

Enhancing Small Business Quality: Strategy Development for Classifying SMEs in Palembang

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Abstract

Purpose: This community service aims to provide training and develop strategies to improve the quality of small businesses based on the classification of SMEs in Palembang, South Sumatra.

Methodology/approach: This research was conducted using a sample of data from 15 printing MSMEs in Palembang. The methodology follows a systematic process involving classification and association analysis. Data attributes such as Business Status, Business Classification, Place of Birth, Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Marital Status, and Domicile were selected and transformed for analysis. The classification and association algorithms were applied to reveal the relationships between variables, using relevant categorization such as age groups (e.g., early adulthood, late adulthood, etc.).

Results/findings: The findings show that by categorizing and analyzing the attributes of the MSMEs, strategies effectively enhance their income and operational efficiency. Moreover, the study found that 76% of participants successfully implemented appropriate strategies following the training. On average, businesses experienced a 15% increase in income and a 20% improvement in production efficiency.

Conclusions: This training significantly contributed to improving the performance of printing MSMEs in Palembang by enhancing entrepreneurs' understanding of business classification, operational efficiency, and targeted development strategies. It also fostered collaboration and strengthened business networks to support MSME competitiveness.

Limitations: The limitation lies in the sample size, which includes only 15 printing MSMEs. This may limit the generalizability of the findings to other MSMEs in different regions or industries. Additionally, the data collected is based on self-reported information, which could introduce bias or inaccuracies in the analysis.

Contribution: This study contributes to SME development by emphasizing the importance of classification-based strategies. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, training organizations, and SME owners in creating more targeted, effective strategies to enhance SME performance in Palembang.

Keywords: *Classification Strategy, Msmes, Small Businesses, Performance.*

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1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Palembang play a significant role as one of the main pillars of the local economy, not only by creating job opportunities but also by contributing to the

regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP). MSMEs help reduce unemployment rates and play a key role in combating poverty. However, one of the challenges faced by MSMEs in the city is the lack of clear classification, which often leads to the implementation of development strategies that are not well-targeted (Hamid & Susilo, 2015; Saragih, et al., 2024).

Generally, the training and development programs provided tend to overlook the diverse conditions and needs of different MSMEs (Rijal & Sopiah, 2023; Febrianty, et al., 2022). This creates a mismatch between the specific needs of MSMEs and the resources offered in training. For instance, MSMEs that are already independent have very different needs compared to those still at a very micro stage. However, in practice, both types of MSMEs are often included in the same training programs. Effective classification of MSMEs is crucial to ensure that the strategies developed and implemented can achieve maximum effectiveness. With proper classification, training can be better targeted, which not only enhances the success of individual MSMEs but also improves the efficiency of resource use in training (Hamid & Susilo, 2015).

Currently, MSMEs are also facing challenges related to capital, partnership development, promotion, business development, and the development of human resources within the MSMEs themselves (Raharjo, 2017; Novalia, et al., 2024). These factors act as barriers for MSMEs to grow and compete in an increasingly competitive market. In today's digital era, effective and innovative marketing strategies are key to enhancing MSME competitiveness (Triwijayati et al., 2023; Suryaputra, et al., 2024). Segmented and specific training according to MSME classification can help address these issues.

Therefore, this study aims to develop training strategies based on the classification of MSMEs in Palembang. The primary goal is to create a training model that is not only relevant and effective but also adaptable to the various types of MSMEs according to their level of development and specific needs. This will enable MSMEs not only to survive but also to thrive and grow in a dynamic economy (Widiati, et al., 2022). With this objective, this research and development activity is expected to make a tangible contribution to improving the quality and competitiveness of printing MSMEs in Palembang, while also strengthening their role in the local and national economy.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 The classification of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

The classification of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can be done through various approaches based on business size, type, and demographic characteristics of business owners (BPS, 2020). This classification method is essential for understanding the diversity of MSME characteristics and for developing more targeted development strategies. Some common methods used in classifying MSMEs include performance-based approaches, business development strategies, business characteristics, entrepreneur demographics, MSMEs' role in the economy, and business sectors.

First, the Performance Clustering Method groups MSMEs based on their performance and competitiveness. Through this approach, MSMEs can be classified using a saturated sampling method, which involves taking all home industry MSMEs as samples. This method allows for a more comprehensive analysis in assessing the competitiveness and performance of MSMEs, as shown in the study clustering food businesses into strategic groups in Yogyakarta (Nugraha et al., 2021). Second, the Business Development Strategy Approach classifies MSMEs according to development strategies that suit their characteristics. For example, in Kutai Timur, a study used the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to cluster MSMEs and formulate targeted strategies based on production, capital, and marketing criteria (Bustomi & Suryanto, 2022). This research aims to cluster MSMEs based on performance and competitiveness and to formulate effective development strategies for each cluster. Next, the Business Characteristics Approach is used to group MSMEs based on aspects such as product type, promotion media, asset value, and profit level. Each MSME has unique characteristics, both in terms of the products they produce and the promotional media they use, which influence their profitability. This is aligned with findings from an agribusiness MSME study that categorized businesses based on characteristics and innovation behavior to inform development models during the pandemic (Mariyudi et al., 2022).

Another frequently used method is the Demographic Approach, where MSMEs are grouped based on demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and experience of the business owner. Data collection is carried out through direct interviews to identify differences in MSME characteristics based on the background of their owners. This demographic and strategic segmentation has been emphasized in East Java, where MSMEs formed survival clusters during COVID-19 using incubation and network strategies (Sritrsiniawati, 2022). Furthermore, MSMEs in the tourism and creative sectors have shown that applying competitive strategies such as digitalization and price strategy can significantly improve business performance when aligned with their sector and owner demographics (Nainggolan et al., 2024).

Additionally, the Economic Role Approach classifies MSMEs by their function in the economy. MSMEs are widely recognized for their contributions to employment, innovation, and economic inclusivity. Their ability to produce diversified products and absorb labor makes them crucial in supporting national resilience, particularly in economic shocks (Lestari et al., 2024). Another method is the Sector Based Classification, which categorizes MSMEs based on industry orientation. Sectors such as manufacturing, services, trade, and digital economy represent distinct operational environments, requiring different support mechanisms. For instance, technology-based MSMEs may demand digital literacy programs and innovation grants, while retail-based MSMEs may need working capital access and supply chain integration (Zukari & Aryanto, 2025).

In Indonesia, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) also provides a formal classification using financial and employment indicators as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. MSME Classification According to BPS

No	Enterprises Scale	Criterion	
		Net Income/ Asset (excluding land and buildings for enterprises premises)	Revenue/Turnover
1	Micro Enterprises	Maximum Rp 50 Million	Maximum Rp 300 Million
2	Small Enterprises	> Rp 50 Million – Rp 500 Million	> Rp 300 Million – Rp 2,5 Billion
3	Medium Enterprises	> Rp 500 Million – Rp 10 Billion	> Rp 2,5 Million – Rp 50 Billion.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) classifies MSMEs based on the number of employees in each business unit. This classification aims to simplify the identification of business scale and address the different development needs of each category. Besides assets and revenue, classification also considers the number of workers: micro (<5), small (5–19), and medium (20–99 employees). These criteria offer a standardized framework for understanding MSME scale and capacity (Setyawati et al., 2023).

Each classification dimension provides insights into different challenges and needs. For instance, micro enterprises often require support in basic financial literacy and market access. Small enterprises, while having basic structure, struggle with market expansion and operational formalization. Medium enterprises need to upgrade technological capabilities and adopt innovation strategies to compete globally (Jam'an, 2020; Tjahjadi et al., 2022; Zukari & Aryanto, 2025). Moreover, digital adoption and financial inclusion are key enabling factors across all MSME types. E-commerce and digital marketing are vital for business continuity and competitiveness, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Jam'an, 2020). Concurrently, financial education improves MSME performance by promoting sound financial decision making (Setyawati et al., 2023).

Human capital also plays a vital role in MSME development. Entrepreneurial training significantly enhances business competence and sustainability (Tjahjadi et al., 2022). The importance of human capital readiness in achieving global market orientation and long-term competitiveness. Hence, MSME

classification should not be limited to quantitative metrics, but also incorporate qualitative indicators such as technological readiness, innovation capacity, and human resource development. (Zukari & Aryanto, 2025) proposed an innovation and technology based classification framework to enable more precise and impactful empowerment strategies. A more comprehensive classification framework allows policymakers and stakeholders to develop tailored strategies that are relevant, measurable, and impactful ultimately contributing to inclusive and sustainable economic development.

2.2 Classification-based MSME Development Strategy

A classification-based MSME development strategy is an approach aimed at advancing the MSME sector by considering classifications that align with the scale and type of business. Each MSME classification faces specific challenges and requires distinct approaches (Candrawardhani, 2024). Some development strategies that can be implemented. First, for Micro Enterprises, the development strategy should be simple and tailored to the small scale of the business. Developing employees' technical, conceptual, and moral skills becomes the primary focus through more practical training. This type of training aims to improve daily operational efficiency and equip business owners with the ability to address the fundamental problems they face. This aligns with findings showing that micro-MSMEs often struggle with digital adoption, requiring targeted upskilling to remain competitive (Azraputra et al., 2021), (Anatan & Nur, 2022).

Second, Small Enterprises require a more focused and slightly complex strategy. In addition to training that enhances employee skills, the development of effective marketing strategies is also a priority. This is aimed at expanding market share and increasing business visibility in a broader market. Consequently, small businesses can access more growth opportunities and business diversification. Evidence from macroeconomic studies and financial inclusion analysis suggests that access to capital and technology tools plays a critical role at this stage (Sunaryono, 2024), (MahaPutri & Satrianto, 2024). Third, at the Medium Enterprise level, the development strategy becomes more intensive and focuses on more professional management. In addition to employee training and marketing strategy development, a sound management system is essential to enhance operational efficiency and productivity. Medium MSMEs have the potential to grow further, so implementing a good management system will help them compete in an increasingly competitive market. A bibliometric analysis of MSME strategies confirms that market coordination, time strategy, and leadership are key at this stage (Saptaria et al., 2023), (Riswandi & Fitria, 2024).

Fourth, a classification-based strategy refers to the application of different approaches according to the type of business run by the MSME. In this strategy, the development of skills, marketing, and management must be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each MSME classification. This approach ensures that each MSME receives the appropriate attention and solutions, allowing them to develop optimally according to the conditions and challenges they face. Recent studies stress that MSMEs' development must consider institutional support, digital literacy, and tailored financial programs (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2025), (Sinha et al., 2024), (Alfiyah et al., 2022).

By employing development strategies based on business classification, MSMEs are expected to be better prepared to face market competition, improve internal efficiency, and expand their business opportunities across various sectors. Comparative analyses between Indonesian MSMEs and other ASEAN countries have also highlighted the need for classification-specific support to enhance competitiveness and resilience (Suprihanti et al., 2025).

2.3 Targeted Strategies

The importance of targeted strategies becomes increasingly evident given the complexity and diversity of MSMEs and the types of businesses they operate (Palupi et al., 2021). With accurate classification and a deep understanding of the characteristics of each MSME, developing strategies that cater to the specific needs of each category becomes crucial. In the context of Small and Medium Enterprise development strategies, a comprehensive and focused approach is essential to deliver a significant impact. These strategies should not only consider employee skill development through education and training but also incorporate effective marketing strategies and sound management systems

(Wiliandari, 2018). Thus, MSMEs can enhance their competitiveness in the market and achieve their desired growth objectives. In this context, developing targeted strategies is not just an option, but a necessity to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of MSME businesses amid increasingly complex market challenges.

3. Research Methodology

In this research, the process of classification and association analysis of the attributes or variables of MSMEs is conducted using a sample of data from 15 printing MSMEs collected in Palembang. This process consists of several interconnected steps, starting from attribute selection to drawing conclusions (Raharjo, 2017). The first step is Attribute Selection. At this stage, relevant attributes for classifying MSMEs are chosen by considering factors that can provide important information. The analysis attributes used include Business Status, Business Classification, Place of Birth, Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Marital Status, and Domicile. The selection of these attributes aims to ensure that all variables influencing the performance and characteristics of MSMEs are included in the analysis.

The second step is Data Transformation. This process involves converting raw data into a more understandable format without losing the essence of the information. For example, age data is transformed into several categorical groups, such as early adulthood, late adulthood, early elderly, late elderly, and senior citizens. This transformation aims to facilitate analysis and assist in structuring the data more effectively. The third step is Classification and Association. The main objective of this research is to enhance the income of MSMEs by measuring income. Therefore, it is essential to align the analysis with existing MSME classifications. Classification and association serve as important instruments in data analysis, providing deeper insights into the relationships between variables and the specific needs of each MSME category. Consequently, the strategies implemented will be more targeted and effective.

The final step is Conclusion, where conclusions are drawn based on the results of the classification and association algorithm tests. At this stage, the analysis results are used to formulate recommendations that can support strategy development for MSMEs, with the hope of increasing their income and competitiveness in the market. By following these steps, this research aims to provide a better understanding of the characteristics and needs of printing MSMEs in Palembang, as well as to create relevant strategies to enhance their performance and income.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Description of Activity Implementation

This community service activity was designed to make a tangible contribution to the development and improvement of the performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Palembang. Focusing on enhancing the quality of small businesses, the activity aimed to provide MSME actors with a deep understanding of the importance of developing strategies to improve the quality of small enterprises based on the classification of printing MSMEs in Palembang, efficiently boosting productivity, quality, and the competitiveness of their businesses.

At figure 1, the community service team is conducting the initial coordination phase regarding the training agenda. During this phase, the team engages in an in-depth discussion about the materials to be presented during the training sessions, focusing on developing effective ways to present the content so it is easily understood by participants. Additionally, the team plans the event rundown for the training. This phase involved collaboration between the team members, conducted online on August 5, 2024, through the Zoom platform.

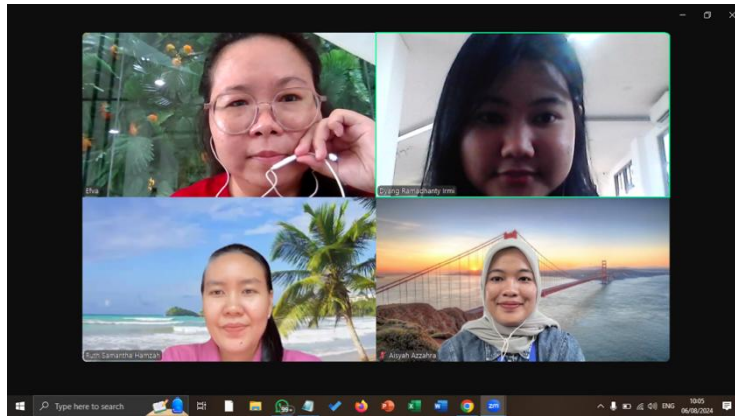


Figure 1. First Coordination of the Community Service Team

The community service team continued the discussion about the activity by holding a face-to-face meeting on August 7, 2024, at UNSRI Palembang campus. The focus of this discussion was on drafting in-depth materials related to Strategies for Improving the Quality of Small Enterprises Based on General Classification. On the following day, August 8, 2024, the team finalized preparations for the community service activity at the same location.



Figure 2. Opening Remarks from The Lecturer Representative

On August 10, 2024, the main event was held Integrated Community Service of Accounting, Universitas Sriwijaya. The event took place in the Hall of Xaverius 1 Bangau High School, Palembang, on the 2nd floor, starting from 9:00 AM WIB until the activity was completed. During this event, the participants were given a comprehensive explanation of the material on Training and Developing Strategies to Improve Small Business Quality Based on General Classification. The event was organized in a seminar and workshop format. The event began with greetings from the MC, followed by opening remarks from a representative of the community service team to all participants. Next, the participants collectively participated in a prayer session to ensure the smoothness of the event. After the prayer, the speaker started the presentation focused on Quality Improvement Strategies for Enterprises through Business Classification, delivered through a PowerPoint presentation.



Figure 3. Presentation of Material by the Speaker



Figure 4. Questionnaire Completion

Following the presentation, there was a discussion and Q&A session between the speaker and the participants. This session lasted for about an hour, from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The participants were enthusiastic and actively asked questions related to material relevant to MSMEs. The high level of participation was evident through the number of questions raised and the engaging discussions around various aspects of proper business strategy and classification. After the Q&A session concluded, the event continued with a documentation session and the presentation of a plaque as a token of appreciation to the speaker. The outcomes of the discussion indicated that the participants successfully gained a clear understanding of the objectives of this activity.



Figure 5. Discussion and Q&A Session



Figure 6. Presentation of Plaques to Speakers

At the close of the event, participants were given the opportunity to take group photos as a symbol of successful collaboration during the activity. This community service effort successfully provided in-depth insights into various strategies for improving business quality based on business classification, enabling participants to apply them to their enterprises to enhance business performance sustainably.



Figure 7. Group Photo

4.2 Results of Community Service Activities

During the community service activities, the team distributed questionnaires to all participants to serve as a benchmark for determining whether they had gained the appropriate knowledge and understanding. Before the material was presented by the speaker, participants were directed to complete a Pre-Training Questionnaire related to the topics covered. The results of this pre-training questionnaire are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 2. The Results of Pre-Training Questionnaire

Question	1	2	3	4
I have a good understanding of the definition of the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	24%	70%	6%
I have a good understanding of the importance of implementing the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	24%	65%	11%
I have a good understanding of the purpose of implementing the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	29%	65%	6%
I am able to classify my business independently	0%	18%	71%	12%
I am able to apply the right strategy to improve the quality of my business based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	12%	65%	24%
The instructions for this activity are clear	0%	0%	65%	35%
I recommend this kind of training	0%	0%	41%	59%

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that 24% of respondents answered “Disagree,” 70% answered “Agree,” and 6% answered “Strongly Agree.” Thus, it can be concluded that all participants understood the definition of the appropriate strategy for improving business quality based on MSME classification. For the second question, 11% of respondents answered “Disagree” and 65% answered “Agree,” indicating that participants understood the importance of applying the correct strategy for improving business quality.

For the third question, 6% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” 65% answered “Agree,” and 29% answered “Disagree.” This suggests that most participants adequately understood the purpose of applying the right strategy for business improvement. The fourth question revealed that 71% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” and 65% answered “Agree.” This suggests that most participants were able to classify their business independently.

For the fifth question, 24% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” 65% answered “Agree,” and 12% answered “Disagree.” Thus, it can be concluded that most participants were able to apply the correct strategy based on MSME classification. Regarding the sixth question, 65% of respondents answered “Agree,” and 35% answered “Strongly Agree,” indicating that most participants clearly understood the instructions given during the training. For the final question, 41% of respondents answered “Agree,” and 59% answered “Strongly Agree,” showing that all participants would recommend the training to other MSMEs. After completing the pre-training questionnaire, participants received training and material on implementing strategies to improve small businesses based on MSME classification. The team distributed a **Post-Training Questionnaire** to all participants after the training was completed. The results of the post-training questionnaire can be seen in **Table 2**.

Tabel 3. The Results of The Post-Training Questionnaire

Question	1	2	3	4
I have a good understanding of the definition of the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	6%	59%	35%
I have a good understanding of the importance of implementing the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	0%	65%	35%
I have a good understanding of the purpose of implementing the right strategy to improve business quality based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	6%	53%	41%
I am able to classify my business independently	0%	0%	47%	53%
I am able to apply the right strategy to improve the quality of my business based on the classification of MSMEs	0%	0%	53%	47%
The instructions for this activity are clear	0%	0%	35%	65%
I recommend this kind of training	0%	0%	24%	76%

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that 6% of respondents answered “Disagree,” 59% answered “Agree,” and 21% answered “Strongly Agree.” This indicates that all participants understood the definition of an appropriate strategy for improving business quality. For the second question, 65% of respondents answered “Agree,” and 35% answered “Strongly Agree.” This shows that participants understood the importance of applying the right strategy.

For the third question, 41% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” 53% answered “Agree,” and 6% answered “Disagree.” This suggests that most participants adequately understood the purpose of applying the right strategy for business improvement. The fourth question revealed that 53% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” and 47% answered “Agree.” This suggests that most participants were able to classify their business independently.

For the fifth question, 47% of respondents answered “Strongly Agree,” and 53% answered “Agree.” Thus, it can be concluded that most participants were able to apply the correct strategy based on MSME classification. Regarding the sixth question, 35% of respondents answered “Agree,” and 65% answered “Strongly Agree,” indicating that most participants clearly understood the instructions given during the training. For the final question, 24% of respondents answered “Agree,” and 76% answered “Strongly Agree,” indicating that all participants would recommend the training to other MSMEs.

Based on the analysis of pre-training and post-training results, participants’ understanding of MSME development strategies based on classification improved significantly. Before the training, most participants had a basic understanding, but some were still unsure. After the training, their understanding deepened, as shown by the increase in respondents who answered "Agree" and "Strongly Agree." Participants became more capable of classifying their businesses and recognizing the importance of implementing the correct strategies based on MSME classification. Additionally, nearly all participants expressed a willingness to recommend the training to other MSMEs, reflecting their satisfaction.

Overall, this training successfully strengthened participants' understanding of the importance of classification-based strategies tailored to the specific needs of MSMEs. By implementing the right strategies, MSMEs are expected to enhance operational efficiency, expand business opportunities, and improve their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. Such training is not only crucial for the growth of MSMEs but also key to ensuring business sustainability in the future.

5. Conclusion

The training provided a significant contribution to supporting the development and improvement of MSME performance, particularly in the printing sector. It helped business owners understand the importance of business classification as a strategic step in enhancing their competitiveness and the quality of their services. Participants gained a better understanding of grouping businesses based on the scale and characteristics of their operations, which in turn helped them develop more targeted development strategies.

Through this understanding, printing MSMEs were able to improve operational efficiency and make better business decisions, especially in managing resources, production capacity, and investment planning. Additionally, the training opened up opportunities for participants to establish collaborations and share experiences among fellow business owners, fostering the growth of stronger business networks and supporting the improvement of MSME performance, particularly in the printing sector in Palembang.

Limitation and Further Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample size, which only includes 15 printing MSMEs in Palembang, limits the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or regions. A small sample size may affect the external validity of the research, as the results might not represent printing MSMEs in other areas with different characteristics. Second, the data used in the analysis mostly comes from self-reported information from MSME owners, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies in the provided data. Third, this study does not account for external factors, such as macroeconomic conditions or government regulations, which may influence MSME performance. Fourth, the focus of this research is restricted to the printing sector, so the findings and strategies may not be applicable to MSMEs in other industries.

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