



## The Impact of Mice Multiplier Effect on Local UMKM Income in Medan

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### Article Info

#### Article History:

Received: 13 June 2025

Revised: 16 September 2025

Accepted: 30 September 2025

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### Keywords:

MICE

UMKM

Multiplier Effect

Income

Business Promotion

Local Economy

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### Abstract

*This study was conducted to analyze the development of the implementation of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) activities by contributing to increasing the income of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Medan City. This study was conducted with a quantitative approach related to survey techniques on 80 MSME actors who have direct experience in MICE activities. The findings show that most respondents experienced an increase in income and expansion of business relations after their involvement in MICE. Around 80% of respondents have been involved as exhibition booth renters, providers of consumption services, or souvenir makers. Businesses in the culinary and handicraft sectors are the most widely run, because they are in line with the typical needs of MICE events. In addition to providing a direct economic impact, MICE has also proven to be a strategic promotional media for local MSME products. However, there are still various obstacles such as limited production capacity, lack of mastery of digital technology, and minimal training available. Thus, synergy between MSME actors, event organizers, and the government is key to optimizing the role of the MICE industry as a driver of local economic growth.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has experienced significant growth and plays a key role in driving economic development in various countries, especially in Indonesia. The increasing mobility of global business is driving increasing demand for MICE services, which has direct implications for the hospitality, tourism, and various other supporting sectors (Rogers, 2021; Aburumman, 2020; Anas et al., 2020). Major cities in Indonesia are starting to utilize the potential of the MICE industry as an economic development strategy, including Medan City, which is the largest economic center outside Java.

As a metropolitan city in North Sumatra, Medan has supporting infrastructure such as star-rated hotels, convention centers, and good transportation accessibility, making it a strategic destination for holding national and international events (Sihombing & Simamora, 2023; Ouma, 2023; Yang et al., 2014). The development of the MICE industry in Medan has a broad economic impact, one of the impacts of the development and growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSME

actors contribute as providers of various event support services, such as catering, souvenir production, decoration, and transportation services (Supriyanto et al., 2024; Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019; Camilleri, 2017; Alejandrino et al., 2022).

In this context, the MICE industry creates a multiplier effect through backward linkage and forward linkage, where demand for MSME products and services increases, and additional spending from event participants expands the local economic impact (Situmorang, 2022; Kumar & Hussain, 2022; Vanhove, 2022). However, not all MSMEs are able to take advantage of this opportunity optimally due to various obstacles such as limited capital, low market access, and the inability to meet the quality standards required by the MICE industry (de Guzman & Quezon, 2024; Lekgau, 2022).

Medan City continues to develop the MICE sector as part of its strategic regional development plan, but the involvement of MSMEs in the MICE ecosystem still faces structural challenges. Along with the national program to support MSMEs as the backbone of the Indonesian economy, there is a need to deeply evaluate the relationship between industry growth (Nursini, 2020; Saputra & Darmawan, 2023; Kusumawardhani et al., 2015; Khaing, 2024).

The main problem underlying this research is the gap between the growth potential of the MICE industry and the adaptability and readiness of MSMEs to take advantage of these opportunities. Without proper intervention, MSMEs are at risk of being left behind in the flow of economic growth, so that the goal of inclusive economic development cannot be achieved. Therefore, it is important to systematically understand the economic impact of the MICE industry on MSMEs in order to formulate more effective policies. Previous research has shown that the MICE industry is able to make a significant contribution to the regional economy by increasing local business activity and absorbing labor (McCartney et al., 2014). A study by Kusumawati (2022) found that the MSME sector that was successfully integrated with the MICE industry experienced revenue growth of up to 35% within one year. In addition, research by Pratama and Harahap (2023) in Bandung City showed that the existence of a strong backward linkage between MSMEs and MICE organizers significantly increased the production capacity of MSMEs. However, several studies also note that the success of MSME integration with the MICE industry is highly dependent on factors such as access to financing, skills training, and policy support from local governments (Syahrani et al., 2023). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the MICE industry provides a multiplier effect on MSME income in Medan City, identify various factors that encourage or hinder MSME participation in the MICE industry ecosystem, and formulate strategic recommendations to optimize the role of MSMEs in the MICE sector to support sustainable local economic development.

## METHODS

The research design in this study is a quantitative research methodology to determine the effect of the multiplier of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry on the revenue of the local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the city of Medan. According to the quantitative approach, it would be appropriate since it allows the systematic measurement and statistical analysis of the connection between the MICE activities and MSME income changes. Having used such numerical data, the research will be able to test hypotheses objectively and measure the degree of impact that the MICE sector has on the local businesses.

The research design identified is a survey research and it was chosen because of its efficacy in obtaining data that is direct and the respondents represent the population of MSME in Medan. The survey tool gives a systematic way of collecting similar information across various business units hence allows better generalization in the context of the study.

A purposive sampling method was applied in sampling. This approach was used to make sure that the respondents fit certain requirements of the research goals. The main criterion was MSME actors that were directly engaged in or enjoyed MICE activities in Medan. These activities include exhibitions, conferences and trade fairs among others that create business opportunities to the local enterprises. The total number of MSME respondents was 80 and it could be seen that they were evenly distributed across several lines of business including culinary, handicraft, fashion and other creative businesses. The reason behind this diversity of respondents was to indicate the different ways of engagement and impact of MICE activities on different sectors.

The data were gathered using structured questionnaires which were administered to owners or representatives of MSME. The questionnaire was created in such a way that it would both identify the demographics (type of business, length of operation, and degree of involvement in MICE events) and the most important variables of the research, i.e., the perceived benefits and changes in revenues related to the participation in MICE events. This form of organization provided consistency in data collection and also made it easy to use statistical analysis methods.

The data obtained were processed and analysed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were used to summarize the nature of respondents and give a general idea of the way the MSMEs in the various sectors are involved in the MICE activities. The research hypotheses were tested with the help of inferential statistics which were the correlation and regression analysis to identify the power and the significance of the relationship between the MICE participation and the changes in the MSME income. This two-level analysis strategy provided the necessary conditions so that the general trends could be determined as well as particular relationships.

The purposive sampling and use of surveys to collect data and statistical analysis of the data make the methodology used in the study a holistic structure in conducting the research on the role of the MICE industry in aiding the local economic development. It also guarantees that the results are empirically based and to the policy debates on the maximization of benefits of MICE activities to MSMEs in Medan City.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study examines the role of the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry in shaping the economic outcomes of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Medan City. Medan, as the largest economic hub outside Java, has invested heavily in MICE infrastructure such as convention centers and hotels, positioning itself as a major destination for national and international events (Sihombing & Simamora, 2023). MSMEs form the backbone of the local economy, and their integration into the MICE ecosystem is expected to generate a multiplier effect through increased sales, expanded networks, and enhanced promotional opportunities (Situmorang, 2022; Rogers, 2021). The survey of 80 MSMEs provides insights into how participation in MICE activities influences their income, competitiveness, and sustainability.

## Demographic Profile and Gendered Participation

The demographic characteristics of respondents reveal the social and economic profile of MSME actors involved in the MICE ecosystem in Medan. As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution indicates that 60% of respondents were female entrepreneurs, while 40% were male.

Table 1. Gender distribution of MSME respondents in Medan

Gender	Percentage (%)
Female	60
Male	40

This gender pattern illustrates the increasing role of women in local entrepreneurship, particularly within the creative industries such as culinary arts, crafts, and fashion, which are closely linked to the MICE sector. Prior studies support this finding, suggesting that women-led MSMEs contribute significantly to inclusive economic development by expanding household income and stimulating innovation in the service sector (Kabeer, 2021; Kusumawati, 2022). The results therefore confirm that MICE events have provided not only economic opportunities but also platforms for gender empowerment through exposure and market access. Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs remain constrained by limited capital access and technological capacity, reinforcing the need for gender-responsive policies to ensure equitable participation (Santoso & Anggraeni, 2023).

Furthermore, the age distribution (not tabulated) shows that nearly half of respondents (47%) belong to the productive age group of 31–45 years. This pattern aligns with the typical entrepreneurial demographic observed in urban MSMEs, which tend to be dominated by individuals in their prime working years who possess both experience and adaptability (Nursini, 2020). Collectively, these demographic results depict a dynamic MSME community in Medan that is capable of responding to the emerging opportunities generated by the MICE industry.

## Business Sectors and Market Relevance

Table 2. Business sectors of MSME respondents engaged in MICE activities

Business Sector	Percentage (%)
Culinary	45
Handicrafts	30
Fashion	15
Souvenirs/Other Creative Products	10

The culinary and handicraft sectors dominate MSME participation, together accounting for 75% of all respondents. This dominance corresponds to the fundamental requirements of MICE events food and beverages for participants, as well as handcrafted souvenirs and decorations for exhibitions and conventions (Liem & Surya, 2021; Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019). The findings affirm the concept of backward and forward linkages in the tourism value chain (Vanhove, 2022), where the MICE core industry stimulates demand for complementary goods and services from surrounding enterprises.

However, this concentration in a few sectors presents both opportunities and risks. As Kartika and Hidayat (2023) argue, when too many MSMEs cluster around similar market niches, competition intensifies and profit margins narrow. This implies that diversification into underrepresented sectors such as logistics, digital services, and event technologies could improve resilience. Moreover, MSMEs outside these



dominant sectors often struggle to penetrate the MICE market, indicating a need for inclusive procurement policies and technical training (Wulandari & Prabowo, 2020; Supriyanto et al., 2024).

### Income Growth and Multiplier Effect

Table 3. Reported income growth of MSMEs after participating in MICE events

Income Growth after MICE	Percentage (%)
Increased	80
No Change/Decreased	20

Approximately 80% of respondents reported increased income after participating in MICE events. Many attributed this growth not only to direct sales during events but also to longer-term benefits, such as repeat orders and new business partnerships. The significant proportion of MSMEs experiencing revenue growth substantiates the multiplier effect theory proposed by Situmorang (2022) and Kumar and Hussain (2022). In MICE-driven economies, expenditure by event participants generates secondary and tertiary economic flows across local business networks, thus increasing aggregate demand and regional income (Vanhove, 2022; Rogers, 2021). Respondents emphasized that income increases were not only derived from immediate sales during exhibitions but also from follow-up orders and the formation of new client relationships. This aligns with findings by Pratama and Harahap (2023), who observed that backward linkages between MSMEs and event organizers in Bandung City significantly boosted production capacity and market exposure.

Nevertheless, the income benefits were not evenly distributed. Smaller enterprises, often constrained by capital and workforce limitations, faced difficulties meeting bulk orders or maintaining supply consistency. As Syahrani et al. (2023) and Lekgau (2022) note, this inequality highlights a structural divide between high-capacity MSMEs and micro-enterprises with less adaptive resources. Hence, while MICE participation enhances local income generation, the absence of equitable access to finance and training risks amplifying intra-sector disparities. To ensure inclusive growth, capacity-building programs and micro-credit schemes tailored to MICE-linked MSMEs are essential.

### Promotion, Branding, and Market Expansion

MICE events also serve as strategic promotional platforms for MSMEs, enhancing brand visibility and consumer awareness. As summarized in Table 4, the most common forms of MSME participation were exhibition booth rentals (35%) and catering services (25%), followed by souvenir production (20%) and other event-related services (20%).

Table 4. Forms of MSME participation in MICE events

Form of Participation	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Exhibition Booth Rental	35
Catering/Food Services	25
Souvenir Production	20
Other Event Services	20

These modes of participation provided MSMEs with face-to-face interaction opportunities with event attendees, corporate clients, and visiting delegations, facilitating both sales and branding outcomes. This finding supports previous research indicating that trade exhibitions and conventions offer significant market entry and networking advantages for MSMEs (Nurfadilah & Saputra, 2020; Gultom

et al., 2025). Moreover, MICE exposure contributes to the creation of *intangible assets* such as reputation and trust, which enhance competitive positioning in future markets (Camilleri, 2017).

However, qualitative feedback from respondents suggested that these promotional effects are often temporary. Without sustained digital marketing and brand management, MSMEs struggle to maintain post-event engagement. Kartika and Hidayat (2023) emphasize that integrating digital tools social media marketing, e-commerce, and customer relationship management systems is vital for sustaining visibility beyond the event period. This resonates with Indraajaya et al. (2024), who demonstrated that consistent online branding significantly extends the lifecycle of customer interest. Consequently, while MICE participation offers immediate promotional leverage, the long-term benefits depend heavily on MSMEs' digital readiness and marketing innovation.

### Barriers to Sustainability

Despite these benefits, several barriers limit MSMEs' ability to sustain growth from MICE participation. The main challenges are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Reported barriers to sustainability among MSMEs in MICE participation

Barriers	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Limited Production Capacity	30
Weak Business Management	25
Low Digital Literacy	25
Limited Access to Finance	20

Limited production capacity was cited by 30% of respondents, reflecting difficulties in scaling operations to meet event-driven demand spikes. Weak business management and low digital literacy, each reported by 25%, further constrain the ability of MSMEs to adapt to changing market requirements. These findings are consistent with Amornkitvikai et al. (2022) and Disimulacion (2021), who identify digital and managerial deficiencies as key obstacles to MSME competitiveness in Southeast Asia's event tourism sector.

In addition, limited access to finance (20%) remains a persistent issue, preventing smaller enterprises from acquiring raw materials or upgrading production technologies. As Syahrani et al. (2023) highlight, financial inclusion and credit facilitation are prerequisites for equitable participation in high-value economic networks. The absence of such support structures not only restricts MSME scalability but also undermines the potential for inclusive regional development. Addressing these barriers requires a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach. Governments should enhance access to training, micro-financing, and digital tools, while MICE organizers can provide incubation and mentorship programs. This approach aligns with Kevane et al. (2024), who advocate gender- and scale-sensitive interventions to sustain women-led and micro-enterprises in post-COVID economic recovery contexts.

### Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector significantly contributes to the income growth and economic empowerment of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Medan. The evidence that 80% of MSMEs reported increased revenue following participation in MICE events indicates the operation of a local multiplier effect that

extends beyond immediate transactions. This outcome is consistent with the theoretical perspective articulated by Vanhove (2022) and Kumar and Hussain (2022), who describe the MICE industry as a complex economic system capable of generating both backward and forward linkages in local economies. Within Medan's context, the circulation of capital from MICE events stimulates demand for goods and services across the culinary, handicraft, and fashion sectors. This pattern corroborates Rogers' (2021) argument that the MICE industry fosters economic interdependence between event organizers and local suppliers, creating a cyclical flow of value that supports job creation and community-based enterprise growth.

The findings strengthen previous empirical work by McCartney (2014) and Ciuffreda and Simonetti (2024), who found that MICE development generates measurable regional spillovers through hospitality, logistics, and creative service chains. In Medan, such spillovers have been localized, showing how the MICE economy can integrate with urban micro-enterprise ecosystems. However, the observed multiplier effect operates with partial efficiency. Smaller businesses with limited production capacity and minimal access to credit find it difficult to sustain operations after events conclude. This situation echoes Syahrani et al. (2023), who observed that unequal access to resources among Indonesian MSMEs constrains their ability to benefit from tourism-driven economic cycles. Situmorang (2022) similarly emphasizes that the strength of the multiplier effect depends on the absorptive capacity of local enterprises, meaning that the benefits of MICE participation are contingent upon MSMEs' readiness to scale production, maintain quality, and fulfill event demands.

The concentration of MSME participation in the culinary and craft sectors also reflects a characteristic pattern of event-driven economies, where demand is tied to consumable and decorative products. Liem and Surya (2021) and Soukhathammavong and Park (2019) observed similar trends in Southeast Asian cities, where MICE events create opportunities for local artisans and food producers but simultaneously induce high competition within narrow market segments. In Medan, this clustering effect implies that while MICE events generate short-term sales, long-term sustainability is jeopardized by market saturation and limited diversification. Kartika and Hidayat (2023) argue that innovation and sectoral diversity are essential for maintaining competitiveness in event tourism economies. The limited integration of MSMEs from non-traditional sectors such as digital services or logistics, as highlighted by Wulandari and Prabowo (2020), suggests that institutional intervention is necessary to broaden participation and reduce dependency on a few economic niches.

The dominance of female entrepreneurs among respondents—accounting for 60%—is another noteworthy dimension of MICE-related MSME development. This gendered participation pattern aligns with the arguments of Kabeer (2021) and Kusumawati (2022), who contend that women often occupy central roles in creative and service industries that complement the MICE ecosystem. The involvement of women in culinary and handicraft enterprises underscores MICE's potential as a mechanism for gendered economic inclusion. Women entrepreneurs in Medan appear to have leveraged event participation to enhance visibility, access new markets, and expand business networks. Similar findings were noted by Kevane et al. (2024), who reported that event-related enterprises create entry points for women into formal economic structures, supporting the goals of inclusive development. However, as Santoso and Anggraeni (2023) emphasize, the empowerment of women entrepreneurs remains constrained by structural limitations such as restricted access to finance, training,

and technology. This study's results reaffirm that MICE participation contributes to women's economic empowerment primarily at the exposure level but does not automatically guarantee sustained advancement without targeted institutional support.

The study further identifies MICE participation as a potent promotional tool for MSMEs, validating previous conclusions by Nurfadilah and Saputra (2020) and Gultom et al. (2025), who highlighted that exhibitions and conventions serve as effective marketing channels for small enterprises. Many MSMEs in Medan reported that MICE events expanded their customer base and strengthened their brand visibility, demonstrating the sector's capacity to function as an alternative marketing infrastructure. However, consistent with Kartika and Hidayat (2023), these promotional benefits were often temporary and diminished once events ended. A major contributing factor is the low level of digital literacy among respondents, which restricts the ability of MSMEs to maintain customer relationships and continue marketing efforts after the event. Amornkitvikai et al. (2022) observed similar challenges among Thai MSMEs, concluding that e-commerce integration is a critical determinant of business sustainability. The present findings echo that argument: digital engagement is not merely supplementary but essential to transforming short-term exposure into lasting competitiveness. Indrajaya et al. (2024) further suggest that digitalized marketing strategies enable MSMEs to maintain continuous engagement with customers, extend the sales lifecycle, and reduce dependency on physical events.

The other important issue in this discourse is the structural constraints that have remained in place to hamper the growth of MSME in the MICE sector. The respondents found four prevailing limitations, including lack of production capacity, low digital literacy, limited access to finance, weak management, which are also in line with Kusumawardhani et al. (2015) and Disimulacion (2021) findings. All these are factors that hinder the capacity of MSMEs to effectively respond to opportunities that are presented by MICE and the attainment of sustainable growth. de Guzman and Quezon (2024) find identical difficulties in the Philippines and Kumar and Hussain (2022) in Malaysia where MSMEs experience systemic barriers to credit access, business training, and governmental support. The fact that these problems persisted in Medan indicates a weakness in the institutions more generally: the lack of an overarching institutional system between MICE development policies and MSME empowerment. In the absence of such coordination, the economic interconnections created because of MICE would be left fractured in favor of only those enterprises that already have capacity and networks to access.

The same results also support the theoretical stance of Rogers (2021) that the viability of event-based economies is not as much as the size of the activities but rather the institutional framework that will enable ongoing participation. The looseness of relationship between the MSMEs and the organizers of the MICE in Medan has limited the dissemination of long-term gains and the possibility of capacity building over time. Supriyanto et al. (2024) suggest that multi-stakeholder collaboration models should be implemented by both the public and the private actors in order to allow integration by supporting it through training, procurement alliance, and market enabling. Empirical data of Medan confirms this practice since the answerers repeatedly determined coordination and access barriers as the primary constraint than market demand itself.

On the whole, the results of the present study support the argument developed by Situmorang (2022) and Vanhove (2022) according to which the multiplier effects of



the MICE sector are not pre-determined but rather rely on the interaction of the structural preparedness, policy assistance, and enterprise performance. The case of Medan highlights that the possibility of MICE becoming a driver of local economic development can be achieved in its full potential only with systemic changes, which would allow improving the rate of digital literacy, financial inclusion, and the diversity of the sector. These findings therefore form part of the current scholarly discussion regarding the contribution of business tourism towards facilitating inclusive development. Although it validates the economic importance of MICE participation to MSMEs, this discussion also points at the skewed nature of the benefits, the necessity to provide gender- and scale-specific assistance, and the necessity to introduce a digital transformation into the scope of small business activities. MICE activities in emerging urban settings like Medan therefore must not just be considered as a one-off economic phenomenon but rather as an element of a larger development agenda that incorporates development of enterprises, empowerment of women and technological advancement in the local economic environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) sector has a strong influence on increasing the income of MSMEs in Medan City. The majority of MSMEs participating in MICE activities experienced revenue growth and gained strategic benefits in terms of promotion and expanding business relations. The MICE industry also encourage a multiplier effect through increasing demand for local goods and services, especially in the culinary, craft, and fashion sectors. However, there are still MSMEs that have not been able to optimally utilize these opportunities due to limitations in production capacity, business management, and technology utilization.

### **Suggestion**

#### **For Local Government**

Local governments are encouraged to strengthen their support for MSMEs by providing entrepreneurship training, easy access to financing, and digital-based promotional media. In addition, the government should also act as a liaison between MICE event organizers and MSME actors in order to create more systematic and sustainable collaboration.

#### **For MSMEs**

MSMEs are expected to be more active in improving the quality of their products and services, and to start utilizing digital technology in marketing strategies and business management. In addition, increasing readiness to meet large-scale demand is important so that MSMEs can be competitive in the MICE industry environment.

#### **For MICE Event Organizers**

The organizers are expected to provide greater opportunities for the involvement of local MSMEs and hold coaching or training programs to help develop the capacity and quality of MSMEs participating in MICE events.

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