



Utilization of e-commerce to increase culinary business opportunities for rural communities

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ABSTRACT

Serdang Wetan Village is one of the villages in Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia which will focus on improving welfare through science and technology, MSMEs and human resource potential. Serdang Wetan village still has several problems, where the level of education is still low, as well as the type of business of the village community which is focused only on the culinary business. The human capital has very limited skills besides local food and beverage production. Thus, it is shown the importance of encouraging job creation in the village through e-commerce media. In this digital world, people are more likely to shop using online media. E-commerce can open up even greater business opportunities, both for culinary businesses and other MSMEs. The training provided is in the form of an introduction to online business (e-commerce) with a focus on social commerce or selling using social media, to tips and tricks for selling using e-commerce. In this training, a technopreneur in the culinary field will also be invited who share her experiences in doing business using the e-commerce platform. Apart from that, following the SDGs, this activity can help village communities to expand business opportunities, so it is hoped that it can help eradicate poverty and hunger, reduce inequality, sustainable consumption, and production as well as partnerships to achieve goals.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, the advancement of information technology, especially internet usage and smartphones, has been a driving force for economic growth and social progress (Tang & Zhu, 2020). Indonesia as a developing country having great potential to utilize the internet to increase their economic growth. Internet usage in Indonesia reached 212.9 million in January 2023, with 98.3 percent of all users accessing the internet via mobile phone, on average access the internet of 7 hours 42 minutes a day (Clinton & Pertiwi, 2023). The usage of e-commerce also promoted by the previous pandemic Covid-19 that hit global industry which led the needs of digital economic transformation and digital commerce (Tahalele et al., 2021). In fact, since more people have access to digital technology and have started purchasing online, e-commerce has emerged as the primary driver of the current generation of consumers (Campisi et al., 2023).

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of e-commerce in Indonesia's rural areas, including increased internet access, digitization, and technology adoption. E-commerce has significantly increased in language, customer service, and logistics assistance. In rural Indonesia, e-commerce offers retailers and small-scale industries new opportunities to get their products online and grow their businesses. Due to the benefits of advanced technology, even people in rural areas take advantage of the Internet to shop and access a variety of services (Fernandes & Shailashri, 2023). Serdang Wetan village is located in Tangerang, an area that are newly developed and surrounded by developed BSD cities and other more developed Tangerang cities (Alexander et al., 2023). This condition made the opportunities of business is very large to grow and has enormous potential.

E-commerce provides rural entrepreneurs and small business owners with unparalleled access to a wide range of markets, from local to international. The utilization of e-commerce can help increase business opportunities for rural communities in Serdang Wetan, Tangerang. E-commerce has been hailed as the business revolution of the information age, and it has been attracting considerable interest around the world. However, despite the considerable potential benefits offered by e-commerce, the rural sector has been slow to embrace the new business practices. Further, there are also challenges face by rural communities such as inadequate and inefficient internet services, logistic services, linguistic barriers, affordability and accessibility, and so on (Mei et al., 2022).

The introduction of e-commerce in rural areas, particularly in the context of culinary businesses, presents both opportunities and challenges. While e-commerce can provide rural culinary businesses with access to a broader customer base and potentially lead to increased sales and business growth, there are also challenges that need to be addressed. A study outlines various challenges when starting and operating e-commerce in rural areas, raising awareness of the difficulties faced by people in these regions.

In the specific case of Serdang Wetan, Tangerang, efforts have been made to develop village tourism potential through the implementation of several community outreach program activities. This indicates a broader interest in leveraging local resources and attractions for economic development. Additionally, the emphasis of e-commerce in rural resurgence has been highlighted, with the potential to create jobs, lead to industry growth, and empower rural sellers to conduct larger and more active businesses. E-commerce has been recognized as a means to bring opportunities to rural communities, alleviating the burden of transportation and ultimately saving money. However, it is important to acknowledge that challenges exist, and the experiences of rural operators in introducing e-commerce practices in their business operations have been documented. Therefore, while e-commerce holds promise for rural culinary businesses, it's essential to consider the unique challenges and opportunities that exist in the specific context of Serdang Wetan, Tangerang.

2. METHODS

The community outreach program objectives are to give opportunities for rural communities in Serdang Wetan to learn how to utilize social media and E-marketplace as a platform to increase their local culinary businesses. Expertise in local food were brought to the program as part of the seminar sessions, to give the participants insights on how to bring small business into seemingly larger business. As shown in Figure 1, the community outreach program activities are carried out through the implementation of stages. These include site visits, data collection, preparation, activities, and evaluation.

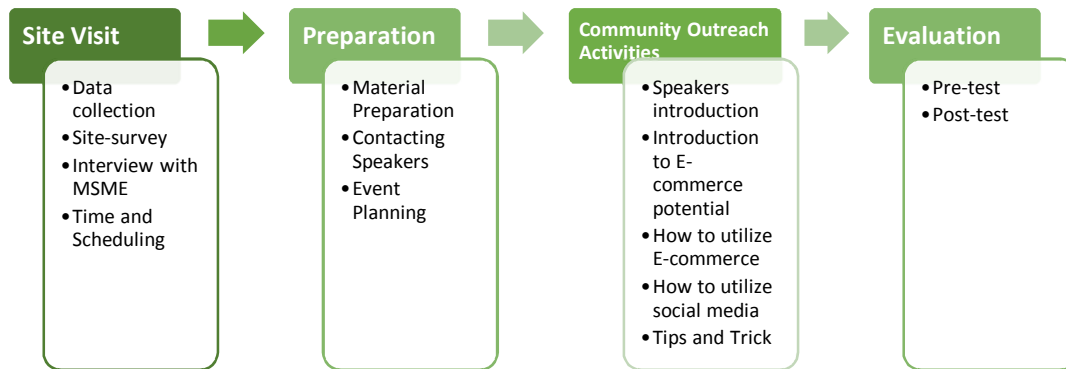


Figure 1. Community outreach program stages

Site-Visit

Understanding the local context in Serdang Wetan is crucial, thus it is important to conduct an initial visit to the village to understand the local economic landscape, existing businesses, and the community's needs and challenges. In this first stage, the community outreach team are engaged with local community leaders, businesses, and residents to identify the potential participants for the e-commerce initiative. There is also direct interview with MSME and with the Director of BUMDES (Village-Owned Enterprise) Serdang Tirta Kencana, Wibowo Budi Utomo to gain insights about the opportunity and challenges in the villages. Further, it is also discussed the time and how the program best will be conducted for the participants.

Preparation

The community outreach team then prepare for the activities, one of them is to develop training programs to enhance digital literacy and e-commerce skills among participants. Materials for community outreach activities were made according to the needs of the participants. Materials teaching were made in PPT format, then later discussed with the speaker. Further, the eligible speakers to present at the community outreach activities was contacted. The last step of preparation is event planning for the community outreach activities. The activity done including room booking, food and snacks ordering, assigning duties for the committee, arranging room, printing banner and materials, and other activities.

Community Outreach Activities

The program continues to the community outreach activities, which will be held in Workshop Program. According to the data collected from the initial site-visit on the first stage, there are three focuses that will be brought up in the activities as can be seen in Table 1.

Evaluation

The program implemented in the village need to be evaluated. Feedback mechanisms, including participant and consumer feedback, were employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The benchmark for the success of implementing activities is carrying out activities according to the time that

have been determined so that there needs to be good cooperation between the community outreach team and the participants. The benchmark for success from the participants were evaluated through the pre-test and post-test that are conducted before and after the workshop. The test is using Likert scale from 1 to 5 to evaluate their understanding of the e-commerce material given in the workshops. On the other hand, verbal assessment also done by the speakers directly in interactive workshop to make sure the understanding of the participants. Apart from that, the success of the community outreach team can also be measured by good communication during the implementation of activities as well as the suitability of the number of participants join in the workshop.

Table 1. Topics and activity objectives

Topics	Activity Objectives
E-commerce Introduction	Participants will be able to understand what is e-commerce and the benefits on selling product online.
Social Commerce	Participants will be able to understand how to maximize the usage of social media for businesses.
Tips and Trick for E-commerce	Participants will be able to understand the tips and trick given by the speaker on how to sell products using e-commerce effectively.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The community outreach activities were held in form of Workshop at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Indonesia, 30 Mei 2023. The workshop itself were packed with title “*Bisnis Kuliner Untung dengan E-commerce* (Profitable Culinary Business Utilizing E-commerce)”. The poster of the event is shown at Figure 2. The poster was made attractive to improve the interest of the Food and Beverage MSME of Serdang Wetan Village Business owners.

The event is attended by 39 participants, which 18 of them are MSME culinary business owner from Serdang Wetan. Most of them has food businesses, for instance *Nasi Kuning* (Turmeric rice), *Nasi Box*, *Tahu Baso* (Tofu with Meat), *Gorengan* (Fried dishes), and other local Indonesian food.

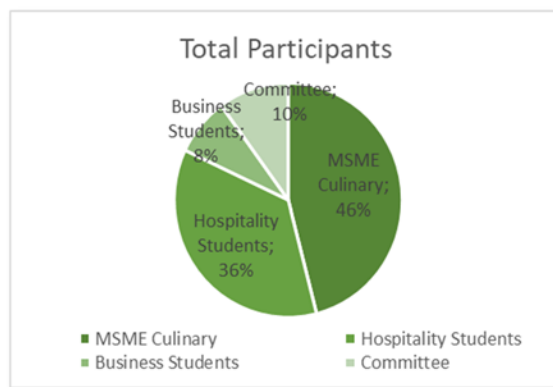


Figure 2. Event poster
Figure 3. Total participants

Stages in Community Outreach Activities

There are several stages in implementing the community outreach activities as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Stages in community outreach activities

Stage 1	Introduction
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening of the Workshops - Introduction of the moderator and speaker of the day - Opening statement from speaker - Background Business of the Speaker - Pre-Assessment
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants can expect what they will get from the community outreach activities - Introduce speaker of the day and her background business
Stage 2	Introduction to E-commerce
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing e-commerce - Presentation of e-commerce potential - How to utilize e-commerce
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants understand what is e-commerce and the potential for their culinary business - Participants understand how to utilize e-commerce for their culinary business
Stage 3	How to Utilize Social Media (Social-Commerce)
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to Social Commerce - Presentation on how to use Social Media for business
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants understand how to use social media efficiently to increase their culinary business
Stage 4	Tips and Trick
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on tips and trick for e-commerce
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants understand the tips and trick to utilize e-commerce to the fullest for their culinary business
Stage 5	Closing
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking Pictures for documentation - Certificates and materials given to the participants and speaker - Door Prize - Post-assessment - One-on-one discussions
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing the community outreach activities - Participants have personal discussions with the speakers

Implementation

Before the topic's material were being discussed, the speaker was introduced herself to the participants. The speaker chosen for this activity is Ms. Vania Lie M.Par, as the Founder of El Granola, one of MSME in Food and Beverages that supply healthy breakfast food. The speaker herself start the Granola business from scratch in 2015 and continue to grow their sales by the help of e-commerce. Within time, El Granola has succeeded to accomplish several achievements such as achieved Top 100 Blibli Start Indonesia Season 4; as one of chosen seller for Makerfest and Pasar Idea by Tokopedia; and has covered on TV and other national business interviews. The objective of the speaker's introduction is also to inspire the participants to understand that they also have a chance to succeed their culinary businesses with the utilization of e-commerce. Further, the background of the speaker who were started her business since she was still a hospitality students and with limited amount of capital to start a

business also could be one of the story that may inspire the MSME owners in Serdang Wetan. In this session, there were interactive discussion and also sharing from each of the MSME participants.

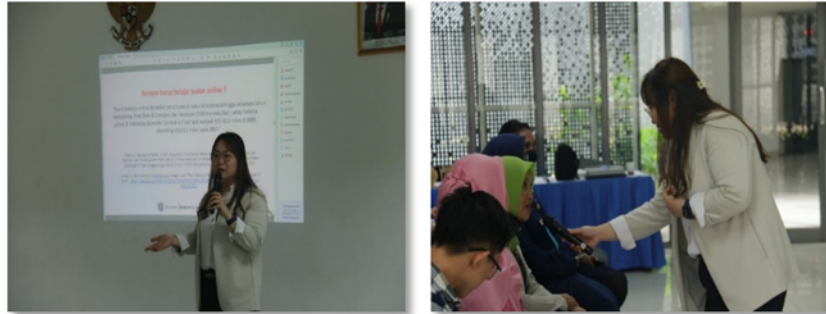


Figure 4. Presentation of the speaker

Introduction to e-commerce then presented by the speaker. The objectives are so the participants will know the function and the importance of e-commerce for culinary business nowadays. Pre-assessment of e-commerce also done in this stage. Finally, at the end of session, all the participants took pictures with the speaker and all committees (Figure 5).

After group photo, then the event continues on the presentation of certificates to speaker. This is to show appreciation for giving the participants such a valuable knowledge that may help their culinary businesses. Further, games and quizzes also conducted for the participants with several prizes that can beneficial for their culinary business, such as stove, cutleries, plate and bowls. However, the prizes won by three participants who have answered the quizzes correctly. The questions given in the quizzes are from the teaching materials brought by the speaker, thus empower the participants to really listen and understand the materials.



Figure 5. Participants of the community outreach activities

Figure 6. Certificates and supporting materials given to the speaker and participant

Discussion

The culinary industry plays a vital role in the economic development of any community, providing not only gastronomic delights but also employment opportunities and tourism attractions. By harnessing the power of e-commerce, culinary businesses in rural communities like Serdang Wetan, Tangerang can significantly enhance their opportunities for growth and success (Haris et al., 2021). In the community outreach activities, the participants were given knowledge that e-commerce wil allows their businesses to

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reach a wider customer base, expand their market reach beyond local borders, and increase their visibility online. Through e-commerce platforms, such as online food delivery services or virtual marketplaces, culinary businesses in Serdang Wetan can showcase their unique offerings and attract customers from different parts of the country or even internationally. Furthermore, e-commerce provides a convenient and efficient way for customers to order food or make reservations, eliminating the need for physical visits or phone calls. With the help of e-commerce, culinary businesses in Serdang Wetan can streamline their processes, improve customer experience, and increase profitability.

Further, in order to effectively utilize e-commerce for culinary businesses in rural communities like Serdang Wetan, Tangerang, we conducted training sessions to educate culinary business owners in Serdang Wetan about the benefits and strategies of utilizing e-commerce. Activities include assisting businesses in setting up their online presence, helping them create appealing digital menus or online storefronts, and providing guidance on marketing and promotional strategies in the digital realm.

In the discussion with the participants, we explain that with the recent rapid growth of the e-commerce sector, consumers now have better access to goods and services with more convenient times and locations (Gupta et al., 2023). E-commerce can significantly benefit culinary businesses, especially in rural areas. The adoption of e-commerce in the food and beverage industry allows businesses to sell to other businesses and directly to consumers, providing access to a wider market. Moreover, the food and beverage industry has seen a significant shift towards e-commerce, with the rise of online grocery shopping and direct-to-consumer sales (Yuan et al., 2021). This trend has led to a meaningful transformation in consumer habits and supply chain dynamics, shaping a new normal for food and beverage e-commerce. Additionally, e-commerce can help culinary businesses overcome the challenges of the perishable nature of food products and specific delivery or storage needs.

In rural areas, e-commerce can open up new opportunities for culinary businesses. It allows them to reach a broader customer base, including consumers in urban areas and even international markets (Gupta et al., 2023). This can be particularly beneficial for businesses that specialize in specialty gourmet foods, food processing, or unique agricultural products. Moreover, the utilization of e-commerce in the culinary business, especially in rural areas, can lead to increased sales, access to a wider customer base, and the potential for business growth and expansion (Cristobal-Fransi et al., 2023).

Based on the results of unstructured interviews between the implementing team and participants which included direct observations during the activities, the implementation of community service program activities gave the following results: (1) The community outreach activity in Serdang Wetan village contribute to give knowledge and understanding for MSME culinary business owners for the potential of e-commerce to their culinary businesses. The level of understanding and knowledge were increasing and could be seen from the result compared in pre-assessment and post-assessment of the participants; (2) the evaluation post-test also showed that 100% of the participants now already have a digital account in e-commerce or social media platform specifically made to sell their culinary product.

As showed in Figure 7, the pre-test showed that 12 out of 18 Serdang Wetan village participants does not have any social media account or any digital platform specifically made for selling their culinary products. Most of the participants were Housewives that only made the product by order, and they usually market it by using mouth-to-mouth selling strategy. In 2024, 100% of the business owners already has digital platform to sell their product. The digital platform is in Website form, the outcomes of the future continuance community program activities culinary business assistance with Serdang Wetan village community.

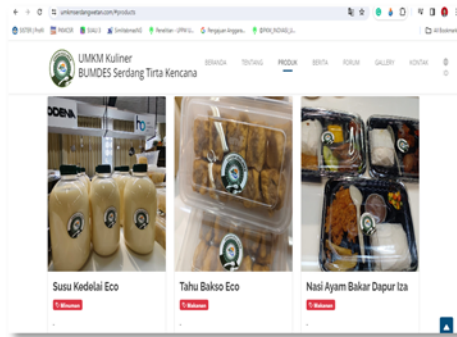


Figure 7. Social media account ownership
Figure 8. Website platform

This website platform is beneficial for the culinary business owner in Serdang Wetan village to give digital footprint to the businesses. Advancement in technology has made impact in food industries, thus having digital presence has an enormous impact for food businesses (Daradkeh et al., 2023). Further, in modern technologies most business environments are turning more into digital ecosystems, thus it is very important for business owner create value through digital customer orientation (Kopalle et al., 2020). The website helps the business owner for having digital presence, so it is hoped easier for new customer of reach out their products.

There have been two major paradigm shifts in the food business sector as a result of the recent rise in the use of digital technologies (Kılıç et al., 2023). First, this involves a shift on different social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok from textual to visual representation (Chen et al., 2022). Second, there is a transition from professional media content to user-generated content, and from text to visual representation (Sharma et al., 2020). These changes have brought about a revolution in the industry structure and altered the marketing techniques for culinary tourism, which presents a number of issues (Chen et al., 2022).



Figure 9. The enthusiasm of the participants

The utilization of e-commerce to increase culinary business opportunities for rural communities in Serdang Wetan, Tangerang offers several benefits for participants in the community outreach (Schubert & Ginsburg, 2000). Firstly, by embracing e-commerce, culinary businesses in rural communities can expand their market reach beyond their local area. This means that they have the opportunity to attract customers from different regions, increasing their customer base and potentially boosting their sales and profits. Secondly, e-commerce provides a platform for culinary businesses to showcase their products

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and services. This allows them to create attractive and professional online storefronts, showcase their menus or products, and provide detailed information about their offerings. This can help to attract and engage potential customers, leading to increased interest in their business (Karmeli et al., 2021). Thirdly, the utilization of e-commerce can improve the efficiency of culinary business operations. By adopting online ordering and delivery systems, culinary businesses can streamline their order management process and reduce manual errors (Riyanto et al., 2021). This can lead to faster and more accurate order fulfillment, resulting in improved customer satisfaction. Additionally, the use of e-commerce can also help in reducing costs for culinary businesses in rural communities.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the community outreach program, feedback surveys can be distributed to culinary business owners in Serdang Wetan. The surveys will help assess the level of knowledge and understanding gained from the workshops, as well as measure the success of implementing e-commerce strategies in their businesses.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The community outreach activities centered on the utilization of e-commerce in Serdang Wetan have demonstrated both the potential and the transformative impact of digital initiatives on rural economies. The holistic approach, encompassing site visits, thorough preparation, targeted activities, and continuous evaluation, has resulted in significant positive outcomes for the participating community. The implementation of e-commerce platforms has empowered local businesses and individuals, providing them with a gateway to broader markets. Through carefully designed activities, participants not only established a digital presence but also enhanced their marketing strategies and financial literacy. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in income for participating entrepreneurs, contributing to the overall economic upliftment of Serdang Wetan. The success of this outreach program can be attributed to the proactive involvement of community members. The needs assessment phase ensured that the training and support provided were tailored to the specific requirements of the participants. The collaborative spirit within the community, coupled with their eagerness to embrace digital tools, played a pivotal role in the initiative's success. The journey was not without its challenges. Issues such as limited internet access and initial resistance to digitalization posed hurdles that required strategic interventions. Proactive measures, including community-wide awareness campaigns and collaborations with local service providers, were instrumental in overcoming these challenges. The adaptability and resilience of the community were key factors in navigating and addressing these obstacles. In conclusion, the Utilization of e-commerce to Increase Business Opportunities for Rural Communities in Serdang Wetan, Tangerang has proven to be a resounding success. The integration of digital tools has not only expanded economic opportunities but has also fostered a sense of empowerment and resilience within the community. This endeavor exemplifies the potential of community-driven e-commerce initiatives as catalysts for sustainable rural development.

Community outreach activities can play a crucial role in the utilization of e-commerce for rural communities, including those in Serdang Wetan, Tangerang. There are several recommendations to enhance the community service activities in Serdang Wetan, specifically for MSME culinary. One of them is trying to understand the specific needs and interests of the rural community in Serdang Wetan. Tailoring e-commerce offerings to meet these needs can enhance community engagement and participation. The participants also requested to be guided personally on how to really open an account in e-commerce, thus it is recommended to have this topic for Serdang Wetan Village. Further, adopting community-building strategies to foster a sense of belonging and interest in the Village-owned Enterprise Serdang Tirta Kencana, the institution that oversees MSME in Serdang Wetan village. This can include rewarding

loyal Business owners that were active to attend events and workshop for community outreach activities, and supporting a greater cause to create a deeper connection with the community. Creating a sense of community is essential to make the community outreach activity is gone smoothly. This can be achieved through social engagement, sharing interesting content materials on what is needed by the MSME, and providing exceptional service to the MSME, so they feel appreciated and taken care of when doing the activities. By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped the rural communities can effectively engage with community outreach activities, create a sense of belonging to MSME business community (BUMDES Serdang Tirta Kencana), and provide valuable opportunities for economic development and growth in Serdang Wetan village through the utilization of e-commerce.

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