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ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE COMPETENCE, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND TRAINING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MSMEs (A CASE STUDY OF MSMEs IN MEDAN CITY)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the influence of human resource (HR) competence, competitive advantage, and training on the performance of MSMEs (a case study of MSMEs in the city of Medan), both partially and simultaneously. This study employs a quantitative approach with a sample of 100 MSME owners/operators in Medan. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Data analysis methods used consist of descriptive analysis, research instrument testing, classical assumption testing, multiple linear regression analysis, partial testing, simultaneous testing, and the determination of the coefficient of determination. The results indicate that HR competence has a positive and significant effect on MSME performance. Competitive advantage also has a positive and significant effect on MSME performance. Training, however, does not have a significant effect on MSME performance. Simultaneously, HR competence, competitive advantage, and training collectively have a positive and significant effect on MSME performance.

Keywords: Human Resource Competence, Competitive Advantage, Training, MSME Performance

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the main drivers in the Indonesian economy which have a strategic role in encouraging national and regional economic growth. MSMEs contribute significantly to gross domestic product (GDP), and have an important role in absorbing labor and equalizing people's income. MSMEs are a sector that is resilient in facing global economic dynamics and uncertainty and is able to survive in various economic conditions. Therefore, developing and improving the performance of MSMEs is one of the Government's main focuses in efforts to realize inclusive and sustainable economic development. Data shows that MSMEs continue to increase from year to year, both in terms of economic contribution and the number of MSME business actors, this shows that MSMEs have great potential to continue to be maximized.

Table 1. Performance Data of MSMEs in Indonesia, 2022–2024

Years	Contribution of MSMEs to GDP	Labor Absorption	Number of MSMEs (units)
2022	61,00%	97,00%	± 65,0 million
2023	61,90%	97,10%	± 66,0 million
2024	62,50%	97,30%	66,5 million
2025	61,90%	97,00%	65,5 million

Source: Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs of Indonesia (Kemenkop), 2024

The city of Medan possesses significant potential in its micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which play a key role in supporting economic growth, absorbing the workforce, and increasing locally-generated revenue. MSMEs in Medan thrive across various sectors, including culinary, handicrafts, fashion, services, agribusiness, and trade. The local government supports the development of these enterprises by providing training, mentorship, capital assistance, business equipment, licensing support, and access to markets. Such support is

intended to enhance the capacity, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of MSMEs, ultimately fostering public well-being and strengthening the economy of Medan.

Table 2. Criteria for MSMEs Based on Government Regulation (PP) No. 7 of 2021

Criteria	Business Capital	Annual Sales
Micro	< 1 billion	< 2 billion
Small	1-5 billion	2-15 billion
Medium	5-10 billion	15-20 billion

Source: Government Regulation No. 7 of 2021

In accordance with the classification and criteria for MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) as stipulated in Government Regulation Number 7 of 2021, the Medan City Government—through its Department of Cooperatives and MSMEs—continuously collects data on the number of business units operating within the city. This data collection aims to obtain accurate information regarding the growth in the number of MSMEs, the characteristics of these businesses, and their current operational status. Such data serves as a foundation for the government to formulate policies, development and empowerment programs, and support initiatives tailored to the specific needs of MSMEs.

Table 3. Number of MSMEs in Medan City

Years	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of MSME's	27,763	38,343	40,267	46,807

Source: Medan City Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs, 2024

Based on the table above, there is a quantitative increase in the number of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in the city of Medan from year to year. However, this growth does not necessarily reflect an overall improvement in business performance. Consequently, further analysis of the performance aspects of MSMEs in Medan is required. This phenomenon indicates that, beyond mere quantity, the quality of MSME performance is a critical factor to consider in the development of the MSME sector in Medan.

Specific areas that warrant further research include human resource (HR) competence and competitive advantage. Regarding HR competence, MSME operators often face limitations in knowledge and skills related to financial management, marketing, digital technology, general management, and business strategy. A lack of continuous training hinders their ability to adapt to market changes, enhance productivity, and effectively compete. Meanwhile, in terms of competitive advantage, MSMEs in Medan encounter challenges in areas such as innovation, product differentiation, production processes, marketing, customer service, and the utilization of technology. As a result, the products offered by these MSMEs tend to lack uniqueness and often resemble those of their competitors. Therefore, future research should examine the development of HR competence and strategies for building competitive advantage, with the aim of enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs in the city of Medan.

Training for MSME (micro, small, and medium enterprise) owners is essential for enhancing their knowledge and skills in digital marketing. However, challenges such as limited time, restricted access to training, a lack of technological understanding, and insufficient ongoing guidance hinder these efforts. Consequently, the implementation of marketing strategies remains suboptimal, highlighting the need for continuous training and effective mentorship to enable business owners to expand their market reach and consistently increase sales. Given this context, the performance of MSMEs in Medan City warrants attention to support their business development. MSME performance reflects an enterprise's capacity to improve sales, profits, productivity, product quality, and customer base. Nevertheless, achieving such improvements remains difficult due to obstacles including limited human resource competencies, a lack of competitive advantage, insufficient digital marketing training, challenges in product innovation, inadequate financial management, limited use of technology, and a struggle to adapt to changing market conditions.

Based on the background provided above, the problems identified in this study are as follows:

1. The performance of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in Medan City remains suboptimal, as evidenced by limitations in human resource (HR) competencies, competitive advantage, digital marketing, innovation, financial management, technology, and the ability to navigate market competition.

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2. HR competencies within MSMEs require improvement; due to limited knowledge and skills in managing businesses professionally, there is a need for continuous training and skills development.
3. The competitive advantage of MSMEs is not yet fully realized; limited innovation, product differentiation, production capabilities, and technology result in MSME products often being too similar to one another and lacking uniqueness compared to those of competitors.
4. Training initiatives remain suboptimal, hindered by limited understanding of technology, a lack of digital marketing skills, restricted access to training, time constraints, insufficient mentoring, and an inability to consistently implement strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MSME's Performance

According to Sudaryo et al. (2018), performance refers to the work outcomes achieved by an individual in carrying out assigned tasks, as well as the extent to which they contribute to the organization. Performance also encompasses the results—in terms of both quantity and quality—attained by an individual within an organization, in accordance with their assigned responsibilities. Furthermore, according to Malikhah et al. (2024), the performance of an MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) is defined as the work outcomes achieved by an individual through the completion of their specific tasks within the MSME over a given period, which are then evaluated against the benchmarks or standards established by the MSME. According to Setyawati (2021), the performance indicators for MSMEs include sales growth, capital growth, workforce growth, and profit growth.

Human Resource Competence

According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, competence is defined as an individual's ability—encompassing knowledge, skills, and work attitudes—that aligns with established standards. Furthermore, Wibowo (2022) defines competence as the ability to perform a job or task, grounded in skills and knowledge and supported by work attitudes characterized by professionalism within a specific field, serving as an essential attribute or a distinct advantage. According to Edison et al. (2020), the indicators of human resource competence are knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Competitive Advantage

According to Anggraini et al. (2023), competitive advantage is the result of strategic entrepreneurship, in which a firm employs an entrepreneurial mindset to identify opportunities, manage resources strategically, apply creativity and innovation, and create a sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, Setyawati (2021) notes that the term "competitive advantage" has traditionally been described as a factor—or a combination of factors—that enables an organization to perform better than other organizations within the same industry, product market, or competitive environment. According to Santoso (2023), the indicators of competitive advantage are product, innovation, quality, and price.

Training

According to Widodo (2022), training consists of a series of individual activities designed to systematically enhance skills and knowledge, thereby enabling professional performance within one's field. Furthermore, as noted by Lubis et al. (2026), training can improve productivity, work quality, operational efficiency, innovation, workplace safety, and customer satisfaction; it also assists organizations in navigating technological changes and accelerating the achievement of strategic goals. According to Mangkunegara (2022), the indicators for training are as follows: the goals and objectives of training and development must be clear and measurable; trainers must be qualified experts (professionals); training and development materials must be aligned with the intended objectives; and participants (trainees) must meet the specified requirements.

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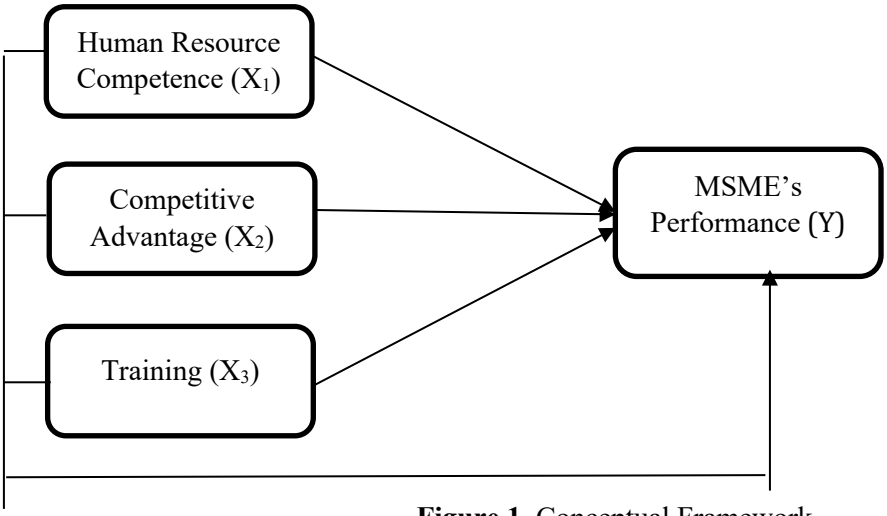


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher (2026)

The research hypotheses are:

1. H1: Human resource competence has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs in Medan City.
2. H2: Competitive advantage has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs in Medan City.
3. H3: Training has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs in Medan City.
4. H4: Human resource competence, competitive advantage, and training have a positive and significant simultaneous effect on the performance of MSMEs in Medan City.

METHOD

The research approach used an associative approach, with a quantitative method. This research is conducted in the city of Medan, which serves as a hub for economic, trade, and service activities. Medan was selected as the research site due to the significant number and diversity of its MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises). The research will take place from December 2025 through June 2026, continuing until its completion. The population in this study consists of all MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) located in the city of Medan; based on the available data, there are 46,807 such enterprises in the city. The Slovin formula is used to determine the sample size from a known population at a specific margin of error, as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Note:
n = population size
N = sample size
e = margin of error (the maximum tolerable allowance for inaccuracy due to sampling error)

Based on the formula above, the sample size to be used can be calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{46.807}{1 + 46.807\ (0{,}10)^{\ 2}}$$

$$n = \frac{46.807}{1 + 46.807\ (0{,}01)}$$

$$n = \frac{46.807}{1 + 468{,}07}$$

$$n = \frac{46.807}{1 + 469,07}$$

n = 99,78

Based on the calculation above, a sample size of 99.78 was obtained, which is rounded up to 100 respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Description of Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Description of Respondent Characteristics

Gender	Number of People	Percentage	Total
Man	15	15%	100
Woman	85	85%	
Age	**Number of People**	**Percentage**	**Total**
< 25 Tahun	6	6%	100
25 - 34 Tahun	38	38%	
35 - 44 Tahun	25	25%	
45 - 54 Tahun	19	19%	
> 55 Tahun	12	12%	
Education	**Number of People**	**Percentage**	**Total**
Elementary School	9	9%	100
Junior High School/Equivalent	15	15%	
Senior High School/Equivalent	42	42%	
Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	34	34%	

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

Based on data from 100 research respondents, it was identified that the majority of MSME owners in Medan City are female; in terms of age, the majority are between 25 and 34 years old; and in terms of education, the majority hold a high school diploma or equivalent.

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2. Validity Test Results Human Resource Competence, Competitive Advantage, Training, MSME's Performance

Statement Items	r-count	r-table	Description
HRC1	0,592	0,361	Valid
HRC2	0,540	0,361	Valid
HRC3	0,733	0,361	Valid
HRC4	0,694	0,361	Valid
HRC5	0,756	0,361	Valid
HRC6	0,740	0,361	Valid
CA1	0,608	0,361	Valid
CA2	0,515	0,361	Valid
CA3	0,451	0,361	Valid
CA4	0,549	0,361	Valid
CA5	0,423	0,361	Valid
CA6	0,723	0,361	Valid

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Statement Items	r-count	r-table	Description
CA7	0,662	0,361	Valid
CA8	0,706	0,361	Valid
T1	0,606	0,361	Valid
T2	0,720	0,361	Valid
T3	0,616	0,361	Valid
T4	0,633	0,361	Valid
T5	0,555	0,361	Valid
T6	0,564	0,361	Valid
T7	0,557	0,361	Valid
T8	0,496	0,361	Valid
MP1	0,693	0,361	Valid
MP2	0,540	0,361	Valid
MP3	0,612	0,361	Valid
MP4	0,469	0,361	Valid
MP5	0,523	0,361	Valid
MP6	0,589	0,361	Valid
MP7	0,521	0,361	Valid
MP8	0,458	0,361	Valid
MP9	0,520	0,361	Valid
MP10	0,572	0,361	Valid

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

Based on Figure 2, the results of the validity test above show that all statement items are > r table 0.361, so they are hereby declared valid/legitimate.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results Human Resource Competence, Competitive Advantage, Training, MSME's Performance

Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Provision	Description
Human Resource Competence	0,765	0,60	Reliable
Competitive Advantage	0,721	0,60	Reliable
Training	0,736	0,60	Reliable
MSME's Performance	0,740	0,60	Reliable

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

It is known that the Cronbach's alpha value for all research variables of human resource competence, competitive advantage, training and Msme's performance is > 0.60, so it can be said that the results of the reliability test for all variables are reliable.

Table 4. Results of the One Sample Kolmogorov Normality Test

Description	Value
N	100
Mean	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	3.33949982
Absolute	0.043
Positive	0.043
Negative	-0.032
Test Statistic	0.043
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

It is known that the asymp. sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200 > 0.05 significance value so it can be concluded that the data tested is normally distributed.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
(Constant)	5.675	3.779	-	1.502	.136	-	-
Human Resource Competence	.420	.127	.262	3.295	.001	.884	1.132
Competitive Advantage	.585	.253	.438	2.310	.023	.155	6.469
Training	.165	.250	.123	.660	.511	.161	6.199

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

It is known that the results of the multicollinearity test for the human resource competence, competitive advantage, training variables have a tolerance value of > 0.10 and VIF < 10, so this study is declared free from multicollinearity problems.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Tegression Test Results

Variable	**B**	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.675	3.779	-	1.502	.136	-	-
Human Resource Competence	.420	.127	.262	3.295	.001	.884	1.132
Competitive Advantage	.585	.253	.438	2.310	.023	.155	6.469
Training	.165	.250	.123	.660	.511	.161	6.199

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

The multiple linear regression analysis yielded the following equation: Y = 5.675 + 0.420X1 + 0.585X2 + 0.165X3. The constant value of 5.675 represents the level of MSME performance when the variables of human resource (HR) competence, competitive advantage, and training are all assumed to be zero. The regression coefficient for HR competence is 0.420, meaning that a one-unit increase in HR competence leads to a 0.420-unit increase in MSME performance, assuming all other variables remain constant. The regression coefficient for competitive advantage is 0.585, indicating that a one-unit increase in competitive advantage results in an increase of approximately 0.585 in MSME performance, assuming all other variables remain constant. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient for training is 0.165, which means that a one-unit increase in training leads to an increase of approximately 0.165 in MSME performance, assuming all other variables remain constant.

Table 7. Partial Test Results (t-Test)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	**t**	**Sig.**	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.675	3.779	-	1.502	.136	-	-
Human Resource Competence	.420	.127	.262	3.295	.001	.884	1.132
Competitive Advantage	.585	.253	.438	2.310	.023	.155	6.469
Training	.165	.250	.123	.660	.511	.161	6.199

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

Based on the table above, the results of the partial test (t-test) can be explained as follows:

1. The influence of human resource (HR) competence on MSME performance: The t-statistic for HR competence is 3.295, which is greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected; thus, HR competence has a positive and significant partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 1 is accepted).
2. The influence of competitive advantage on MSME performance: The t-statistic for competitive advantage is 2.310, which is greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.023 (< 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected; thus, competitive advantage has a positive and significant partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 2 is accepted).

3. The influence of training on MSME performance: The t-statistic for training is 0.660, which is not greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.511 (> 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected and the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted; thus, training has no partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 3 is rejected).

Table 8. Simultaneous Test Results (F Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	962.836	3	320.945	27.906	0.001
Residual	1104.074	96	11.501	-	-
Total	2066.910	96	-	-	-

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

Based on the above, the F-test results show an F-calculated value of 27.906, which is greater than the F-table value of 2.47 (with degrees of freedom n-k-1 = 100-3-1 = 96), and a significance level of 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, indicating that human resource competence, competitive advantage, and training have a simultaneous effect on the performance of MSMEs. Thus, the preceding hypothesis (H4) is accepted.).

Table 9. Results of the Coefficient of Determination test

Model	R	R Square	**Adjusted R Square**	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.683	.466	.449	3.39128

Sources: SPSS versi 25 (2026)

The adjusted R-squared value of 0.449—which serves as the coefficient of determination—indicates that 44.9% of the variance in MSME performance can be explained by human resource (HR) competence, competitive advantage, and training, while the remaining 55.1% (100% – 44.9% = 55.1%) is explained by variables outside the model that were not examined.

Discussion

The Effect Human Resource Competence on MSME'S Performance

The t-statistic for HR competence is 3.295, which is greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected; thus, HR competence has a positive and significant partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 1 is accepted). Human resource competence in MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) is not limited to technical or operational skills; it also encompasses proficiency in using digital technology, financial management, modern marketing, and efficient resource management. In the digital era, MSME owners are expected to be able to leverage various digital platforms, such as e-commerce, social media, and digital payment systems. Digital competence has become crucial for MSMEs to remain competitive amidst a rapidly evolving and dynamic market (Aisyah & Ismunawan, 2020). This theory is supported by research conducted by Maulatuzulfa (2022), whose testing of the first hypothesis indicates that human resource competence has a positive impact on MSME performance—meaning that higher-quality human resource competence among MSME owners leads to improved MSME performance.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Consumer Satisfaction

Competitive advantage on MSME performance: The t-statistic for competitive advantage is 2.310, which is greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.023 (< 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected; thus, competitive advantage has a positive and significant partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 2 is accepted). Competitive advantage refers to a business's ability to offer greater value than its competitors through product quality, competitive pricing, innovation, service, and effective marketing strategies. For Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), competitive advantage plays a crucial role in enhancing business performance and ensuring long-term sustainability amidst increasingly intense market competition. This concept is supported by research conducted by Nazarrudin et al. (2024), which indicates that competitive advantage has a significant impact on the performance of MSMEs.

The Influence of Customer Experience on Consumer Satisfaction

Training on MSME performance: The t-statistic for training is 0.660, which is not greater than 1.661 (n-k = 100-4 = 96 at a 0.05/5% significance level), with a p-value of 0.511 (> 0.05). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected and the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted; thus, training has no partial effect on MSME performance. (Hypothesis 3 is rejected). Training is a crucial effort for enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) owners in conducting their business operations. Such training can encompass various areas, including financial management, marketing, customer service, product development, the use of digital technology, and human resource management. Through appropriate training, MSME owners are expected to be able to manage their businesses more effectively and professionally. This theory is supported by research conducted by Roni (2023), which indicates that training has a significant impact on performance.

The Influence of Price Perception, Word of Mouth, and Customer Experience on Consumer Satisfaction

The F-test results show an F-calculated value of 27.906, which is greater than the F-table value of 2.47 (with degrees of freedom n-k-1 = 100-3-1 = 96), and a significance level of 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, indicating that human resource competence, competitive advantage, and training have a simultaneous effect on the performance of MSMEs. Thus, the preceding hypothesis (H4) is accepted). Human resource competence, competitive advantage, and training are crucial factors in enhancing the performance of MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises). Human resource competence assists business owners in managing finances, making decisions, and boosting productivity. Competitive advantage—achieved through product quality, competitive pricing, innovation, service, and digital technology—can expand market reach and increase sales. Meanwhile, training enhances knowledge and skills in areas such as management, marketing, finance, and product development. These three factors work in tandem to improve operational efficiency, profitability, and business competitiveness. Therefore, developing competencies, implementing competitive strategies, and providing continuous training are essential for fostering the growth and sustainability of MSMEs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Human resource competence has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs (a case study of MSMEs in Medan City).
2. Competitive advantage has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs (a case study of MSMEs in Medan City).
3. Training does not have a significant partial effect on the performance of MSMEs (a case study of MSMEs in Medan City).
4. Human resource competence, competitive advantage, and training have a positive and significant simultaneous effect on the performance of MSMEs (a case study of MSMEs in Medan City).

Based on the discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are provided:

1. MSME owners are advised to improve product quality, manage capital, develop workforce competencies, utilize digital marketing, implement effective promotions, control operational costs, and maintain regular financial records to enhance profitability, business performance, and long-term competitiveness.
2. MSME owners are encouraged to expand their knowledge of business management, finance, marketing, and technology, while honing their skills through continuous training and practice. Furthermore, they should cultivate traits such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and creativity to boost productivity, competitiveness, consumer trust, and business sustainability.
3. MSME owners are advised to innovate products in line with market trends, maintain high standards of product and service quality to ensure customer satisfaction, and set competitive prices—factoring in production costs, quality, and consumer purchasing power—to strengthen their competitive advantage and business sustainability.
4. To improve performance, MSMEs are encouraged to enhance the quality of their products and services, manage capital effectively, leverage digital marketing, pursue innovation, set competitive prices, control costs, and continuously develop their knowledge and skills.

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