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Workforce Management and Operational Productivity in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Pisang Tajopit Wak Om in Tanjungbalai

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ABSTRAK

Pengelolaan tenaga kerja menentukan kelancaran operasional usaha kuliner berskala kecil, terutama ketika jumlah karyawan terbatas dan permintaan pelanggan berubah sepanjang waktu. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pengelolaan tenaga kerja mendukung aktivitas operasional dan produktivitas yang dipersepsikan pada UMKM Pisang Tajopit Wak Om di Kota Tanjungbalai. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus tunggal yang dilaksanakan pada Oktober–November 2025. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan pemilik dan pekerja, observasi kegiatan produksi dan pelayanan, serta penelaahan dokumen operasional. Analisis dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian tematik, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Usaha ini mempekerjakan enam orang, masing-masing tiga orang pada produksi dan pelayanan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pembagian tugas yang jelas, pelatihan sesuai bidang pekerjaan, dan pendampingan pemilik membantu menata alur kerja serta menjaga konsistensi produk dan layanan. Komunikasi yang konstruktif dan penghargaan atas kinerja juga digunakan untuk mendukung motivasi karyawan. Namun, kedisiplinan kehadiran, koordinasi antarfungsi, pergantian pekerja, dan lonjakan permintaan pada periode ramai masih menjadi tantangan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa produktivitas operasional UMKM tidak semata-mata bergantung pada jumlah pekerja, tetapi juga pada keterpaduan pembagian tugas, pengembangan keterampilan, dan praktik pengelolaan sehari-hari.

Keywords: *Manajemen Tenaga Kerja; Produktivitas Karyawan; Pembagian Kerja; Pelatihan Karyawan; UMKM Kuliner*

ABSTRACT

Workforce organization is central to the daily performance of small culinary businesses, where a limited number of employees must maintain production quality while responding to fluctuating customer demand. This study examines how workforce management supports operational activities and perceived productivity at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, a banana-based food MSME in Tanjungbalai, Indonesia. A qualitative single-case study was conducted from October to November 2025. Data were collected through interviews with the owner and workers, direct observation of production and customer service, and examination of operational documents. The data were interpreted through reduction, thematic presentation, and conclusion drawing, supported by source and method triangulation. The business employs six workers, divided equally between production and customer service. Findings indicate that defined responsibilities, role-specific training, and supportive supervision help organize workflows and maintain product and service consistency. Employee motivation is encouraged through constructive communication and performance recognition. However, irregular attendance, coordination difficulties, staff turnover, and increased demand during peak periods remain operational challenges. The study suggests that productivity in small food enterprises depends not only on workforce size but also on the interaction between task allocation, skill development, and everyday managerial practices.

Kata Kunci: Workforce Management; Employee Productivity; Division of Labour; Employee Training; Culinary MSMEs

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy an important position in Indonesia's economic development, particularly through their contribution to employment, household income, and local economic activities. Their significance extends beyond business creation, as small enterprises also provide opportunities for communities with limited access to formal employment and economic resources (Lubis & Salsabila, 2024). Fawwazky et al. (2023) similarly highlight the role of MSMEs in supporting broader economic activities. National statistical publications further illustrate the diversity of Indonesia's small business sector, where enterprises operate with different workforce capacities, managerial arrangements, and production characteristics (BPS, 2025; Industri, 2025). Despite their economic importance, many MSMEs continue to face difficulties in organizing daily operations and managing limited resources. These challenges are not confined to production and marketing but also involve administrative capacity and the management practices needed to sustain business activities (Utari et al., 2022).

Among the resources available to small enterprises, labour plays a particularly important role because employees are directly involved in transforming business inputs into products and services. Labour contributes not only physical effort but also technical knowledge, practical skills, and the ability to respond to operational demands. Chaerudin et al. (2020) emphasize the central position of human resources in organizational activities, while Setyawati et al. (2024) draw attention to the alignment between employee capabilities, organizational objectives, and performance management. In small culinary businesses, this relationship becomes especially important because production and customer service often take place within closely connected work processes. Employees are expected to maintain food quality, complete orders, communicate with customers, and respond to changing demand, frequently within a limited workforce. Their contribution therefore depends not simply on the number of workers employed but also on how responsibilities, skills, and working relationships are managed.

Productivity provides a useful perspective for examining these managerial conditions. At its most basic level, productivity concerns the relationship between the resources used and the outputs generated. However, within small businesses, its operational meaning extends to the timeliness of service, consistency of product quality, and effective use of working time (Dewi, 2021). Hidayat et al. (2022) discuss the broader contribution of MSMEs to economic development, reinforcing the importance of strengthening their productive capacity. Meanwhile, Tambunan (2019) situates the development of Indonesian MSMEs within changing economic conditions and the challenges of sustaining business competitiveness. These perspectives suggest that improvements in productivity cannot be separated from the ways businesses organize their workforce and adapt to operational constraints. For labour-intensive culinary enterprises, productivity is particularly dependent on the interaction between employee competence, task distribution, and coordination during daily operations.

These issues are relevant to Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, a banana-based culinary MSME operating in Tanjungbalai City, North Sumatra. Previous attention to the contribution of small enterprises to the local economy provides a basis for understanding the significance of MSME development in Tanjungbalai (Tuah, 2010). Within this setting, Pisang Tajopit Wak Om relies on a relatively small workforce to manage production and customer service. Its operations involve six employees, divided between food preparation and direct customer service. Although this arrangement establishes a functional separation of responsibilities, maintaining operational consistency remains challenging when customer demand increases. Employees must complete orders promptly while preserving

product quality and responding to customer expectations. The business also faces managerial concerns involving employee discipline, communication, workforce stability, and the continuity of work performance.

The challenges experienced by Pisang Tajopit Wak Om illustrate that assigning employees to different functions does not automatically ensure effective coordination. Production employees and customer service personnel perform distinct duties, but their activities remain interdependent. Delays in food preparation can affect service delivery, while incomplete communication regarding customer orders may disrupt production. Coordination consequently becomes an essential part of workforce management, particularly during busy operating periods. Mukti (2025) discusses the importance of internal communication for teamwork and coordination, a perspective relevant to understanding these operational relationships. Training and employee motivation introduce additional considerations. Workers require sufficient technical competence to perform their responsibilities, while supportive supervision and clear expectations can help sustain work discipline. When these elements are poorly aligned, businesses may experience difficulties maintaining consistent operations despite having an established division of labour.

Existing discussions of MSME development and human resource management provide important insights into workforce capabilities, organizational performance, and business productivity. Nevertheless, these concepts need to be examined more closely within the everyday operations of small culinary enterprises. In such businesses, workforce management often depends on direct supervision by the owner, informal communication, practical training, and adjustments to fluctuating customer demand. The central research problem is therefore not simply whether labour contributes to productivity, but how different workforce management practices operate together to support or constrain daily business activities. Examining these relationships is important because a small enterprise may have clearly assigned responsibilities while continuing to experience difficulties related to employee attendance, work coordination, and staff turnover. A qualitative examination of these conditions can reveal organizational processes that are not readily captured through aggregate productivity indicators.

This study addresses this issue by examining workforce management as a combination of interconnected managerial and interpersonal practices. Rather than treating task allocation, training, motivation, and employee discipline as separate factors, the analysis considers how these elements interact within the operational setting of Pisang Tajopit Wak Om. Its contribution lies in explaining how a small culinary enterprise organizes a limited workforce while responding to the simultaneous demands of production, customer service, and changing workloads. Particular attention is given to the relationship between formal task assignments and informal managerial practices, including direct guidance, employee recognition, and day-to-day communication. This perspective offers a more context-sensitive understanding of operational productivity by recognizing that clearly defined responsibilities must be supported by employee capabilities, coordination, and responsive supervision.

Beyond its analytical contribution, the study has practical relevance for small business owners seeking to improve workforce performance without substantially increasing staffing or managerial costs. Understanding how training, task allocation, and interpersonal management operate in practice may help identify arrangements that support more consistent production and service delivery. It may also clarify why workforce difficulties persist despite established responsibilities and routine supervision. Such insights are relevant to culinary MSMEs that operate under fluctuating demand and depend heavily on the continued involvement of a small number of employees. Rather than proposing a

universally applicable management model, the study seeks to identify practical considerations that can inform workforce organization in comparable business settings.

Against this background, this study aims to examine the role of workforce management in supporting operational activities and employee productivity at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om in Tanjungbalai City. Specifically, it investigates how labour responsibilities are distributed, how employee training and motivation are managed, and what challenges emerge in maintaining workforce coordination and operational consistency. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research explores the experiences and practices of the business owner and employees within their everyday working environment. The findings are expected to contribute to a more grounded understanding of human resource management in small culinary enterprises, particularly the interaction between workforce organization, employee development, and operational productivity.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design to examine workforce management and its contribution to operational productivity at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, a culinary MSME in Tanjungbalai City, Indonesia. The case study design allowed the researchers to explore how daily work was organized, how employees carried out their responsibilities, and how managerial practices shaped production and service activities. Rather than establishing a statistical relationship between workforce characteristics and productivity, the study focused on the experiences, interactions, and operational practices through which employees contributed to business performance. Particular attention was given to task allocation, employee training, motivation, work coordination, and challenges encountered during routine operations.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om in Tanjungbalai City, North Sumatra, between October and November 2025. The business was purposively selected because its operations depend on a small workforce responsible for interconnected production and customer service activities. This setting provided an opportunity to examine how workforce management was practiced within the organizational and resource constraints of a small culinary enterprise.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in business operations and their knowledge of workplace practices. Informants included the business owner, production workers, and employees responsible for customer service and sales. The owner provided a managerial perspective on work organization, training, employee supervision, and operational challenges. Employees contributed information concerning their assigned duties, daily work experiences, and coordination across operational functions. Informant recruitment was guided by the relevance and sufficiency of the information obtained in relation to the research objectives.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews explored the distribution of responsibilities, employee competencies, training practices, motivation, workplace relationships, and perceived contributions to productivity. The semi-structured format allowed participants to describe their experiences while providing

opportunities to examine issues emerging during the conversations.

Direct observation focused on production activities, work coordination, customer service, and employee responses to operational demands. These observations helped contextualize interview accounts by examining how responsibilities were carried out in everyday business activities. Supporting documents, including production records, organizational information, activity photographs, and available operational records, were also examined to complement the interview and observation data.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative approach involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview accounts, observation notes, and relevant documents were reviewed to identify information related to workforce organization and operational productivity. During data reduction, relevant information was selected and grouped into recurring themes, including task distribution, employee training, work motivation, coordination, and workforce management challenges.

The findings were subsequently organized into thematic narratives to identify patterns and relationships across the collected evidence. Interpretations were developed by comparing participants' accounts with observed workplace practices and supporting documentation. Conclusions were drawn inductively, with particular attention to how workforce management practices supported or constrained daily operational activities. This process enabled the researchers to examine productivity through reported and observed work processes rather than relying on unverified assumptions about measurable performance improvements.

Trustworthiness of the Findings

The credibility of the findings was supported through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information provided by the business owner and employees to identify consistent accounts and differences in their experiences. Method triangulation was conducted by examining the relationship between interview findings, direct observations, and available business documents. These comparisons helped assess whether reported managerial practices were reflected in daily operational activities.

The interpretation remained grounded in the circumstances of the selected business, recognizing that the findings represent a context-specific understanding of workforce management rather than statistically generalizable evidence. This approach provided a basis for explaining how task allocation, employee capabilities, and workplace coordination interacted in supporting operational productivity within a small culinary enterprise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Workforce Composition and the Organization of Daily Operations

The findings show that Pisang Tajopit Wak Om operates with six employees, comprising three men and three women. The workforce is divided into two main functions, with three employees assigned to production and three responsible for customer service. This arrangement reflects a relatively simple organizational structure in which responsibilities are distributed according to the principal activities of the business. Production workers handle food preparation and product consistency, while service employees manage customer interactions, order delivery, and other service-related activities.

The equal representation of male and female employees describes the composition of the

workforce, although it does not necessarily indicate equality in decision-making, remuneration, or workload distribution. More relevant to the present study is how the existing workforce is organized to meet daily operational requirements. With only six employees, the business depends on clearly understood responsibilities and coordination between production and service functions. The division of labour provides a practical basis for managing these activities without introducing a complex organizational hierarchy.

According to the business owner, the existing workforce is generally sufficient to support regular operations. This assessment suggests that employee adequacy is considered in relation to the current scale of the business rather than an externally established staffing standard. However, workforce sufficiency should also be understood in relation to changing operational demands. A staffing arrangement that functions effectively during ordinary working hours may face additional pressure when customer numbers increase. The adequacy of the workforce therefore depends on employee capabilities, the distribution of responsibilities, and the ability to respond to variations in workload.

The findings also suggest that workforce organization cannot be separated from employee development. Dividing tasks may establish clearer responsibilities, but employees still require the knowledge and practical skills needed to perform them. Adiguna et al. (2024) highlight the importance of human resource training and skills development in strengthening MSME capabilities. Within Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, this perspective is reflected in the need to prepare employees for different operational functions rather than expecting all workers to perform identical activities.

The case illustrates how a small culinary enterprise organizes its workforce around two interdependent functions. Although production and customer service have distinct responsibilities, their performance must remain coordinated. The effectiveness of this arrangement depends not only on maintaining a balanced allocation of personnel but also on ensuring that employees can communicate and respond to operational demands across functional boundaries.

Employee Training and the Development of Work Competencies

Employee training forms an important part of workforce management at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om. The findings indicate that training is differentiated according to operational responsibilities. Customer service employees undergo approximately one week of preparation, focusing on communication, menu presentation, and appropriate interaction with customers. Production employees receive a longer training period of approximately one month, during which they learn food preparation procedures, tajopit banana processing techniques, and the preparation of beverage ingredients, including young coconut.

The difference in training duration reflects the distinct requirements associated with each function. Production activities involve technical procedures in which product characteristics must be maintained across repeated preparation processes. Customer service, meanwhile, requires familiarity with the menu, clear communication, and responsiveness to customer requests. Both functions require competence, although the nature of the skills and the time needed to develop them differ.

This approach indicates that employee development is closely connected to the practical needs of the business. Rather than treating training as a separate administrative activity, the enterprise incorporates learning into the preparation of employees for their assigned responsibilities. The arrangement allows workers to become familiar with procedures before assuming their daily duties. It also provides the owner with an opportunity to communicate expectations regarding product quality,

service behaviour, and work discipline.

Training has particular relevance to the consistency of food production. Variations in preparation techniques, ingredient handling, and product presentation can affect the characteristics of the final product. Herlina et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of quality control within production processes. In the present case, training represents one mechanism through which operational expectations are communicated to employees responsible for maintaining product standards.

Nevertheless, the existence of a training programme does not automatically establish its effectiveness. The available findings describe the duration and content of employee preparation but do not provide systematic assessments of skills before and after training. Its contribution can therefore be interpreted through the operational functions it is designed to support, rather than through a measured increase in employee competence.

An important implication concerns the continuity of employee development. Initial training may prepare workers for routine responsibilities, but changing customer demand, staff replacement, and operational difficulties can introduce additional learning needs. For a business with limited personnel, maintaining employee competence may require periodic guidance and practical feedback alongside the initial training programme. Training is therefore relevant not only to employee placement but also to the continuity of everyday business operations.

Workplace Motivation, Managerial Relationships, and Performance Recognition

The findings reveal that workforce management at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om involves interpersonal practices alongside the formal allocation of tasks. The business owner adopts a relatively informal supervisory approach, emphasizing respectful communication when addressing employee performance. Employees are generally not reprimanded publicly in front of customers. Instead, the owner prefers to provide corrective guidance in a more considerate manner.

This practice is significant because supervision in small enterprises often takes place through direct interaction between owners and employees. Unlike organizations with separate human resource departments, small businesses commonly depend on the owner's everyday decisions and communication style to shape workplace relationships. The manner in which employees receive instructions and corrections can therefore influence their willingness to communicate difficulties and respond to managerial expectations.

Employee motivation is also supported through simple forms of recognition. The owner occasionally provides snacks during working hours, while workers who demonstrate discipline, satisfactory performance, and strong work commitment may receive bonuses or salary increases. These practices indicate that motivation is approached through both interpersonal appreciation and financial rewards.

Rahayu (2018) discusses the relationship between work motivation, the working environment, and employee performance, while Cahyati and Adelia (2024) emphasize the importance of leadership and organizational culture in shaping workplace outcomes. These perspectives provide a basis for understanding why managerial interaction deserves attention alongside technical workforce arrangements. At Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, the owner's approach illustrates how informal communication and recognition are incorporated into everyday management.

The reward system also serves an evaluative function. According to the reported practices, employee performance is assessed through observable aspects of daily work, including discipline, responsibility, and service quality. This allows the owner to recognize employees whose contributions

are considered satisfactory without relying on an elaborate performance management system.

However, informal evaluation may introduce inconsistencies if employees do not clearly understand the criteria used to determine rewards. A system based largely on managerial judgment can remain practical for a small enterprise, but greater transparency would help establish clearer expectations. Communicating the basis for bonuses or salary adjustments may also reduce uncertainty regarding how employee contributions are recognized.

The findings suggest that workplace motivation at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om is supported by a combination of interpersonal treatment, practical recognition, and performance-related incentives. These arrangements may encourage employee commitment, although the available evidence does not independently establish changes in job satisfaction or loyalty. Their principal significance lies in demonstrating how employee management is embedded in routine interactions rather than confined to formal organizational procedures.

Working Hours, Labour Flexibility, and Workforce Management Challenges

Pisang Tajopit Wak Om generally operates from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The business does not apply routine overtime, although working hours may be extended until approximately 1:00 a.m. during periods of increased customer demand, particularly on weekends, religious holidays, and New Year celebrations. This arrangement reflects the need to adjust labour availability to variations in business activity.

The reported working pattern illustrates a common managerial challenge in small culinary enterprises. Demand is not distributed evenly throughout operating hours, yet the business must maintain sufficient personnel to complete production and customer service activities. During busy periods, workers may be required to process orders more quickly while maintaining product consistency and service quality. The owner's decision to extend working hours in particular circumstances represents one response to these fluctuations.

Although flexible scheduling can support operational continuity, its implications should not be assessed solely in terms of productivity. Extended working hours may also increase physical demands and affect employee recovery, particularly when employees perform repetitive production or service activities. The absence of daily overtime does not, by itself, establish that working arrangements are sufficient to protect employee well-being. A fuller assessment would require information about rest periods, overtime compensation, workload distribution, and employees' experiences of extended shifts.

The findings further identify attendance, internal communication, and employee turnover as recurring workforce management concerns. Differences in individual circumstances and work discipline may affect attendance and scheduling reliability. When employees are absent or responsibilities are not communicated effectively, the remaining workforce may need to adjust its activities to maintain operational continuity.

Coordination between production and customer service is particularly important during busy periods. Production employees must respond to incoming orders, while service employees need accurate information about product availability and preparation. Delays or misunderstandings between these functions can disrupt service, even when individual employees complete their assigned duties. This indicates that a clear division of labour needs to be accompanied by effective communication across work functions.

Employee turnover introduces an additional challenge. Staff replacement requires the business

to allocate time and resources to training new workers, potentially interrupting established routines. Agustini (2024) discusses employee retention as an important concern in maintaining workforce continuity. In the context of Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, turnover is relevant because the business depends on a small group of employees whose practical skills and familiarity with daily procedures are developed through training and experience.

The evidence does not provide a measured turnover rate or establish the reasons employees leave. Nevertheless, the reported concern suggests that workforce stability deserves greater managerial attention. Regular communication about working conditions, transparent performance expectations, and opportunities for employees to express workplace concerns may help the owner identify difficulties before they affect operational continuity.

Taken together, these findings reveal a tension between workforce efficiency and operational flexibility. Maintaining a limited workforce can reduce staffing complexity, but it also leaves the business dependent on the availability and capabilities of individual employees. During periods of high demand or staff absence, the established division of responsibilities may become more difficult to maintain. Workforce management therefore requires not only effective task allocation but also practical arrangements for handling unexpected changes in staffing and workload.

Workforce Contribution to Operational Productivity and Product Quality

The findings indicate that employees contribute to the operational performance of Pisang Tajopit Wak Om through their involvement in production, customer service, and the maintenance of daily work routines. Production workers are responsible for preparing products according to the business's established practices, while service employees facilitate customer interactions and the delivery of orders. Their responsibilities are distinct but closely connected, making cooperation essential to the completion of business activities.

Employee productivity in this setting can be examined through several operational considerations, including task completion, service timeliness, product consistency, and the use of available labour. Productivity is commonly understood in relation to the conversion of inputs into outputs, while discussions of work performance also recognize the relevance of employee attitudes, competence, and working conditions (Wahyuningsi Sri, 2018). For the present case, these considerations help explain why workforce management is relevant even when quantitative productivity measurements are unavailable.

The owner's assessment suggests that the six employees are generally capable of handling the business's routine operational requirements. However, increased customer demand places additional pressure on production and service activities. This difference between normal and peak operating conditions indicates that productivity cannot be evaluated through staffing numbers alone. The ability to maintain service while demand fluctuates also depends on employee readiness, communication, and the organization of daily work.

Product quality represents another important dimension of workforce contribution. In a culinary business, consistency depends on how employees select and handle ingredients, follow preparation procedures, and present the final products. Small variations in these activities may influence the customer's experience, making employee competence an important consideration in maintaining operational standards.

The connection between workforce practices and product quality also has implications for customer perceptions. Research conducted in other consumer product settings has examined the

relevance of product quality and variety to purchasing decisions (James Prabowo et al., 2020). Although findings from other product categories cannot be directly applied to Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, they highlight the importance of considering product characteristics when examining customer responses. The present study, however, does not include independent customer assessments and therefore cannot establish whether workforce management has directly improved customer satisfaction or purchasing behaviour.

The operational contribution of employees is also relevant to the broader role of small businesses in local economic activity. Raju et al. (2024) discuss MSMEs in relation to community economic empowerment. From this perspective, maintaining an organized workforce supports more than the completion of internal tasks, as the continuity of business operations also sustains employment and participation in local economic activities. Nevertheless, the present study does not directly measure wider economic or community-level outcomes.

A central finding of this study is that workforce productivity should be understood through the interaction of several managerial practices rather than attributed to a single factor. Task allocation establishes individual responsibilities, training develops the skills needed to perform them, managerial communication shapes daily cooperation, and flexible scheduling helps the business respond to changing demand. These practices operate together within the constraints of a small workforce.

At the same time, the challenges identified in attendance, internal communication, and staff turnover indicate that workforce management remains an ongoing process. Clear responsibilities and initial training may support routine operations, but their effectiveness can be weakened when employee availability changes or coordination becomes difficult. The case therefore suggests that operational productivity depends on the ability to maintain consistency while adjusting work arrangements to immediate business needs.

The broader contribution of these findings lies in illustrating how workforce management combines structured responsibilities with informal managerial practices in a small culinary enterprise. Pisang Tajopit Wak Om does not rely on a complex organizational system, yet its daily performance depends on decisions concerning employee placement, training, supervision, recognition, and working hours. Understanding how these practices interact provides a more grounded account of labour's contribution to small business operations.

However, the study's qualitative evidence does not establish a quantified improvement in productivity or determine the independent effect of each management practice. The findings instead show how workforce organization and managerial relationships are perceived and observed to support operational continuity and product quality. This distinction is important for interpreting the case without overstating the relationship between workforce management and business performance.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how workforce management supports operational productivity at Pisang Tajopit Wak Om, a culinary MSME in Tanjungbalai City. The findings indicate that the contribution of employees extends beyond routine production and customer service activities. Clear task allocation, role-specific training, supportive supervision, and performance recognition help organize daily operations and maintain product and service consistency. However, attendance irregularities, communication difficulties, and employee turnover continue to challenge workforce stability, particularly during periods of increased customer demand. These findings suggest that operational

productivity in small culinary enterprises depends not merely on workforce size but on how employee capabilities, managerial practices, and coordination are brought together to meet changing operational needs.

The study is limited by its single-case design, relatively short research period, and the limited number of informants. Furthermore, productivity was examined through reported experiences and observed operational practices rather than systematic measurements of output or labour efficiency. These limitations restrict the transferability of the findings and prevent conclusions about measurable productivity gains. Nevertheless, the study offers practical implications for MSME owners. Clearly defined responsibilities, continuous skills development, transparent performance recognition, and more effective communication between production and service employees may help strengthen operational consistency. Workforce scheduling also deserves attention to ensure that responses to increased demand do not compromise employee well-being.

Future research could extend this analysis through comparative studies involving culinary MSMEs with different workforce sizes, business characteristics, and managerial arrangements. Greater attention to employees' perspectives would help clarify how supervision, training, rewards, and working conditions influence motivation and retention. Longitudinal or mixed-methods designs could further examine changes in production output, service time, product consistency, and employee turnover across different operating periods. Such investigations would provide stronger evidence concerning the conditions under which workforce management contributes to productivity and sustainable business performance in resource-constrained enterprises.

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