Jurnal Ilmiah Research and Development Student (JIS)
Volume. 4 Nomor. 2 Juni 2026
e-ISSN : 2988-5922; p-ISSN : 2988-6058,Hal 434-444
DOI: https://doi.org/10.59024/jis.v4i2.2328
Tersedia: https://jurnal.alimspublishing.co.id/index.php/jis

Case Study on the Liaison Officer MSMEs Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical

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Abstract. This research aims to support MSMEs, especially Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical, through the Polbeng Business Expo by improving digital marketing, creating business profiles, product catalogs, promotional videos, and implementing QRIS payment methods. The Expo also helps these MSMEs reach a wider market and increase public awareness of their products. The project uses three stages: preparation, implementation, and accomplishment. The results show that the Liaison Officer plays an important role in connecting MSMEs with potential customers, while the Business Consultant provides useful guidance related to digital marketing and operational improvements. Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical gained several benefits, including increased product visibility on social media, more efficient transactions through QRIS, and better understanding of financial management through structured financial reports. Overall, the Polbeng Business Expo successfully supports the development of MSMEs through innovative and strategic approaches.

Keywords: Digital Marketing; Financia report; MSMEs; Polbeng Business Expo; QRIS Payment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in promoting economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and reducing poverty in many developing countries, including Indonesia. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs contribute significantly to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb more than 90% of the national workforce. Their substantial contribution demonstrates that MSMEs are one of the primary drivers of the national economy and an important pillar in achieving sustainable economic development. Despite their significant economic contribution, many MSMEs continue to encounter various challenges that hinder their competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

One of the major challenges faced by MSMEs is their limited capacity to adopt digital technologies in business operations. The rapid advancement of digital transformation has fundamentally changed consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and transaction systems. Consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for products, compare prices, and complete purchasing transactions. Consequently, MSMEs are required to improve their digital capabilities to remain competitive in today's business environment. However, many small businesses still experience difficulties in developing attractive branding, utilizing social media effectively, implementing digital payment systems, and maintaining systematic financial records.

Artikel Masuk: 28 April 2026; Revisi: 26 Mei 2026; Diterima: 23 Juni 2026; Terbit: 30 Juni 2026

Digital marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for expanding market reach while reducing promotional costs. Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok provide MSMEs with opportunities to promote products, communicate directly with customers, and build stronger brand awareness. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of digital marketing depends on business owners' knowledge and skills in developing promotional content and managing online business activities. Similarly, digital payment systems such as the Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) have transformed business transactions by providing faster, safer, and more convenient payment alternatives. Although these technologies offer numerous advantages, many MSMEs still have limited understanding of their implementation and business benefits.

Besides technological challenges, financial management remains another critical issue among MSMEs. Inadequate bookkeeping practices often prevent business owners from monitoring cash flow, evaluating profitability, and making informed business decisions. Many entrepreneurs continue to combine personal and business finances, resulting in poor financial control and limited business growth. Therefore, strengthening managerial competencies through mentoring and practical business assistance is essential to improve MSME performance and sustainability.

Higher education institutions have increasingly been recognized as strategic partners in supporting MSME development through community engagement and entrepreneurship programs. Universities possess the capacity to transfer knowledge, introduce technological innovation, and provide practical solutions to business problems. One example is the implementation of Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, organized by Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis. Unlike conventional business exhibitions that primarily focus on product promotion, this program integrates business mentoring with project-based learning, allowing students to work directly with MSMEs as Liaison Officers (LOs). Through this approach, students assist business owners in improving branding, developing promotional media, optimizing digital marketing strategies, implementing QRIS, and preparing simple financial reports. This collaborative model benefits both students, who gain practical experience, and MSMEs, which receive structured business assistance.

Several previous studies have reported that mentoring programs contribute positively to improving MSME performance through digital marketing, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial capacity building. However, most existing studies examine these interventions separately, focusing only on marketing, financial management, or digital payment systems. Limited research has investigated an integrated mentoring model that simultaneously combines branding development, digital marketing, financial administration, digital payment implementation, and business exhibitions within a project-based learning environment. Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding the role of university students as active facilitators in MSME development remains relatively limited, particularly in the Indonesian context.

This study addresses this research gap by examining the implementation of an integrated mentoring program conducted through Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II. Specifically, the study explores how business profiling, promotional media development, digital marketing optimization, QRIS implementation, and financial reporting contribute to strengthening MSME capacity and business competitiveness. By documenting the mentoring process and evaluating its outcomes, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of university-led business assistance programs in supporting MSME digital transformation.

The findings are expected to contribute to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on MSME development, entrepreneurial mentoring, and digital transformation by demonstrating how integrated assistance programs enhance business capacity. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for higher education institutions, policymakers, and business support organizations seeking to design sustainable mentoring programs that improve MSME competitiveness and accelerate digital transformation. Therefore, this study contributes not only to the academic discussion on entrepreneurship education but also to the practical development of community-based business empowerment initiatives.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of a mentoring program for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II organized by Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis in 2025. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of mentoring activities, business development processes, and the outcomes achieved by participating MSMEs.

The study was conducted over approximately three months, encompassing the stages of needs assessment, project planning, mentoring implementation, and evaluation. Two MSMEs, namely Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical, were purposively selected as research participants because they represented businesses with growth potential while facing challenges in branding, digital marketing, financial management, and digital technology adoption.

The research procedure consisted of five sequential stages, as illustrated in Figure 1.

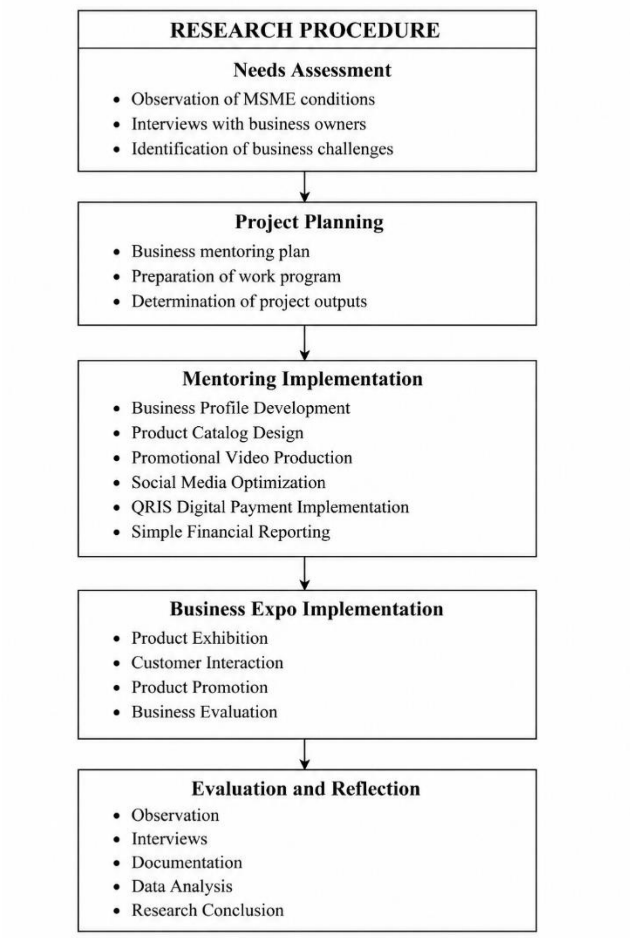

Figure 1. Research Procedure

The first stage involved identifying the needs and challenges experienced by the participating MSMEs through direct observation and semi-structured interviews. The information obtained during this stage served as the basis for designing an appropriate mentoring program.

The second stage focused on project planning, during which the researchers developed mentoring strategies tailored to the characteristics and business conditions of each MSME. The planned activities included business profiling, promotional media development, digital marketing optimization, implementation of QRIS digital payment systems, and preparation of simple financial reports.

The third stage consisted of implementing the mentoring activities. During this phase, the researchers acted as Liaison Officers (LOs) who facilitated communication between the organizing committee and business owners while directly assisting the MSMEs in improving branding, digital marketing, financial administration, and customer services.

The fourth stage was the implementation of Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, where both MSMEs promoted their products to visitors and interacted directly with potential customers. This stage also provided opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed promotional media and digital marketing strategies in real business settings.

Finally, the evaluation stage was conducted by comparing business conditions before and after the mentoring program. Data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, including business profiles, promotional materials, financial reports, and social media content.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and method triangulation were applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and project documentation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study was conducted as part of the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, organized by Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis in 2025. The program served as an implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) while simultaneously functioning as a community engagement initiative aimed at assisting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The research was carried out over approximately three months, covering the stages of needs assessment, project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The study involved two MSMEs, namely Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical, with the researchers acting as Liaison Officers (LOs) responsible for facilitating communication, coordinating activities, and providing business assistance throughout the Business Expo program.

Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with business owners, documentation of project activities, and evaluation of the outputs generated during the mentoring process. These methods enabled the researchers to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of the assistance program in improving business management, marketing strategies, and digital transformation within the participating MSMEs.

The initial assessment revealed several challenges faced by both enterprises. Although the businesses possessed competitive products with considerable market potential, they experienced limitations in business branding, digital marketing, financial administration, and the adoption of digital technologies. Promotional activities relied primarily on word-of-mouth marketing and conventional social media usage without a structured content strategy. Furthermore, financial transactions and bookkeeping were conducted manually, making it difficult for business owners to monitor business performance and make informed managerial decisions.

Based on these findings, a comprehensive mentoring program was designed to address the identified issues. The program included the preparation of business profiles, corporate profile videos, promotional videos, product catalogs, digital marketing strategies, social media optimization, QRIS-based digital payment implementation, and simple financial reporting. These activities were developed according to the specific needs of each MSME to ensure that the proposed solutions were practical, sustainable, and directly applicable to their business operations.

The research findings indicate that all planned mentoring activities were successfully implemented. One of the primary achievements was the development of comprehensive business profiles describing the history, vision, mission, products, target markets, and competitive advantages of each enterprise. These business profiles became the foundation for developing other promotional materials, including product catalogs and promotional videos. The existence of professionally prepared business profiles strengthened the identity of both MSMEs and facilitated communication with prospective customers and business partners.

In addition to business profiling, the project produced various digital promotional media aimed at increasing customer engagement. Promotional videos highlighted the production process, product quality, product variations, and unique selling points of each MSME. These videos were subsequently uploaded to social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, enabling the businesses to reach broader audiences. Compared with conventional promotional methods, audiovisual content proved more attractive because it provided consumers with richer and more engaging information regarding the products offered.

Social media optimization represented another significant outcome of the project. The researchers assisted business owners in developing content calendars, designing promotional materials, writing informative captions, selecting relevant hashtags, and utilizing paid promotional features. These strategies substantially expanded the visibility of promotional content and enhanced public awareness of both businesses. Although this study did not quantitatively measure sales growth, interviews with business owners revealed an increase in customer interactions, inquiries, and new customer acquisition following the implementation of structured digital marketing strategies.

Another important outcome was the implementation of the Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) as a digital payment system for *Es Teler* Tropical. Prior to the mentoring program, all transactions were conducted exclusively in cash, which occasionally created inconvenience for customers. Following QRIS implementation, customers were able to complete transactions using mobile banking and electronic wallet applications, resulting in faster, more efficient, and more convenient payment processes. This innovation also reflected the MSME's readiness to adopt digital financial technologies that are increasingly becoming standard practice in Indonesia's business environment.

Furthermore, the mentoring program strengthened business administration through the preparation of simple sales reports and financial statements. Before the project, financial records were incomplete and lacked systematic documentation, limiting the owner's ability to evaluate business performance accurately. After the mentoring activities, both MSMEs possessed standardized financial recording formats that facilitated income tracking, expense monitoring, and profit calculation. Consequently, business owners gained a clearer understanding of their financial conditions and were better equipped to formulate future business strategies.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the mentoring program successfully achieved its intended objectives. Beyond producing promotional media and administrative documents, the project enhanced business owners' understanding of branding, digital marketing, digital payment systems, and financial management. These improvements collectively contributed to strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the participating MSMEs.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the mentoring model implemented through Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II significantly contributed to improving the managerial capacity and competitiveness of participating MSMEs. The program addressed multiple aspects of business development, including branding, digital marketing, customer service, financial management, and digital transformation. These results suggest that business expos can function not only as promotional events but also as effective platforms for entrepreneurial learning, knowledge transfer, and capacity building.

One of the most significant achievements of the mentoring program was the enhancement of business identity through the development of business profiles, promotional videos, and product catalogs. From a marketing perspective, a strong brand identity is an essential strategic asset that enables businesses to differentiate themselves from competitors and establish customer trust. The professionally designed promotional materials produced during this project enabled both MSMEs to communicate their business values more effectively while presenting a more professional image to potential consumers. Consequently, branding activities should not be viewed merely as promotional tools but as long-term investments in business sustainability.

The implementation of digital marketing strategies also played a crucial role in expanding market reach. The increasing use of social media platforms has transformed consumer behavior, making digital channels indispensable for business promotion. By developing structured promotional content, utilizing audiovisual materials, and implementing paid advertising, both MSMEs successfully improved their online visibility and customer engagement. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that digital marketing has become one of the most effective approaches for improving MSME competitiveness due to its relatively low cost and extensive market reach.

The adoption of QRIS further illustrates the importance of digital transformation in modern business operations. Digital payment systems not only simplify financial transactions but also improve service quality by providing customers with faster and more convenient payment alternatives. The integration of QRIS demonstrates that even small businesses can benefit from financial technology adoption, contributing to greater operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. This finding supports previous research emphasizing that financial technology adoption has become a key determinant of MSME competitiveness in the digital economy.

Another important contribution of this study concerns financial management practices. Many MSMEs continue to experience difficulties due to inadequate financial record-keeping, resulting in limited access to reliable business information. The introduction of standardized sales reports and simple financial statements enabled business owners to separate personal and business finances, monitor cash flow, evaluate profitability, and make evidence-based business decisions. Sound financial administration therefore represents a fundamental component of sustainable business management.

Overall, this study confirms that university-based mentoring programs implemented through business expo activities can effectively strengthen MSME capabilities in multiple dimensions. The collaboration between higher education institutions and business actors facilitates the transfer of knowledge, practical skills, and technological innovation, ultimately supporting business development and improving competitiveness. Rather than serving solely as commercial exhibition events, business expos can become strategic instruments for entrepreneurial empowerment and sustainable MSME development.

The findings also have important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study reinforces existing literature on MSME development, digital transformation, and entrepreneurial mentoring by demonstrating how integrated assistance programs can simultaneously improve branding, digital marketing, financial management, and technology adoption. Practically, the study provides evidence that universities can play a strategic role in supporting local economic development through structured mentoring programs. Future business expo initiatives are therefore encouraged to incorporate comprehensive mentoring components that extend beyond product exhibitions to include business consultation, digital transformation, financial literacy, and marketing innovation, thereby creating sustainable impacts for participating MSMEs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the mentoring program implemented through Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II successfully enhanced the business capacity of the participating MSMEs, namely Dhira Donut *Kentang* and *Es Teler* Tropical. The integrated assistance program, which included business profiling, promotional video production, product catalog development, social media optimization, QRIS implementation, and simple financial reporting, effectively addressed several managerial and operational challenges faced by the businesses. The findings indicate that these activities contributed to strengthening business identity, improving promotional effectiveness, facilitating digital payment transactions, and enhancing financial management practices.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that structured mentoring plays a significant role in supporting the digital transformation of MSMEs. The adoption of digital marketing strategies through social media platforms expanded product visibility and increased customer engagement, while the implementation of QRIS provided more efficient and convenient payment services. In addition, the introduction of systematic financial recording enabled business owners to better monitor business performance and make more informed managerial decisions. These improvements collectively increased the readiness of the participating MSMEs to compete in an increasingly digital and competitive business environment.

The findings also highlight the strategic role of higher education institutions in promoting local economic development through community engagement programs. Business expos should not be viewed merely as promotional events but also as collaborative platforms for entrepreneurial learning, innovation, and business capacity building. The active involvement of students as Liaison Officers created opportunities for knowledge transfer while providing practical solutions tailored to the needs of MSMEs.

Despite these positive outcomes, this study was limited to two MSMEs participating in a single Business Expo program. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all MSMEs. Future studies are encouraged to involve a larger number of enterprises from different business sectors and geographical locations, employ longer observation periods, and integrate quantitative performance indicators, such as sales growth, customer acquisition, and financial performance, to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of mentoring effectiveness. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainable MSME development and the long-term impact of university-led business assistance programs.

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