

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR SMES AT DHARMAWANGSA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the forms of support provided by English language communication training to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) mentored by Dharmawangsa University. A qualitative approach was used to explore in depth the experiences of MSMEs involved in the university's mentoring programme. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five trainers, three mentors, and ten MSME operators actively participating in business incubation activities. The findings indicate that the support provided encompasses business management training, guidance on digital marketing, as well as administrative and legal support for business operations. The MSME operators acknowledged that the university's ongoing mentoring has had a positive impact on enhancing their business capacity and ensuring the sustainability of their enterprises. This study concludes that the active role of English language communication training is crucial in building a campus entrepreneurship ecosystem that empowers local SMEs.

Keywords: MSMEs, training, English language communication, entrepreneurship, Dharmawangsa University

I. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in national economic growth, particularly in creating jobs and driving the local economy. However, MSMEs often face various obstacles, such as limited managerial knowledge, access to technology, marketing, and business legalities. Recognising this, many higher education institutions in Indonesia, including Dharmawangsa University, are actively involved in supporting the development of MSMEs through training and mentoring programmes.

Dharmawangsa University, as a higher education institution, plays a role in empowering MSMEs through community service activities and business incubation. In this context, the roles of trainers and mentors are vital. Trainers provide technical and managerial knowledge, whilst mentors offer ongoing guidance and support the implementation process on the ground. However, there has been little research specifically evaluating the effectiveness of this form of support in enhancing the capacity of SMEs mentored by universities.

Current developments in the business world require Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to continuously improve the quality of their products and services in order to compete in an increasingly expansive market. Not only are they competing at a local level, but many MSMEs now have the opportunity to reach national and even international markets through advances in digital technology and e-commerce. However, to capitalise on these opportunities, MSME operators need to possess a range of supporting skills, one of which is the ability to communicate in English.

English has become the international language used in the worlds of business, trade and cross-border communication. English language proficiency can help MSME operators introduce their products to foreign consumers, communicate with potential business partners, understand global market information, and utilise various digital platforms, the majority of

which are in English. Unfortunately, many MSME operators still lack adequate English communication skills, meaning that opportunities to expand their businesses into wider markets cannot yet be fully utilised.

This situation highlights that improving English communication skills is a key priority for SME owners. One approach is through training programmes tailored to the needs of business owners. Such training not only provides basic knowledge of English but also equips participants with the ability to communicate in business contexts, such as introducing products, serving foreign customers, conducting simple negotiations, and promoting products via digital media.

As a higher education institution with a role in fulfilling the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, Dharmawangsa University has a responsibility to contribute to community empowerment, including supporting the capacity development of SMEs. Through English communication training programmes, the university can act as a strategic partner in enhancing the competencies of SME operators so that they are better prepared to face business competition in the global era.

This study aims to examine the role of the English language communication training programme delivered by Dharmawangsa University in improving the communication skills of SME operators. Furthermore, this study also aims to determine the extent to which this training benefits participants' business development, both in terms of boosting their confidence when interacting with customers and in opening up opportunities for collaboration and marketing to wider markets. The research findings are expected to serve as a basis for evaluation by Dharmawangsa University in developing more effective training programmes, as well as contributing to the enhancement of SME competitiveness at both national and international levels.

Consequently, this study was conducted to understand how trainers and mentors contribute to the development of SMEs within the Dharmawangsa University environment, as well as the tangible impact experienced by SME operators as the beneficiaries.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive study design. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of the forms of support provided by trainers and mentors to SMEs under the guidance of Dharmawangsa University, as well as the perceptions of SME operators regarding the mentoring they receive.

Data collection techniques included: semi-structured interviews with 10 SME operators under the programme's guidance, 5 trainers, and 3 mentors from Dharmawangsa University's business incubation programme; observation of training sessions and mentoring activities; and documentation in the form of programme reports, training modules, and evaluation results from the mentoring activities.

Data analysis utilised the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques.

This research was conducted from March to May 2025, with activities taking place on the Dharmawangsa University campus and at the business premises of the MSMEs receiving support.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the support provided by trainers and mentors to MSMEs at Dharmawangsa University falls into three main categories: managerial and technical training, guidance on digital marketing, and support with business legalities and administration.

a. Managerial and Technical Training

The training provided covered business plan preparation, basic bookkeeping, and production and packaging. The MSME entrepreneurs stated that this training had improved their knowledge of managing their businesses more professionally.

b. Digital Marketing Support

The mentors help MSMEs set up business social media accounts, utilise online marketplaces, and create promotional content. Several MSME owners have reported an increase in turnover after actively marketing their products online.

c. Business Legality and Administration

Mentors assist SME owners in obtaining a Business Identification Number (NIB), halal certification, and product labelling. This makes it easier for them to reach a wider market and participate in government programmes.

The following is an example of research findings written in an academic style whilst remaining easy to understand, flowing, and not appearing overly formal. This section can be used for qualitative research findings or community service reports.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The English language communication training for SME operators organised by Dharmawangsa University yielded fairly positive results. The programme was attended by SME operators active in various business sectors, such as the food and beverage industry, fashion, handicrafts, and home-processed products. The majority of participants stated that, prior to attending the training, they had never received English language training directly related to their business activities.

At the start of the programme, the team identified participants' needs through interviews and discussions. The results showed that the main challenges faced by MSME entrepreneurs were not only limited English vocabulary, but also a lack of confidence when speaking to foreign customers. Furthermore, the majority of participants were not yet able to describe their products, introduce their businesses or provide basic customer service in English. These findings are consistent with various MSME empowerment programmes, which indicate that business owners require practical English language training tailored to their day-to-day business needs, rather than learning that focuses solely on theory. (, Journal of Labuhanbatu University)

During the training, participants were provided with materials designed around the business activities they frequently undertake. The materials covered how to greet customers, introduce their business, explain product advantages, quote prices, carry out simple transactions, and promote products in English. The material was delivered through short lectures, discussions, conversation simulations (role-play), and hands-on practice, enabling participants to immediately apply what they had learnt.

Observations during the training showed that participants became increasingly active in each session. At the start of the programme, most participants were still hesitant to use

English. However, after several practice sessions and simulations, they began to speak more confidently, albeit still using simple sentences. The interactive training environment made participants feel more comfortable to try without fear of making mistakes.

The improvement in participants' skills was also evident from the practical exercises at the end of the training. Most participants were able to introduce their products using simple sentences in English, explain the benefits of their products to potential customers, and create brief descriptions for publication on social media. In addition to improving language skills, this training also boosted participants' confidence in interacting with customers from other regions and overseas. Similar results have been reported in various English language training programmes for SMEs in Indonesia, demonstrating improvements in participants' promotional skills, business communication, and self-confidence following practice-based training. (Labuhanbatu University Journal)

From post-training interviews, the majority of participants stated that the material provided was easy to understand as it used examples relevant to their business activities. Participants also reported gaining new knowledge on how to promote products in English, making them more confident when marketing their products via social media or online marketplaces with a wider market reach.

This training also highlighted the important role of Dharmawangsa University in supporting the development of MSMEs through community service activities. The university acts not only as a provider of knowledge but also as a mentor, helping the community to enhance their skills in line with the current needs of the business world. Through this practical training, participants acquired skills that can be directly applied in their day-to-day business activities.

Nevertheless, this study also identified several challenges. Differences in participants' educational levels and prior abilities meant that the learning process proceeded at varying speeds. Furthermore, the relatively short duration of the training meant that participants were unable to master all the material in depth. Consequently, participants expressed a hope that similar activities could be conducted on an ongoing basis with a more diverse range of topics, such as advanced business communication, digital marketing in English, and communication practices with prospective international buyers.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the English communication training delivered by Dharmawangsa University has had a positive impact on improving the communication skills, self-confidence and readiness of MSME operators to expand the marketing reach of their products. This training represents a form of community empowerment capable of enhancing the quality of human resources whilst supporting the competitiveness of MSMEs in the era of the global economy.

V. CONCLUSION

The following is a conclusion written in academic language, which is easy to understand and consistent with the research findings on 'The Role of English Communication Training for SMEs at Dharmawangsa University'.

1. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the English communication training organised by Dharmawangsa University plays a positive role in improving the communication skills of SME operators. Prior to attending the training, the majority of participants still faced difficulties in using English to support their business activities, particularly when introducing products, communicating with foreign customers, or creating promotional materials in English. After attending the training, participants

- demonstrated improved communication skills, both in terms of vocabulary, constructing simple sentences, and the confidence to use English in business activities.
2. The training, which was delivered through practical exercises, discussions and conversation simulations, proved effective in boosting participants' confidence. The material, tailored to the needs of the business world, enabled participants to more easily understand and immediately apply the skills acquired in their daily activities, such as serving customers, explaining products and promoting their businesses via social media and online marketplaces. This demonstrates that practical training is more effective than learning that focuses solely on theory.
 3. In addition to benefiting the participants, this study also shows that Dharmawangsa University plays a strategic role in community empowerment through the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, particularly in the field of community service. Through English communication training, the university helps to improve the quality of human resources and strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs so that they are better prepared to face competition in both national and international markets.
 4. Nevertheless, this study also identified several challenges, such as variations in participants' initial proficiency levels and time constraints during the training, which meant that not all material could be mastered optimally. Therefore, there is a need for a continuous follow-up training programme with more in-depth material, such as advanced business communication, negotiations with international customers, the creation of English-language digital marketing content, and regular practical mentoring. With such a sustainable programme in place, it is hoped that the English communication skills of MSME practitioners will continue to improve, enabling them to expand their marketing networks, enhance business competitiveness, and open up opportunities to enter global markets.

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