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Training and mentoring on local wisdom-based story branding for Gunung Guntur educational tourism MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to strengthen the story branding skills of educational tourism micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through local wisdom-based narratives in the Gunung Guntur area. The program involved 10 MSME actors and was conducted through participatory training and mentoring. The activities included interactive presentations, public speaking role-play using the five-card story technique, brand narrative development through Thematic Associated Words, and assistance in creating digital promotional content. The results demonstrated measurable improvements in participants' storytelling and branding skills. The number of participants able to deliver coherent and communicative stories increased from 2 to 8. Furthermore, 9 out of 10 participants successfully developed brand narratives incorporating local wisdom, while 8 out of 10 created and uploaded digital promotional content through social media platforms. These outcomes indicate that integrating local cultural elements into practical storytelling exercises can strengthen MSME actors' capacity to communicate their business identities and develop more contextual promotional materials. This program provides a practical model for introducing local wisdom-based story branding to educational tourism MSMEs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of educational tourism (edu-tourism) based on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) plays a strategic role in driving sustainable local economic growth (Harahap & Hasugian, 2024; Pradana et al., 2025; Sihotang et al., 2025). Edu-tourism offers not only recreational experiences but also integrates educational, cultural, and local wisdom values that serve as primary attractions for tourists. In practice, however, many edu-tourism MSMEs still face limitations in managing brand identity and communication, preventing their economic potential from being optimally utilized (Kusumah, 2025). This problem indicates that the economic sustainability of MSMEs is determined not only by product or destination quality, but also by the capacity to construct meaningful and market-relevant business narratives.

The Gunung Guntur edu-tourism area in Garut Regency possesses diverse potential in local wisdom, ranging from volcanic rock-based natural landscapes, mountain panoramas, waterfall legends, the "*nyawang bulan*" tradition, traditional games (*kaulinan budak*), to distinctive local culinary delights

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and natural resources. However, based on an initial identification of 10 edu-tourism MSME practitioners involved in this program, only two businesses, specifically a beekeeping honey enterprise and an edu-tourism café, already possessed brand narratives. Regarding digital promotion, only the edu-tourism café owned a social media account to support promotional activities, whereas other practitioners had yet to utilize them. This condition indicates that most participants have not been able to develop brand narratives that integrate products or services with stories, cultural meanings, and local identities. The primary obstacle lies in limited capabilities to explore and articulate local wisdom into communicative and engaging business narratives. In fact, such potential could serve as a differentiator for edu-tourism MSME products and services from other destinations (Citraresmana et al., 2025; Hasibuan et al., 2025).

Previous community service initiatives have demonstrated that strengthening branding capacity, particularly through narrative and storytelling approaches, enhances MSME practitioners' understanding of business identity, product value, and more adaptive marketing strategies (Korry, 2025; Putri & Salsabela, 2025; Sitorus et al., 2025). Local wisdom-based approaches have also proven effective in fostering emotional connections between products and consumers while reinforcing MSME competitiveness amid tourist destination rivalry. Therefore, story branding is understood not merely as a promotional technique, but as a communication strategy that integrates cultural values, local experiences, and business sustainability.

Based on these conditions, this community service activity is designed to strengthen local wisdom-based story branding as an economic sustainability strategy for edu-tourism MSMEs. The activity focuses on applied, participatory, and contextual training and mentoring tailored to the local characteristics of the edu-tourism area. By enhancing story branding capacity, MSMEs are expected to establish stronger business identities, increase market appeal, and support long-term economic sustainability grounded in local potential (Fikri et al., 2025).

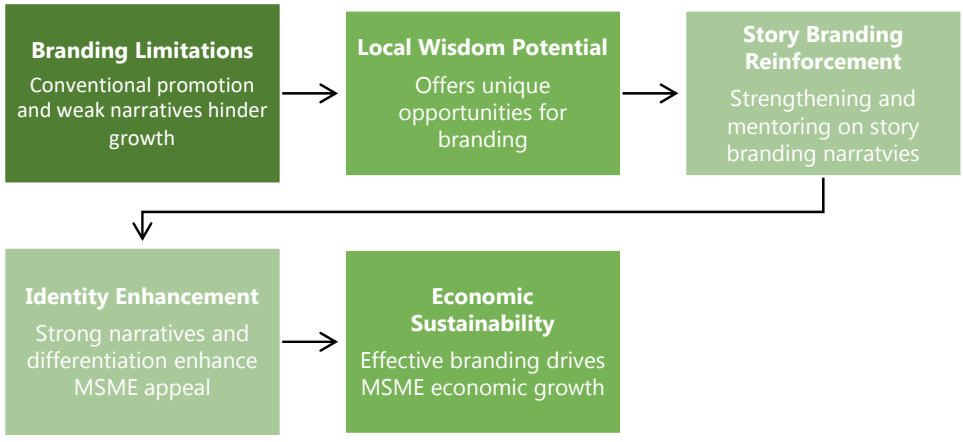


Figure 1. Problem-solving framework

Although various previous community service programs have emphasized the importance of strengthening MSME capacity through marketing and branding training, most of these initiatives have focused primarily on technical aspects of promotion, such as digital media utilization or visual design (Budiman, 2025; Nugroho, 2025), without thoroughly exploring local wisdom potential as the core of brand narratives. Consequently, the resulting branding tends to be generic and fails to adequately represent local cultural identity. Furthermore, community service activities that specifically integrate story branding within the context of edu-tourism as a long-term economic sustainability strategy remain limited. Therefore, this community service initiative addresses this gap by offering an applied

and contextual local wisdom-based story branding approach, enabling MSMEs not only to promote their products or services, but also to construct sustainable meaning, experiences, and cultural value for the edu-tourism market.

Figure 1 illustrates six stages of program intervention, starting from the identification of MSME branding problems, exploration of local wisdom potential, communication and storytelling training, brand narrative development, application of narratives in social media promotional content, to the evaluation of participant competencies and digital promotional outputs. All stages were sequentially designed to enhance the capacity of MSME practitioners to develop and implement local wisdom-based story branding.

Based on these issues, this community service program aims to strengthen the capacity of 10 edu-tourism MSME practitioners in the Gunung Guntur area in implementing local wisdom-based story branding. Operationally, this activity is directed toward improving MSME practitioners' communication and public speaking skills, developing competencies in exploring and formulating brand narratives that represent local potential and identity, and enhancing their ability to apply these narratives into digital promotional content via social media.

2. METHODS

Design and Characteristics of Activities

This community service activity was implemented in the form of local wisdom-based story branding training and mentoring oriented toward strengthening the capacity of edu-tourism MSMEs (Bachtiar et al., 2025; Kaseng, 2025; Khadavi et al., 2025). The activity involved 10 MSME practitioners operating businesses in the Gunung Guntur edu-tourism area, Garut Regency, West Java. The activity sites encompassed the lower area, which includes beekeeping enterprises, volcanic rock formations, and cinnamon forests, as well as the upper area around the waterfall tourist attraction. Participants consisted of practitioners from beekeeping honey businesses, an edu-tourism café, culinary ventures, traditional snacks, a swimming pool, and enterprises surrounding the waterfall area.

Participant selection was based on direct involvement in operating businesses within the edu-tourism area, the relevance of their enterprises to tourism activities, and their willingness to participate in the entire series of training and mentoring sessions. Parts of the lower area are managed by the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) with the involvement of the village government, whereas other enterprises are independently managed by the practitioners. Regional development has also received Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support, primarily from PLN. In this activity, MSME practitioners served as active partners by providing information regarding business characteristics, local experiences, and local wisdom potential that could be developed into brand narratives. The community service team was responsible for preparing materials, conducting training, providing mentoring, and evaluating the activity.

Approach Based on Local Wisdom

The activity approach explicitly positions local wisdom as the primary source for developing product narratives and business identities (Suprana et al., 2026; Zulhuda et al., 2025). The local wisdom elements explored include cultural values, local folklore and legends, volcanic natural landscapes, community traditions, cultural activities, and edu-tourism experiences in the Gunung Guntur area. These elements were utilized as materials for formulating story branding so that the business narratives would not be generic, but rather represent local characteristics and identity.

Stages and Methods of Implementation

The implementation of the activity was structured into five interrelated stages, ranging from partner needs identification to the evaluation of training outcomes. Each stage was sequentially designed to enhance the capacity of MSME practitioners to develop and implement local wisdom-based story branding.

Preparation and identification of partner needs

The initial stage aimed to identify the baseline conditions and needs of MSME practitioners regarding business communication, branding, and the utilization of digital promotional media. The activity was conducted through observation, discussion, and the mapping of business potential as well as local wisdom in the Gunung Guntur area. Participants were also encouraged to identify their business experiences, product characteristics, and obstacles in conveying stories that represent local identity. The community service team, together with the partners, carried out this identification as the basis for preparing training materials and strategies. The output of this stage was a mapping of local needs and potential to serve as materials for developing story branding.

Strengthening public speaking skills through story-based roleplay using five cards

This stage aimed to enhance participants' communication skills and confidence in delivering stories coherently and communicatively. The activity began with an interactive presentation and reflective discussion on business communication, public speaking, and the importance of storytelling in building brand identity (Gulo & Wahyudi, 2025; Kamila et al., 2025). Subsequently, participants engaged in a roleplay practice titled *story based on five cards*, an exercise in composing and delivering narratives based on five prompt cards. The community service team acted as facilitators, providing guidance and feedback throughout the practice session. The output of this stage was an improvement in participants' ability to verbally deliver business narratives.

Developing brand narratives through the Thematic Associated Words Method

This stage aimed to develop brand narratives that integrate business characteristics with local wisdom potential. Participants were guided to identify and categorize keywords (Thematic Associated Words) related to their enterprises and surrounding environment, such as beekeeping honey, volcanic rocks, cinnamon forests, waterfall legends, community traditions, and traditional cuisine. These words were subsequently developed into storylines depicting the identity, values, and uniqueness of each enterprise. The community service team provided mentoring and feedback on the narratives drafted by the participants. The output of this stage was local wisdom-based brand narratives.

The application of story branding in digital promotional content

This stage aimed to enhance participants' skills in applying brand narratives into digital promotional media. Mentoring was conducted through practical exercises in composing promotional copy, selecting supporting visuals, as well as creating and uploading content via social media. This activity drew upon a local storytelling approach as part of strengthening community-based tourism communication and promotion (Pratiwi et al., 2025; Telaumbanu, 2025). Participants were also introduced to the utilization of digital technology and simple artificial intelligence as supporting tools for developing promotional ideas and materials. As reinforcement, participants were provided with a training module containing guidelines

for exploring cultural values, examples of local business narratives, and steps for implementing story branding in promotional media (Taufik et al., 2024). The output of this stage was local narrative-based digital promotional content created and uploaded by the participants.

Evaluation, Reflection, and Follow-up

Activity evaluation was conducted using an assessment sheet administered through a pre-test and post-test to compare participants' competencies before and after participating in the training and mentoring sessions. The assessment was carried out by the community service team based on three main indicators, namely storytelling ability (public speaking), the ability to formulate local wisdom-based brand narratives, and skills in applying story branding within digital promotional content.

For the first indicator, storytelling ability was assessed based on storyline coherence, clarity of delivery, and interconnections between ideas. Participants were categorized as competent if they could deliver a story with a clear flow, comprising an opening, body, and closing, and in a manner comprehensible to listeners. For the second indicator, brand narratives were evaluated based on the presence of local wisdom elements, the relevance of these elements to business characteristics, and their integration in building brand identity and uniqueness. Participants were categorized as competent if they succeeded in formulating narratives that relevantly connected their products or services with cultural potential, nature, traditions, or local stories. For the third indicator, digital content was assessed based on the alignment of the narrative with business identity, the incorporation of local wisdom elements, the harmony between text and visuals, and the application of storytelling in promotional content uploaded via social media.

The pre-test and post-test assessment results were subsequently compared to identify changes in each participant's competencies across the three indicators. Participants were categorized as competent if they met the assessment criteria for each respective indicator based on the assessment sheet. The data were then presented descriptively in the form of the number and percentage of participants who achieved the success criteria. The evaluation was also complemented by a joint reflection with the participants to identify achievements, obstacles, and follow-up needs in implementing local wisdom-based story branding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Stages of activity implementation

The implementation of this community service activity was carried out gradually and systematically using a participatory approach. The stages were designed to progressively build participants' capacity, starting from strengthening self-confidence, understanding the concept of local wisdom-based story branding, to technical application in social media as a promotional medium for edu-tourism MSMEs.

Presentation and material introduction phase

The results of the activity indicate that participants' public speaking skills experienced a measurable improvement as an initial foundation for building story branding. Prior to the training, most participants tended to convey business information descriptively and limited their descriptions to the functional aspects of their products. Based on initial observations, participants' ability to deliver business stories coherently and communicatively was relatively limited. Only 2 out of 10 participants were able

to compose and deliver stories with a clear flow, interconnections between ideas, and communicative message delivery. This indicator specifically measured participants' ability to construct narrative structure, rather than their confidence in speaking before a group. After participating in the training session using the Story Based on Five Cards Roleplay Method, a notable improvement occurred. A total of 8 out of 10 participants were able to compose and deliver simple stories with a more structured flow, while all participants demonstrated increased confidence in speaking in front of the group. This was evident from their active participation during the practice sessions, where participants such as Novi and Darsim began to connect their business experiences with more personal and engaging narratives.

Table 1. Summary of participants' skill achievements before and after the activity

Skill Aspect	Pre-Activity Condition	Post-Activity Condition
Coherent and communicative public speaking	2 out of 10 participants	8 out of 10 participants
Confidence in speaking spontaneously	3 out of 10 participants	9 out of 10 active participants
Formulation of local wisdom-based narratives	3 out of 10 participants	9 out of 10 participants
Utilization of social media for promotion	2 out of 10 active participants	8 out of 10 participants successfully uploaded content

Qualitatively, this improvement was also reinforced by participants' statements. Umi Tati, one of the MSME practitioners, stated:

> "*Biasanya saya hanya menjelaskan jualan apa adanya, sekarang jadi tahu bagaimana menceritakan usaha supaya lebih menarik*." ("Usually, I only described what I was selling as it is, but now I know how to tell the story of my business to make it more engaging.")

These findings indicate that an experiential learning approach through roleplay is effective in enhancing participants' communication skills. This aligns with the findings of Gulo & Wahyudi (2025), who stated that interactive learning can improve participants' engagement and communicative thinking skills. In the context of edu-tourism MSMEs, public speaking functions not only as a communication skill, but also as an initial medium for building an emotional connection with visitors.

Accordingly, strengthening public speaking capacity serves as a fundamental stage in the process of forming story branding, as a compelling narrative originates from an individual's ability to verbally articulate a story before translating it into digital media.



Figure 2. Document introducing the activity to participants

Strengthening public speaking skills through roleplay

The results of the activity indicate that the implementation of the Story Based on Five Cards Roleplay Method had a positive impact on improving participants' public speaking skills. In the initial stage, most participants still exhibited limitations in verbally delivering stories, in terms of confidence, fluency, and storyline construction. Based on initial observations, only 3 out of 10 participants demonstrated the confidence to speak spontaneously in front of the group, while the remaining participants tended to be passive and waited for prompts before sharing opinions or stories. This indicator focused on aspects of courage, self-confidence, and active participation in verbal communication, thereby differing from the indicator of the ability to compose stories coherently and communicatively measured in the previous stage. Following the implementation of the roleplay, a measurable increase in participation occurred. A total of 9 out of 10 participants began actively engaging in the storytelling practice, albeit with varying levels of fluency. Participants such as Novi and Darsim demonstrated increased confidence in speaking, while Umi Tati and Rita began to compose simple stories with a more coherent flow based on the provided prompt cards.

Qualitatively, this method assisted participants in building spontaneity and self-confidence. Doni stated: "Initially, I was a bit confused about where to start, but with the cards, it became easier to structure a story." Furthermore, the activities depicted in Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrate the active involvement of participants in the roleplay process, where they not only listened, but directly practiced composing and verbally delivering stories. This demonstrates that a participatory approach can create a more interactive learning environment and encourage participants' confidence to explore communication.

These findings align with Sintia & Safitri (2025) and Arif (2025), who stated that practice-based interactive learning can measurably improve participants' communication skills and engagement. Within the context of this community service activity, public speaking serves not merely as a supplementary skill, but as a crucial foundation for building story branding, as the ability to verbally deliver a story represents the initial stage before a narrative is developed into written form or digital content. Accordingly, the utilization of the story card-based roleplay method proved effective in progressively enhancing participants' communication skills, as well as preparing them for a more structured and contextual story branding development process.



Figure 3. Documentation of an activity involving the creation of a story based on 5 cards

Development of local wisdom-based story branding through the Thematic Associated Words Approach

The results of the activity indicate that the implementation of the Thematic Associated Words Method is effective in assisting participants in developing local wisdom-based story branding in a more

structured and meaningful manner. In the initial stage, most participants still experienced difficulties in connecting the products or services they offered with local wisdom-based narratives. Based on initial identification results, only 3 out of 10 participants had attempted to incorporate local elements into their business promotions, yet these remained descriptive and had not yet formed a cohesive storyline.

Following the training session, a measurable improvement in competency occurred. A total of 9 out of 10 participants were able to compose business narratives that integrated local wisdom elements, such as the volcanic landscape of Gunung Guntur, waterfall legends, the "*nyawang bulan*" tradition, and distinctive edu-tourism experiences. The resulting narratives demonstrated an interconnection between products, experiences, and local cultural values, thereby establishing a more authentic business identity.

For example, Rita developed a culinary business narrative by connecting the experience of enjoying *nasi liwet* with the "half-sky" (*setengah langit*) ambiance in the Gunung Guntur area, providing an emotional impression and a unique experience for visitors. Meanwhile, Doni linked water tourism activities with local legends surrounding the waterfall, creating added value in the form of a narrative experience for tourists. Darsim also began associating his business activities with the volcanic natural character as a symbol of the area's strength and uniqueness.

From a descriptive perspective, this shift demonstrates a change in participants' mindset from merely selling products to building meaning through storytelling. Novi stated:

> *"Sekarang jadi lebih paham kalau usaha itu bisa punya cerita yang menarik, bukan hanya jualan biasa."* ("Now I understand better that a business can have an interesting story, rather than just being an ordinary sales activity.")

The activity depicted in Figure 5 illustrates a collaborative process in building local theme-based word associations, where participants actively identified and connected various elements of local wisdom into a coherent narrative sequence. This process not only assisted participants in generating story ideas, but also strengthened their understanding of local potential as a primary source of branding.

These findings align with Putri & Salsabela (2025), who emphasized that integrating local wisdom into business strategies can enhance added value and product appeal in the market. Furthermore, Zulhuda et al. (2025) and Febriosa et al. (2025) stated that local wisdom serves as a primary source of inspiration in developing tourism products based on an authentic cultural identity.



Figure 4. Documentation of the activity for building word connections

Within the context of edu-tourism, local wisdom-based story branding acts as a differentiation strategy that not only strengthens business identity, but also fosters an emotional bond between business practitioners and visitors. The resulting narratives serve as a medium to transform tourism

experiences into more meaningful ones, thereby contributing to enhanced competitiveness and economic sustainability for MSMEs. Accordingly, the Thematic Associated Words Approach proved effective in facilitating participants to systematically and contextually explore, compose, and develop local wisdom-based business narratives.

Stage of implementing story branding on social media as a digital promotion strategy for edu-tourism MSMEs

The results of the activity indicate that the implementation of story branding on social media served as a crucial stage in transforming participants' understanding into tangible practice. In the initial stage, most participants had not yet optimally utilized social media as a medium for business promotion. Based on initial observations, only 2 out of 10 participants actively used social media to promote their products, and even then, their efforts remained limited to informative posts lacking a structured narrative. Following the mentoring sessions, a measurable improvement occurred in participants' ability to implement story branding within digital media. A total of 8 out of 10 participants succeeded in creating and uploading story branding content in the form of short videos via Instagram Stories and WhatsApp Status. The resulting content not only showcased products, but also highlighted stories based on authentic experiences and local wisdom.

For example, Umi Tati uploaded a short video narrating the cooking process while enjoying the natural ambiance of Gunung Guntur, whereas Doni featured visitor experiences in the water tourism area linked to local stories. Rita also began utilizing simple narratives in her posts by emphasizing the atmosphere and experience, rather than solely the products being sold.

Based on participant feedback, individuals demonstrated an increase in digital literacy and self-confidence in utilizing technology. Novi stated:

> "*Ternyata tidak harus bagus sekali videonya, yang penting ceritanya nyata dan bisa menarik orang*." ("It turns out the video does not have to be overly polished; what matters is that the story is authentic and capable of engaging people.")

The activity depicted in Figure 6 illustrates the direct mentoring process in creating and publishing story branding content, ranging from narrative composition and simple video recording to uploading to social media. This mentoring helped participants understand that social media can serve as an effective and accessible narrative space for business promotion. Furthermore, the utilization of simple artificial intelligence (AI)-based technology to assist in drafting text and content ideas also contributed to accelerating participants' creative processes. Although still in a basic stage, this use of AI demonstrates the potential for technology integration in supporting more adaptive MSME marketing strategies.

These findings align with Pratiwi et al. (2025), who stated that storytelling in digital media can enhance the promotional appeal of MSMEs through a more personal and contextual approach. In addition, Korry et al. (2025) emphasized that the utilization of narrative-based digital media can strengthen the image and competitiveness of MSMEs in the creative economy era. Within the context of economic sustainability, implementing story branding via social media provides opportunities for MSMEs to expand their market reach without requiring substantial costs. Authentic and consistent story-based content can build an emotional connection with the audience, thereby increasing the potential for visits and customer loyalty. Accordingly, the application of story branding on social media serves not merely as a technical output of the training activities, but also represents an adaptive strategy that supports the digital transformation of edu-tourism MSMEs toward stronger economic sustainability.



Figure 5. Documentation of story branding mentoring until the content is ready to be uploaded to participants' social media

Stage of implementation, evaluation, and reflection as reinforcement for MSME story branding sustainability

The results of the activity during the implementation stage indicate that participants were able to independently apply all the provided materials in the form of story branding content production. A total of 8 out of 10 participants succeeded in independently creating and uploading story branding videos via social media, reflecting an integration of business narratives, local experiences, and digital media. This activity serves as an indicator that the training process was not only understood conceptually, but had also been translated into tangible practice.

During the reflection stage, participants, together with the implementing team, evaluated their experiences throughout the content creation process. Several identified challenges included limitations in video recording, difficulties in composing spontaneous narratives, and limited mastery of digital technology. Nevertheless, participants also demonstrated strong adaptability by utilizing simple, authentic experience-based approaches.

Based on participant feedback, Rita stated: "*Walaupun videonya sederhana, ternyata bisa tetap menarik kalau ada ceritanya.*" ("Even though the video is simple, it turns out it can still be engaging if it has a story."). Meanwhile, Doni added: "*Awalnya sulit, tapi setelah dicoba jadi lebih percaya diri untuk buat konten sendiri.*" ("It was difficult at first, but after trying it out, I became more confident in creating my own content.").

The dialogic review stage revealed a noticeable improvement in the quality of participants' narratives. All participants presented their story branding outcomes, both in the form of verbal stories and digital content. Based on the evaluation results, 9 out of 10 participants were assessed as capable of composing narratives with a clear flow, incorporating elements of local wisdom, and possessing potential appeal for edu-tourism visitors.

The feedback provided by the implementing team focused on strengthening aspects of message clarity, narrative consistency, and the alignment between the story and business identity. This process functioned not merely as an evaluation, but also as a reflective learning space that helped participants understand the strengths and weaknesses of the story branding they developed.

The display stage reinforced the implementation outcomes through the tangible visualization of participants' works in the form of social media posts, specifically on Instagram Stories and WhatsApp

Status. Through this stage, participants could directly observe how local wisdom-based narratives were applied within the context of digital promotion. Furthermore, participants also began to understand audience responses as part of an initial evaluation process regarding the effectiveness of the created content.

The closing stage demonstrated that the community service activity yielded a positive impact not only on enhancing technical skills, but also on shifting participants' mindsets in viewing their businesses. Participants no longer focused solely on products, but began to recognize the importance of stories, experiences, and cultural values as integral components of a marketing strategy.

These findings align with Sitorus et al. (2025), who stated that strengthening experience-based communication and branding can enhance MSMEs' readiness to face market dynamics. Moreover, a reflective approach to learning also proved effective in reinforcing participants' understanding and the sustainability of their practices after the activity concluded.

Accordingly, the implementation, review, display, and closing stages serve not merely as the final segments of the activity, but function as mechanisms for evaluation and program sustainability reinforcement (Saputra, 2022). This process ensures that the training outcomes can be independently replicated by participants in their daily business operations, thereby supporting the economic continuity of edu-tourism MSMEs sustainably.

Activity materials

The activity materials in this community service program were compiled in a structured and practical manner to support the objective of strengthening local wisdom-based story branding as an economic sustainability strategy for edu-tourism MSMEs. The development of these materials was based on theoretical reviews, the practical experience of the implementing team, and the actual needs of participants operating within the Gunung Guntur edu-tourism area.

Public speaking materials for edu-tourism MSMEs

The public speaking materials focused on strengthening participants' self-confidence and ability to verbally deliver business stories. These materials covered basic public speaking techniques, storyline structuring, the use of communicative language, and strategies for capturing audience attention. During delivery, the materials were supplemented with the Story Based on Five Cards Roleplay Method, enabling participants to spontaneously compose and present stories based on prompt cards. These materials were designed to help participants adapt to direct interactions with edu-tourism visitors, allowing them to explain products, services, and tourism experiences in a more persuasive and meaningful manner.

Local wisdom-based story branding materials

The story branding materials aimed to equip participants with an understanding of the importance of narratives as a business identity. The primary focus of these materials was exploring and utilizing local wisdom as a source of storytelling, encompassing natural elements, local history, legends, culture, and distinctive activities of the Gunung Guntur area. In this session, the Thematic Associated Words Method was applied, wherein participants developed business stories based on interconnected thematic words representing local character. Through these materials, participants were guided to build authentic, contextual story branding with a distinct competitive edge compared to generic business promotions.

Story branding materials on social media

The final set of materials focused on implementing story branding on social media as an accessible digital promotional medium for MSMEs. These materials covered an introduction to social media platforms, basic principles of visual and narrative content, and simple techniques for producing story videos. The approach utilized was Story Based on Real Situation, in which participants composed stories drawn from authentic daily experiences in operating their edu-tourism businesses. At this stage, participants received technical mentoring ranging from creating social media accounts, utilizing story features, and using digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI)-based technology, to uploading content to Instagram Stories and WhatsApp Status. These materials emphasized the importance of story consistency and authenticity as a sustainable promotional strategy relevant to the characteristics of edu-tourism MSMEs.

Table 2. Community service activities schedule

Time	Activity	Objective
08.00–08.30	Participant registration, opening ceremony, and program orientation	Provide an overview of the program objectives and workflow, as well as build participants' initial understanding of the importance of local wisdom-based story branding within the context of edu-tourism MSMEs.
08.30–10.00	Session 1: Public speaking training through the Story Based on Five Cards Roleplay	Enhance participants' self-confidence and ability to verbally deliver business stories with a coherent, communicative, and persuasive flow as the initial foundation of story branding.
10.00–12.00	Session 2: Designing local wisdom-based story branding using the Thematic Associated Words Method	Guide participants in exploring and weaving local wisdom elements (nature, history, culture, and edu-tourism experiences) into an authentic brand narrative with a strong local identity.
12.00–13.00	Break	Provide rest time for participants before entering the subsequent practical session.
13.00–15.00	Session 3: Implementing story branding on social media through the Story Based on Real Situation approach and content uploading practice	Train participants to translate local wisdom-based business narratives into social media content and enhance digital literacy as a sustainable promotional strategy for edu-tourism MSMEs.
15.00–15.30	Closing, reflection, and activity evaluation	Evaluate activity achievements, reflect on participants' experiences, and reinforce their commitment to sustainably applying story branding in edu-tourism business operations.

Discussion

The discussion interprets the outcomes of the community service activity, which consisted of local wisdom-based story branding training for Gunung Guntur edu-tourism MSMEs. The sequence of the discussion is structured according to the workflow of the activity, progressing from strengthening individual participant capacity and developing local wisdom-based narratives to direct implementation on social media as a strategy for economic sustainability.

Strengthening individual capacity through public speaking as the foundation of story branding

The results of the activity indicate that strengthening public speaking skills served as a measurable initial foundation in building story branding for edu-tourism MSMEs. Prior to the training, most participants tended to convey business information descriptively and functionally, lacking an engaging storyline. Through the *story based on five cards* roleplay approach, participants were trained to spontaneously compose stories with a coherent and communicative flow.

This approach aligns with the principles of participatory and experiential learning, wherein participants do not merely receive materials passively, but engage directly in storytelling practice. The speaking skills developed at this stage serve as vital capital for edu-tourism MSMEs, as direct interaction with visitors constitutes an integral part of the tourism experience. Accordingly, public speaking functions not only as a communication skill, but also as an initial medium for shaping business image and identity.

Local wisdom-based story branding as differentiation for edu-tourism MSMEs

The subsequent stage demonstrates that the story branding developed by participants experienced measurable strengthening when business narratives were linked to local wisdom. Through the *thematic associated words* method, participants were able to identify and weave local elements, such as the volcanic landscape, the history of Gunung Guntur, waterfall legends, the "*nyawang bulan*" tradition, and local cuisine, into the core of their business stories. Narratives concerning volcanic rocks, for instance, were no longer understood merely as natural elements, but as symbols of geological history and regional identity. The account of Gunung Guntur's name change from Gunung Kutu to Gunung Guntur was interpreted as a natural journey that shaped the character of the region and its surrounding community. Similarly, the "*nyawang bulan*" tradition was positioned as a reflective experience of togetherness holding high cultural value, thereby enriching the appeal of edu-tourism. This reinforcement of local wisdom-based story branding contributes to the differentiation of edu-tourism MSMEs. The resulting narratives are not generic, but contextual and authentic, holding the potential to enhance visitor recall and emotional engagement. This strengthens the position of MSMEs as an integral part of the community-based tourism ecosystem.

Digital story branding implementation and MSME social media literacy

The results of the activity also indicate that implementing story branding on social media served as a crucial stage in driving the economic sustainability of MSMEs. Through the *story based on real situation* approach, participants were guided to narrate their daily business activities naturally and authentically, without the pressure of complex content production. The technical mentoring provided, ranging from creating social media accounts and utilizing story features to employing artificial intelligence (AI)-based technology to assist in narrative formulation, enhanced participants' digital literacy. The story branding video uploads on Instagram Stories and WhatsApp Status at the conclusion of the activity served as concrete evidence that participants were able to directly apply the training materials. This approach demonstrates that digital promotion for MSMEs does not necessarily require substantial resources, but can begin with simple stories that are consistent and relevant to the local context. Accordingly, social media functions as a narrative space that expands promotional reach while preserving the authenticity of local stories.

Impact of the activity on the economic sustainability of edu-tourism MSMEs

Overall, this community service activity yielded a positive impact on strengthening the capacity of edu-tourism MSMEs to build a sustainable business identity. Local wisdom-based story branding not only improved participants' communication and promotional skills, but also fostered awareness of the economic value inherent in local culture and nature.

Economic sustainability in this context is interpreted not merely as short-term revenue growth, but as the ability of MSMEs to maintain business viability through narratives that are strong, adaptive, and easily reproducible. This activity also opens opportunities for further development, such as packaging story-based tour itineraries, fostering collaboration among MSME practitioners, and integrating story branding into long-term digital marketing strategies.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This community service activity demonstrates that training and mentoring in local wisdom-based story branding contribute to strengthening communication capacity, brand narrative development, and digital promotion skills among 10 edu-tourism MSME practitioners in the Gunung Guntur area. The evaluation results indicate that participants' ability to deliver business stories coherently and communicatively increased from 2 to 8 individuals following the training. Furthermore, 9 out of 10 participants succeeded in composing brand narratives that integrated elements of local wisdom, while 8 out of 10 participants successfully created and uploaded digital promotional content via social media. Final evaluation results also reveal that 7 out of 10 participants were able to produce narratives with a clear storyline incorporating local wisdom elements. These achievements illustrate that integrating communication, business experience, and local potential through a story branding approach can assist MSME practitioners in building a more authentic business identity and generating contextual promotional materials. Accordingly, this program provides a practical contribution to strengthening the promotional capacity and competitiveness of edu-tourism MSMEs through the utilization of local wisdom, although direct impacts on revenue growth, transactions, and tourist visitation numbers were not measured within this activity.

Based on the outcomes of the activity, it is recommended that local wisdom-based story branding reinforcement programs be conducted continuously with an extended mentoring duration, providing participants with the opportunity to more optimally develop narrative consistency and digital promotional strategies. In addition, follow-up monitoring and evaluation are necessary to measure medium-term impacts on enhancing the visibility and market appeal of edu-tourism MSMEs. Future program development can also be directed toward integrating story branding with broader digital marketing strategies, such as utilizing diverse social media platforms, developing more varied visual content, and optimizing artificial intelligence (AI)-based technology in a more targeted manner. On the other hand, the involvement of local stakeholders, such as the village government and tourism communities, needs to be strengthened to encourage collaboration among MSME practitioners in establishing a sustainable story-based edu-tourism ecosystem. With a more integrated and sustainable approach, similar community service activities are expected not only to generate short-term outcomes, but also to contribute substantially and measurably to strengthening the local economy based on local wisdom.

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