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## The Effectiveness of the Roles of Liaison Officers and Business Consultants in the Development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes MSMEs

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### Abstrak

*This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the roles of the Liaison Officer (LO) and Business Consultant (BC) in supporting the development of the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) Alna Mochi and My Crepes through the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II. The research employed a qualitative method with a project-based approach consisting of three stages: preparation, implementation, and completion. Data were collected through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation during the mentoring activities. During the preparation stage, the team identified the business needs and challenges faced by both MSMEs and developed mentoring plans. In the implementation stage, the Liaison Officer facilitated communication, coordination, and operational activities between the organizing committee and MSME owners, ensuring that all activities were carried out effectively. Meanwhile, the Business Consultant provided assistance in developing digital marketing strategies, creating promotional materials, implementing QRIS-based digital payment systems, and improving basic business management practices. The completion stage involved evaluating the mentoring outcomes and documenting the results. The findings indicate that the collaboration between the Liaison Officer and Business Consultant positively contributed to increasing product visibility, expanding market reach, improving digital technology adoption, facilitating cashless transactions, and enhancing the professionalism of the MSMEs. Although the mentoring period was relatively short, the integrated roles of both mentors effectively supported the business growth and sustainable development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes while strengthening their competitiveness in the increasingly digital business environment.*

**Keywords:** *Liaison Officer, Business Consultant, MSMEs, Digital Marketing, QRIS, Business Development.*

### 1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a vital pillar of the Indonesian economy. The MSME sector not only contributes to job creation but also plays a vital role in equitable development and poverty reduction [1]. MSMEs or Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises—are a type of business that plays a crucial role in a country's economy. MSMEs are businesses owned by individuals or small groups with fewer than 250 employees. MSMEs are also characterized by small capital, limited business scale, and often use simple technology in production and marketing. As they grow, MSMEs can contribute to job creation, increase community income, and strengthen the economy at the local level [2]. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a highly strategic role in Indonesia's economic structure. As one of the backbones of the national economy, MSMEs not only make a significant contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also play a key role in labor absorption, employing more than 97% of the workforce throughout Indonesia [3].

Despite their strategic role, most MSMEs still face various challenges, such as limited marketing capabilities, low adoption of digital technology, suboptimal financial management, limited market access, and a weak business identity. These conditions result in MSMEs' competitiveness remaining relatively low.

Online marketing is a marketing strategy that promotes products through digital media or the internet. Today, the internet is one of the most important elements in society, as nearly all current technologies rely on it. Digital marketing has also transformed the interaction between sellers and buyers. What was once a one-way interaction has now become multi-directional. Digital marketing is no longer unfamiliar to business owners. In recent years, digital marketing has become the preferred choice for many business owners when marketing their products. Digital marketing refers to promotional activities and market outreach conducted online through digital media, utilizing various channels such as social media [4]. Digital marketing is a critical component of a company's marketing strategy in today's digital age. By leveraging digital platforms and technologies, companies can reach

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a broader target audience, build strong brand awareness, increase conversions and sales, and better measure campaign results [5].

In this event, students serve as Liaison Officers (LO) and Business Consultants (BC). A Liaison Officer acts as a liaison between two groups to ensure effective communication. At the Business Expo, the LO is responsible for coordinating between the organizing committee and MSME participants, meeting the needs of exhibitors, and helping to resolve any issues that arise during the event [6]. The Liaison Officer is a key role tasked with facilitating communication between event organizers and international guests. The Liaison Officer (LO) is a crucial position in event management, particularly for international-scale events. A Liaison Officer (LO) is an individual responsible for assisting, coordinating, and ensuring smooth communication between event participants and organizers [7]. A Liaison Officer serves as a liaison between two groups to ensure effective communication. At a Business Expo, the LO is tasked with coordinating between the organizing committee and SME participants, addressing tenant needs, and helping resolve issues that arise during the event.

Meanwhile, business consultants provide guidance to business owners on improving operational effectiveness through marketing strategies, digital marketing, financial management, product innovation, and the use of digital technology. Business consultants play a role in optimizing business processes, improving the efficient use of resources, and minimizing waste. Business consulting can improve the operational efficiency of MSMEs through business strategies, marketing training, and financial management [8]. Business consulting can improve the operational efficiency of MSMEs through business strategies, marketing training, and financial management [9].

In this modern era, in addition to the rapid growth of the internet, various technologies continue to evolve and become increasingly sophisticated, as does the growing use of social media. One such technology is the one we currently use: cashless payments, known as QRIS. With QRIS, people's lives have become easier, as they no longer need to carry cash wherever they go. The introduction of QRIS has also been met with positive responses from various quarters. Given current trends, several e-commerce platforms have begun using QR-code systems as a payment method. This system is shifting many people's habits from cash payments to cashless transactions. However, not everyone is familiar with or understands cashless payment systems. To make electronic/cashless payments, people must possess technological literacy. The implementation of QR-code-based electronic payment systems is indeed considered efficient in various aspects [10] in Indonesia. QRIS is a QR code standard for digital payments via server-based e-money apps, e-wallets, or mobile banking. The purpose of QRIS is to make digital payments easier for the public and to enable oversight by a single regulatory body, as it adheres to established standards [11]. Furthermore, although QRIS offers various benefits, such as faster transactions and more accurate data, there are concerns regarding data security and the potential for fraud. Therefore, it is important for stakeholders to fully understand the dynamics of QRIS implementation, including the opportunities and challenges faced by MSMEs [12].

In addition to streamlining the payment process by implementing QRIS payments at the exhibition, business development is also crucial for enhancing the branding of the MSMEs involved in the project. Business development plays a key role in growing and advancing a business. Some of the key aspects involved include increasing revenue, improving profitability, driving business expansion, and so on [13]. Business development is a critical role within a company responsible for identifying opportunities for business growth. In practice, business development must involve new innovations that drive the business forward. The business development manager is a high-level position responsible for a company's business development. A business development manager must have a deep understanding of the company's operations, including its targets, products, and future plans. Business development differs from sales development, but both roles must contribute their best ideas to grow the company's business, especially when facing competitors in the same industry [14]. Business development is the process of creating long-term value for a company through business relationships, markets, and customers [15]. Sustainable business development is the company's primary focus, which can be achieved by adopting business strategies and activities that align with the needs of the company and its shareholders, while protecting, preserving, and strengthening the resources required by the company [16].

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the roles of Liaison Officers and Business Consultants in the development of the Alna Mochi and My Crepes MSMEs. This study focuses on the effectiveness of the roles of Liaison Officers and Business Consultants in the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II. During the MSME development process at the business expo, the Liaison Officers and Business Consultants coordinated and provided guidance on promotional activities, digital marketing, the implementation of QRIS, and MSME management throughout the event. The results of this study are expected to provide insight into the effectiveness of the roles of Liaison Officers and Business Consultants during the expo in supporting the development of MSMEs and to serve as a reference for other researchers.

## 2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method with a project-based approach to examine the effectiveness of the roles of Liaison Officers (LOs) and Business Consultants (BCs) in the development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes MSMEs. The study was conducted at the Bengkalis State Polytechnic campus in the context of the Polbeng Business Expo activities. The research subjects consisted of the LOs and BCs involved in assisting the two MSMEs, while Alna Mochi and My Crepes were the objects of the assistance activities.

The project was implemented through three stages, as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Project-Based Research Stages**

| No. | Stage          | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Preparation    | Observing and identifying the conditions and needs of Alna Mochi and My Crepes; collecting information related to business conditions, product marketing and promotion; preparing marketing strategies; preparing digital payment implementation; and assigning responsibilities to LOs and BCs before the expo. |
| 2   | Implementation | Coordinating and communicating with MSME owners; implementing mentoring activities; assisting product marketing and promotion; supporting business operations; and implementing business development activities conducted by LOs and BCs.                                                                        |
| 3   | Accomplishment | Evaluating the mentoring activities; documenting the implementation and outcomes; identifying challenges and solutions; and collecting feedback, criticism, suggestions, and input from the MSME owners.                                                                                                         |

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly during the mentoring activities and MSME operations. Interviews were conducted with MSME owners, LOs, and BCs to obtain information regarding the implementation and outcomes of the mentoring activities. Documentation was used to support the research data through activity reports, photographs, and other relevant documents.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying the roles performed by LOs and BCs and examining their contributions to the development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes MSMEs. The effectiveness of the roles was assessed based on the implementation of mentoring activities and the outcomes obtained by the MSMEs during the project.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The research findings indicate that the mentoring activities provided by Liaison Officers (LOs) and Business Consultants (BCs) supported the development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes during the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II. The mentoring activities covered operational coordination, marketing and promotion, digital marketing, promotional media, digital payment facilities, and basic business record-keeping. The results are presented sequentially based on the preparation, implementation, and accomplishment stages.

### 3.1 Preparation

The preparation stage began with an assessment of the initial conditions and needs of Alna Mochi and My Crepes. The assessment focused on promotional activities, social media utilization, payment methods, and promotional media. The results of the assessment are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Conditions of MSMEs Before Mentoring**

| Aspect            | Alna Mochi                     | My Crepes                 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Promotions        | WhatsApp and direct promotions | Direct promotions         |
| Social Media      | Not yet optimized              | Not yet optimized         |
| Payment           | Cash and QRIS                  | Cash                      |
| Promotional Media | Simple banners                 | Limited promotional media |

Based on the initial conditions, the mentoring program was prepared according to the needs of each MSME. For Alna Mochi, the mentoring focused on optimizing promotional activities, social media utilization, and promotional media. For My Crepes, the mentoring focused on expanding promotional activities, optimizing social media, improving promotional media, and introducing QRIS as an additional payment facility.

The LO was responsible for coordinating operational needs, communicating with the organizing committee and MSME owners, and ensuring that information related to the expo was effectively delivered. Meanwhile, the BC

focused on business development activities, including digital marketing strategies, promotional materials, social media optimization, and preparation for digital payment implementation.

The preparation stage therefore provided the basis for determining the mentoring activities according to the initial conditions of each MSME. The differences in the conditions of the two MSMEs resulted in different priorities during the mentoring process.

### 3.2 Implementation

During the implementation stage, the LO acted as a liaison between the organizing committee and the MSME owners. The activities included coordinating schedules, communicating technical information, ensuring that MSME needs were addressed, and assisting in resolving operational issues during the expo. These activities supported communication and coordination between the MSME tenants and the organizing committee.

The BC provided assistance related to digital marketing, promotional media, digital payment facilities, and basic business management. The activities included optimizing social media, preparing banners and product catalogs, supporting QRIS implementation, developing marketing strategies, and providing guidance on simple business record-keeping. The results of the mentoring activities are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Mentoring Program and Outcomes**

| Program                          | Result                                                         |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social media optimization        | Promotional activities through social media became more active |
| Banner and catalog design        | More attractive product presentation                           |
| QRIS implementation              | Cashless payment facility became available                     |
| Marketing support                | Promotional reach was expanded                                 |
| Business record-keeping training | Business management became more structured                     |

The implementation results show that the roles of LOs and BCs complemented each other. The LO primarily supported communication, coordination, and operational activities, while the BC focused on marketing, promotion, digitalization, and business management. The combination allowed the mentoring program to address both the operational needs of the MSMEs during the expo and their business development needs.

### 3.3 Accomplishment

Following the completion of the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II, an evaluation was conducted through discussions with the MSME owners, LOs, and BCs. The evaluation focused on the benefits of the mentoring program, challenges encountered during implementation, and opportunities for further business development.

The evaluation indicated changes in several aspects of the MSMEs following the mentoring activities, as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Changes Following Mentoring**

| Aspect              | Before     | After                       |
|---------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Promotion           | Limited    | More active on social media |
| Payment             | Cash       | Cash and QRIS               |
| Promotional Media   | Simple     | More engaging               |
| Business Management | Undirected | More systematic             |

The results indicate that the mentoring activities produced several practical outcomes for the two MSMEs. Promotional activities became more active through social media, promotional media were improved, and digital payment facilities were available. In addition, business record-keeping guidance provided a more systematic approach to managing business activities.

However, the evaluation also identified a limitation related to the duration of the mentoring period. The limited implementation period meant that some of the recommended strategies could not be fully implemented or evaluated over the long term. Therefore, continued mentoring is needed to support the consistent application of digital marketing and business management strategies.

### 3.4 Effectiveness of the Roles of Liaison Officers and Business Consultants

The effectiveness of the LO and BC roles was assessed based on observations of the mentoring activities and interviews with the parties involved. The results show that the LO was effective in supporting communication and coordination between the organizing committee and the MSMEs. The indicators of the LO's role are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Effectiveness of the Liaison Officer's Role**

| Indicator                                  | Observation Results                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Coordination with the organizing committee | Ran smoothly throughout the event                     |
| Information dissemination                  | Information was delivered to MSMEs in a timely manner |
| Operational support                        | MSME tenant needs were addressed                      |
| Troubleshooting                            | Operational challenges were resolved during the event |
| Communication with MSMEs                   | Communication operated effectively and responsively   |

The findings indicate that the LO contributed primarily to the operational effectiveness of the expo. The coordination and communication functions helped ensure that information and operational requirements were conveyed between the organizing committee and the MSME owners. The LO's role was therefore important in maintaining the smooth implementation of the event and responding to operational challenges.

The effectiveness of the BC role was identified through the implementation of mentoring activities related to digital marketing, promotional media, digital payments, marketing strategies, and business management. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Effectiveness of the Business Consultant's Role**

| Mentoring Program                 | Results                                                              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social media optimization         | Product promotion became more active                                 |
| Promotional materials development | Banners and product catalogs were available                          |
| QRIS implementation               | Cashless payment facility became available                           |
| Marketing strategies              | Promotional activities became more targeted                          |
| Business management               | MSME owners gained an understanding of basic business record-keeping |

The findings indicate that the BC contributed to the development of the MSMEs through practical assistance in marketing and business digitalization. The mentoring activities resulted in more active social media promotion, the availability of promotional materials, the use of digital payment facilities, and increased understanding of basic business record-keeping. These outcomes demonstrate that the BC role extended beyond promotional activities to include aspects of business management.

Overall, the findings indicate that the roles of LOs and BCs were complementary in supporting Alna Mochi and My Crepes. The LO focused primarily on communication, coordination, and operational assistance, while the BC focused on marketing, digital promotion, payment facilitation, and business management. The results suggest that this division of roles supported the implementation of the mentoring program and produced several practical outcomes for the MSMEs.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the mentoring should be interpreted within the scope and duration of the project. The findings demonstrate improvements in the implementation of promotional, digital payment, and business management activities, but the available data do not establish the long-term effects of the mentoring on business growth or financial performance. Therefore, further and continuous mentoring is required to determine whether the changes achieved can be maintained and contribute to sustainable MSME development.

### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the mentoring provided through the Polbeng Business Expo Chapter II supported the development of Alna Mochi and My Crepes MSMEs. The Liaison Officer (LO) played an effective role in facilitating communication and coordination between the organizing committee and MSME owners, supporting operational needs, and assisting in resolving challenges during the event. Meanwhile, the Business Consultant (BC) contributed to business development through digital marketing strategies, social media optimization, promotional materials, QRIS-based digital payment facilities, and basic business management

guidance. The mentoring activities resulted in improvements in product promotion, marketing reach, transaction facilities, digital technology utilization, and business management. Although the mentoring period limited the implementation of some programs, the complementary roles of LOs and BCs effectively supported the development of the two MSMEs within the scope of the project. Continued mentoring, accompanied by post-activity monitoring and evaluation, is recommended to support the consistent implementation of digital marketing and business management strategies and to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs.

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