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**MSMEs Empowerment Communication in New Normal Era: The Case of Mini University Kaltim Preneurs in East Kalimantan, Indonesia**

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**Abstract**

Indonesia's economy consists mainly of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In this pandemic situation, the government through its various institutions has made various efforts to save Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) from the impact of covid-19, including Indonesian Central Bank located in East Kalimantan Province. Its existing empowerment program named Mini University Kaltim Preneurs made an innovation to accommodate all its graduates to support each other in a local market place named Minishop. This study try to analyse the empowerment communication strategy implemented by Bank Indonesia-East Kalimantan Area in strengthening the local MSMEs in new normal era, and map out the barriers and challenges faced to improve the program. This research employs qualitative method, and using empowerment communication theory as an umbrella to analyse the data. The study found that the success of MSME rescue policy from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be supported by some specific strategies to maintain the sustainability of MSMEs as one of the players of the Indonesian economy.

**Keywords**  
MSMEs empowerment, empowerment communication, pandemic covid-19

**1. Introduction**

COVID-19 has become a global problem including in Indonesia. As of November 6, 2020, covid-19 infected patients across the country reached over 488 thousands (Indonesian Covid-19 Media Centre). Indonesia ranks 21st in the world for total cases of covid-19 infected patients based on CNN Indonesia news reported (19/11/2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted economic, social, and political aspects for almost all countries in the world, including in Indonesia (Susilawati, Falefi, & Purwoko, 2020) and (Pakpahan, 2020). The World Trade Organisation (WTO) estimates that global trade volume is likely to decline by about 32% by 2020 during the COVID-19 period (2020). Restrictions on public activity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused significant economic losses nationally (Hadiwardoyo, 2020). The sectors significantly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic are transportation, tourism, trade, and health; yet the economic sectors affected the most by COVID-19. Particularly the home industry sector (Susilawati, Falefi, & Purwoko, 2020) which known as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Not only in the form of measurable and clearly visible economic impacts. Another impact resulting from Covid-19 is actually also felt by many individuals-communities such as increased anxiety, stress and panic that is included in this context is Panic Buying. Accurate data about the situation have not been described in research reports, but if collected in a variety of psychological opinions in the news media, it can be said that Pandemic Covid-19 threatens mental disorders. Putri (2020) wrote a report on how the emergence of panic in a

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