



Empowering MSMEs through Digital Marketing and Product Packaging Training: A Community Service Program in Kedurus, Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to enhance the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through digital marketing and product packaging training. The program was conducted in RW 08 Kedurus Village, Karang Pilang District, Surabaya, involving 24 MSME participants. The methods included problem identification using SWOT analysis, training sessions, mentoring, and evaluation. The results indicate that prior to the program, many MSMEs had limited knowledge of digital marketing and packaging strategies. After the intervention, participants demonstrated improved understanding and practical skills, including the ability to create social media business accounts and develop more attractive product packaging. The program contributed to increasing participants' awareness of the importance of digital transformation in business development.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are widely recognized as the backbone of national economies, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. MSMEs contribute significantly to employment generation, poverty alleviation, and equitable income distribution. Their flexibility and resilience enable them to survive in uncertain economic conditions, including global crises and rapid technological changes (Naimi et al., 2023). However, despite their strategic role, many MSMEs still face structural and operational challenges that hinder their growth and competitiveness in an increasingly globalized market (Cardon et al., 2019).

In the era of digital transformation, the business landscape has shifted dramatically from conventional to technology-based systems (Kartiko & Rachmi, 2021). The advancement of internet technology, mobile devices, and social media platforms has changed how businesses interact with customers, promote products, and build brand identity (Rocha et al., 2021). Digital marketing has emerged as a crucial tool that allows MSMEs to reach a broader audience, engage directly with customers, and operate more efficiently at relatively low costs. Through digital platforms, MSMEs can overcome geographical limitations and compete with larger enterprises (Suryono, 2019).

Nevertheless, the adoption of digital marketing among MSMEs remains uneven. Many business actors still lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to utilize digital tools effectively. Limited digital literacy, lack of training, and resistance to change are among the key barriers that prevent MSMEs from maximizing digital opportunities. As a result, their marketing strategies often rely on traditional methods, which are less effective in reaching modern consumers who are increasingly active in digital environments (SUMIATI, 2020).

In addition to marketing challenges, product packaging has become another critical issue affecting MSME competitiveness. Packaging is no longer merely a protective layer for products; it has evolved into a strategic element of branding and marketing. Attractive and informative packaging can enhance product value, create a positive consumer experience, and influence purchasing decisions. In highly competitive markets, packaging serves as a visual communication tool that differentiates products and strengthens brand identity. However, many MSMEs still use simple and less appealing packaging due to limited knowledge, resources, and access to design innovation (Winarsih et al., 2022).

The combination of weak digital marketing capabilities and inadequate product packaging significantly limits the growth potential of MSMEs. Without proper intervention, these limitations may prevent MSMEs from expanding their market share and achieving sustainable development. Therefore, capacity-building initiatives are essential to equip MSME actors with practical knowledge and skills that align with current market demands.

As part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, community service programs play a vital role in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and societal needs. Universities are expected to contribute actively to community

empowerment by providing training, mentoring, and technical assistance. Through collaborative efforts between academics and local communities, MSMEs can be supported in improving their business performance and adapting to technological advancements.

This community service program was conducted in RW 08 Kedurus Village, Karang Pilang District, Surabaya, targeting local MSME actors engaged in various sectors such as food, beverages, and services. Despite their potential, these MSMEs face challenges in utilizing digital marketing tools and developing competitive packaging. Therefore, this program aims to provide technical guidance and mentoring in digital marketing and product packaging to enhance their knowledge, skills, and business performance.

Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Identify the main challenges faced by MSMEs in digital marketing and product packaging;
2. Provide training and mentoring to improve MSMEs' capabilities in utilizing digital platforms;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the program in enhancing participants' knowledge and skills;
4. Contribute to the development of sustainable MSME empowerment models through community service initiatives.

By strengthening MSME capabilities in digital marketing and packaging, this program is expected to improve their competitiveness, increase sales performance, and support long-term business sustainability. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to provide insights for policymakers, academics, and practitioners in designing effective community empowerment programs in the digital era.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

This community service program adopted a participatory and applied approach aimed at strengthening the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in digital marketing and product packaging. The program was implemented over a six-month period, from September 2024 to February 2025, in RW 08 Kedurus Village, Karang Pilang District, Surabaya. A total of 24 MSME actors participated in this program, representing various business sectors such as food, beverages, and small-scale services. The methodological design combined a qualitative descriptive approach with elements of action research, allowing the research team not only to identify problems but also to intervene directly and observe the resulting changes in participants' knowledge and practices. This approach was chosen to ensure that the program was contextual, solution-oriented, and responsive to the actual needs of the community.

Data collection was carried out using multiple techniques to obtain comprehensive and reliable information. In-depth interviews were conducted with MSME actors and local community representatives to explore the main challenges they faced, particularly in relation to digital marketing practices and product packaging. These interviews were complemented by direct field observations, which enabled the research team to assess the initial conditions of the participants, including their current marketing strategies, use of digital

platforms, and packaging designs. In addition, documentation techniques were employed to collect supporting data such as participant outputs, activity records, and visual evidence of product development. To further strengthen the analysis, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) framework was utilized to systematically evaluate both internal and external factors influencing MSME performance. The results of this analysis served as the foundation for designing appropriate training materials and intervention strategies.

The implementation of the program was conducted through a series of interconnected stages, beginning with the problem identification phase. During this stage, the research team conducted field visits and engaged in direct discussions with MSME actors to map their key challenges. The findings revealed that most participants had limited knowledge of digital marketing strategies, lacked the skills to effectively utilize social media platforms, and used relatively simple and less attractive packaging for their products. Based on these findings, the next stage involved the delivery of training sessions focusing on two main areas: digital marketing and product packaging. The digital marketing training covered fundamental concepts, the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Shopee, and TikTok, content creation strategies, and techniques for engaging with customers online. Meanwhile, the packaging training emphasized the importance of packaging as a branding tool, design principles such as color selection and logo placement, and the use of appropriate materials to enhance product appeal and safety.

Following the training sessions, the program continued with a mentoring phase designed to ensure that participants were able to apply the knowledge they had gained. This mentoring process was conducted both offline and online, with online assistance facilitated through communication platforms such as WhatsApp. During this stage, participants received guidance in creating and optimizing their digital marketing accounts, developing promotional content, and improving their product packaging designs. The mentoring approach was interactive and adaptive, allowing participants to ask questions, share experiences, and receive personalized feedback from the facilitators. This stage played a crucial role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that the learning outcomes were effectively translated into real business practices.

The final stage of the program involved monitoring and evaluation to assess its effectiveness and impact. Monitoring was conducted continuously throughout the program to track participant progress and identify any challenges encountered during implementation. Evaluation was carried out by examining several indicators, including participants' ability to create and manage social media business accounts, improvements in product packaging design, and the level of participant engagement during the activities. Feedback from participants was also collected to evaluate their satisfaction and perceived benefits of the program. The data obtained from these processes were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques, involving data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis provided insights into the extent to which

the program achieved its objectives and contributed to enhancing MSME capabilities.

Overall, this methodological approach ensured that the community service program was implemented in a structured, participatory, and impactful manner. By combining problem identification, training, mentoring, and evaluation within a continuous cycle, the program was able to provide practical solutions to the challenges faced by MSMEs while also generating valuable insights for future community empowerment initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The implementation of this community service program produced significant improvements in the knowledge, skills, and awareness of MSME actors in RW 08 Kedurus Village, Karang Pilang District, Surabaya. The program involved 24 participants representing various business sectors, primarily in food, beverages, and small-scale services. At the initial stage, the results of observations and in-depth interviews indicated that most participants had limited understanding of digital marketing and had not fully utilized digital platforms to promote their products. Although some MSME actors already had social media accounts, their usage was still minimal and not strategically managed. In addition, product packaging was generally simple, less attractive, and not yet aligned with branding principles, which reduced the competitiveness of their products in the market.



Figure 1. A community outreach/socialization activity delivered by a speaker indoors, with participants actively attending the session.

Following the training sessions, there was a noticeable improvement in participants' understanding of digital marketing concepts and practices. Participants demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of utilizing digital platforms such as Instagram, Shopee, and TikTok as marketing tools. They began to understand how to create engaging content, interact with customers, and build brand identity through social media. This finding is consistent with previous studies which highlight that digital marketing enables MSMEs to expand their market reach, enhance customer engagement, and improve business performance. The training also encouraged participants to shift from conventional marketing methods to more modern, technology-based approaches, which are more relevant in the current digital era. The mentoring phase further strengthened these outcomes by providing participants with hands-on guidance in implementing digital marketing strategies. During this stage, participants actively engaged in creating business accounts, uploading product content, and experimenting with different promotional techniques. The interactive nature of the mentoring process allowed participants to receive direct feedback and gradually improve their skills. As a result, many participants were able to independently manage their digital platforms and apply basic marketing strategies effectively. This indicates that continuous assistance plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of training outcomes, as it helps bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and practical implementation.



Figure 2. Display of products from the activity arranged on a table, complemented by decorative elements to support the presentation.

In terms of product packaging, the program also yielded positive results. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the role of packaging not only as a protective element but also as a strategic tool for branding and marketing. They learned about design elements such as color combinations, logo placement, typography, and material selection, which contribute to creating visually appealing and marketable products. After the training, several participants began to improve their packaging designs by making them more attractive, informative, and aligned with their brand identity. These improvements are expected to enhance consumer perception and increase the likelihood of purchase decisions, as packaging plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior (Hoang et al., 2020).

Moreover, the results of the monitoring and evaluation stage revealed that participants showed a high level of enthusiasm and engagement throughout the program. They actively participated in discussions, asked questions, and demonstrated a willingness to adopt new knowledge and skills. This positive response indicates that the program successfully addressed the needs of the participants and provided relevant solutions to their challenges. In addition, participants expressed satisfaction with the program and acknowledged the benefits of the training and mentoring activities in supporting their business development. From a broader perspective, the findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating digital marketing and product packaging strategies in MSME development programs. The combination of these two aspects creates a synergistic effect that enhances both product visibility and attractiveness, ultimately improving competitiveness in the market. Furthermore, the participatory approach adopted in this program proved to be effective in fostering collaboration and mutual learning between the academic team and the community. By actively involving participants in every stage of the program, the intervention was able to generate more meaningful and sustainable impacts. In conclusion, the results of this community service program demonstrate that targeted training and mentoring in digital marketing and packaging can significantly improve MSME capabilities. However, continuous support and follow-up programs are necessary to ensure long-term sustainability and to further enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital economy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

This community service program has demonstrated that targeted training and mentoring in digital marketing and product packaging can significantly enhance the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The findings indicate that prior to the intervention, many participants had limited knowledge and skills in utilizing digital platforms and developing attractive product packaging. However, after participating in the program, MSME actors showed substantial improvement in their understanding and ability to apply digital marketing strategies, including creating and managing social media business accounts and developing promotional content. In addition, participants were able to improve their product packaging by incorporating better design elements, which contributed to increasing the visual appeal and

perceived value of their products. These outcomes suggest that the integration of digital marketing and packaging strategies is essential in strengthening MSME competitiveness in the modern business environment (Ubirajara et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the participatory and mentoring-based approach implemented in this program proved to be effective in facilitating knowledge transfer and practical application. The combination of training, hands-on assistance, and continuous evaluation enabled participants to gradually adapt to new business practices and technologies. The positive response and active engagement of participants also indicate that such programs are highly relevant to the needs of MSMEs, particularly in facing the challenges of digital transformation. Therefore, community service initiatives conducted by higher education institutions can play a strategic role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world business practices, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic development (Kaplan, R.S. and Norton, 2004).

In terms of recommendations, it is suggested that MSME actors consistently utilize digital platforms to promote their products by creating engaging and innovative content in order to reach a wider audience. Continuous learning and adaptation to technological developments are also necessary to maintain competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic market. In addition, future community service programs should be designed as sustainable and long-term initiatives, incorporating advanced training topics such as digital branding, data analytics, and e-commerce optimization. Collaboration between universities, government institutions, and the private sector is also highly recommended to provide comprehensive support for MSME development, including access to funding, product certification, and market expansion opportunities. By implementing these strategies, MSMEs are expected to achieve sustainable growth and make a greater contribution to the economy.

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