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Education, Business Capital, Marketing Access, and Location as Determinants of MSME Success in Bengkulu City

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ABSTRACT

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in employment creation and regional economic activity, yet their success is shaped by managerial and market-related conditions. This study examines the effects of education, business capital, marketing access, and business location on MSME success in Bengkulu City. A quantitative cross-sectional design was applied using primary data collected through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. The population consisted of 44,627 MSMEs, from which 100 respondents were selected through probability sampling. After outlier removal, 93 observations were analyzed using multiple linear regression in SPSS 23. The measurement items were valid and reliable, and the regression model met the assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Education had a positive and significant effect on MSME success ($B = 0.092$; $p = 0.003$), as did marketing access ($B = 0.136$; $p < 0.001$) and business location ($B = 0.090$; $p = 0.002$). Business capital did not have a statistically significant effect ($B = -0.036$; $p = 0.246$). Collectively, the four predictors significantly explained MSME success, $F(4, 88) = 37.709$, $p < 0.001$, with $R2 = 0.632$ and adjusted $R2 = 0.615$. The findings indicate that human capital, market reach, and strategic location are more consistent determinants of MSME success than the amount of financial capital alone. Capacity-building programs should therefore combine managerial education, digital marketing assistance, and evidence-based location planning with access to finance.

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Introduction

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a strategic position in Indonesia's economy because they generate employment, distribute income, support household livelihoods, and maintain economic activity across regions. Their importance becomes particularly visible during periods of economic disruption, when smaller businesses often demonstrate flexibility in adjusting products, production volumes, and operating methods. MSMEs are also closely connected to local supply chains and consumer markets, which enables them to circulate income within communities. Sarfiah et al. (2019) describe MSMEs as a pillar of national economic development, while Hisrich et al. (2017) emphasize

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that entrepreneurship contributes to opportunity creation, innovation, and economic resilience.

The significance of MSMEs is equally evident at the regional level. Bengkulu Province recorded 52,724 MSME units in 2022, of which Bengkulu City accounted for 44,627 units, comprising 44,607 active businesses and 20 inactive businesses. This concentration indicates that MSMEs are a major component of the city's economic structure. Nevertheless, a large number of business units does not automatically guarantee sustainable performance. Many MSMEs face limited managerial capability, inadequate market information, weak financial planning, intense competition, and locations that do not match customer movement. These constraints may reduce sales, limit business expansion, and increase the risk of discontinuity.

Business success is generally reflected in the achievement of organizational and owner-defined objectives. For MSMEs, success may be indicated by higher revenue, increased production, a growing customer base, business expansion, improved facilities, and stronger market coverage. It is therefore broader than short-term profit. Success also concerns the owner's ability to manage resources efficiently, adapt to changing demand, maintain customer relationships, and sustain operations over time. Storey (1994) and Acs and Armington (2006) show that small-business performance is shaped by a combination of entrepreneurial capability, resource availability, and the surrounding business environment.

Education is one of the factors expected to strengthen MSME success because it contributes to human capital. Formal and non-formal education can improve the ability of business owners to interpret information, calculate costs, maintain records, understand consumer behavior, evaluate risk, and adopt new technology. Better-educated entrepreneurs may also be more capable of identifying opportunities and making structured decisions. Ucbasaran et al. (2013) argue that human capital affects the identification and pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities, while Bardhan and Patwardhan (2018) associate education with stronger entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes in developing economies. Education does not guarantee success by itself, but it can provide the cognitive and managerial foundation required to respond to a competitive market.

Business capital is another commonly discussed determinant. Financial resources are required to purchase raw materials, equipment, inventory, technology, and promotional services, as well as to pay wages and operating expenses. Access to finance can help a firm expand capacity and withstand temporary cash-flow pressures. Demirguc-Kunt and Maksimovic (2005) demonstrate that financial constraints may restrict firm growth. However, empirical findings on the direct effect of capital on MSME performance remain inconsistent. In some settings, capital is significant because businesses need additional funds to increase scale. In other settings, the amount of capital alone is insufficient when owners lack financial discipline, market demand, product differentiation, or managerial competence. Handinata (2023), Herawaty and Yustien (2019), and Junedi and Arumsari (2021) reported that business capital did not independently determine business success or continuity in their respective samples.

Marketing access refers to the ability of an enterprise to identify target customers, communicate product value, distribute products, and reach markets efficiently. It includes product decisions, pricing, promotion, distribution channels, branding, customer communication, and the use of digital platforms. Marketing is increasingly important because internet-based channels allow MSMEs to reach consumers beyond their immediate neighborhoods. Social media, messaging applications, online marketplaces, and digital payment ecosystems reduce geographical barriers and support continuous interaction with customers. Chlomoudis and Vlachopoulou (2017), Murthy and Rama Krishna (2012), and Sahu and Swain (2018) link effective marketing orientation and strategy with stronger performance among small and medium enterprises.

Business location is also fundamental, particularly for enterprises that depend on direct customer visits. A strategic location improves visibility, accessibility, proximity to target markets, transportation convenience, and the availability of supporting infrastructure. It may also reduce distribution costs and increase spontaneous purchases. Conversely, a location with poor access, limited parking, low traffic, or an unsuitable surrounding market may weaken performance even when the product is competitive. The importance of location is supported by studies such as Putri and Purwanti (2022), Nugroho et al. (2024), and Suraji (2022), although the magnitude of its influence may vary according to business type and the growing role of online channels.

Previous studies have generally examined capital, marketing, location, human capital, accounting information, or entrepreneurial characteristics in separate combinations and in different sectors. Their findings are not fully consistent. Alfian (2023), for example, found different effects of marketing strategy, capital, and location among culinary MSMEs, whereas Chairuman et al. (2023) reported that business capital, product quality, and location contributed to the success of dim sum MSMEs. These variations suggest that determinants of MSME success are context-specific. The concentration of MSMEs in Bengkulu City and the limited integrated evidence concerning education, capital, marketing access, and location create a need for a local empirical assessment.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the partial effects of education, business capital, marketing access, and business location on MSME success in Bengkulu City and to test their simultaneous contribution. The study is expected to clarify which factors require the greatest attention from business owners, educational institutions, financial service providers, and local government. Four partial hypotheses propose that each independent variable affects MSME success, while a fifth hypothesis proposes that all four variables jointly affect MSME success.

Method

This study used a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional design. The research was conducted in Bengkulu City in May 2024, with MSME owners or operators serving as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable was MSME success, while the independent

variables were education, business capital, marketing access, and business location. The research design was intended to test the direction and statistical significance of the relationships between the variables at one point in time.

The study population comprised 44,627 MSMEs registered in Bengkulu City. The minimum sample was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula with a 10% precision level, resulting in approximately 100 respondents. Probability sampling was used so that members of the population had an opportunity to be selected. Questionnaires were distributed to MSME actors, and 100 usable responses were initially collected. During data screening, seven observations were identified as outliers and removed. The final regression analysis therefore used 93 observations.

Primary data were collected with a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Education was measured with seven items covering knowledge, skills, adaptability, and the ability to manage business activities. Business capital was measured with seven items relating to the availability and use of financial and productive resources. Marketing access was measured with six items covering market reach, promotion, customer access, and distribution. Business location was measured with seven items concerning accessibility, visibility, infrastructure, and proximity to customers. MSME success was measured with two items that summarized perceived achievement and business development.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23. The analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, Pearson item-total correlation tests, Cronbach's alpha reliability tests, and multiple linear regression. Item validity was assessed by comparing the calculated correlation with the critical value of approximately 0.196. A construct was considered reliable when Cronbach's alpha exceeded 0.60. Regression assumptions were evaluated using the normal probability plot and one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values, and a residual scatterplot. Partial effects were evaluated with t tests at a 5% significance level, simultaneous effects with an F test, and explanatory power with R2 and adjusted R2. The estimated model was $Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + b3X3 + b4X4 + e$, where Y represents MSME success, X1 education, X2 business capital, X3 marketing access, and X4 business location.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile and Descriptive Statistics

Of the 93 respondents included in the final analysis, 34 were men and 59 were women, equivalent to 36.6% and 63.4%, respectively. The respondents were predominantly senior high school and bachelor's degree graduates. There were 42 respondents with senior high school or vocational qualifications (45.2%) and 43 respondents with bachelor's degrees (46.2%). The remaining respondents included one elementary school graduate, five junior high school graduates, one diploma graduate, and one master's degree graduate. The

educational profile indicates that most participating MSME actors had at least upper-secondary education, but variation remained sufficient to examine the relationship between educational capacity and business success.

Descriptive statistics show relatively high average scores across the four predictors. Education had a mean of 28.76 (SD = 3.84), business capital 28.58 (SD = 3.59), marketing access 25.35 (SD = 3.37), and business location 29.45 (SD = 3.84). The mean MSME success score was 8.53 (SD = 1.17) on a possible observed range from 6 to 10. The results suggest that respondents generally evaluated their educational capability, resource condition, marketing activities, location, and business achievement positively. Nevertheless, the standard deviations and score ranges indicate meaningful differences among MSMEs.

Table 1. ***Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables***

Variable	N	Observed Range	Mean	SD
Education	93	21-35	28.76	3.843
Business capital	93	21-35	28.58	3.591
Marketing access	93	16-30	25.35	3.368
Business location	93	21-35	29.45	3.843
MSME success	93	6-10	8.53	1.166

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS 23.

Measurement Quality and Regression Assumptions

All questionnaire items met the validity criterion. Item-total correlations ranged from 0.609 to 0.758 for education, 0.595 to 0.775 for business capital, 0.666 to 0.811 for marketing access, 0.729 to 0.804 for business location, and 0.881 to 0.888 for MSME success. Each value exceeded the critical correlation of approximately 0.196. Reliability was also satisfactory: Cronbach's alpha was 0.833 for education, 0.802 for business capital, 0.860 for marketing access, 0.887 for business location, and 0.723 for MSME success. These findings indicate acceptable internal consistency and support the use of composite scores in the regression analysis.

The regression diagnostics indicated that the model assumptions were met. The normal probability plot showed residuals distributed close to the diagonal line, and the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.062, which was greater than 0.05. Tolerance values ranged from 0.413 to 0.481 and VIF values from 2.078 to 2.424, showing no problematic multicollinearity. The residual scatterplot displayed a random distribution above and below zero without a clear pattern, indicating no evident heteroscedasticity. The model was therefore considered suitable for inferential interpretation.

Table 2. ***Summary of Measurement Reliability and Regression Diagnostics***

Assessment	Result	Criterion	Decision
Cronbach alpha	0.723-0.887	> 0.60	Reliable
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p = 0.062	p > 0.05	Normal residuals
Tolerance	0.413-0.481	> 0.10	No multicollinearity
VIF	2.078-2.424	< 10.00	No multicollinearity
Residual scatterplot	Random pattern	No systematic pattern	No heteroscedasticity

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS 23.

Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation

The estimated regression equation was: MSME success = 0.811 + 0.092(education) - 0.036(business capital) + 0.136(marketing access) + 0.090(business location). The constant was not statistically significant (p = 0.238), but the coefficients reveal different relationships between the predictors and business success. Education, marketing access, and location had positive coefficients, whereas business capital had a small negative coefficient after the other variables were controlled.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Constant	0.811	0.683	-	1.188	0.238
Education	0.092	0.030	0.302	3.090	0.003
Business capital	-0.036	0.031	-0.111	-1.169	0.246
Marketing access	0.136	0.035	0.393	3.897	<0.001
Business location	0.090	0.028	0.298	3.194	0.002

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS 23.

Education had a positive and significant effect on MSME success (B = 0.092, beta = 0.302, t = 3.090, p = 0.003). This result supports the first hypothesis. A one-unit increase in the education score was associated with a 0.092-unit increase in the MSME success score, holding the other variables constant. The result indicates that knowledge, skills, and learning capacity are relevant to business management. Education may help owners prepare plans, understand costs and revenues, respond to customer preferences, organize operations, and adopt new technologies. The finding is consistent with the human-capital perspective and with Ucbasaran et al. (2013), who emphasize the role of knowledge and experience in recognizing and pursuing opportunities. It also supports Bardhan and Patwardhan's (2018) argument that education can improve entrepreneurial outcomes in developing-country settings.

The significance of education should not be interpreted solely in terms of formal degrees. The indicators used in this study also represent practical knowledge and adaptability. For MSMEs, short courses, mentoring, bookkeeping assistance, digital literacy, and peer learning may produce benefits similar to formal education by increasing the owner's

managerial competence. The practical implication is that MSME development programs should not focus only on distributing financial assistance. They should also strengthen decision-making, financial recording, customer analysis, inventory control, product development, and the ability to evaluate business performance.

Business capital did not have a statistically significant effect on MSME success (B = -0.036, beta = -0.111, t = -1.169, p = 0.246), so the second hypothesis was not supported. This result does not imply that capital is unnecessary. All businesses require resources to operate. Rather, after education, marketing access, and location were considered simultaneously, differences in the reported capital score did not explain additional variation in success. One possible explanation is that the effect of capital depends on how effectively resources are allocated. Additional funds may not improve performance when demand is weak, costs are poorly controlled, inventory is excessive, or the business owner lacks a clear expansion strategy.

The non-significant result is consistent with Handinata (2023), Herawaty and Yustien (2019), Junedi and Arumsari (2021), and Faradillah et al. (2022), who reported that capital did not independently determine business success, continuity, or sustainability in their samples. However, other studies, including Chairuman et al. (2023) and Alfian (2023), found a significant role for capital. The contrast indicates that capital is likely to be conditional rather than universally decisive. Its effect may vary according to business sector, initial scale, financing source, financial management quality, product demand, and the purpose for which funds are used. It is also possible that the questionnaire captured respondents' perceptions of capital availability more strongly than the productivity of capital.

Marketing access produced the largest standardized coefficient and had a positive, significant effect on MSME success (B = 0.136, beta = 0.393, t = 3.897, $p < 0.001$). The third hypothesis was therefore supported. The result demonstrates that the capacity to reach customers, communicate product value, select appropriate promotional channels, and maintain market relationships is a central determinant of success. Marketing access directly connects production with sales. Without sufficient customer reach, increases in inventory or production capacity may not translate into revenue.

This finding is consistent with Chlomoudis and Vlachopoulou (2017), Murthy and Rama Krishna (2012), and Sahu and Swain (2018), who emphasize the contribution of market orientation and marketing strategy to enterprise performance. For MSMEs in Bengkulu City, digital channels create an important opportunity to expand beyond consumers located near the business. Social media, online marketplaces, messaging applications, customer databases, and digital content can support low-cost promotion and repeat purchases. Nevertheless, digital marketing should be supported by product quality, rapid response, transparent prices, reliable delivery, and consistent branding. The positive coefficient indicates that marketing assistance should be treated as a core capability-building program rather than an optional promotional activity.

Business location also had a positive and significant effect on MSME success (B = 0.090, beta = 0.298, t = 3.194, p = 0.002), supporting the fourth hypothesis. A suitable location increases accessibility, visibility, and convenience and may improve the frequency

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of customer visits. For offline businesses, proximity to residential areas, offices, schools, markets, tourism routes, or transport corridors can shape daily sales. Supporting facilities, including safe access and adequate parking, may further influence customer choice. The result aligns with Putri and Purwanti (2022), Nugroho et al. (2024), and Suraji (2022), who identify location as an important factor in MSME sales or business success.

The continuing significance of location does not contradict the growth of online marketing. Instead, physical and digital accessibility can complement each other. A strategically located business may attract walk-in customers, while online channels extend its market and support delivery. Location decisions should therefore consider customer density, rent, competition, supplier access, logistics, parking, safety, and the suitability of the surrounding area for the product category. Local government can support better decisions by providing spatial information on commercial zones, customer traffic, transport networks, and business clusters.

The simultaneous test showed that education, business capital, marketing access, and business location jointly affected MSME success, $F(4, 88) = 37.709$, $p < 0.001$. The multiple correlation was 0.795, indicating a strong relationship between the predictor set and MSME success. The model explained 63.2% of the observed variance in success ($R2 = 0.632$), while the adjusted R2 was 0.615. The adjusted value is the more conservative estimate after accounting for the number of predictors and sample size. Based on the adjusted R2, the remaining 38.5% may be associated with factors not included in the model, such as product quality, innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, accounting practices, digital capability, customer service, business age, competition, networks, and government support.

Table 4. ***Overall Model Fit and Explanatory Power***

R	R2	Adjusted R2	SEE	F(4, 88)	p
0.795	0.632	0.615	0.724	37.709	<0.001

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS 23.

The joint findings suggest that MSME success is produced by a configuration of capabilities rather than a single resource. Education helps an owner interpret information and make decisions; marketing access converts products into customer demand; location improves physical accessibility; and capital enables activities to be financed. The non-significant partial coefficient for capital, alongside a significant overall model, reinforces the view that finance becomes productive when combined with managerial competence and market opportunity. Consequently, financing programs should be integrated with mentoring, bookkeeping, market validation, and monitoring of fund utilization.

From a policy perspective, the results support three priorities. First, entrepreneurship education should be delivered in practical formats that address financial literacy, simple accounting, cost calculation, inventory management, and technology adoption. Second, MSMEs should receive sustained assistance in digital marketing, branding, customer relationship management, and marketplace operations. Third, location planning should be

strengthened through business mapping, cluster development, infrastructure improvement, and information on market traffic. Financial support remains relevant, but credit and grants should be matched to feasible business plans and accompanied by capacity development.

The study has several limitations. It used a cross-sectional design and self-reported questionnaire data, so causal interpretation should be made cautiously. The final sample included 93 MSMEs from one city, limiting generalization to other regions and sectors. Seven observations were removed as outliers, which improved model fit but may have reduced the representation of unusual business conditions. In addition, the probability-sampling process depended on the availability and accuracy of the MSME population frame. Future research should use larger stratified samples, distinguish sectors and business sizes, include objective performance indicators, and test mediating or moderating variables such as financial management, digital capability, innovation, and entrepreneurial orientation. Longitudinal studies would also help explain how education, financing, marketing, and location influence performance over time.

Conclusion

This study concludes that education, marketing access, and business location are significant positive determinants of MSME success in Bengkulu City. Marketing access shows the strongest standardized effect, followed by education and location. Business capital does not have a significant partial effect after the other variables are controlled, indicating that the availability of funds alone is not sufficient to ensure success. However, the four variables jointly form a significant model, explaining 63.2% of the variance in MSME success, with an adjusted explanatory power of 61.5%.

MSME owners should strengthen managerial learning, systematically identify target markets, use digital and conventional marketing channels, and select locations based on accessibility and customer movement. Government agencies, educational institutions, and financial providers should integrate financing with business education, digital marketing assistance, financial-recording support, and location-based market information. Future studies should apply sector-specific sampling and incorporate objective financial data to clarify when and how business capital contributes to sustained MSME performance.

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