the entrepreneurial and startup ecosystem in Indonesia.

The data analysis techniques used were descriptive analysis to assess respondents' perceptions, and multiple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of creativity and innovation on business sustainability. The results of this analysis were then linked to previous theory and research to explain the role of creativity and innovation in supporting startup business sustainability.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on data collected from respondents, including students and MSMEs, a descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain a general overview of respondents' perceptions of the research variables. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis for the Creativity, Innovation, and Business Sustainability variables are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

No.	Variables	Average	Std. Dev
1	Creativity (X1)	21.11	1.93
2	Innovation (X2)	21.09	1.76
3	Sustainability (Y)	19.80	2.27

Source: 2026 research data

Table 2. Determinant Coefficient Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.315	0.099	0.081	2,175

Source: 2026 research data

Table 3. F Test Results

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	51,684	2	25,842	5,462	0.006
Residual	468,395	99	4,731		
Total	520,078	101			

Source: 2026 research data

Tabe 4. T-Test Results

Variables	Coefficient B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	10,535	3,003		3,508	0.001
Creativity	0.309	0.121	0.263	2,551	0.012
Innovation	0.130	0.133	0.101	0.976	0.332

Source: 2026 research data

The results of multiple linear regression show that creativity has a positive and significant effect on business sustainability ($\beta = 0.263$; $p = 0.012$), indicating that increased creativity is related to increased business ability to survive in uncertain economic conditions. Meanwhile, innovation does not show a partial significant effect on sustainability ($\beta = 0.101$; $p = 0.332$), so that increased innovation in this sample has not shown a statistically significant effect on business sustainability in this study.

Simultaneously, creativity and innovation significantly influence business sustainability (F test $p = 0.006$), but their explanatory contribution is relatively limited, with $R^2 = 0.099$, meaning the model only explains 9.9% of the variation in business sustainability. Thus, approximately 90.1% of the variation in sustainability is influenced by other factors outside the model, such as leadership quality, market conditions, marketing strategy, operational efficiency, access to capital, and social capital.

These findings suggest that creativity plays a more adaptive role, directly helping businesses respond to uncertainty, while innovation tends to require specific prerequisites such as resources, technology, managerial support, and market readiness

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to achieve a tangible impact on sustainability. Therefore, businesses that cultivate a creative culture tend to adapt more quickly to change, while innovation may be more effective when supported by adequate internal and external ecosystems.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Creativity and innovation play a role in maintaining business sustainability, especially amidst uncertain economic conditions. Creativity enables startups to generate new ideas relevant to market needs, while innovation has the potential to play a role in implementing these ideas into products, services, and business processes that add value. Creativity has been proven to help startups remain adaptive and competitive, while innovation has the potential to make an impact when supported by adequate internal and external conditions.

Respondents had a positive perception of the importance of creativity and innovation in startups. Creativity is considered capable of helping startups find new opportunities and create business differentiation, while innovation contributes to improving efficiency, service quality, and business competitiveness. Consistent with previous research, creativity and innovation are crucial factors contributing to maintaining business existence and sustainability, especially for startups with limited resources.

As a recommendation, startup business owners are expected to continue developing an organizational culture that supports creativity and innovation sustainably, both through human resource development and the use of technology. Furthermore, startups need to be more open to changes and market needs to maintain long-term business sustainability. For further research, it is recommended to use a larger number of respondents and more in-depth analysis methods to obtain more comprehensive research results regarding the factors influencing the sustainability of startup and MSME businesses.

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