



Survival Strategies In Crisis For Micro-enterprises In Cibaduyut Shoes Center, Bandung

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ABSTRACT

Cibaduyut leather shoe center is the idol of domestic tourists when visiting Bandung. The influx of shoes made in China and the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years have resulted in the shoe industry experiencing a significant decline in sales. Sales of shoes were almost zero because shoes were a secondary necessity, and restrictions on people's movement resulted in a drastic decrease in demand for shoes. This research aims to get solutions to survive in crisis and take advantage of every opportunity for micro-enterprises in Cibaduyut Shoes Center, Bandung. The research method used is descriptive qualitative; data collection is carried out through surveys, interviews, and observations of shoe entrepreneurs in Cibaduyut. The results showed that many companies should need to be closed, because the income was not feasible, while fixed costs could not be reduced. Companies can only survive by relying on sales of available products, production stops, difficulties, increases in raw material prices, uncertain labor costs, manual production with existing machines, the substitution of leather material with imitations, innovation stops, and online marketing not be done. The conclusions showed that companies could reduce fixed costs and take advantage of small opportunities.

Keywords: survival, crisis, fixed cost, production, opportunities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The company's objectives will be achieved if business performance can be optimized and managed carefully and correctly. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can help workers find employment in Indonesia. This is in line with the statement of Sofyan Tan, the Director of *Yayasan Ekosistem Lestari* (YEL, the Sustainable Ecosystem Foundation), who stated that MSMEs employ 96% of the entire workforce due to their greater business flexibility in dealing with bureaucracy and innovating products and business strategies when compared to larger businesses. Accordingly, the government is promoting programs and focusing specifically on growing MSMEs in Indonesia.

According to the [1], MSMEs are defined as (1) micro enterprises are productive enterprises owned by individuals or business entities that meet the criteria; (2) small enterprises are productive, independent enterprises that are managed by individuals or businesses that are not subsidiaries and that are directly or indirectly owned, controlled, or integrated into another medium- or large-sized enterprises; and (3) medium enterprises are productive, independent enterprises that are managed by individuals or businesses that are not subsidiaries and that are directly or indirectly owned, controlled, or integrated with.

The existence of MSMEs is the majority of the national economy, showing indicators of the level of

community participation in various sectors of economic activity. MSMEs have demonstrated their reliability as safety valves in times of crisis by creating employment opportunities and added value. This strategic role and function can be improved by making MSMEs one of the complementary business actors for national economic development and not subordinate to other business actors. Success in improving MSMEs' abilities shows a strengthening of the community's economic business. This will help accelerate the process of national economic recovery and provide a real source of support for local governments in implementing government autonomy. Based on this data, businesses can be classified based on the size of the business for shoe center entrepreneurs. It is interesting for researchers to conduct research in the field of the Cibaduyut shoe center.

Bandung City makes a significant economic contribution to the West Java province, with the MSME sector and the creative industry as two examples. This study raises the case in micro-enterprises engaged in shoe making and examines the extent to which business performance begins with the procurement of raw materials, production process, marketing, and sales for the business's operations to run well, thrive, and be competitive with other enterprises. As a competitive micro-enterprise, the company must be able to survive and compete by optimizing performance to survive in business competition.

The Cibaduyut shoe center is one of five potential centers in Bandung that could create job opportunities and contribute to the economy. Other centers include Cibuntu tofu and *tempe*, Cigondewah textiles and textile products, Suci t-shirt and screen printing, and Binong Jati knitting. In Bandung, the fashion industry makes up the major of the creative economy. The creative industry in Bandung City has contributed a total of 39.14% of the city's gross regional product (GRDP). The fashion industry has been one of the attractions in Bandung City, helping to establish the city's reputation as a center of the industry. The Cibaduyut footwear (shoes) industry is one of the mainstay industries in Bandung City. Based on data from the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs, there are many permanent and "seasonal" shoe craftsmen in Cibaduyut.

The Cibaduyut shoe center is a well-known leather shoe business that has been around since 1920. In 1940, there were 89 shoemakers in Cibaduyut. Since it was determined that Cibaduyut shoe products had excellent quality in meeting the customers' interest at that time, this immediately improved the number of incoming orders. After Indonesia's independence in 1950, the number of business units in Cibaduyut grew to 250. Due to the large number of business units, Cibaduyut is renowned as a center for footwear manufacturers.

The increase in orders has encouraged business owners to hire workers by involving local people in production. However, the proliferation of low-cost shoes imported from China led to a fall in Cibaduyut shoe manufacturing and sales. As a result, many producers decided to shut down their businesses and change professions to survive due to a lack of income that did not cover expenses. Another factor contributing to the decline in productivity is the lack of attention given to human resources (HR), which results in inadequate quality development. Supposedly, HR is a production factor crucial for entrepreneur productivity, which will benefit the business. HR plays a significant role in the performance of the Cibaduyut shoe center business because it will produce shoe production following what business owners target.

Every MSME that wants to develop must be aware of its resource factors. This refers to the role of human resources, which is crucial in assisting in managing a business. A business's ability to achieve its objectives highly depends on the entrepreneur. If entrepreneurs

can manage a business well, they will likely be able to obtain satisfactory results. The concept of entrepreneurship refers to a variety of behaviors, personalities, and traits common to those with a strong desire to implement innovation into the world of business and the process of building these traits into their workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated a severe threat to the world between 2020 and 2021. Due to this situation, all business sectors face challenges that have not been anticipated. Crises are generally associated with three threats: security, financial, and reputational loss. COVID-19 caused all these threats so suddenly that micro-enterprises could not make decisions and find strategies to deal with this situation. [2] indicated that the cause of the decline in MSME performance during a pandemic is affected lower demand, problems in obtaining raw materials, and disruption of raw material distribution. This is caused by supplier companies closing or no longer running their businesses and challenges in getting access to finance.

This research aims at identifying, analysing, and examining the efforts made by the Cibaduyut shoe center in Bandung City to survive the crisis, as well as the crisis management strategies, use, and post-crisis plans. According to [3], the tourism industry is included in the category of the losers of COVID-19 because the ability to survive will be crucial. The Cibaduyut shoe center's target market is tourists who visit Bandung.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Crisis management is developing the best plan to help MSMEs deal with unexpected situations that harm the business and its stakeholders [4]. Crisis can be categorized into five types, namely financial crisis, personnel crisis, organizational crisis, technological crisis, and natural crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic situation can be classified as a type of natural crisis that significantly affects business. Companies must move immediately to address it. The best strategy is to be proactive by choosing solutions to help you withstand the crisis and prepare a rescue plan. High levels of uncertainty necessitate the preparation of contingency plans.

Figure 1 shows the model of crisis management for MSMEs with four stages.

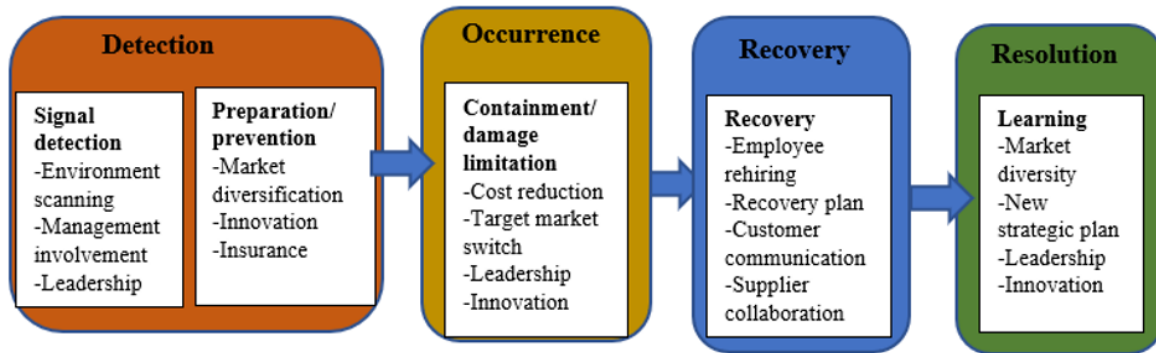


Figure 1. MSMEs Crisis Management Model. Source: Hong, Paul; Huang, Chenglei; and Li, 2012).

The detection stage signals an early warning, which allows the company's core human resources to assign the appropriate resources and plan preparatory actions. In the occurrence stage, the crisis genuinely occurs and affects damage. In the recovery stage, the company needs to establish procedures in order to restart regular business activities and restore key functional capabilities. Finally, in the resolution stage, the company evaluates the relevant crisis management activities and continues its efforts beyond the crisis.

[5] reveals that almost half of Indonesia's MSMEs were able to withstand the COVID-19 pandemic. Entrepreneurs still have optimism and plan to expand their businesses after the pandemic. The research conducted by [6] shows that MSMEs use their resources and capabilities more purposefully and effectively during times of crisis. During the crisis, entrepreneurship, the capacity for innovation, the accumulation of knowledge, and cooperation influence the ability to create new products. Meanwhile, prior to the crisis, this ability was only influenced by entrepreneurship and the accumulation of knowledge.

[3] To increase business resilience, MSMEs must develop technology-based business flexibility and collaboration. Business resilience is the ability of MSMEs to adapt to disruptions, grow, and seize several business opportunities in a challenging business environment [7]. Business flexibility is the organizational ability to adapt to the changing demands of the business environment [8] through identifying, formulating, and managing various strategic alternatives [9]. The development of collaboration

capacities enables MSMEs to adjust quickly to shifting dynamic economic environments by focusing on social interactions that influence innovation [10]. In addition, this development also has two positive effects at once, including making a company more flexible and resilient to operate a business during the COVID-19 pandemic [3].

The research by [11] revealed that MSMEs enhance their income by utilizing technology, improving their customer service, and paying attention to product quality. In addition, MSMEs can increase their income by engaging in business through (a) e-commerce, or the selling of products based on the internet, which can be done whenever, wherever, and saves time; (b) digital marketing, which is the activity of promoting or trying to look for market names through the use of the internet or social media; (c) improvement of products and services offered to customers to regain consumer confidence and indirectly updating services available to customers; and (d) maintaining existing products and customers, to create long-term relationships between business actors and consumers so that customer loyalty can be created.

The model proposed by Guo et al. (2020) indicates that digitalization positively correlates with strategies to respond to the crisis and the MSME's performance. MSMEs with higher levels of digitization can more successfully implement strategies to respond to the crisis and achieve better performance during COVID-19, as shown in Figure 2.

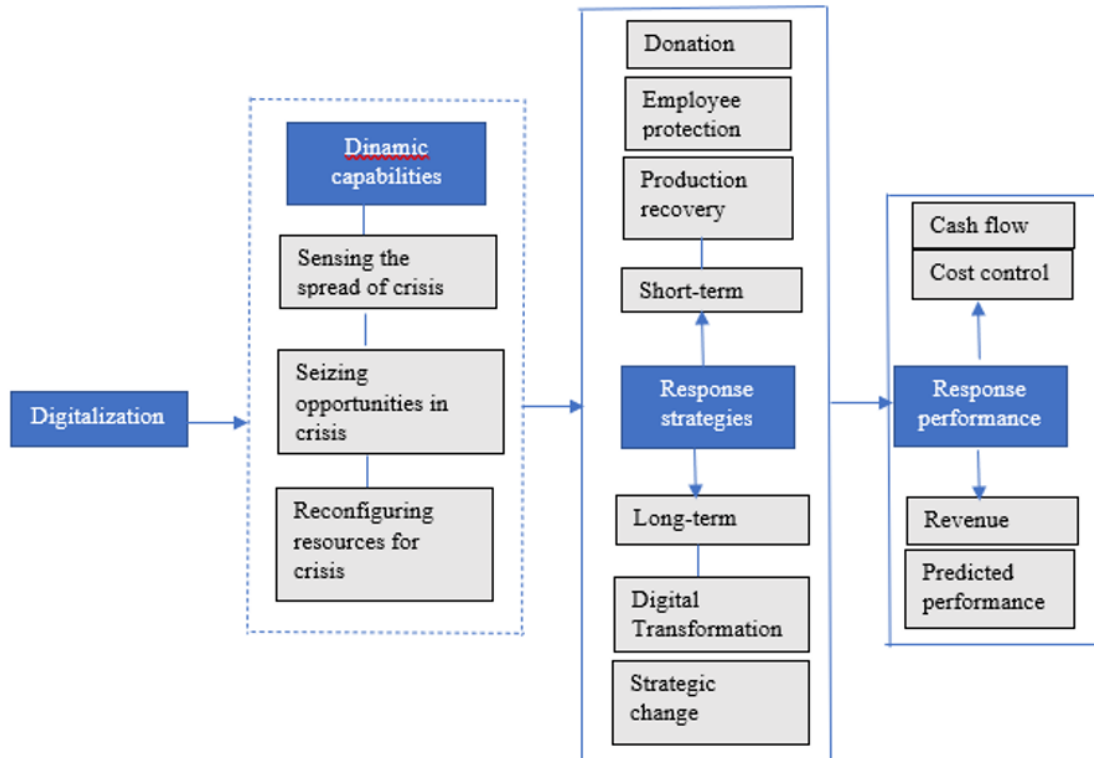


Figure 2. Digitalization and Public Crisis Responses. Source: (Guo et al., 2020)

Digital technology is at the core of digitization. Digitization can enhance dynamic capabilities, allowing for greater flexibility in highly unstable environments. Digitalized companies are easier to get

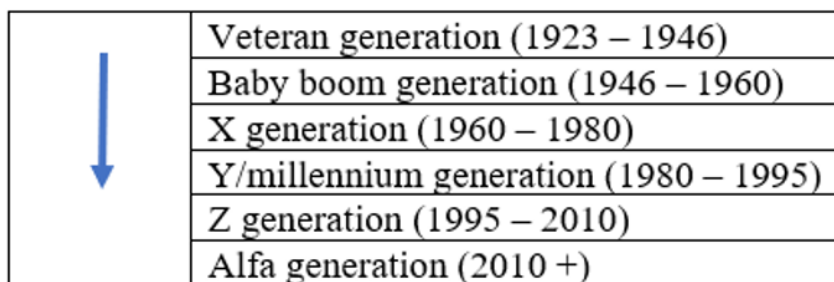
better performance and respond to crises, both short-term and long-term. The key dynamic model is presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Key Dynamic Model. Source: (Hossain et al., 2022)

During a pandemic, micro-enterprises encountered problems such as declining demand, supply chain disruptions, order cancellations, raw material issues, and transportation impediments. Entrepreneurs must play different roles in making changes and creating opportunities with available resources. They also need to have the ability and plan to survive to ensure their company's future viability, sustainability, and

continuity. The crisis is forcing entrepreneurs to be innovative in their product and investment designs and their ability to adapt to changes in the market and entrepreneurial marketing behaviors such as finding opportunities, managing sources, taking risks, and accepting new customers' value. Based on their characteristics, generations can be divided into six groups, as shown in Figure 4.



↓	Veteran generation (1923 – 1946)
	Baby boom generation (1946 – 1960)
	X generation (1960 – 1980)
	Y/millennium generation (1980 – 1995)
	Z generation (1995 – 2010)
	Alfa generation (2010 +)

Figure 4. Time-line Generation. Source: (Andrea et al., 2016)

Different generational groups of entrepreneurs have distinct behaviours in response to the use of information technology. Generation X uses it confidently, while the millennial generation considers information technology a part of everyday life.

3. METHOD

The research employs a qualitative method by conducting in-depth observations and interviews with two micro-entrepreneurs (owners) at the Cibaduyut shoe center in Bandung City. Interviews are required to obtain the owner's opinions on how to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic situation at different stages of the crisis. The necessary information includes business knowledge, understanding of the organization, and its role in crisis management. The results of observations and interviews were confirmed by secondary data obtained from Bandung City's Department of Cooperatives and SMEs website. The research was conducted between March and May 2022.

In multiple case studies, interviews with micro-entrepreneurs, pattern matching, and replication logic were used to test construct, internal, and external validity. Case study protocols and databases were used to test reliability [13]. All data obtained from interviews were collected and recorded. The results of observations were documented in the form of photographs, then analyzed theoretically, and developed using qualitative descriptions.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research results showed that micro-enterprises engaged in shoe manufacturing in Cibaduyut were significantly affected by the COVID-19 crisis, which caused sales to be close to zero while fixed costs could not be decreased. Various efforts were made to survive by temporarily laying off workers with the promise that they would be re-hired when conditions improved. The closeness between owners and workers results in mutual understanding so that temporary layoffs do not cause significant conflicts, although there is sadness between them.

Another problem that micro-enterprises encounter is their inability to pay their stores and factories rent. As a result, they decide to close their stores rather than incur fixed costs that do not cover their sales and prevent future losses. In addition, debtors with loans from creditors can be restructured by deferring or extending loans and interest payments.

Micro-enterprises that operate exclusively with their factories/stores and only use their fund can survive because they are protected from the burden of fixed costs. As long as they can generate income that can cover variable costs, efforts to survive can also be made by achieving affordable sales or taking full advantage of limited opportunities by selling their products for less than their cost of production. Since it is uncertain when the pandemic situation will end and when the sales target can be achieved as it was before the outbreak, there is no opportunity to replace machines or equipment. Uncertainty is one of the sources of risk [4].

The production-related constraints experienced during the COVID-19 included (1) the difficulty of raw materials, even waiting within three months, (2) uncertain labor costs, (3) equipment not feasible but unwilling to purchase new equipment, (4) manual production and only using the existing material inventory, (5) the production process was temporarily stopped due to very low sales, (6) rising raw material prices, (7) substitution of leather into imitation materials.

This is in line with [14], stating that micro-enterprises must apply cost reduction strategies in the form of reducing personnel costs and other operational expenditures by utilizing flexible HR policies and reducing operating time, negotiations with building/stores/factory owners to reduce rental costs and debt restructuring with creditors and banks. Similarly, [15] found that the pandemic caused a decline in demand and disruption of supply chains, which led to challenges in obtaining raw materials.

The crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic has become a new phenomenon that is unpredictable and affects the whole world. This condition causes restrictions on the movement of people. Several challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic

include declined demand, supply chain disruptions, furloughed employees, quarantine or exposure, closure of borders between cities/countries, payment delays, and market uncertainty [16].

[17] stated that the COVID-19 pandemic is a unique crisis that has a variety of effects on businesses, including supply (reduction in labor supply due to stay-at-home workers, lack of resources, disruption of supply chains); demand (reduced demand due to loss of customers, precautions, cautious investors); uncertainty (inability to rely on future revenue streams, e.g., replacement of employees or equipment), and unavailability of funding.

Conditions in the tourism industry are unpredictable. Similar to how the Cibaduyut shoe center operated, the downstream business also depends on sales to tourists. The main segment of Cibaduyut shoes is local tourists who visit Bandung City with the intention of shopping. Restrictions on the movement of people also make sandals and shoes become secondary necessities because they are not needed for travel (work, school, shopping, sightseeing, or other outdoor activities). The government gives instructions to carry out all activities from home. Since people no longer need to buy shoes and sandals for activities outside the home due to the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB, *Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*) and the Micro-Based Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement (PPKM, *Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat Mikro*) with various levels, the number of sandals and shoes sold at the Cibaduyut shoe center is almost zero.

In Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020, and there was no preparation for micro-entrepreneurs to deal with it. The implementation of crisis management strategies is carried out to minimize or mitigate losses. The crisis management model for micro-enterprises proposed by [18] shows that even though it initially started in China, this crisis was not anticipated, came on fast, and lasted long without any preparations.

The late detection stage and the policy of restricting the movement of people affect the income from sales that cannot cover the production costs. The production process is still being carried out using available materials with the hope that the crisis will not be prolonged. Furthermore, the government even blocked the movement of people and opened stores so that the workers were gradually laid off while waiting for government concessions. Savings are made in all areas in order to survive. Policies from the leadership are needed to make decisions to preserve, continue operating, temporarily close, or permanently close the business. Market diversification, innovation, and guarantees cannot be carried out because the available funds are prioritized for survival.

The research results are in line with [3], which states that the ability to survive needs to be supported

by collaboration and business flexibility. Collaboration enables close relationships and the exchange of experience and knowledge to create innovations in the form of ideas/operations and new business progress. The introduction of digital marketing, online marketing, and e-commerce requires the support of knowledge and sharing of experiences to expand marketing reach.

The ability of a leader to innovate and take risks is crucial for efforts to survive in times of crisis. [19] stated that a proactive personality, which includes enhanced creativity, innovation, and cost-cutting, positively influences business financial performance during a financial crisis. The research results from [11] can inspire entrepreneurs to understand sales based on e-commerce, online, and digital marketing technologies in order to reach a wider market segment. Likewise, [6] supported that innovation and collaboration skills are needed during a crisis in addition to entrepreneurship and knowledge. When a crisis occurs, all that can be done is limit losses and strive to survive by cutting expenses, changing target markets, demonstrating leadership, and being innovative.

Cost reduction includes gradually reducing the workforce until there is either no one left to manage the store or none. Since the revenue from sales is no longer enough to cover the rental costs, enterprises that use rental factories and stores do not have a choice but to shut them down. Furthermore, companies that use credit must also restructure their credit by extending the credit period. This effort can be made by negotiating with the creditor. However, the certainty for the return still has to wait for economic conditions to improve, or at least there is relaxation from the government's policy of restricting the movement of people.

The target market also needs to be changed by conducting online distribution/marketing. Entrepreneurs cannot do this not from the millennial generation because of the lack of ability to utilize information technology. Furthermore, the shoe and sandal industry demands a variety of sizes and colors from each model so that micro-entrepreneurs do not need to use social media or e-commerce to reach the targeted market segment.

The need for shoes and sandals is greatly reduced because of the PSBB, PPKM, Work from Home (WFH), or online learning, which do not require shoes and sandals to carry out activities. Entrepreneurs only make money by selling their current inventory. The production process is only carried out in moderation. Entrepreneurs who are also craftsmen spend their spare time producing shoes/sandals using their limited materials. The sandals use leftover leather from the bag factory in Tangerang, so if the bag factory does not make a product, there will be no leather shipments for the sandals. If raw materials are supplied, production

can start, and products can be sold to wholesalers or retail stores for less than their actual cost in order to boost profits. This finding is in line with the research conducted by [15], revealing that cash flow shortages and supply chain disruptions are major limitations for micro-enterprises.

The micro-entrepreneurs take on the role of a leader, determining the company's direction and the policies to address the issues they encounter. The leadership spirit for micro-entrepreneurs is developed through education and more by experience. The decision is made based on observations in the field. The efforts to increase revenue are by selling at prices below the normal price, getting a small margin, and even covering the variable costs.

The crisis forced entrepreneurs to make changes, innovate to survive, and prepare for recovery from the pandemic. The innovations offered by [11] are e-commerce and digital marketing. This is in line with Guo et al. (2020), in which digitalization enables micro-enterprises to respond effectively to crises by leveraging their dynamic capabilities. In addition, digitization can help to improve performance. Likewise, [15] stated that companies that use digital platforms through technology, digital marketing, and innovation will be successful in generating profits. Micro-entrepreneurs from Generation Y need to learn or work with millennial in order to use technology to their advantage and broaden their market.

Improvement of products and services to consumers can be carried out through communication with customers using information technology so that the products follow the customers' interests and the delivery method. Millennial entrepreneurs and customers who are inseparable from technology in their daily lives can benefit from its convenience. Retaining existing products and customers can be done by entrepreneurs who are not familiar with information technology.

This statement is in line with [6] that micro-enterprises must be objective in how they use their resources and competencies related to entrepreneurship, innovation, and knowledge acquisition during the crisis. The development of cooperation is crucial for strategic planning, especially because it can help in the processes of innovation and new product development [3].

Strategy formulation through formal and informal mechanisms must be done more innovatively and assisted by an entrepreneurial culture approach. Simultaneously, organizational processes must be in line with day-to-day operations. This will reduce dependence on individual knowledge. Furthermore, linkages with relationships will increase knowledge and experience, opening up opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

On 23 March 2022 (www.kompas.com), the government allowed people to return home to Lebaran, indicating that community movement was allowed again. This is a sign that the business is starting to enter a period of recovery. Business initiatives that need to be undertaken are starting to gradually re-hire staff, making recovery strategies, interacting with customers, and collaborating with suppliers.

The last stage of the crisis management model is the resolution by studying market diversification opportunities, developing new strategic plans, and demonstrating leadership and innovation. Market diversification means seeking new market segments, so that market segments become wider. The steps that need to be taken care determining the target market segment, then understanding their needs and wants. Entrepreneurs can use the Business Model Canvas (BMC) as a guide for operating a business profitably.

5. CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurs at the Cibaduyut shoe center in Bandung City can make an effort to survive by reducing costs in the form of temporarily laying off workers, halting production, closing rental stores, and changing target markets, leadership, innovation, collaboration, and business flexibility. Entrepreneurs must pay attention to fixed costs because they cannot be reduced if incomes are dramatically declining. Since the company's current operations require using the available funds, no product innovation can currently be done. Leaders play an important role in making short-term decisions to survive in times of crisis and prepare for innovation to deal with the recovery period.

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