

Empowerment of MSMEs 'Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri' Through Packaging Innovation and Digital Marketing in Kureksari Village

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ABSTRACT

This Community Service activity was carried out to increase the competitiveness and independence of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri in Kureksari Village, Sidoarjo, through packaging innovations and digital marketing strategies. The background of this activity departs from the problem of partners who still use plain packaging without brand identity and conventionally limited promotional strategies. The purpose of this activity is to empower partners to be able to develop highly competitive products by utilizing information technology. The implementation method uses a participatory approach through observation stages, interviews, packaging innovation training, social media management assistance, and evaluation of activity results. The results of the activity show a significant increase in the appearance of products with new packaging with logos and attractiveness, as well as an increase in the ability of partners to use social media as a means of promotion. This activity not only has a practical impact in the form of increasing sales and product image, but also strengthens digital literacy and innovative awareness of business actors. Overall, this PKM activity contributes to strengthening the community-based creative economy and becomes a replication model for the empowerment of MSMEs in other regions that have similar characteristics.

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Introduction

MSMEs are one of the strategic sectors in national economic development because they play an important role in labor absorption, income equity, and improving community welfare. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the MSME sector contributes more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the economic backbone of the lower middle class (KemenkopsUKM, 2022). In the midst of globalization and the development of the digital economy, MSME actors are required to continue to adapt to market changes and consumer behavior. These challenges include improving product quality, strengthening brands, and utilizing information technology as an effective marketing tool (Paramita & Surur, 2022). In this context, Community Service (PKM) activities are an important means for universities to provide strategic assistance that has a direct impact on increasing the capacity and competitiveness of MSMEs at the local level.

Kureksari Village, Waru District, Sidoarjo Regency, is one of the areas with micro-business-based economic potential in the culinary sector. One of the MSME actors that is quite well-known in the area is Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri, a traditional drink business based on natural ingredients that has a distinctive taste and is loved by the surrounding community. Despite having promising market potential, the business faces obstacles in terms of packaging design and marketing strategy. The product still uses plain plastic packaging without brand identity, while promotions are carried out conventionally with a limited reach. This condition makes it difficult for products to compete in the midst of the rise of similar drinks that have implemented modern design and digital marketing. This kind of obstacle is commonly experienced by MSMEs in areas that have not fully optimized information technology in business development (Sufaidah et al., 2022).

The main problems faced by partners are not only the visual aspect of the product, but also the low digital literacy and understanding of the importance of brand identity. In the modern marketing era, packaging is not just a container, but a visual communication element that functions to build consumer perception of product quality and value (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Other research shows that packaging innovation is able to increase consumer attractiveness and trust in local products, thus having implications for increasing sales and customer loyalty (Badri et al., 2022). In addition, the ability to utilize social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram can be a cheap, effective, and adaptive promotional tool for MSMEs (Chaffey, 2019). However, most small business actors at the village level still face difficulties in managing attractive and market-oriented digital content (Syahputro, 2020).

The selection of Duo Pudi's Young Coconut Ice as a partner in PKM activities was carried out in a targeted manner by considering the real needs in the field. This business represents the characteristics of traditional MSMEs that have potential but are hampered

by limited innovation and digital marketing knowledge. This service activity is designed to provide concrete solutions through assistance in packaging innovation and training on sustainable social media management. The approach used is participatory, actively involving partners in each design process so that the results are not only in the form of visual products, but also in increasing the capacity and independence of entrepreneurs. Through this activity, it is hoped that partners will be able to understand the importance of attractive packaging design, build brand identity, and optimize social media as a means of promotion and communication with customers.

The contribution of PKM activities not only focuses on increasing the selling value of products, but also on empowering the creative economy of local communities. The assistance provided is expected to be able to foster awareness among MSME actors of the importance of innovation, creativity, and adaptation to technological developments. With packaging innovations and digital marketing strategies, Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri is expected to be an example of best practice for other MSMEs in Kureksari Village and its surroundings. This activity also shows the real role of universities in strengthening the community-based entrepreneurship ecosystem through the transfer of knowledge and simple technology that is applicable. Thus, this PKM not only provides solutions to microeconomic problems, but also contributes to strengthening the sustainable competitiveness of the local economy

Implementation Method

The partner of the service activity is the owner of the Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri business located on Jl. Colonel Sugiono No. 88 RT 04 RW 02, Kureksari Village, Waru District, Sidoarjo Regency. This business was chosen because it has promising economic potential but faces obstacles in terms of packaging and digital marketing strategy. This service activity is carried out with a qualitative participatory and descriptive approach, where the implementation team not only acts as a facilitator, but also as a collaborative partner in the mentoring process. This approach aims to make business actors actively involved in the process of identifying problems, designing solutions, and evaluating results, so as to create a sustainable empowerment process.

The implementation of activities is carried out through several systematic stages. The first stage is initial observation, which is direct observation of business conditions to understand the actual situation, find problems, and identify development potentials and opportunities. The results of these observations are used as a basis for formulating questions and mentoring strategies that are in accordance with the needs of partners. The second stage is the preparation of a list of questions and in-depth interviews, where the service team digs into more detailed information related to the production process, packaging form, promotion techniques, and obstacles faced by business actors. The data

obtained from the results of interviews and observations were analyzed descriptively to describe the actual conditions and formulate the right direction of activities.

The third stage is packaging innovation assistance and digital branding training. At this stage, the team provides a theoretical and practical understanding of the importance of packaging design in increasing the selling value and brand identity of the product. The training is conducted on the principle of learning by doing, where partners are actively involved in the process of redesigning packaging, selecting materials, and determining product logos and labels. The results of the assistance are in the form of new packaging innovations using plastic cups and stickers with logos that display the visual identity of Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri. Furthermore, social media management training such as WhatsApp and Instagram was carried out as a means of digital marketing to expand the reach of promotions. Partners are trained to create simple promotional content, manage communication with consumers, and utilize digital features as branding media.

The fourth stage is the analysis and evaluation of activities. The analysis was carried out by reviewing the results of interviews, observations, and the effectiveness of the assistance that had been carried out. The evaluation focused on three main indicators: (1) improvement of partners' skills in managing product design and identity, (2) improvement of promotional capabilities through digital media, and (3) positive consumer response to product appearance and appeal. Evaluation is carried out qualitatively through reflective discussions with partners, as well as feedback for continuous improvement.

In its implementation, this PKM activity combines several methods, namely community education, training, advocacy, and diffusion of science and technology. The public education method is used to increase partners' awareness of the importance of innovation and business digitalization. The training is applied to equip technical skills in packaging design and social media management. The advocacy approach is used in the form of intensive assistance during the change process. Meanwhile, the diffusion of science and technology is applied through the application of simple technology in the form of digital graphic design and social media-based promotional strategies. The combination of these four methods allows activities to not only focus on the physical results of new packaging, but also to build the capacity of partners to be independent and economically empowered. With these approaches and stages, this service activity is expected to provide practical solutions as well as long-term contributions for MSME actors. Through a participatory mentoring process, Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri is expected to be able to manage product innovations independently, expand the market through digital marketing strategies, and become an example of the success of empowering MSMEs based on the creative economy at the village level.

Results and Discussion

This Community Service activity has resulted in several main achievements related to increasing the competitiveness and independence of Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri's business partners. Based on the results of initial observations and interviews, it is known that before the activity was carried out, this business still used plain plastic packaging without labels or logos that distinguish the product from other competitors. Promotion is done simply through direct sales in stalls and word of mouth, without a digital marketing strategy. This condition makes the product less widely known and potentially loses market opportunities amid the increasing trend of modern packaged drinks that utilize social media as a means of promotion. The results of this identification make it clear that the main problems of partners lie in two aspects, namely the limitations of packaging design and the low ability of digital literacy in marketing.

The packaging innovation mentoring stage has succeeded in producing new designs that are more attractive, informative, and identity. Together with partners, the service team redesigned the packaging using plastic glass materials and stickers with a graphic design with a logo. The logo features the product name "Es Kelapa Muda Duo Putri" with color elements that represent the freshness and authenticity of natural ingredients. In addition to adding aesthetic value, the new packaging also serves as a means of visual communication that strengthens brand identity and increases consumer trust. This is in line with the opinion of Kotler & Keller (2016) who stated that packaging plays an important role in building quality perceptions and driving purchasing decisions. Through this activity, partners not only obtain physical results in the form of new packaging, but also understand the basic principles of product design that can be applied independently in further development.



Figure 1. Comparison of Packaging Before and After Assistance

In addition to packaging innovation, this activity also provides training and assistance in digital marketing as a strategy to expand the reach of promotion. Partners

are trained to use social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram in managing product promotions. The service team helps create simple visual content, write attractive promotional messages, and set up a posting schedule so that interaction with consumers becomes more consistent. This approach has proven to be effective in increasing business visibility because promotion through digital media is able to reach a wider market than conventional promotions. Chaffey (2019) emphasized that digital marketing provides a great opportunity for MSMEs to build direct relationships with customers and expand market share without requiring large costs. Based on follow-up interviews, business owners admitted that there was an increase in orders after the implementation of digital promotion strategies and the use of new packaging designs.

In terms of empowerment, this activity also has an impact on increasing the knowledge, skills, and confidence of partners. Before the activity, partners did not understand the importance of visual identity and digital media as a business development tool. After mentoring, partners show a significant change in the perspective of innovation and marketing. Business owners are able to manage social media accounts independently, create simple promotional content, and dare to try design variations for new products. The mentoring process carried out with the participatory principle has fostered a sense of ownership of the results of the activity. This is in line with the concept of community empowerment which emphasizes increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to manage their potential independently (Sumarto, 2020). Thus, this PKM activity not only produces visual changes in products, but also builds entrepreneurial awareness that is adaptive to the changing times.



Figure 2. The business display of *Duo Puo's Young Coconut Ice* products after packaging innovation assistance

The results of the activity show that packaging innovation and digital marketing are able to increase the competitiveness and image of local products. Consumers give a positive response to the appearance of the new packaging which is considered more

hygienic, attractive, and professional. This increase in visual appeal has a direct impact on increased sales and customer trust in product quality. These findings strengthen the results of Sufaidah et al.'s (2022) research which states that packaging innovation and digital marketing are important factors in expanding the market and strengthening the position of MSMEs in the modern era. In addition, the use of social media provides strategic advantages in the form of more efficient and interactive promotions. In the local context, this activity also contributes to strengthening the creative economy in Kureksari Village through increasing the capacity of small businesses based on local wisdom.

Overall, this service activity succeeded in realizing three main achievements, namely (1) improving the quality and identity of product packaging, (2) improving the ability of partners to utilize digital media for promotion, and (3) increasing the confidence of partners as creative entrepreneurs. The combination of visual innovation and digital strategy has proven to be an effective approach in empowering MSMEs to be able to adapt to modern market competition. Assistance carried out with a participatory approach is also the key to success because it builds the independence of partners in the long term. Through these results, it can be concluded that strengthening innovation capacity and business digitalization is a strategic step in encouraging the growth of a community-based creative economy at the village level.

Conclusion

The Community Service activity which focuses on empowering Duo Puric's Es Kelapa Muda MSMEs through packaging innovation and digital marketing has succeeded in achieving its goal of increasing competitiveness, independence, and adaptive capacity of partners towards the development of the creative economy. Participatory assistance has resulted in real changes in the form of new packaging that is more attractive and identity, as well as an increase in partners' ability to manage promotions through social media independently. Practically, this activity has a social impact in the form of increasing the confidence and entrepreneurial awareness of MSME actors on the importance of sustainable innovation, while academically, this activity strengthens the application of the concept of science and technology transfer and digital-based marketing strategies in the context of community service. This success opens up follow-up opportunities in the form of developing networks between MSMEs in Kureksari Village to build a shared digital marketing ecosystem, as well as becoming a replication model for creative economy empowerment programs in other regions that have similar characteristics.

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