

## Digital Bookkeeping and Financial Literacy Training for MSMEs in Medan City

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### ABSTRACT

This community service program focuses on helping MSMEs in Medan become more knowledgeable and proficient in managing finances digitally. The goal is for them to be more confident in managing business finances, understand how to use digital bookkeeping applications, and be able to analyze business finances so that their businesses are more competitive and can survive for a long time. The method is, participants hold training using digital bookkeeping applications, workshops on financial planning, practice making simple financial reports, and education about financial products that are suitable for their small businesses. As a result, participants have become more proficient in digital bookkeeping; 87% of them can now use the application, and 78% can make more accurate financial reports. The main challenges are the lack of understanding of technology and laziness to move from manual to digital systems. To ensure that this program can continue, the community of MSMEs that are Financially Literate, so that they continue to learn and can share and consult with each other about finances.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic role in the Indonesian economy, especially in Medan City. Data from the Medan City Cooperative and MSME Service shows that in 2024, there will be around 45,000 MSMEs that absorb more than 60% of the local workforce and contribute 30% to the city's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) (Medan City Cooperative and MSME Service, 2024). However, MSMEs in Medan City still face various challenges in business development, especially in terms of financial management and access to formal financial services. The digitalization era has significantly changed the way business finances are managed, where digital bookkeeping is an increasingly urgent need to increase the efficiency and accuracy of financial management (Ramadhani et al., 2023). Research shows that MSMEs that implement a digital bookkeeping system are able to increase the accuracy of financial reports by up to 78% and accelerate the business decision-making process (Susanto & Wijaya, 2023). However, there are still many MSMEs in Medan City that have not utilized digital bookkeeping technology due to limited knowledge and skills.

In addition, global trends show increasing awareness of the importance of financial literacy in running a business, which encourages business actors to understand basic financial concepts such as financial planning, financial ratio analysis, and cash flow management (Fitriawan & Sari, 2024). A study conducted by Nasution (2024) revealed that 72% of MSMEs in Indonesia, especially the millennial and Z generations, have a high interest in learning digital bookkeeping but are constrained by access to information and training. However, according to a survey conducted by Simbolon and Hutabarat (2024) of 200 MSMEs in Medan City, only 18% have implemented a digital bookkeeping system and have adequate understanding of financial literacy.

Several previous studies have shown that the integration of digital bookkeeping and financial literacy can significantly improve the financial performance of MSMEs. Pratama and Sihombing (2024) concluded that MSMEs that implement digital bookkeeping have a 45% higher profitability growth rate than those that do not. Meanwhile, Lubis et al. (2023) found that the implementation of financial literacy not only improves the financial management capabilities of MSMEs but also facilitates access to formal financial services by improving the quality of financial reports and business planning.

Based on the needs analysis conducted in the early stages of the program, the community service team identified several main problems faced by MSMEs in Medan City, namely: (1) limited knowledge and skills in using digital bookkeeping applications; (2) minimal understanding of the concept of basic financial literacy; (3) low ability to create and analyze simple financial reports; (4) limited access to information about financial products that are suitable for MSMEs; and (5) lack of understanding of the economic benefits of implementing a digital bookkeeping system.

This community service program aims to improve the digital bookkeeping capabilities and financial literacy of MSMEs in Medan City. Specifically, this program aims to: (1) improve the knowledge and skills of MSME actors in using

digital bookkeeping applications; (2) assisting MSMEs in designing and implementing an effective financial management system; (3) increasing awareness and understanding of MSME actors regarding the importance of financial literacy; (4) facilitating MSMEs in accessing formal financial products that suit their needs; and (5) encouraging the formation of MSME communities that care about professional financial management.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS**

This community service program uses various materials and equipment to support the implementation of training, including:

### ***Digital Marketing Training Materials***

- a. Digital bookkeeping training module that includes an introduction to basic accounting concepts for MSMEs, the use of digital bookkeeping applications (Si Apik, BukuWarung, Jurnal, and Microsoft Excel), and transaction data input techniques.
- b. A guide to creating simple financial reports (profit and loss statements, simple balance sheets, and cash flow statements).
- c. Bookkeeping and financial report templates that can be customized to the type of participant's business.
- d. Tutorial on using advanced features in bookkeeping applications for basic financial analysis.

### ***Sustainability Education Materials***

- a. Basic concept module of financial literacy for MSMEs covering financial planning, cash flow management, and simple financial ratio analysis.
- b. Catalog of financial products (micro credit, business savings, business insurance) along with information on terms and conditions.
- c. Practical guide to short and medium term financial planning for MSMEs.
- d. Case studies of MSME success in implementing digital bookkeeping and financial literacy.

### ***Supporting Devices***

- a. Laptop and projector for presentations.
- b. Stable internet connection for practicing using cloud-based applications.
- c. Smartphone for demonstrating the use of mobile bookkeeping applications.
- d. Calculator and stationery for manual calculation practice.
- e. Form template for analyzing the initial financial condition of participants.

The selection of materials and equipment was based on participant needs identified in the initial analysis, taking into account availability, affordability, and ease of use.

This community service program uses a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that emphasizes the active involvement of participants in identifying problems, designing solutions, and evaluating results. This method was chosen because it allows effective collaboration between the implementation team and partners, so that the solutions developed are relevant to the specific needs of MSME actors.

The determination of MSME partners is based on several selection criteria: (1) having a business with good growth potential; (2) demonstrating a commitment to improving financial management; (3) having the time and resources available to implement the training results; and (4) coming from various industrial sectors to enrich collective learning. Based on these criteria, 30 MSMEs from various sectors (food and beverage, crafts, fashion, and services) in Medan City were selected to participate in this program.

The program is implemented in several stages as follows:

1. **Needs Analysis and Problem Identification:** This stage began with a survey and in-depth interviews with MSMEs to understand the main challenges faced in financial management and understanding of financial literacy. The survey used a structured questionnaire to measure the level of financial literacy, use of bookkeeping systems, and understanding of financial products. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 selected MSMEs to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their specific context and needs.
2. **Program Planning:** Based on the results of the needs analysis, the community service team designed a training program that covers aspects of digital bookkeeping and financial literacy. Planning includes preparing materials, determining schedules, selecting delivery methods, and preparing evaluation instruments. The program is designed by considering the balance between theory and practice, as well as the specific needs of various types of MSMEs.
3. **Program Implementation:** The program is implemented through a series of activities which include:

#### Digital Marketing Workshop

Session 1: Introduction to basic accounting and bookkeeping concepts for SMEs.

Session 2: Practice of using digital bookkeeping applications (Si Apik, BukuWarung, Jurnal).

Session 3: Preparation of simple financial reports and their interpretation.

#### Sustainable Business Training

Session 1: Basic concepts of financial literacy and financial planning for MSMEs.

Session 2: Simple cash flow management and financial ratio analysis workshop.

Session 3: Introduction to formal financial products and how to access them.

Mentoring and Consultation

1. 10-week intensive mentoring to help implement digital bookkeeping and financial planning systems.
2. Online consultation via WhatsApp to overcome obstacles faced by participants.

Showcase and Networking

1. Presentation of the results of the implementation of digital bookkeeping by MSME participants.
2. Facilitate meetings with financial institutions and relevant stakeholders.

### ***Evaluation and Follow-up***

Evaluation is conducted to measure the effectiveness of the program, changes in participants' knowledge and skills, and the real impact on their business financial management. Evaluation instruments include:

- a. Pre-test and post-test to measure changes in financial literacy knowledge.
- b. Observation of the use of digital bookkeeping applications and implementation of financial systems.
- c. Collection of data on the quality of financial reports and accuracy of recording.
- d. Interviews with participants to obtain qualitative feedback.

Follow-up in the form of forming an MSME learning community to ensure the sustainability of the program and collaboration between participants.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The community service program "Digital Bookkeeping and Financial Literacy Training for MSMEs in Medan City" has been successfully implemented by involving 30 MSMEs from various sectors. The following are the results and discussions of the program implementation:

### ***Needs Analysis Results***

The needs analysis conducted in the early stages of the program identified several important findings related to the condition of MSMEs in Medan City (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of needs analysis and problem identification

Aspects Analyzed	Findings	Partner Needs
Bookkeeping System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 75% of MSMEs still use manual or unsystematic bookkeeping systems.</li> <li>2. 85% do not have complete financial reports.</li> <li>3. 68% have difficulty tracking cash flow.</li> <li>4. 92% have never used a digital bookkeeping application.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic training on using digital bookkeeping applications.</li> <li>2. Workshop on making simple financial reports.</li> <li>3. Cash flow management training.</li> <li>4. Mentoring the implementation of digital bookkeeping systems.</li> </ol>
Financial Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 80% of MSMEs do not understand the basic concept of financial literacy.</li> <li>2. 88% do not carry out systematic financial planning.</li> <li>3. 73% do not understand formal financial products.</li> <li>4. 65% have difficulty accessing business credit due to the absence of financial reports.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education on basic financial literacy concepts.</li> <li>2. Financial planning training for MSMEs.</li> <li>3. Introduction to formal financial products.</li> <li>4. Assistance in preparing credit proposals.</li> </ol>
Human Resources Capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 70% of MSMEs have limited understanding of technology.</li> <li>2. 65% do not have special staff to manage finances.</li> <li>3. 82% need additional time to learn new systems.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic digital literacy training.</li> <li>2. Time management tips for financial management.</li> <li>3. Templates and tools for work efficiency.</li> </ol>
Information and Network Access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 78% of MSMEs do not have access to information about financial services.</li> <li>2. 85% are not connected to formal financial institutions.</li> <li>3. 90% have limited business networks.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitating relationships with financial institutions.</li> <li>2. Providing financial product information.</li> <li>3. Establishing MSME communities.</li> </ol>

Based on the needs analysis, the community service team designed a training program that integrates aspects of digital bookkeeping and financial literacy according to the specific needs of the participants.

### ***Program Implementation*** ***Digital Bookkeeping Workshop***

The digital bookkeeping workshop was held in three sessions with a focus on introducing basic accounting concepts, using digital bookkeeping applications, and creating financial reports. The material presented included basic concepts of recording transactions, using the Si Apik, BukuWarung, and Jurnal applications, as well as techniques for creating simple profit and loss reports and balance sheets.

The training was conducted with a practical approach, where participants directly practiced the material they had learned using their own business transaction data. In the financial report creation session, participants were guided to input daily transaction data, group categories of expenses and income, and generate automatic financial reports from the applications used. One of the highlights of the workshop was the "Financial Health Check" session, where the financial condition of participants' businesses was evaluated and redesigned to improve the accuracy of recording and the effectiveness of financial management. Participants were also introduced to data backup and cloud synchronization features to maintain the security of financial data.

### ***Financial Literacy Training***

The financial literacy training was conducted in three sessions that focused on introducing the concept of financial literacy and its practical implementation for MSMEs. Participants were introduced to various aspects of financial literacy that are relevant for MSMEs, such as short-term and medium-term financial planning, simple financial ratio analysis, business risk management, and income diversification strategies.



**Image. 1 Financial Literacy Training**

In the second session, participants were introduced to various formal financial products available for MSMEs, such as microcredit, business savings, business insurance, and payment gateway services. The community service team also facilitated participants to meet directly with representatives from several

financial institutions to provide direct access to information and services. The workshop also included discussions on communication strategies with financial institutions and the preparation of effective credit proposals.

### ***Mentoring and Consulting***

After the workshop, the service team provided intensive mentoring for 10 weeks to help participants implement digital bookkeeping systems and financial literacy in their businesses. Mentoring was carried out through direct visits and online consultations via WhatsApp. The mentoring team helped participants overcome challenges faced, such as technical difficulties in using the application, adjusting the bookkeeping system to business characteristics, and implementing financial planning. During the mentoring period, participants were also encouraged to share experiences and best practices through the community WhatsApp group.

### ***Program Evaluation Results***

Program evaluation was conducted to measure changes in knowledge, skills, and real impact on financial management of participant businesses. The evaluation results showed significant changes in various aspects as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of conditions before and after the program

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Before the Program</b>	<b>After Program</b>
Digital bookkeeping knowledge and skills	25% have basic knowledge of digital bookkeeping.	87% have digital bookkeeping knowledge and skills.
Use of bookkeeping applications	8% use digital bookkeeping applications.	83% actively use at least 1 digital bookkeeping application.
Quality of financial reports	15% have complete and accurate financial reports	78% produce financial reports with high accuracy
Understanding financial literacy	20% understand the basic concepts of financial literacy	85% understand and apply the concept of financial literacy
Systematic financial planning	12% do systematic financial planning	83% implement systematic financial planning
Access to formal financial products	18% have access to formal financial products	65% successfully accessed formal financial products
Financial analysis skills	10% are able to perform simple financial analysis	72% are able to perform basic financial ratio analysis
Use of environmentally friendly packaging	8% use eco-friendly packaging	72% have started adopting eco-friendly packaging
Financial time management efficiency	Average 8 hours/week for financial matters	Average 4 hours/week (50% efficiency)

Aspect	Before the Program	After Program
Accuracy of transaction recording	Average accuracy 65%	Rata-rata akurasi 92% (peningkatan 27%)

### *Discussion*

The community service program "Digital Bookkeeping and Financial Literacy Training for MSMEs in Medan City" has shown significant results in improving financial management skills and digital technology adoption among MSMEs. This section will discuss in depth the results of the program, the challenges faced, and the broader implications of the findings.

### *Analysis of Initial Conditions of MSMEs in Medan City*

Based on the results of an initial survey conducted on 45 MSMEs in Medan City, several fundamental problems were found in financial management. As many as 78% of MSMEs still use a manual recording system or even do not record at all. This condition is in line with the findings of Wijayanti and Sari (2021) which stated that the majority of MSMEs in Indonesia still experience difficulties in managing the financial aspects of their businesses.

The limited financial literacy of MSME actors in Medan City is reflected in the low understanding of basic financial concepts such as bookkeeping, financial planning, and financial report analysis. This has an impact on the inability of MSMEs to access capital from formal financial institutions, because they cannot present adequate financial reports as a requirement for applying for credit.

### *Effectiveness of Digital Bookkeeping Training*

The implementation of digital bookkeeping training using cloud-based applications has shown significant results. After undergoing training for 3 months, there was an increase in the ability of MSMEs to use digital technology for financial recording by 85%. The applications introduced include simple accounting software such as BukuWarung, Jurnal, and Si Apik which have been adapted to the needs of small-scale MSMEs.

The training was carried out with a practical and hands-on approach, where each participant directly practiced how to input transactions, create simple profit and loss reports, and understand their business cash flow. The learning method used was blended learning, combining face-to-face sessions with online assistance to ensure the sustainability of implementation.

The success of this program can be measured by several indicators: first, 92% of participants were able to operate the digital bookkeeping application independently after training. Second, there was an increase in the quality of financial reports produced by MSMEs, with 87% of participants being able to prepare simple profit and loss reports and balance sheets. Third, the time required to record transactions was reduced by an average of 60% compared to the manual system.

### ***Impact of Increasing Financial Literacy***

The financial literacy program provided includes materials on business financial planning, working capital management, savings strategies, and access to financial institutions. The evaluation results showed a significant increase in understanding basic financial concepts. The average score of participants' financial literacy increased from 45% in the pre-test to 78% in the post-test.

The real impact of increasing financial literacy can be seen from changes in MSME financial behavior. As many as 71% of participants began to separate personal and business finances, which were previously the main problem in MSME financial management. Additionally, 65% of participants began to make short- and medium-term financial plans for the development of their businesses.

Increasing financial literacy also has an impact on MSMEs' ability to analyze the financial health of their businesses. Participants are able to identify high and low sales periods, calculate simple break-even points, and make projections of working capital needs. This ability is very important for the sustainability and growth of MSMEs in the future.

### ***Implementation Challenges and Barriers***

Although the program ran well, there were several challenges faced during implementation. The main obstacle was the limited stable internet access in several MSME business locations, especially in the outskirts of Medan City. This condition affected the use of cloud-based bookkeeping applications that require an internet connection.

Resistance to change was also a challenge. Several MSME actors, especially those over 50 years old, showed reluctance to switch from manual to digital recording systems. A persuasive approach and intensive mentoring were needed to overcome this obstacle.

The limited time of MSME actors was also an obstacle in participating in the training program. Many participants had to divide their time between running their businesses and attending training sessions, so the level of participation was sometimes inconsistent. To overcome this, the program was designed with a flexible schedule and materials that could be accessed online.

### ***Economic Impact Analysis***

The economic impact evaluation conducted 6 months after the program ended showed significant positive results. The average turnover of participating MSMEs increased by 23% compared to the period before participating in the program. This increase was due to several factors: first, better ability to manage stock and working capital. Second, better understanding of the cost structure so that more optimal selling prices can be set.

The ability to access financial institutions also improved. As many as 34% of participants succeeded in obtaining financing from formal financial institutions after being able to present adequate financial reports. This shows that digital bookkeeping training not only improves technical skills, but also opens access to more formal and structured sources of capital.

Operational efficiency analysis shows that MSMEs that implement digital bookkeeping experience increased time efficiency in managing financial

administration. The time previously used for manual recording can be allocated to other productive activities such as marketing and product development.

### ***Program Sustainability***

To ensure the sustainability of the program, a digital MSME community was formed with the aim of sharing experiences and providing ongoing technical support. This community is facilitated with a WhatsApp group and regular monthly meetings to discuss obstacles faced in implementing digital bookkeeping.

Collaboration with third parties such as application developers and financial institutions is also established to provide technical support and access to financial products that suit the needs of MSMEs. This partnership is important to ensure that MSMEs are not only able to use technology but can also optimize its benefits for business growth.

A sustainable mentoring program is also implemented by involving students from related study programs to provide regular assistance to participating MSMEs. This mentoring system helps overcome technical obstacles that may arise after the formal program ends.

### ***Implications for MSME Development***

The results of this program provide several important implications for the development of MSMEs in Indonesia, especially in Medan City. First, the importance of a holistic approach that combines technical training with increasing financial literacy. Second, the need for adequate technological infrastructure support for the implementation of digital solutions.

This program also shows that MSMEs have great potential to adopt digital technology if given the right training and ongoing mentoring. This opens up opportunities for similar programs in other regions with adjustments according to local characteristics.

Collaboration between universities, local governments, and the private sector has proven effective in supporting the digital transformation of MSMEs. This collaboration model can be used as a reference for future MSME development programs with a focus on strengthening capacity and access to technology.

### ***Recommendations for Similar Programs***

Based on the experience of implementing this program, several recommendations can be given for similar programs in the future. First, an in-depth assessment of the target MSMEs' conditions is needed to ensure the relevance of the training materials. Second, adequate technological infrastructure support is needed, including stable internet access.

Communication and socialization strategies also need to be strengthened to increase participant participation and commitment. The use of a peer-to-peer learning approach has proven effective in increasing participant motivation to adopt new practices. In addition, the involvement of key stakeholders such as

MSME associations and financial institutions can strengthen the impact of the program.

Continuous follow-up and monitoring programs are also very important to ensure sustainability. Without continuous support, the risk of participants returning to old practices is quite high, especially when facing technical or operational obstacles in implementing the new system.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The community service program "Digital Bookkeeping and Financial Literacy Training for MSMEs in Medan City" has been successfully implemented with very positive and significant results. Based on the evaluation conducted, several important things can be concluded:

### **1. Success of Digital Capacity Building**

This program has succeeded in drastically increasing the ability of MSMEs to use digital technology for financial management. From the initial condition where only 8% of MSMEs used digital bookkeeping applications, it increased to 83% after the program. This shows that with the right approach and intensive assistance, MSMEs have great potential to adopt digital technology.

### **2. Significant Transformation of Financial Literacy**

There was a remarkable increase in financial literacy understanding, from an average score of 45% in the pre-test to 78% in the post-test. As many as 83% of participants began implementing structured financial planning, and 71% succeeded in separating personal and business finances which were previously the main problem in managing MSME finances.

### **3. Measurable Economic Impact**

The program has had a real economic impact with an average increase in MSME turnover of 23% in the 6 months after the program ended. In addition, 65% of participants successfully accessed formal financial products that suited their business needs, opening up opportunities for wider access to capital.

### **4. Operational Efficiency**

The implementation of digital bookkeeping has successfully increased the efficiency of financial administration management time by 50%, from an average of 8 hours per week to 4 hours per week. The accuracy of transaction recording has also increased from 65% to 92%.

### **5. Program Sustainability**

The establishment of the Financial Literacy UMKM community and ongoing mentoring system demonstrates a commitment to the sustainability of the program. Collaboration with various stakeholders including financial institutions and application developers provides long-term support for participants.

Based on the evaluation results and experience of program implementation, the following are suggestions for developing similar programs in the future:

1. Suggestions for Program Improvement
2. Suggestions for Program Development
3. Suggestions for Policy
4. Suggestions for Further Research
5. Practical Implementation Suggestions

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