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Strengthening Financial Management of OK OCE-Supported MSMEs to Enhance Business Sustainability

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Abstract

Background: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in local economic development and employment creation, yet many face financial management challenges that may hinder effective business management and long-term sustainability.
Aims: This Community Service Program aimed to strengthen the financial management capacity of OK OCE-supported MSMEs through practical training and mentoring in simple bookkeeping, cash flow management, financial planning, and the separation of personal and business finances.
Methods: The program involved 30 MSME participants and employed a participatory approach consisting of needs assessment, pre-test, financial management training, contextual practical exercises, direct mentoring, discussion and consultation, post-test, and follow-up evaluation. Program outcomes were assessed by comparing pre-test and post-test scores across five financial management indicators.
Results: Participants demonstrated an average immediate post-program improvement of 41.6 percentage points across the five indicators, with improvements ranging from 40 to 43 percentage points. The greatest improvement was observed in simple budgeting, which increased from 35% to 78% (+43 percentage points).
Conclusion: The training and mentoring program was associated with immediate improvements in participants' understanding of basic financial management, particularly in financial recording, cash flow management, budgeting, separation of personal and business finances, and the use of financial information for decision-making. These improvements provide a foundation for more structured financial management practices, while their longer-term contribution to business resilience and sustainability requires further follow-up evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in supporting economic development and employment creation, particularly among urban communities and emerging entrepreneurs (Dhar et al., 2024; Oktavianti & Budi Eko Soetjipto, 2025). In Indonesia, MSMEs contribute substantially to local economic activities (Abduh et al., 2024; Nanda & Kumar, 2023; Tambunan, 2023; Vandita & Jaiswal, 2023) and provide important sources of income and

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employment (Chandra & Haeruddin, 2025; Djalangkara et al., 2024; Widita et al., 2024). The development of MSMEs therefore requires support for production and marketing activities (Chumaidiyah et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2026) and the strengthening of internal business management capabilities (Lumbanraja et al., 2026), particularly financial management (Maryanti et al., 2026; Pranitasari et al., 2026; Ridhwan et al., 2026).

OK OCE is one of the platforms supporting the development of entrepreneurs and MSMEs through capacity-building activities. However, MSMEs supported by OK OCE continue to face challenges in managing their business finances. Based on preliminary observations and discussions with MSME actors, several problems were identified, including irregular financial recording, the absence of clear separation between personal and business finances, limited understanding of cash flow conditions, and inadequate financial planning (Adam et al., 2024; Kadiyono & Susanto, 2025; Pramesti et al., 2025). Many business owners still rely on personal experience and intuition when making financial decisions (Haq et al., 2026; Suryawati et al., 2025; Susanti & Putra, 2025), making it difficult to determine actual business profits, control cash flow, and plan future business needs (Murini et al., 2025; Susan, 2023; Susanti & Putra, 2025).

These situations may affect business resilience and sustainability (Mulyani et al., 2024; Zuhroh et al., 2025). Poor financial records make it difficult for business owners to evaluate business performance (Esomar et al., 2025; Sulhan et al., 2025), while uncontrolled cash flows may disrupt the ability of MSMEs to meet operational requirements (Kurniasari et al., 2025; Mukhlis et al., 2026). In addition, the absence of reliable financial information may limit MSMEs' ability to access formal financing because business owners may have difficulty demonstrating their financial condition and business feasibility (Hasanah et al., 2025; Junarsin et al., 2023; Susanti & Putra, 2025; Tran Thanh Thuy, 2025). Therefore, strengthening financial management capabilities is an important component of efforts to support MSME sustainability.

The distinctiveness of this Community Service Program lies in its integrated and sequential intervention approach. Rather than providing stand-alone financial literacy training, the program combined needs assessment, financial management training, contextual practical exercises, direct mentoring, pre- and post-program evaluation, and follow-up consultation within the specific context of OK OCE-supported MSMEs. This integrated approach enabled the program to address participants' identified financial management problems while providing opportunities to practice and discuss the application of financial management concepts in their own business situations.

Financial management is an important component of MSME management because it provides business owners with information needed to monitor performance, control expenditures, manage cash flows, and make business decisions (Nazaruddin et al., 2026; Susanti et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2026). Financial literacy is closely related to the ability of small businesses to manage financial resources effectively (Derbyshire et al., 2023; Iriyadi et al., 2023; Mang'ana, 2026). Talip & Wasiuzzaman (2024) emphasized the relationship between financial literacy and the financial performance of small enterprises, indicating the importance of financial knowledge in supporting business financial outcomes.

Cash flow management is another critical aspect of MSME financial management (Purnamasari et al., 2025; Rahayu et al., 2023; Ratnawati et al., 2025). Sales growth alone does not necessarily guarantee business sustainability when cash inflows and outflows are not properly controlled (Arduini et al., 2026; Raghuvanshi & Ahmad, 2026). Nasimiyu & Kamau (2024) highlighted the importance of cash flow management for the performance of small and medium enterprises. Effective cash flow management enables business owners to identify operational priorities, anticipate financial requirements, and maintain sufficient liquidity for continuing business activities (Airout et al., 2023; Hu, 2025; Mehar, 2025).

Financial planning also supports more rational and measurable business decision-making (Imjai et al., 2025). Pusparini et al. (2026) and Poliakova et al. (2024) associated financial management

practices with the sustainability of small and medium enterprises, suggesting that systematic financial practices can support the long-term continuity of business activities. Similarly, Kareem et al. (2024), Mutambara & Kader (2025), and Kaur & Dhiman (2025) emphasized the importance of financial management assistance in strengthening MSMEs' ability to manage their finances and support business sustainability.

In the context of community empowerment, financial management should therefore not be limited to the delivery of theoretical knowledge (Alsqour et al., 2025; González-Prida et al., 2025). Practical assistance is necessary to help MSME actors translate financial concepts into daily business practices (SolihFahmi & Purwidianti, 2025; Gunawan et al., 2023; Widjayanti et al., 2025). Training combined with mentoring can provide opportunities for participants to practice recording transactions, managing cash flows, and interpreting financial information based on their own business situations (Aleksieienko et al., 2025; Sumiati et al., 2026; Ulupui et al., 2025).

Although financial literacy and financial management have been widely recognized as important factors in MSME performance and sustainability, financial management practices among micro and small businesses remain relatively difficult to implement consistently. Existing discussions frequently emphasize the importance of financial knowledge and management practices, but MSME actors may still experience difficulties translating these concepts into routine business activities.

The preliminary condition of OK OCE-supported MSMEs indicates a practical gap between awareness of the importance of financial management and its actual implementation. Some participants did not maintain financial records regularly, continued to combine personal and business finances, and had limited practices for monitoring cash flows and preparing simple financial plans. Consequently, financial information was not consistently available to support business decision-making.

This gap indicates the need for an intervention that is not limited to one-way financial literacy training. MSME actors require practical guidance that is adapted to their business scale and characteristics and allows them to directly apply financial management practices to their own business activities. Therefore, the present Community Service Program addresses the implementation gap by combining financial management training with direct mentoring and follow-up evaluation.

The selection of OK OCE-supported MSMEs as the target participants was based on the financial management challenges identified during the preliminary needs assessment. Despite their involvement in an entrepreneurship development ecosystem, several participating MSMEs still experienced difficulties in maintaining regular financial records, separating personal and business finances, monitoring cash flows, preparing simple budgets, and using financial information for business decision-making. These conditions indicated a need for practical financial management assistance that could complement the broader entrepreneurial capacity-building support provided through the OK OCE program.

A participatory mentoring approach was selected because MSME actors have different business characteristics, levels of experience, and financial management capabilities. Through practical exercises and discussions, participants can learn financial management concepts while applying them directly to their own business situations. This approach is expected to make financial management more accessible and encourage participants to develop consistent financial management habits.

The program was implemented within a community development collaboration involving Universitas Mercu Buana, OK OCE, and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. This collaboration provides an opportunity to apply academic knowledge to practical challenges faced by MSMEs while strengthening community engagement and supporting local economic development.

Purpose of the Community Service Program

This Community Service Program aimed to strengthen the financial management capacity of OK OCE-supported MSMEs through practical training and mentoring in simple bookkeeping, cash flow management, financial planning, and the separation of personal and business finances. The program also aimed to improve participants' ability to use financial information for more informed business decision-making and to provide a stronger foundation for more structured and sustainable financial management practices.

As this article reports a Community Service Program rather than an empirical study designed to test causal relationships, no statistical hypothesis was formulated. Program effectiveness was instead assessed through a comparison of participants' pre-test and post-test results across five financial management indicators.

METHOD

This Community Service Program used a participatory training and mentoring approach to strengthen the financial management capabilities of OK OCE-supported Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The program combined financial management training, practical mentoring, interactive discussions, and evaluation activities to facilitate the application of financial management practices in participants' business activities.

A pre-test and post-test approach was employed to assess changes in participants' understanding of basic financial management before and after the program. The evaluation focused on participants' understanding of financial record-keeping, cash flow management, separation of personal and business finances, basic financial planning, and the use of financial information for business decision-making.

The program was designed as a community-based capacity-building activity rather than a causal experimental study. Therefore, the evaluation was intended to describe changes in participants' understanding and reported financial management capabilities following the training and mentoring activities. This approach is consistent with community service programs that combine practical intervention with pre- and post-activity evaluation to assess program outcomes. Recent articles published in the target journal similarly apply training, mentoring, and pre-test/post-test evaluation to assess changes in participants' knowledge and skills.

The Community Service Program involved 30 MSME actors supported by OK OCE. Participants represented micro and small businesses operating in the culinary, fashion, handicraft, service, and retail/trading sectors. Participants were recruited in coordination with OK OCE based on the following criteria: micro and small business actors engaged in several business sectors, including culinary, fashion, handicraft, services, and retail/trading. The participating MSMEs had diverse business backgrounds and different levels of experience in financial management. This diversity was considered in the delivery of the program by adapting examples, practical exercises, and mentoring discussions to participants' respective business conditions.

The participants were selected as beneficiaries based on their involvement in the OK OCE-supported MSME community and their relevance to the financial management capacity-building objectives of the program. The program focused on strengthening participants' practical understanding and ability to apply basic financial management practices in their daily business operations.

The Community Service Program was conducted at Universitas Mercu Buana over a one-day implementation period. The program consisted of one main session, with a scheduled coffee break between activities. The session included needs assessment, pre-test administration, financial management training, contextual practical exercises, direct mentoring, post-test assessment, and follow-up consultation.

The program was implemented through three sequential stages: (1) coordination, preparation, and activity planning; (2) preliminary assessment, training, and mentoring; and (3) follow-up, evaluation, and reporting. These stages were designed to ensure that the intervention was systematically prepared, implemented, evaluated, and followed by opportunities for additional consultation.

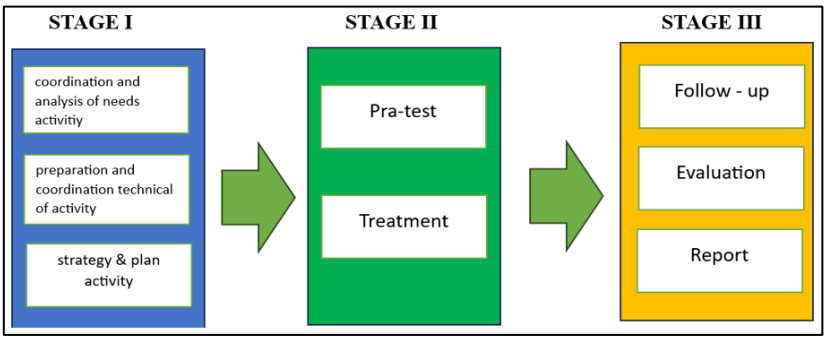


Figure 1. Stages of Community Service Program Implementation

Stage 1: Coordination, Preparation, and Activity Planning
The first stage focused on coordination, preparation, and activity planning. The PKM team coordinated with OK OCE as the community partner to align the objectives, responsibilities, participant involvement, and technical implementation of the program. The team also conducted an initial needs analysis to identify the financial management issues experienced by the participating MSMEs and to ensure that the training materials were relevant to their business conditions.

Based on the identified needs, the PKM team prepared training and presentation materials covering basic financial management, simple financial recording, cash flow management, separation of personal and business finances, basic budgeting, and the use of financial information for business decision-making. Technical preparations were also carried out by ensuring the availability of presentation media, projectors, training materials, and other supporting equipment. The activity strategy was designed using a participatory approach in which participants were encouraged to actively engage in discussions, ask questions, share their business experiences, and relate the materials to their own business practices.

Stage 2: Preliminary Assessment and Program Implementation
The second stage began with a pre-test to assess participants' initial understanding of five financial management indicators: financial recording, separation of personal and business finances, cash flow management, simple budgeting, and the use of financial information for business decision-making. Following the pre-test, participants received financial management training supported by contextual practical exercises. Participants were guided to practice recording business transactions, distinguishing personal and business finances, identifying cash inflows and outflows, preparing simple budgets, and interpreting financial information for business decisions. The mentoring process used participants' own business situations as practical examples, allowing them to discuss specific financial management difficulties directly with the facilitators. Participants were also encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and receive individual clarification where necessary.

Stage 3: Follow-Up, Evaluation, and Reporting
Following the training and mentoring activities, a post-test was administered using the same indicators and scoring procedure as the pre-test. The pre-test and post-test scores were compared descriptively to identify immediate changes in participants' understanding of financial management. Follow-up consultations were conducted for one month after the main training activities. During this period, participants were given opportunities to discuss difficulties encountered in applying the financial management practices introduced during the program and to obtain additional clarification and assistance from the PKM team through email, telephone, and WhatsApp. The final stage also

included documentation and reporting of participant attendance, assessment results, activity photographs, meeting notes, and other supporting records.

Evaluation Instrument and Measurement

Program outcomes were evaluated using a structured pre-test and post-test assessment administered before and immediately after the financial management training and mentoring activities. The assessment covered five financial management indicators: (1) financial recording, (2) separation of personal and business finances, (3) cash flow management, (4) simple budgeting, and (5) the use of financial information for business decision-making. Each indicator was represented by assessment questions designed to measure participants' understanding and ability to apply the relevant financial management concepts in their business activities.

The assessment instrument was developed based on the learning objectives and materials delivered during the program. The questions were formulated using practical situations and examples relevant to MSME operations. The same assessment instrument and scoring procedure were used for both the pre-test and post-test to ensure consistency and comparability of the results. Each correct response was assigned a score of 1, while an incorrect or unanswered response received a score of 0. The scores for questions within each indicator were summed and converted into percentage scores using the following formula:

$$Indicator\ score\ (\%) = \left(\frac{number\ of\ correct\ answers}{total\ number\ of\ questions\ for\ the\ indicator}\right) X\ 100$$

For each indicator, the mean percentage score was calculated across all 30 participants. Improvement was determined by calculating the absolute difference between the mean post-test and pre-test percentage scores. The overall improvement was subsequently calculated by averaging the percentage-point changes across the five indicators. Because the program employed a single-group pre-test–post-test evaluation without a control group, the results were interpreted descriptively as immediate changes in participants' understanding of financial management during the program period rather than as evidence of causal effects.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

The Community Service Program involved 30 MSME actors supported by OK OCE. The participants represented several business sectors, reflecting the diversity of business activities within the OK OCE-supported MSME community. The largest group of participants was engaged in the culinary sector, with 12 participants (40.0%), followed by the fashion sector with 6 participants (20.0%), handicraft with 5 participants (16.7%), services with 4 participants (13.3%), and retail/trading with 3 participants (10.0%). The distribution of participants by business sector is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participating MSMEs by Business Sector

Business Sector	Number of Participants	Percentage
Culinary	12	40.0%
Fashion	6	20.0%
Handicraft	5	16.7%
Services	4	13.3%
Retail/Trading	3	10.0%
Total	30	100.0%

The distribution indicates that the program reached MSMEs operating across different types of businesses, with the culinary sector accounting for the largest proportion of participants. This diversity is relevant to the implementation of financial management assistance because MSMEs operating in different sectors may face different patterns of revenue, expenditure, cash flow, and financial planning. Therefore, the training and mentoring activities emphasized basic financial

management practices that could be adapted to the operational characteristics of each participating business.

Implementation of the Financial Management Program

The financial management assistance program was implemented through a combination of financial management training, practical exercises, interactive discussions, and mentoring. The activities were designed to enable participants to understand basic financial management concepts and apply them directly to their respective business activities. The implementation emphasized practical and contextual learning so that participants could relate the financial management materials to the actual conditions of their businesses.

The activity began with the delivery of financial management materials covering the importance of systematic financial recording, separation of personal and business finances, cash flow management, simple budgeting, and the use of financial information for business decision-making. The participants were encouraged to discuss the financial challenges they experienced in managing their businesses and to share their experiences with the facilitators and other participants.

The training was followed by practical mentoring activities. Participants were guided to apply simple financial recording practices and identify the relationship between business income, expenditures, and cash flow. The mentoring process also encouraged participants to distinguish business-related financial transactions from personal financial needs. Through direct guidance and discussion, participants were able to relate the concepts presented during the training to their own business operations.

The interactive nature of the program encouraged active participation throughout the activity. Participants were given opportunities to ask questions, discuss problems, and seek clarification regarding financial management practices that were relevant to their businesses. This approach was intended to reduce the perception that financial management is complicated and to encourage participants to adopt simple and consistent practices that can be maintained in their daily operations.



Figure 2. Financial Management Training and Mentoring Activities

Figure 2 documents the implementation of the financial management training and mentoring activities, including the delivery of training materials, participant interaction, practical guidance, and

discussion sessions. The documentation provides visual evidence of the participants' involvement throughout the program.

Changes in Participants' Understanding of Financial Management

The effectiveness of the financial management training and mentoring program was assessed by comparing participants' pre-test and post-test results across five financial management indicators. The assessment focused on financial recording, separation of personal and business finances, cash flow management, simple budgeting, and the use of financial information for business decision-making. The comparison was conducted to identify changes in participants' understanding following their participation in the program.

Table 2. Comparison of Participants' Understanding of Financial Management Before and After the Program

Financial Management Indicator	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement
Financial Recording	45%	85%	+40 pp
Separation of Personal and Business Finances	40%	82%	+42 pp
Cash Flow Management	38%	80%	+42 pp
Simple Budgeting	35%	78%	+43 pp
Financial Information for Decision-Making	42%	83%	+41 pp
Average Improvement			+41.6 pp

The pre-test and post-test comparison showed improvements across all five financial management indicators. The most substantial change was observed in simple budgeting, which increased by 43 percentage points, followed by separation of personal and business finances and cash flow management, each increasing by 42 percentage points. These relatively large changes indicate that the areas in which participants initially demonstrated lower levels of understanding, particularly budgeting and cash flow management, also showed some of the greatest immediate post-program improvements. Financial recording increased by 40 percentage points, while the use of financial information for business decision-making increased by 41 percentage points. Taken together, the five indicators showed an average improvement of 41.6 percentage points. The pattern of results indicates a broad improvement in participants' understanding of financial management immediately following the training and mentoring activities, rather than improvement being concentrated in only one aspect of financial management.

The consistent direction of change across all five indicators suggests that participants demonstrated stronger understanding of financial management at the immediate post-program assessment. Because the evaluation used a single-group pre-test–post-test design without a control group, these findings are interpreted as descriptive changes observed during the program period and should not be considered evidence of a causal effect of the intervention.

DISCUSSION

The improvements observed across all five financial management indicators show that participants demonstrated stronger understanding of financial management immediately after the program. The average increase of 41.6 percentage points indicates a broad short-term improvement across the assessed areas rather than a change limited to a single financial management skill. This pattern is particularly relevant for MSMEs whose financial management practices may still rely heavily on informal routines and owner experience. The findings therefore support the practical value of combining financial management knowledge with contextual exercises and direct assistance, while remaining limited to immediate learning outcomes.

The increase in financial recording scores suggests that participants developed a stronger understanding of the importance of systematically documenting business transactions. This is important because financial records provide a basis for monitoring income and expenditures, evaluating financial conditions, and distinguishing business transactions from personal financial

activities. The finding is consistent with studies by Pellegrina et al. (2021), which emphasize the relevance of financial literacy and financial management knowledge for small business performance. In the present program, the contextual use of simple recording exercises may have helped participants relate financial concepts more directly to their daily business activities.

The increase in participants' understanding of the separation of personal and business finances is also an important immediate outcome. Mixing personal and business funds can make it difficult for MSME owners to identify actual business income, expenditures, and profitability. A clearer separation of financial transactions can therefore provide more reliable information for monitoring business conditions. Although this program did not measure changes in business resilience directly, this financial management practice is consistent with the broader literature emphasizing the importance of stronger managerial capabilities for SME resilience and adaptability (Arno, 2025; Bouhalleb, 2024; Pelletier et al., 2025).

The improvement in cash flow management indicates stronger participant understanding of the relationship between business income, expenditures, and available cash. This aspect is particularly important for MSMEs because operational continuity depends not only on sales but also on the timing and management of cash inflows and outflows. Previous studies have also highlighted the relationship between effective cash flow management and SME performance. In the context of this program, the improvement should be interpreted as increased short-term understanding of cash flow management rather than as direct evidence of improved business performance.

The largest improvement was observed in simple budgeting, with an increase of 43 percentage points. This suggests that budgeting was one of the areas in which participants showed the greatest immediate learning gain. Basic budgeting can help MSME owners anticipate expenditures, allocate available resources, and plan future operational needs. This finding is consistent with Pangemanan et. (2026) & Utami & Astutie, (2026), who emphasize the broader importance of financial management practices for SMEs. For the participating MSMEs, simple budgeting may represent an accessible entry point for developing more structured financial planning practices.

The improvement in the use of financial information for business decision-making indicates increased participant understanding of the managerial value of financial information. Financial records, cash flow information, and simple budgets can provide a more structured basis for evaluating business conditions and considering future actions. This finding supports the view that financial management is not merely an administrative activity but also a managerial function that can inform decision-making. Similar relationships between financial literacy, financial management, and small-business outcomes have been discussed by (Adel et al., 2026).

The overall findings also highlight the potential value of mentoring as a complement to financial management training. Training provides conceptual knowledge, whereas practical exercises, discussions, and mentoring create opportunities for participants to relate that knowledge to their own business situations. This approach is particularly relevant for MSMEs because financial management practices need to be simple, accessible, and adaptable to different business scales and characteristics. The findings are consistent with studies by Poliakova et al. (2024), which emphasize the importance of financial management assistance in supporting MSMEs. In this context, combining training with direct assistance appears to provide a more contextual learning environment than one-way knowledge transfer alone.

From a broader perspective, stronger understanding of financial management may provide an important foundation for more structured business practices. Improved knowledge of financial recording, separation of finances, cash flow management, budgeting, and the use of financial information can support better-informed financial decision-making. This perspective is consistent with studies by Sumiati et al. (2026), which discuss the relationship between financial capability, resilience, and SME sustainability. However, the present program measured only immediate changes in participants' understanding. Therefore, the average improvement of 41.6 percentage points

should be interpreted as a short-term learning outcome rather than direct evidence of improved profitability, business growth, resilience, or long-term sustainability. Longer-term follow-up is required to determine whether these improvements are translated into sustained financial management practices and measurable business outcomes.

Program Contribution

The main contribution of this program lies in demonstrating an integrated and contextual approach to financial management capacity-building for OK OCE-supported MSMEs. Rather than relying solely on one-way knowledge transfer, the program combined needs assessment, financial management training, practical exercises, direct mentoring, pre- and post-program evaluation, and follow-up consultation. This sequence enabled participants to relate basic financial management concepts directly to the conditions and challenges of their own businesses.

A further practical contribution is the simplification of financial management concepts into practices that are accessible to micro and small business owners. Financial recording, cash flow monitoring, separation of personal and business finances, and simple budgeting were introduced as practical managerial tools rather than complex accounting procedures. This approach is particularly relevant for MSMEs with limited formal financial management experience and may facilitate the incorporation of basic financial practices into routine business activities.

At the community level, the program provides an initial model for financial management assistance that can be adapted to similar MSME capacity-building initiatives. The immediate improvements in participants' understanding of financial management indicate the potential usefulness of integrating training with contextual mentoring and follow-up support. However, the program did not directly assess long-term changes in financial performance, resilience, or business sustainability. Therefore, its contribution to these longer-term outcomes should be regarded as a potential pathway that requires further evaluation.

Limitations

This Community Service Program has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its outcomes. First, the program involved 30 MSME participants supported by OK OCE and represented several business sectors. Therefore, the findings reflect the characteristics and experiences of the participating beneficiaries and should not be generalized to all OK OCE-supported MSMEs or to the broader MSME population.

Second, the evaluation used a single-group pre-test–post-test design without a control group. Consequently, the observed changes cannot be attributed exclusively to the intervention, and the results should be interpreted as descriptive immediate changes during the program period. In addition, the evaluation focused on participants' understanding of financial management rather than direct changes in business performance. Indicators such as profitability, sales growth, productivity, access to financing, and business survival were not measured. Therefore, the average improvement of 41.6 percentage points represents an immediate learning outcome rather than evidence of improved long-term business sustainability.

Third, the main training and mentoring activities were conducted within a one-day program, followed by a one-month consultation period. This relatively short implementation and follow-up period limited the ability of the program team to determine whether participants consistently maintained the financial management practices introduced during the program, including regular financial recording, cash flow monitoring, budgeting, and separation of personal and business finances.

Finally, the participating MSMEs differed in business sector, business experience, and initial financial management capability. These differences may have influenced participants' responses to the training and mentoring activities. Future programs should consider longer implementation periods,

extended follow-up, broader participant coverage, and outcome measures that assess both sustained financial management practices and measurable business performance.

Suggestions

Based on the implementation and evaluation of the program, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen future financial management assistance for OK OCE-supported MSMEs. First, mentoring and follow-up should be extended beyond the initial one-month consultation period to support the consistent application of financial management practices. Follow-up activities may include reviewing financial records, monitoring cash flow, evaluating simple budgets, and discussing practical difficulties encountered by participants.

Second, future programs should consider introducing simple digital financial recording tools that are appropriate to the scale and capabilities of participating MSMEs. Such tools may help participants maintain more consistent records, monitor cash flows, and organize financial information more efficiently.

Third, future evaluations should include longer-term outcome measurements to determine whether improvements in understanding of financial management are sustained and translated into changes in actual business practices. Relevant indicators may include the regularity of financial recording, cash flow stability, profitability, sales growth, access to financing, and business continuity.

Fourth, collaboration among universities, OK OCE, MSME communities, and relevant government institutions should be strengthened to provide more continuous and integrated capacity-building support. Financial management assistance may also be complemented by other areas such as digital marketing, business strategy, taxation, and access to financing.

Finally, future Community Service Programs should involve a larger and more diverse group of MSMEs and use longer implementation and follow-up periods. Broader participant coverage and extended observation would provide a stronger basis for assessing whether improvements in understanding of financial management are sustained and associated with measurable business outcomes over time.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service Program was associated with immediate improvements in the understanding of financial management of OK OCE-supported MSMEs across five assessed areas: financial recording, separation of personal and business finances, cash flow management, simple budgeting, and the use of financial information for business decision-making.

The comparison of pre-test and post-test results showed an average improvement of 41.6 percentage points, indicating a positive immediate learning outcome following the training and mentoring activities. The integrated approach, which combined financial management training, contextual practical exercises, direct mentoring, and follow-up consultation, provided participants with opportunities to relate financial management concepts to their own business conditions.

However, these findings reflect short-term changes in participants' understanding and should not be interpreted as direct evidence of improved business performance, resilience, or long-term sustainability. Continued mentoring and longer-term evaluation are needed to determine whether the observed improvements are sustained, translated into consistent financial management practices, and associated with measurable business outcomes over time.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

IS, DJR, and YMY contributed to the conceptualization, program design, and development of training materials. PR and LN contributed to data collection and data analysis. PR was responsible for activity documentation. IS and THS contributed to manuscript preparation and writing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

AI tools were used by the authors to assist with language editing, manuscript organization, and refinement of the presentation of the Community Service Program. The AI tools were not used to generate, fabricate, or manipulate data, results, or supporting evidence. All content was reviewed, evaluated, and verified by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the implementation of the Community Service Program, the preparation of this manuscript, or the publication of its results.

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