



The social savvy entrepreneur: Lean start-up branding and social media for MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are integral to Indonesia's economy, facing diverse challenges during the pandemic. This paper addresses the hurdles encountered by MSMEs, emphasizing the imperative of bolstering their branding and digital marketing competencies for enduring resilience. Despite their significance, many MSMEs, notably those in rural regions like Karangrejek Village, lack the requisite skills and resources for effective digital platform utilization, necessitating comprehensive support initiatives. Pandemic-induced issues encompass capital constraints and product marketing dilemmas, particularly evident among Karangrejek Village MSMEs. Post-pandemic recovery demands intensified aid to facilitate comprehensive revival, crucial for fostering local economic potential and community welfare enhancement. To address these challenges, a sustainable community service initiative will be launched, focusing on augmenting MSMEs' branding and digital marketing capacities. The program aims to stimulate optimal economic growth, especially in the post-Covid-19 era. It encompasses training sessions on leveraging digital media for product branding, expanding market reach through product marketing strategies, mentorship in product packaging design, and harnessing social media platforms. Through this initiative, MSMEs can fortify their resilience and contribute significantly to the community's economic prosperity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a significant role in driving the Indonesian economy, with data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (Lee & Goldsmith, 2022) revealing that in 2021, there were approximately 64.19 million MSMEs contributing significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP) by 61.97 percent or around Rp 8.6 trillion in capital (Abdurrahman et al., 2019). However, in the current post-pandemic period, MSMEs require additional support for comprehensive recovery (Morabito, 2014; Srikalimah et al., 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges for MSMEs,

particularly concerning capital and product marketing, highlighting the necessity for robust branding strategies to expand market reach and competitiveness. Karangrejek Village, situated in Gunungkidul Regency, possesses substantial potential in tourism and MSMEs. Through observations conducted with Visit Karangrejek, it was discovered that the village boasts various MSMEs, artisans, and diverse tourism attractions, including food producers and local traditional craft artisans. To tap into this potential, Visit Karangrejek initiated a community-based program aimed at promoting tourism and uplifting all aspects of the village, including MSMEs.

However, MSMEs in the village still encounter challenges, particularly in conventional production and marketing processes (Kurniasih et al., 2023). Many MSMEs in Karangrejek Village rely on manual marketing techniques, limiting their capacity to develop effective branding strategies and reach target markets efficiently, thus impeding significant economic growth. Furthermore, the lack of understanding of branding among MSMEs hinders their ability to expand products due to limited access and market networks. Establishing a distinct identity is crucial for MSMEs to differentiate themselves from competitors (Räsänen & Tuovinen, 2020; Untari, 2017). Consequently, MSMEs in Karangrejek Village face difficulties in development and competition with products from other regions. Addressing these challenges and enhancing branding strategies are essential to empower MSMEs and enable them to thrive in the competitive market landscape (Sukma et al., 2019). Strengthening the branding strategies of MSMEs can lead to increased market penetration and competitiveness, ultimately driving economic growth and prosperity in Karangrejek Village and beyond (Ali et al., 2022; Gazzola et al., 2017; Sanggrama et al., 2020; Wibowo, 2018). Support the claim that strengthening MSMEs' branding strategies can lead to positive economic outcomes. These studies likely show that effective branding is linked to increased market penetration, competitiveness, and ultimately, economic growth and prosperity.

Collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is vital to provide MSMEs (Fridayani et al., 2021) in Karangrejek Village with the necessary support, resources, and training to enhance their branding and marketing capabilities. Additionally, fostering an entrepreneurial culture and promoting innovation within MSMEs can stimulate growth and create opportunities (Fridayani & Chiang, 2022a) for new businesses and employment in Karangrejek Village. Moreover, initiatives to improve infrastructure, access to technology, and financial services can further facilitate the growth and competitiveness of MSMEs in Karangrejek Village. Building partnerships with larger corporations, universities, and research institutions can provide MSMEs in Karangrejek Village with access to expertise, technology, and market insights, enhancing their competitive edge.

Encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing among MSMEs in Karangrejek Village can foster a supportive ecosystem where businesses can learn from each other, innovate together, and collectively address common challenges. Providing incentives and support for MSMEs to adopt sustainable practices and green technologies can not only benefit the environment but also enhance their competitiveness and market appeal in Karangrejek Village and beyond. Investing in digital infrastructure and e-commerce platforms can help MSMEs in Karangrejek Village expand their reach and tap into new markets, both domestically and internationally. Ultimately, by supporting the growth and development of MSMEs in Karangrejek Village, stakeholders can contribute to building a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous economy for the benefit of all community members.

The abundance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Karangrejek Village is a manifestation of the diverse economic conditions within the community. Currently, Karangrejek Village is also benefiting from other economic potentials that can be developed to enhance the surrounding economy. The village is in the process of developing a concept of a tourist village, which ultimately aims to boost the economy through sustained tourism. Therefore, it is crucial that the development

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of MSMEs is considered essential to complement the potential provided by this concept. Through the development of MSMEs, the local economy's wheel is set in motion (Fridayani et al., 2022b), generating distinctive regional products and providing employment opportunities for the local population. This effort, in essence, will position the existing MSMEs in the village as an additional attraction, given that most of them produce local products (Fridayani et al., 2021; Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019; Teitel, 2015).

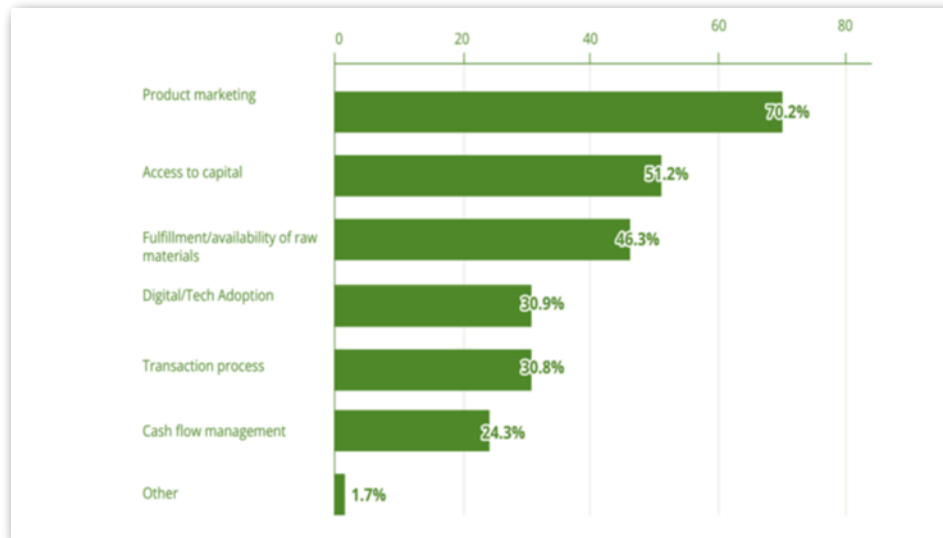


Figure 1. The digitalization landscape within the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) of Karangrejek Village

Based on Figure 1, the data provided offers insights derived from a comprehensive survey conducted in 2023, specifically focusing on the digitalization landscape within the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) of Karangrejek. This survey seeks to gauge the inclination of local businesses towards investing in novel technological advancements. Here's a breakdown of the findings. A significant majority of businesses, totalling 70.2 percent, express a strong willingness to allocate resources towards digital technologies tailored for product marketing strategies. This pronounced interest underscores a collective recognition of the pivotal role digital marketing plays in expanding market reach and enhancing brand visibility within the local community.

Closely following, 51.2 percent of businesses prioritize securing access to capital as a crucial component for facilitating digital investments. This highlights the vital role financial resources play in enabling the adoption of digital solutions, ensuring sustainable growth and innovation within the local business ecosystem. Furthermore, 46.3 percent of surveyed businesses emphasize the importance of digital solutions in optimizing the fulfilment and availability of raw materials. This indicates a growing awareness of the efficiency gains achievable through technological interventions in the local supply chain, fostering resilience and competitiveness among businesses. Direct digital/tech adoption garners interest from 30.9 percent of respondents, reflecting an emerging acknowledgment of the transformative potential embedded within digital technologies to revolutionize traditional business operations and workflows.

Moreover, the survey reveals that 30.8 percent and 24.3 percent of businesses express keenness in leveraging digital tools to streamline transaction processes and manage cash flows, respectively. This

underscores a growing recognition of the instrumental role technology plays in enhancing operational efficiency and financial management practices within the local business landscape. While other areas collectively represent 1.7 percent of interest among respondents, the overarching trend elucidated by the survey underscores a palpable enthusiasm among Karangrejek's MSMEs towards embracing digital technologies. Particularly noteworthy is the keen interest observed in leveraging digital innovations in the domains of marketing and finance, signalling a significant shift towards digital transformation as a catalyst for sustainable growth and prosperity within the local economy.

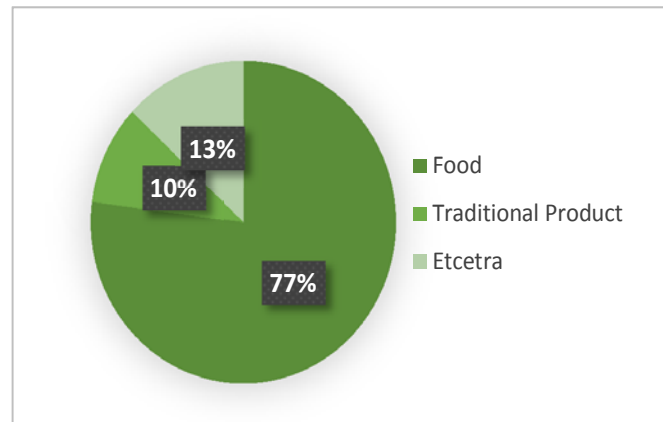


Figure 2. MSME data recapitulation for Karangrejek Village in 2023

Based on the data analysis (Figure 2), it is evident that Karangrejek Village possesses significant untapped potential that could be harnessed to foster both community capacity and local economic growth. Thus, concerted efforts are imperative to actualize sustainable economic advancement within the community. Nevertheless, the economic prospects within this village face obstacles, particularly within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, wherein most micro-business proprietors are involved in traditional product processing, branding, and marketing practices. Consequently, the introduction of the proposed program aims to facilitate the expansion and diversification of MSMEs in Karangrejek Village, thereby fostering opportunities for bolstering the local economy.

2. METHODS

The program focuses on educating rural residents of Karangrejek Village on utilizing social media and online marketplaces to grow their local businesses. This community service initiative took place in February and March 2024, specifically in Karangrejek Village, Gunungkidul Regency, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Province. The participants involved in this program numbered 20 comprising Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Karangrejek Village. This project collaborated with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) led by managers in Karangrejek Village. The location was chosen specifically because of Karangrejek's promising potential in both tourism and MSMEs. The village's recent establishment as a tourism destination called Visit Karangrejek further solidified its suitability for receiving institutional support. The project aimed to address the identified need for improvement in product branding and social media utilization among MSMEs in the area. The workshop sessions offered training in social media and marketing strategies to help participants grow their micro and small businesses into larger, more successful ventures. The program followed a structured approach outlined

in Figure 3, which involved several stages: visiting participating businesses, gathering information, preparing materials, conducting the workshops, and finally, evaluating the program's effectiveness.

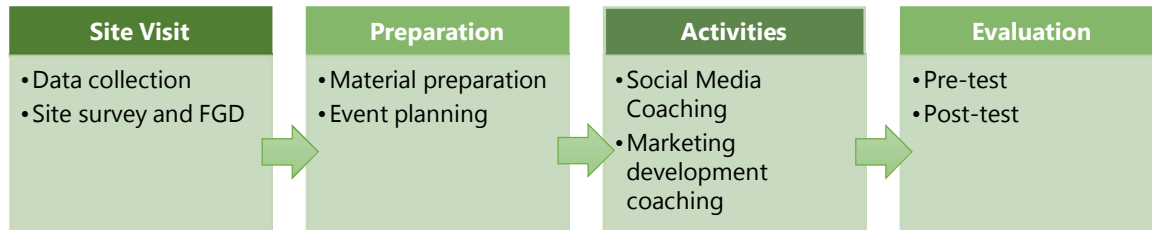


Figure 3. Stages of implementation of the community empowerment program

Site-Visit

Recognizing the importance of local context, the first stage involved understanding Karangrejek's unique situation. The community empowerment team visited the village to assess the economic landscape, existing businesses, and the community's needs and challenges. This involved engaging with local leaders, businesses, and residents to identify potential participants for the e-commerce initiative through Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Preparation

Material preparation is a crucial stage in planning any event, especially one that involves speakers. It refers to gathering and organizing all the physical and digital resources needed for a successful event. Also, Event Planning, this involves creating and managing all the physical and digital materials needed for the event itself. Some examples include: (1) Presentation materials: Preparing any presentations needed by the organizers, moderators, or other participants; (2) Handouts and printed materials: Creating handouts with agendas, speaker information, or key takeaways for the audience; (3) Signage and displays: Designing and printing banners, posters, or directional signs for the venue; (4) Promotional materials: Developing any promotional materials like flyers, social media posts, or website content; (5) Registration materials: Creating registration forms, name tags, and other materials for participants.

Activities

The community empowerment program offers a two-pronged approach to equip participants with the skills needed to thrive in today's market. Through social media coaching, participants gain the knowledge to leverage platforms like Facebook and Instagram to create engaging content, connect with customers, and manage their online presence effectively. Marketing development coaching complements this by teaching participants how to research their target market, develop a strong brand identity, and utilize marketing strategies to promote their products or services. This combination empowers participants to not only reach a wider audience but also convert them into loyal customers, ultimately fostering business growth.

Evaluation

To gauge the program's effectiveness, pre-tests might assess participants' existing knowledge of social media and marketing principles. Social media coaching then equips participants with the skills to

create engaging content, connect with customers, and manage their online presence effectively. Marketing development coaching complements this by teaching participants how to research their target market and utilize marketing strategies to promote their products or services. Post-tests can then be used to measure the improvement in participants' knowledge and identify areas where the program might be further strengthened. This combination of coaching and evaluation empowers participants to not only reach a wider audience but also convert them into loyal customers, ultimately fostering business growth and program development.

Moreover, the ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) approach has been adapted effectively for the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Atmojo et al., 2024; Maulana, 2019), emphasizing the utilization of local assets and resources to foster sustainable growth and entrepreneurship within communities (Nikolaou et al., 2011). In this context, the ABCD method shifts the focus from traditional top-down development models to grassroots initiatives that capitalize on the strengths and potentials inherent in MSMEs and their surrounding ecosystems in Karangrejek Village. By implementing the ABCD approach for MSME development, initiatives can identify and leverage existing assets within the business community, including skills, networks, infrastructure, and cultural capital (Abdurrahman et al., 2019; Maulana, 2019; Wong et al., 2018). Rather than solely addressing challenges and gaps, this approach encourages MSMEs to recognize and build upon their unique strengths and capabilities, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment among entrepreneurs.

The potentials mentioned here encompass various creative economic opportunities, notably Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which form an integral part of the creative economy that can be cultivated within Karangrejek Village with the aim of enhancing the community's economic sustainability. The approach taken in implementing this community service project comprised three main stages: (1) Conducting socialization sessions for MSMEs on aspects of product branding, followed by group discussion forums aimed at addressing issues and finding solutions. These forums involved the participation of MSMEs from Karangrejek Village as well as representatives from the village government, starting with a broad presentation on common challenges faced by MSMEs and leading into detailed discussions; (2) Training sessions were conducted to improve product branding techniques and enhance the utilization of social media platforms within Karangrejek Village. Specific training on Lean Start-up principles and the effective use of Instagram and TikTok as branding tools was provided during these sessions to equip MSME owners with practical skills and knowledge; (3) An evaluation process was undertaken to gauge the comprehension levels of village government officials and MSME owners regarding product branding and social media platform utilization. This evaluation was conducted through a post-test mechanism administered following the completion of the training sessions, allowing for an assessment of the effectiveness of the implemented programs throughout the community service process.



Figure 4. Method framework implementation of the program

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collaboration between Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and the Karangrejek Village Government has yielded significant community service initiatives, particularly aimed at supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) within the village. This partnership underscores a shared commitment to fostering local economic development and empowerment. One pivotal aspect of this collaboration revolves around the execution of community service programs tailored to address the specific needs of MSME owners in Karangrejek Village.

Amidst the diverse range of activities encompassed by these initiatives, the focus on mentoring and enhancing the capacity of MSMEs emerges as a cornerstone. This emphasis is driven by the realization that despite the pivotal role MSMEs play in the village's economic landscape, they have yet to fully exploit their potential (Vuță et al., 2022). Particularly concerning is the apparent struggle of MSMEs in Karangrejek Village to effectively leverage digital media channels for branding their products, despite their integral role in the village's tourism endeavors. The necessity of capacity-building efforts for MSMEs in Karangrejek Village cannot be overstated. By empowering MSME owners with the requisite skills, knowledge, and resources, they can unlock new avenues for growth and prosperity (Wuryandani & Meilani, 2016). Moreover, enhancing the capacity of MSMEs not only strengthens their individual enterprises but also contributes to the overall economic resilience and vibrancy of the village.

The community service project in Karangrejek village yielded several notable outcomes that positively impacted the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating within the area. One significant achievement was the strategic mapping of existing businesses and products, which proved instrumental in identifying key challenges and opportunities faced by these enterprises. Through this process, critical bottlenecks relating to product development, branding, and marketing were brought to light, providing valuable insights for targeted intervention and support (Slamet et al., 2016). The utilization of a data-driven approach in the strategic mapping phase aligns closely with established research frameworks advocating for comprehensive needs assessments prior to implementing interventions aimed at supporting MSMEs. By systematically analyzing the landscape of existing businesses and products (John, 2023), the project was able to identify areas of weakness and potential areas for improvement. This approach enabled stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by MSMEs in Karangrejek village, laying a solid foundation for tailored support and capacity-building efforts.

Following the survey conducted as part of the community service activity in Karangrejek village, the first organized engagement involved participants in a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These FGDs served as a pivotal platform for stakeholders, particularly MSME owners and village government representatives, to convene and delve deeper into the insights gleaned from the initial survey. By facilitating structured discussions, the FGDs aimed to foster a collaborative environment where participants could collectively identify challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions pertinent to the development of MSMEs in the village. During the FGD sessions, participants engaged in candid exchanges, sharing their perspectives and experiences regarding various aspects of MSME operations, including product development, branding, and marketing strategies. The structured format of the discussions allowed for the exploration of key themes and issues identified during the survey phase, enabling participants to articulate their needs and aspirations more comprehensively. Through this participatory approach, the FGDs sought to ensure that the voices and insights of community members were central to the decision-making process.

Figure 5 shows that the primary objective of this initiative was to impart knowledge and skills to the local community, particularly focusing on branding products and digital marketing. In the vibrant

community of Karangrejek village nestled within Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia, a concerted effort is underway to empower the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through comprehensive initiatives centered around branding products and digital marketing. Recognizing the imperative of enhancing market visibility and competitiveness, local entrepreneurs and business owners are actively engaging in workshops and training sessions facilitated by experts in the field. These educational endeavours aim to equip MSMEs with the knowledge and skills necessary to craft compelling brand identities and effectively leverage digital marketing channels. Amidst the picturesque surroundings of the village, participants gather to learn the intricacies of developing impactful branding strategies and implementing digital marketing campaigns tailored to their unique offerings and target demographics.



Figure 5. Photo of the community service activity participants in FGD

Through a combination of hands-on workshops, and ongoing consultations, the community endeavours to harness the power of online platforms, including websites, social media, and e-commerce channels, to expand their customer reach beyond local boundaries. As each MSME delves into the realm of digital marketing, they embark on a journey towards increased sales, revenue growth, and the long-term sustainability of their businesses. This initiative serves as a beacon of innovation and collaboration, illustrating the transformative potential of embracing digital technologies to propel economic prosperity and community development within Karangrejek village.



Figure 6. Workshop and training product branding and digital marketing.

This employed in conducting this community service initiative centered around educating the target audience on the intricacies of digital marketing and product branding. Participants were enlightened about the advantages of utilizing digital platforms for promoting products and enhancing

brand recognition. Through engaging presentations, they were introduced to various digital marketing techniques and the significance of effective product branding strategies in today's competitive market landscape. Practical training sessions were conducted to demonstrate the process of developing compelling brand identities and crafting impactful digital marketing campaigns (Figure 6).

Figure 6 shows that the participants were guided through the steps of leveraging online platforms to showcase their products, engage with customers, and drive sales. Utilizing simple equipment such as smartphones, and internet connectivity, participants learned how to navigate social media platforms, create engaging content, and optimize digital marketing channels to maximize reach and impact. The training was further enhanced through hands-on exercises and interactive discussions, facilitated by experienced digital marketing professionals and industry experts. By the conclusion of the program, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing principles and product branding strategies, equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the digital age. This training stage was supplemented by the assistance of two speakers from the experts who actively participated in the activities, providing additional support and guidance to the participants.

The main focus of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on product branding and social media utilization in Karangrejek village centres around enhancing the visibility, competitiveness, and market presence of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through effective branding strategies and digital marketing techniques. During these FGDs, participants engage in in-depth discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions aimed at exploring innovative approaches to product branding and leveraging social media platforms for business promotion. Specifically, discussions revolve around identifying the unique selling points of products offered by MSMEs in Karangrejek village and developing compelling branding narratives that resonate with target audiences. Participants may explore various aspects of branding, including visual identity, messaging, storytelling, and customer experience, with the aim of differentiating their products in a crowded marketplace and building strong brand recognition. Furthermore, the FGDs delve into the opportunities and challenges associated with utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter for business promotion. Participants may share their experiences, successes, and pitfalls in leveraging social media as a marketing tool, as well as discuss emerging trends, best practices, and strategies for engaging and expanding their online audience.

Empowering MSMEs with Lean Branding & Social Media

The interventions aimed at supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Karangrejek village were meticulously crafted based on a systematic understanding of the unique challenges confronting these businesses. Rather than adopting a generic, one-size-fits-all approach common in many support programs, the interventions were precisely tailored to directly tackle the most pressing needs identified within the village. This targeted strategy aimed to ensure that the assistance provided was relevant and impactful, addressing the specific pain points faced by MSMEs in Karangrejek village. By conducting a thorough needs assessment, organizers gained valuable insights into the specific challenges hindering the growth and development of MSMEs in the village. This assessment served as the bedrock for designing workshops and training sessions that directly addressed the identified areas of concern. For instance, workshops were designed to provide practical guidance on product innovation strategies and to familiarize participants with social media marketing tools, addressing key gaps in knowledge and skills observed among MSME owners in Karangrejek village.

This targeted approach represents a departure from traditional support programs, which often overlook the nuanced needs of individual businesses and communities. By tailoring interventions to

address the specific challenges faced by MSMEs in Karangrejek village, organizers aimed to maximize the effectiveness and relevance of the assistance provided. Moreover, research indicates that such targeted interventions are more likely to resonate with participants and yield sustainable improvements in their businesses over the long term. Furthermore, the targeted workshops and training sessions were designed to empower MSME owners with practical skills and knowledge that could be immediately applied to their businesses. By offering guidance on product innovation and social media marketing, organizers aimed to equip participants with the tools and strategies needed to enhance their competitiveness and adaptability in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

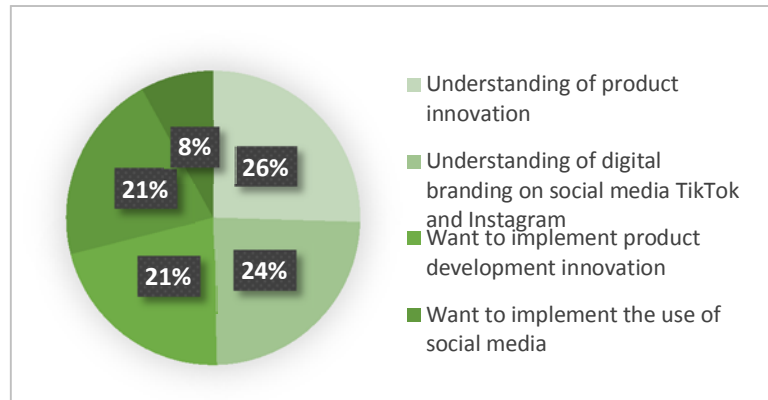


Figure 7. The results of monitoring and evaluation of the program

To address identified needs, expert-led workshops were organized focusing on two key areas: product innovation and basic social media marketing. These workshops effectively built the capacity of MSME owners, equipping them with practical knowledge and skills in these vital domains. Post-workshop assessments confirmed significant knowledge acquisition, with 95 percent of participants demonstrating a strong understanding of product innovation concepts and 90 percent understanding the principles of social media branding. This outcome supports previous studies highlighting the positive correlation between skill-building initiatives and increased entrepreneurial confidence and MSME development.

Research suggests from [John \(2023\)](#) stated that effective skill-building programs for MSMEs should extend beyond imparting theoretical knowledge. Workshops can create a more engaging and impactful learning environment by incorporating practical exercises, case studies, and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. Our workshops employed a blend of these techniques, ensuring that participants not only gained a strong grasp of core concepts but also developed the practical skills necessary to implement them within their businesses. This approach aligns with research advocating for a focus on action-oriented learning strategies in MSME development programs.

The success of the workshops can also be attributed to the expertise of the facilitators. Inviting industry professionals or experienced entrepreneurs to lead the workshops ensured the content was current and relevant to the challenges faced by local MSMEs, providing participants with valuable insights and practical tips directly applicable to their businesses). In contrast, workshops led by those lacking practical business experience may struggle to fully connect with the needs of MSME owners. Importantly, the project ignited a heightened drive for innovation among MSME owners ([Kurniasih et al., 2023](#)). An impressive 80 percent of participants expressed a desire to introduce product development innovations, demonstrating a newfound recognition of the importance of continuous improvement in a competitive market. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the role of innovation-focused

programs in fostering a growth mindset within MSMEs (Agustina et al., 2023). Furthermore, it contrasts with studies highlighting the challenges associated with fostering innovation within MSMEs (ASEAN, 2018; Singh & Venkata, 2017). Such challenges include limited financial resources, lack of access to technological advancements, and a risk-averse culture. The project's success in overcoming these barriers and igniting an innovation mindset suggests the potential effectiveness of targeted workshops and mentorship programs in fostering a culture of continuous improvement within MSMEs (Auliya et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2021).

Additionally, 78 percent of participants displayed a willingness to adopt social media tools for marketing and outreach efforts, indicating their openness to embracing digital transformation. This finding underscores the ever-growing importance of social media platforms as cost-effective channels for MSMEs to connect with customers and enhance brand visibility. However, it is important to note that simply having a social media presence is not enough. MSMEs need to develop a strategic approach to social media marketing, leveraging the unique strengths of different platforms and utilizing targeted content to engage their audience effectively (Cueto et al., 2022). While the workshops provided participants with a foundational understanding of social media marketing principles, ongoing support and guidance may be necessary to ensure they fully harness the power of these platforms (Futri et al., 2023).

The finding that 30 percent of participants expressed interest in simultaneously pursuing both product development innovations and social media strategies indicates a promising shift in perspective among MSME owners in Karangrejek village. This suggests a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of these areas and a recognition of the potential for a synergistic approach to drive business growth. Traditionally, many MSMEs tend to view product development and marketing as isolated functions, limiting their ability to maximize impact. The project successfully encouraged participants to consider the interplay between innovation and digital marketing, allowing them to envision how these areas can work together to achieve greater business success. For example, by coupling the introduction of new or improved products with compelling social media campaigns and targeted customer engagement strategies, MSMEs can amplify their reach, boost the visibility of their innovations, and ultimately drive sales growth. This integrated approach underscores a sophisticated understanding of contemporary business practices essential for MSMEs to remain competitive.

4. CONCLUSION ANDN RECOMMENDATIONS

This community service project in Karangrejek village offers valuable insights for MSME development initiatives. By emphasizing a strategic needs assessment, targeted skill-building workshops, expert facilitators, and a focus on both innovation and digital marketing, the project significantly empowered MSMEs to embrace new strategies and foster a growth-oriented mindset. The project highlights the importance of tailoring interventions to address context-specific needs. The initial mapping phase was pivotal, enabling the design of workshops that resonated with MSME owners and increased their motivation to innovate and adopt social media tools. Moreover, the project's success in fostering a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of product development and marketing strategies demonstrates the potential for greater business impact when MSMEs adopt a synergistic approach. This study contributes to ongoing research on MSME development, emphasizing effective strategies for empowering these enterprises in a competitive marketplace. Future research should investigate the long-term implementation of these strategies by participating MSMEs, tracking their growth trajectories and the sustained impact of such interventions.

Based on the comprehensive needs assessment conducted in Karangrejek village, coupled with the insights gained from targeted interventions, several key recommendations emerge to further support the development of MSMEs in the community. Firstly, it is imperative to continue offering tailored workshops and training sessions that address specific challenges identified among MSME owners. These sessions should focus on areas such as product innovation strategies and social media marketing, providing practical guidance and hands-on skills development to enhance the competitiveness of local businesses. Secondly, ongoing support mechanisms should be established to facilitate continuous learning and knowledge exchange among MSME owners. This could include the creation of peer mentorship programs or networking events where entrepreneurs can share best practices, seek advice, and collaborate on joint initiatives. Additionally, efforts should be made to foster collaboration and partnerships between MSMEs and relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, industry associations, and academic institutions. By leveraging collective resources and expertise, MSMEs can access new markets, funding opportunities, and technical assistance to support their growth and expansion.

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The social savvy entrepreneur: Lean start-up branding and social media for MSMEs

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