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The Role of Liaison Officers in Assisting MSMEs at a Business Expo Case Study of Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung

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Abstract

Business expos provide strategic opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to introduce products, interact directly with consumers, and strengthen digital promotion. However, MSME participation requires effective coordination and continuous operational assistance. This study aims to analyze the role of Liaison Officers (LOs) in assisting MSMEs during the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, focusing on Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews, documentation, activity records, promotional materials, transaction records, and simple financial reports. The data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing across the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. The findings show that LOs performed four integrated roles: liaison, coordinator, facilitator, and promotional assistant. During preparation, LOs identified tenant needs and developed business profiles, promotional videos, catalogs, and social media content. During implementation, they supported booth operations, customer service, direct promotion, communication with organizers, and QRIS-based transactions. During evaluation, they assisted in recording sales, preparing financial reports, and identifying operational challenges. All planned outputs were achieved, including two profile videos, two promotional videos, ten catalog designs, four social media platforms, two paid promotions, QRIS implementation for both MSMEs, and two financial reports. The study concludes that structured LO assistance strengthens MSME readiness, promotional reach, transaction convenience, and event coordination, although sustained post-expo support remains necessary to maintain long-term business impact.

Keywords: Liaison Officer, MSME Assistance, Business Expo

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in supporting economic growth and improving community welfare. The existence of MSMEs not only contributes to job creation but also serves as one of the drivers of community economic activity through the development of local products and increased income for business actors [1]. In an increasingly competitive business environment, MSMEs are required to adapt to changes in consumer behavior, technological developments, and increasingly broader market competition [2]. This condition encourages MSME actors not only to maintain product quality but also to develop marketing strategies that can increase visibility and expand market reach.

Digital transformation has become one of the opportunities that MSMEs can utilize to improve their competitiveness. The use of digital technology enables business actors to expand their marketing reach, improve operational efficiency, and establish broader interactions with consumers [3]. Digital marketing strategies through social media have also become a relatively easy alternative to implement, as they can be used to deliver product information through visual content, promotional videos, and direct communication with consumers [4]. In addition, the use of promotional media such as videos and product catalogs can help MSMEs present information about their business identity, product advantages, prices, and product variations in a more attractive and informative manner [5], [6]. Therefore, the utilization of digital media can be an important part of strengthening MSME promotion, particularly for businesses that still face limitations in marketing resources.

In addition to digital marketing strategies, Business Expos or business exhibitions can serve as a promotional platform that directly connects MSME actors with potential consumers. Expo activities provide business actors with opportunities to introduce their products, obtain direct feedback from consumers, observe market conditions, and establish relationships with other parties who may support business development [7]. Exhibitions can also serve as promotional media that combine direct interaction with consumers and broader marketing activities.

However, the success of MSME participation in expo activities is not solely determined by the availability of a place to sell and display products but is also influenced by the readiness of MSMEs to conduct promotions, manage product information, serve consumers, and utilize supporting transaction technologies.

A Liaison Officer (LO) is an individual responsible for building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships, facilitating communication, and coordinating activities among two or more individuals, institutions, or organizations. According to Shea (2019), *"A liaison officer is an employee who builds and maintains mutually beneficial relationships, facilitates communications and coordinates activities among two or more people, agencies or organizations."* In this context, an LO acts as a liaison who ensures effective communication and coordination among the parties involved, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and addressing communication barriers in the implementation of activities (Arisa & Naryoso, 2025)[8].

In this context, the presence of a Liaison Officer (LO) is important in supporting smooth communication and relationships between event organizers and MSME tenants. The LO serves as a liaison who assists with communication, coordination, information delivery, and addressing tenant needs throughout the event. This role becomes increasingly complex when the LO is involved not only in administrative and coordination functions but also in assisting MSMEs, such as helping prepare promotional materials, guiding the use of digital media, supporting the implementation of marketing activities, and helping connect MSME needs with the event organizers. Therefore, in Business Expo activities, the LO can act as a facilitator who assists MSMEs in maximizing promotional opportunities.

Previous studies have shown that MSME development in the digital era requires strategies that encompass the utilization of technology, innovation, and the strengthening of marketing capabilities [9]. Digital marketing strategies are also considered capable of helping MSMEs increase sales and expand their consumer reach through the utilization of various digital channels [10]. Another study on the promotional mix indicates that promotional activities can be used to increase consumer awareness of products and encourage purchasing decisions [11]. On the other hand, the use of social media as a marketing tool enables MSMEs to interact with consumers more flexibly and expand the dissemination of product information [12]. The use of digital catalogs can also help consumers obtain product information more easily, while promotional videos can enhance visual appeal and attract the attention of potential consumers to the products offered.

The use of technology in MSME activities has also developed in the area of transactions. The implementation of the Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) provides a practical non-cash payment alternative and supports digital transaction processes for business actors [13]. The digitalization of payments can be part of efforts to modernize MSME transaction management while also providing convenience for consumers in making payments [14]. In addition to marketing and transaction aspects, financial management is also an important part of MSME development, as financial record-keeping can help business actors understand their business conditions and serve as a basis for decision-making [15]. Therefore, MSME assistance in Business Expo activities should ideally not only focus on increasing sales during the event but also encompass strengthening promotional activities, digitalization, transactions, and business management.

Although several studies have discussed MSME digitalization, marketing strategies, promotional media, expo activities, and the use of QRIS separately, studies that specifically analyze the role of Liaison Officers as both liaisons and facilitators for MSMEs in the implementation of Business Expos remain relatively limited. Previous studies have primarily positioned digital marketing as a marketing strategy or discussed expos as promotional media, while the coordination and assistance aspects carried out by LOs in integrating various MSME needs during the event have not been extensively examined. This research gap indicates the need for studies that view LOs not only as administrative liaisons between organizers and tenants but also as parties who contribute to supporting promotional readiness, marketing implementation, digital technology utilization, and the smooth operation of MSME activities during Business Expos.

This research was conducted during the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, with case studies of the MSMEs Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung. Both MSMEs received assistance in various activities, including the creation of business profiles and profile videos, promotional video production, the use of social media for marketing, product catalog development, the implementation of QRIS payments, and the preparation of financial reports [15]. The implementation of these assistance activities demonstrates that LO involvement can encompass various integrated activities to support the readiness and development of MSMEs during expo activities. The results of the activities also indicated an increase in sales during the expo; however, this impact tended to decline after the event ended. This condition indicates that the success of an expo should not only be assessed based on short-term sales increases but also based on the assistance provided to MSMEs and the sustainability of utilizing the outcomes of such assistance after the event has concluded.

The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of the role of LOs in assisting MSMEs through an integrated approach, namely by connecting the LO's coordination and communication functions with digital promotional activities, the provision of promotional media, payment digitalization, and business management support. Through this approach, the research not only views the Business Expo as a promotional medium but also examines how the role of LOs can support MSMEs in utilizing expo activities as both a promotional space and a process for strengthening business capabilities. The case studies of Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung also provide empirical insights into MSME assistance practices within the local context of Bengkalis.

Based on the above discussion, this research aims to analyze the role of Liaison Officers (LOs) in assisting MSMEs during the Business Expo, particularly the MSMEs Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung. This research specifically examines the roles of LOs in the coordination and assistance processes, the implementation of promotional and digital marketing activities, the utilization of promotional media, the implementation of QRIS, and support for MSME management during the Business Expo. The results of this research are expected to provide an overview of the contribution of LOs in supporting MSME development through expo activities and serve as a reference for organizers of similar events in designing more structured and sustainable MSME assistance models.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was selected because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the Liaison Officer (LO) in assisting MSMEs during the implementation of the Business Expo, specifically Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung.

The research was conducted during the Business Expo held at Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis. The research subjects consisted of the Liaison Officers responsible for assisting the MSMEs and the owners of Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung as the main informants.

The research object was the Liaison Officer's assistance activities for Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung MSMEs throughout the three stages of the Business Expo, namely:

Tabel 1. Stages and Objects of Liaison Officer Assistance for MSMEs during the Business Expo

Stage	Research Object
Preparation Stage	Liaison Officer assistance activities for Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung MSMEs
Implementation Stage	Liaison Officer assistance activities during the Business Expo
Tahap Penyelesaian	Liaison Officer assistance activities after the Business Expo

The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation of LO assistance and coordination activities with MSME tenants during the Business Expo, as well as interviews with parties involved in the implementation of the event. Research informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the activities, namely the LOs responsible for assisting the tenants and the owners or managers of Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung MSMEs. Secondary data were obtained from event documents, promotional materials, product catalogs, activity documentation, transaction records, and MSME financial reports related to the implementation of the assistance activities.

The data obtained were analyzed using interactive data analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, data from observations, interviews, and documentation were selected and categorized based on the research focus, namely the role of LOs in coordination and communication, promotional assistance, digital marketing, the provision of promotional media, the implementation of QRIS, and support for MSME management. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives and tables to illustrate the relationship between the forms of assistance provided and MSME activities during the Business Expo. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the patterns and findings obtained from all data sources.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly examine the activities of the Liaison Officer during the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages of the Business Expo. Interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding the forms of assistance, duties, responsibilities, challenges, and benefits experienced by the MSMEs. Documentation in the form of activity photographs, Business Expo reports, field notes, and other supporting documents was used as complementary data.

The analysis was conducted continuously from the data collection process until the completion of the research, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the role of the Liaison Officer in assisting MSMEs throughout the Business Expo.

3. Results and Discussion

The research results show that the Liaison Officer (LO) plays a role in assisting MSMEs during the implementation of the Business Expo. This role includes coordination between the organizing committee and MSME actors, activity preparation, the development of promotional media, digital marketing assistance, booth operations, direct promotion, transaction assistance, and activity evaluation. These findings were obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation of assistance activities involving the MSMEs Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung. Overall, the LO assistance activities were categorized into three stages, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

3.1 The Role of Liaison Officers in Assisting MSMEs

During the preparation stage, the LO coordinated with MSME owners to collect information regarding business profiles, products, prices, and promotional needs. This information was used as a basis for preparing promotional materials and addressing MSME needs during the Business Expo. The LO also assisted in preparing promotional media in the form of profile videos, promotional videos, and product catalogs for both MSMEs.

Assistance in digital marketing was provided by helping prepare promotional media through digital platforms. For Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh, the assistance activities included creating and preparing promotional content for Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Meanwhile, for Ice Bandung, assistance was provided through the preparation of promotional content on social media. The results of these activities included the availability of digital promotional media that could be utilized to support MSME marketing activities.

During the implementation stage, the LO assisted with booth operations and helped maintain communication between the MSME owners and the organizing committee. Assistance was also provided in serving visitors and delivering product information. For Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh, the LO assisted with booth arrangement, customer service, and communication with visitors. For Ice Bandung, assistance focused on customer service and providing product information to visitors.

The LO also played a role in supporting direct promotional activities by assisting in explaining products, prices, and catalogs to visitors. In addition, the LO assisted both MSMEs in using QRIS as an alternative non-cash payment method. This assistance supported the service and transaction processes throughout the Business Expo.

During the evaluation stage, the LO assisted in recording sales results and identifying challenges encountered during the event. The evaluation was conducted to assess the implementation of the activities and identify areas for improvement for future events. Thus, the role of the LO extended throughout the entire series of activities, from preparation to evaluation.

3.2 Achievements of Liaison Officer Assistance Activities

In addition to identifying the role of the LO, this study also measured the achievements of the assistance activities based on the predetermined activity targets. These achievements included the provision of promotional media, the utilization of social media, paid promotional activities, the implementation of QRIS, and the preparation of financial reports.

Tabel 2. Targets and Achievements of Liaison Officer Assistance Activities

Indicator	Target	Achievement
MSME Profile Video	2 videos	Achieved
Promotional Video	2 videos	Achieved
Product Flyer/Catalog	10 designs	Achieved
Social Media	4 platforms	Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp
Paid Promotion	2 activities	Paid promotion on Instagram through the Bengkalisku account and paid TikTok content
QRIS Implementation	2 MSMEs	Achieved
Financial Reports	2 reports	Achieved

Based on the data, all predetermined targets of the assistance activities were successfully achieved. Both MSMEs received profile videos and promotional videos, while flyer or product catalog materials were also successfully prepared. Social media assistance was provided through several digital platforms and supported by paid promotional activities. In addition to promotional aspects, the implementation of QRIS for both MSMEs provided

an alternative non-cash payment method, while the preparation of financial reports became part of the assistance in recording business activities.

These achievements indicate that LO assistance was not only focused on operational needs during the Business Expo but also included the provision of supporting tools for MSME marketing and transactions. This demonstrates that the role of the LO can extend beyond merely serving as a liaison between the organizing committee and tenants to becoming a facilitator who assists MSMEs in preparing promotional needs and conducting business activities throughout the event.

3.3 Discussion of the Role of Liaison Officers in Assisting MSMEs

Based on the research findings, the role of the LO can be categorized into four main forms, namely as a liaison, coordinator, facilitator, and promotional assistant. As a liaison, the LO conveys information and coordinates needs between the organizing committee and MSMEs. As a coordinator, the LO helps ensure MSME readiness before and during the Business Expo. As a facilitator, the LO assists MSMEs in addressing operational needs, serving visitors, and managing transactions. Meanwhile, as a promotional assistant, the LO supports the provision of promotional media and the utilization of digital platforms.

These roles indicate that LO assistance is carried out in an integrated manner throughout each stage of the Business Expo. During the preparation stage, assistance focuses on MSME readiness and the provision of promotional facilities. During the implementation stage, the focus of assistance shifts to operational efficiency, direct promotion, visitor services, and transactions. Meanwhile, during the evaluation stage, activities are directed toward recording results and identifying challenges as a basis for improvement.

The research findings also indicate that the Business Expo provides opportunities for MSMEs to conduct promotional activities and engage in direct transactions with consumers. However, the success of the event cannot be attributed solely to the role of the LO, as other factors may influence the outcomes, such as the number of visitors, product attractiveness, pricing, booth location, and the condition of the MSMEs. Therefore, the role of the LO in this study is more appropriately understood as one of the supporting factors contributing to the smooth implementation of the event and the readiness of MSMEs to utilize the Business Expo as a promotional platform.

Thus, LO assistance provides support in the areas of coordination, promotion, operations, transactions, and evaluation of MSMEs during the Business Expo. The research findings show that LO involvement at each stage of the event helps integrate MSME needs with the implementation of Business Expo activities. However, the long-term impact on MSME business development requires continued assistance after the event, particularly in the utilization of digital media, the sustainability of promotional activities, and the management of relationships with consumers.

3.4 Sustainability of MSME Assistance After the Business Expo

The findings indicate that the value of Liaison Officer assistance should not end when the Business Expo closes. Promotional videos, product catalogs, social media content, QRIS facilities, and simple financial reports are reusable business assets that can support MSME activities after the event. Therefore, assistance should be directed not only toward completing event requirements but also toward transferring practical knowledge to MSME owners. This transfer is important so that business actors can independently update product information, publish promotional content, respond to customer inquiries, use digital payment facilities, and maintain basic transaction records without continuous dependence on the LO.

A sustainable assistance model can be organized through follow-up activities after the expo. In the initial stage, the LO and MSME owner can review the sales record, customer questions, promotional responses, and operational obstacles encountered during the event. The review can then be translated into a simple action plan, such as updating product catalogs, determining a regular social media posting schedule, improving product descriptions, organizing customer contacts, and ensuring that QRIS remains active. Periodic communication can also be used to identify technical difficulties and encourage consistent utilization of the promotional tools that were created during the assistance process.

The effectiveness of LO assistance should also be evaluated using indicators that go beyond the completion of outputs. The achievement of videos, catalogs, social media platforms, paid promotions, QRIS implementation, and financial reports demonstrates successful activity execution, but these outputs do not automatically guarantee long-term business improvement. Future Business Expo programs may monitor the frequency of digital promotion, customer response time, number of repeat purchases, proportion of non-cash transactions, completeness of financial records, and changes in sales after the event. Such indicators would provide a clearer picture of whether the knowledge and tools introduced by the LO continue to be used by MSMEs.

From an event management perspective, structured LO assistance requires clear role descriptions, standardized tenant-needs checklists, communication channels, and practical templates for promotion, transactions, and evaluation. LOs should receive initial briefing regarding MSME characteristics, event procedures, digital promotion, customer service, and the limits of their responsibilities. At the same time, MSME owners need to remain the primary decision makers for product, price, and business strategy. This division of roles enables the LO to function as a facilitator who strengthens MSME readiness while maintaining business ownership and independence. A documented assistance model can also help organizers replicate the process in future expos with adjustments based on the needs of each tenant.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that the Liaison Officer (LO) plays a role in assisting MSMEs throughout the implementation of the Business Expo, from the preparation and implementation stages to the evaluation stage. During the preparation stage, the LO is responsible for coordinating with MSME owners, identifying business needs, collecting information regarding products and prices, and preparing various promotional requirements. During the implementation stage, the LO assists with booth operations, helps deliver product information to visitors, supports direct promotional activities, and facilitates the use of QRIS as an alternative non-cash payment method. Meanwhile, during the evaluation stage, the LO assists in documenting the results of the activities, recording sales results, preparing simple financial reports, and identifying challenges that can serve as evaluation materials for future activities. The research findings also show that the assistance activities produced several outputs that supported MSME readiness to participate in the Business Expo. These outputs included two MSME profile videos, two promotional videos, ten flyer or product catalog designs, the utilization of four social media platforms, two paid promotional activities, the implementation of QRIS for two MSMEs, and the preparation of two financial reports. These achievements demonstrate that LO assistance was not limited to coordination between the organizing committee and tenants but also encompassed aspects of promotion, digital marketing, operations, transactions, and business management. Thus, the involvement of the LO supports MSME readiness to utilize the Business Expo as a platform to introduce products, interact with consumers, and conduct direct transactions. The implications of this study indicate that the presence of LOs can be an important component in the implementation of Business Expo activities involving MSMEs. Structured assistance provided from the preparation stage through the evaluation stage can help connect MSME needs with event implementation and ensure that various tenant needs are addressed throughout the expo. This assistance model can be applied to other MSME exhibitions or expos by adapting it to the needs and characteristics of each tenant. However, the success of a Business Expo is not determined solely by the role of the LO but is also influenced by MSME readiness, product quality, promotional strategies, visitor numbers, booth location, product prices, and conditions during the event. This study has limitations because it focuses on only two MSMEs, namely Es Jagung Gerai Mak Teh and Ice Bandung, within a single Business Expo event. This condition means that the findings cannot yet be generalized to all Business Expo activities or to all MSMEs with different characteristics. In addition, this study focuses more on the process and forms of LO assistance during the event and does not quantitatively measure the long-term impact of the assistance on MSME business development. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger number of MSMEs, different Business Expo events, and more diverse research locations. Future studies may also examine the long-term effectiveness of LO assistance by assessing the sustainability of digital marketing, changes in sales, increases in customer numbers, and the development of MSME business performance after the Business Expo has concluded.

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