

The Effect of Soft Skill and Hard Skill Training on the Professionalism of SME Practitioners in Bogor Regency West Java

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the influence of soft skills and hard skills on the professionalism of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Bogor Regency. The study uses a quantitative approach with primary data obtained through questionnaires. The validity and reliability test results show that all research instruments are valid and reliable. Data analysis was performed using simple and multiple linear regression tests, t-tests, F-tests, correlation analysis, and determination coefficients. The results show that, partially, soft skills have a positive and significant effect on professionalism, with a contribution of 77.2%, while hard skills have an effect of 68.7%. Simultaneously, soft skills and hard skills have a significant effect on the professionalism of MSMEs, with a contribution of 79.1%. Multiple linear regression results show that soft skills have a more dominant influence than hard skills. This study concludes that increasing the professionalism of MSMEs requires a balanced strengthening of soft skills and hard skills, with an emphasis on developing soft skills.

Keywords: Soft Skills; Hard Skills; Professionalism; MSMEs

INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the Indonesian economy, particularly in providing employment, increasing community income, and promoting economic equality at the local level. This study focuses on MSME actors in Bogor Regency, particularly those who are members of economic empowerment programs, and aims to increase the capacity of micro and small business actors in the Bogor Regency area. However, business development in Bogor Regency faces internal problems that act as obstacles. The main problem facing MSMEs is the low level of professionalism among business managers. We suspect that the solution to improving this professionalism lies in strengthening two types of skills through training: soft skills (X_1) and hard skills (X_2).

Soft skills are the basic foundation of a person's characteristics and indicate how they behave or think, equate situations, and provide support for a considerable period of time (Members et al., 2013). According to Daniel Goleman (1995), soft skills are part of emotional intelligence (EI). EI helps people recognize, appreciate, and manage their own emotions and those of others. Goleman developed soft skills to help improve empathy, social skills, self-management skills, and interpersonal skills (Siti Nur Bayu et al., 2025). In the context of MSMEs, soft skills include skills such as interpersonal communication and interaction, teamwork, time management, work ethics, and leadership. MSME actors with good soft skills tend to be better able to face challenges, innovate, and build trust with consumers and business partners in a competitive and dynamic business environment (Zuhrinal M. Nawawi & Adisty Aulia Zahra, 2025).

Soft skills and hard skills are complementary. Hard skills are the infrastructure, and soft skills are the superstructure. A building is considered complete when both the

infrastructure and superstructure are present. The main thing that needs to be considered and observed is integrating soft skills and hard skills for the continuity and success of a professional as a college graduate who will face the world of work (Members et al., 2013). Hard skills are the abilities or knowledge and technical skills possessed by weavers in supporting good performance results. Hard skills are closely related to the technical and academic skills inherent in or required for a particular profession. Many organizations/companies set employee competency standards as an indicator of the quality of performance that will be produced in the future, ranging from knowledge and technology skills to the ability to respond to a frequently changing environment (Budi Februari et al., 2024).

In addition, work professionalism is one of the central issues in business development, especially in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Hafsah (2011) states that the most fundamental internal problem faced by SMEs is the low level of managerial professionalism, in addition to limited capital, minimal access to banking and markets, and low technological mastery. Professionalism requires business actors to have adequate expertise and be able to prove their competence in accordance with the business field they are engaged in.

According to Siagian (2000), professionalism refers to the reliability of individuals in performing tasks with high quality, on time, and through work procedures that are easy to understand and follow. Meanwhile, Andrias Harefa (2004) emphasizes that professionalism is not only related to technical abilities but also includes work attitudes. Professionalism is reflected through high skills, a service orientation towards the public interest, and supervision of work behavior supported by an appropriate reward system. Thus, professionalism can be understood as a combination of competence, attitude, and work behavior that reflects professional standards in conducting business activities (Suharsono et al., 2022).

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach, as it aims to determine the extent of the influence of soft skills and hard skills training on the professionalism of MSME practitioners. This study was conducted on MSMEs in Bogor Regency. The population in this study was all MSME practitioners in Bogor Regency who were the targets of the study. The research sample was taken using purposive sampling techniques with the criteria of MSME practitioners who had participated in soft skills and/or hard skills training and had been actively running their businesses for at least the last two years.

The variables used in this study consist of two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables (X) include soft skills training (X_1) and hard skills training (X_2). Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y) is the professionalism of MSME actors. Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of training and professionalism levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

The respondents in this study were MSME actors in Bogor Regency. The collected data were processed using SPSS 21. The variables studied included independent and dependent variables. The independent variables consisted of Soft Skills (X_1) and Hard Skills (X_2). Meanwhile, Professionalism (Y) was the dependent variable.

B. Validity Test

This validity test was used to assess the questionnaire's question validity and reliability. The validity test results are as follows:

Table 1. Validitas Test

Item-Item	X1	X2	Y
Item 1	0.942	0.832	0.927
Item 2	0.985	0.815	0.917
Item 3	0.945	0.830	0.839
Item 4	0.906	0.909	0.863
Item 5	0.962	0.971	0.819
Item 6	0.865	0.878	0.946
Item 7	0.895	0.896	0.948
Item 8	0.969	0.884	0.931
Item 9	0.973	0.858	0.917

Source: Data Processing, 2025

Based on the validity test results in Table 1, all items in the questionnaire for variables X1, X2, and Y, consisting of Soft Skills (X1), Hard Skills (X2), and Professionalism (Y), were declared valid. This is indicated by the Adjusted Item-Total Correlation (CITC) value for each item exceeding 0.300.

C. Reliability Test

Uji reliabilitas dalam studi ini menggunakan Cronbach's Alpha, dan variabel dianggap reliabel jika nilai Cronbach's Alpha-nya > 0.70 . (Ghozali, 2016) menyatakan bahwa meskipun nilai Cronbach's Alpha adalah 0.60, variabel yang dihasilkan masih dapat dianggap reliabel. Hasil uji reliabilitas dalam studi ini sebagai berikut:

Table 2. Reabilitas Test

Item-Item	X1	X2	Y
Item 1	.984	.969	.973
Item 2	.982	.969	.973
Item 3	.983	.969	.976
Item 4	.985	.965	.975
Item 5	.983	.962	.977
Item 6	.986	.967	.972
Item 7	.985	.966	.972
Item 8	.982	.966	.972
Item 9	.982	.968	.973

Source: Data Processing, 2025

Based on the data in the table above, after data processing, the reliability test results for each item in variables X1, X2, and Y were declared reliable.

D. Determination Coefficient Test (R^2)

To assess the extent to which the model used explains the dependent variable, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is used. The coefficient of determination ranges from 0 to 1. The smaller the R^2 value, the less effective the independent variables are in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. On the other hand, if the R^2 value is close to one, the independent variables will cover all the information needed to predict the dependent variable. The results of the coefficient of determination (R^2) test can be seen as follows:

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.889 ^a	.791	.782	3.959

Source: Data Processing, 2024

In this study, the variables Soft Skills (X1) and Hard Skills (X2) together have an influence of 79.1% on Professionalism (Y). The remaining 20.9% is influenced by other variables outside the scope of this study.

This value indicates that both independent variables are very dominant and relevant to the conditions of MSME players, most of whom are micro and small businesses that actively participate in Soft Skills and Hard Skills training programs. They can truly improve professionalism in discipline, customer service, and more organized business management by improving Soft Skills such as communication and responsibility, as well as Hard Skills such as financial calculations and technology.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression Test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	-.272	2.821		.096	.924
	Soft_Skill	.710	.147	.641	.4834	.000
	Hard_Skill	.307	.149	.275	.2070	.044

Source: Data Processing, 2025

Based on Table 4, obtain the regression equation for analysis the effect of soft skills and hard skills on the professionalism of MSME actors as follows:

$$Y = a + bX_1 + bX_2$$

$$Y = -.272 + 0,710X_1 + 0,307X_2$$

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression equation above, it can be described as follows:

From the above results, it can be explained that -.272 means that if the Soft Skill (X1) and Hard Skill (X2) variables are considered zero (0) or ignored, then Professionalism (Y) is considered to have a value of 1.272, and 0.710 means that every change in the Soft Skill variable (X1) by 1 unit will result in a change in the Professionalism (Y) variable by 0.710, and every change in the Hard Skill (X2) variable will result in a change in the Professionalism (Y) variable by 0.307.

Based on the study described above, both soft skills and hard skills have a positive impact on the professionalism of MSME actors in Bogor Regency. Soft skills have a stronger

influence (0.710) than hard skills (0.307), meaning that interpersonal, communication, ethics, and self-management aspects are key factors in shaping the professional behavior of MSME actors. These results align with Daniel Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence, where emotional management and interpersonal relationships are important foundations in the world of work and business.

Therefore, enhancing training programs based on soft skills (such as communication, leadership, and self-management) balanced with strengthening hard skills (such as digital marketing and business finance training) will further improve the professionalism and competitiveness of MSME actors in Bogor Regency.

CONCLUSION

Our results show that Soft Skill and Hard Skill training has a significant impact on improving the professionalism of MSME actors in Bogor Regency, with a contribution of nearly 80%. Most importantly, Soft Skills such as work ethics, communication, and self-management have a stronger influence than technical skills. This confirms that, for MSMEs, a professional attitude (character) is a more crucial foundation than mere technical expertise (infrastructure).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize Soft Skills: Training programs should intensify Soft Skill-based material, such as improving communication skills, problem-solving, business ethics, responsibility, and self-management. Improving interpersonal skills has proven to be the most effective way to build discipline and professional credibility among MSMEs.
2. Balance and Integration of Training: Although soft skills are dominant, hard skills remain important (as infrastructure). Training should integrate soft skills into technical material (hard skills). Example: Digital marketing training should not only teach advertising techniques (hard skills), but also the ethics of interacting and responding to customer criticism professionally (soft skills).
3. Development Focus: For Hard Skills, focus on the most urgent indicators in the digital era, such as calculation skills (financial management and cost of goods sold/COGS calculation) and technological skills (digital marketing and cashless transactions).

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