Strengthening spice coffee SMEs based on digital marketing for sustainable business improvement

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ABSTRACT
Digital marketing is a marketing strategy aimed at providing information to the community at large in an effective and efficient manner without being limited by space and time. This community partnership program aims to increase the understanding of the concept of digital marketing for spice coffee SMEs in Pertakina, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency as partners, by providing education, training and mentoring. The results achieved increase partners' motivation and engagement to use digital marketing in spice coffee marketing, partners already have product logos and have created separate social media accounts for individuals and businesses. Partners can maintain their social media accounts by regularly uploading content about their spice coffee products to social media such as: WhatsApp Group, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. The results of the evaluation with in-depth interviews show that there has been a development in the number of followers on social networks becoming more than before. This shows that there is life on social media, as evidenced by regular content uploads, catching viewers' attention and attracting consumer interest to follow spice coffee social media.

1. INTRODUCTION
Coffee is a leading plantation commodity in Indonesia, as it has market opportunities both domestically and internationally. Coffee plays a significant role in improving the national and regional economy, making it one of Indonesia’s flagship commodities. Coffee has become a commodity that serves as a source of livelihood for millions of people in Indonesia, as Indonesia has been able to enter the world market through its diverse and special coffee flavors (Rahardjo, 2012). East Java Province is one of the largest coffee-producing regions in Indonesia. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture in 2021, East Java produced up to 48,675 tons of coffee, making it a producer of various high-quality specialty coffees that are known worldwide. One of the districts in East Java that has a relatively large
coffee plantation is Blitar Regency. The potential for coffee crops in Blitar Regency is spread across several areas, including Nglegok, Garum, Gandusari, Wilinggim, Selorejo, and Doko. Blitar Regency is also one of the potential regencies in East Java with a growing sector of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially coffee and spice SMEs in Nglegok District, which are fostered by the Indonesian Retired Workers and Family Association (Pertakina) of Blitar Regency. Pertakina is a non-governmental organization that operates in the field of empowering Indonesian retired workers. It was founded in 2010 and has its headquarters in Blitar Regency, with a field office in Sanan Hamlet, Dayu Village, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency. Based on the Pertakina Profile Book (2020), all the SMEs involved in Pertakina in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, amounted to 256 SMEs, producing various products, including food, drinks, and handicrafts.

The partners in the Community Partnership Program are the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the coffee and spices sector that are members of Pertakina in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency. These SMEs are the owners of coffee and spice businesses that have branded their products such as “Al Jaidi Coffee”, “Afdaling Coffee”, and “Abim Coffee”. They not only use typical Indonesian ingredients in their coffee production, but also add some ingredients from the Middle East and local spices to their coffee blends. Each SME has its own unique recipe, some are passed down through generations within their family lineage and some are based on their creativity. Therefore, these coffee blends are claimed to be very distinctive and considered healthy because they contain spices mixed with the best coffee beans from the slopes of Mount Kelud. The coffee production process by the partners initially was done manually, but now many of them use roasting and grinding machines, either self-made or purchased from stores. The raw materials for the coffee and spice blends include coffee beans as the main ingredient, additional ingredients such as ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and coriander, as well as unique ingredients such as cardamom, dates, kelabet, and cloves. The purchase of coffee beans is from farmers around Blitar, considering the level of dryness, and currently the coffee beans are purchased from collectors in the Blitar area.

The marketing of the partner’s coffee and spices is extraordinary, even though they only use simple methods in promoting their products. However, the partner’s coffee and spices have managed to penetrate both national and international markets. This is due to the many networks that the partners have in various regions in Indonesia, ranging from Jakarta, Surabaya, Semarang, Tarakan, Balikpapan, NTB to Makassar. The partner’s coffee and spices are also marketed overseas, especially in Middle Eastern countries, Brunei Darussalam, Saudi Arabia, and Australia. As time goes by, the partners have begun to add new variants of their coffee and spices. Currently, there are many variants produced by the partners, including Arabica coffee, Turkish coffee, chocolate coffee, Arabica coffee, Robusta coffee, green coffee, and black cumin coffee.

From the initial field visit and discussion with the partners of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) producing coffee and spices in Pertakina, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, it was found that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a decrease in their sales. Therefore, to maintain their business post-pandemic, it is necessary to strengthen their digital marketing strategy since they have mostly relied on traditional marketing and personal networks. This is due to the fact that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, customers preferred to shop directly at retail stores, but now they have shifted to e-commerce (Yusup et al., 2020). In fact, in this era, consumers have new abilities to follow the digitalization trend (Febriyantoro & Arisandi, 2018). It means that almost all consumers nowadays have a new ability to follow the digitalization trend by exploring products or services before purchasing them, by utilizing digital marketing channels. This change in consumer behavior requires SMEs managers to rethink their marketing strategies, by utilizing digital marketing to promote their products. Research
results show that the COVID-19 pandemic urges UMKM managers to quickly transform digitally to seize opportunities and expand the market reach of their products (Darmawan et al., 2022).

In general, SMEs in Indonesia face challenges in expanding their businesses due to limited marketing scale. Therefore, SMEs need digital-based marketing to further develop and compete in the digital era. The strategic step needed in empowering SMEs is to conduct digital marketing. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), digital marketing is digital technology that facilitates activities, institutions, and processes in creating, communicating, and delivering values to customers and other stakeholders (Kannan & Hongshuang, 2017). Digital marketing is one of the marketing strategies used to provide efficient and effective information about various products produced by Indonesian SMEs to a wider audience without being limited by space and time. This is in line with research that shows that digital marketing plays an important role in helping SMEs in Indonesia, as it has various benefits that can increase sales for SMEs (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). Another research also indicates that companies with digital marketing are able to reach more customers, resulting in increased sales volume, and companies that implement digital marketing have better performance (Hasyim et al., 2022).

UMKM coffee and spice partners in Pertakina, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency have not fully utilized digital marketing. The obstacles faced by partners in digital marketing are the lack of skills in creating, uploading, and updating content, as well as time constraints, lack of skilled IT workers, and internet network issues. Research shows that digital marketing has not been widely applied in the UKM sector in Indonesia due to several factors, including lack of technology literacy, inadequate supporting facilities, and the challenging geographical conditions in Indonesia (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the partners need to strengthen their digital marketing efforts to increase sales. The main issue faced by the partners is the lack of knowledge and understanding of digital marketing to expand their market and boost sales of their coffee and spice products.

Based on the prioritization of the problems that need to be addressed in the community partnership program, the proposed solution to the issues faced by the partners is as follows: firstly, providing education on the concept of digital marketing to increase partners’ understanding and motivation to use digital marketing in their business; secondly, providing training on digital marketing techniques, including the use of information and communication technology, to enhance partners’ knowledge and skills in digital marketing, which is crucial to be implemented post-COVID-19 pandemic; and thirdly, providing direct assistance to partners in implementing digital marketing using social media (online marketing) to promote their coffee and spice products.

This partnership program aims to improve the understanding of digital marketing concepts for coffee and spice SMEs, particularly in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, so that they are knowledgeable and motivated to utilize digital marketing in their business activities. This will help them expand their product marketing, increase sales, and gain a competitive advantage in the market for their coffee and spice products.

2. METHODS

The community partnership program activities are carried out using a method that can be described in the form of implementation stages as shown in Figure 1. This method is described in several stages, namely the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the evaluation stage. This activity is divided into 3 (three) stages with a duration of 4 months, with the preparation stage lasting for 1 month, the implementation stage for 2 months, and the evaluation stage for 1 month.
Preparation Stage

During the preparation stage, the program will begin with a needs survey to analyze the partners’ needs. The analysis will be conducted to gather information and identify the problems faced by partners, so that solutions can be found. In this phase, the participants will be selected, and the time for the education, training, and mentoring activities will be determined based on the partners’ input. Additionally, the materials for the program will be developed and organized.

Implementation Stage

In this stage, the main activities of the community partnership program will be carried out. In general, there will be three activities: education on digital marketing concepts, training on digital marketing techniques, and assistance in the implementation of digital marketing using social media.

Digital Marketing Transfer Knowledge

The method is a mechanism to transfer knowledge to the partners. The education activity conducted is related to the concept of digital marketing for partners, which aims to motivate partners to enter the digital sector and commit to applying digital marketing aspects to market their coffee and spice products. This education is carried out through presentations and question-and-answer sessions.

Digital Marketing Technical Practices

This method is aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of partners that are useful for business performance improvement and goal achievement. In this mechanism, digital marketing management training will be provided, especially related to creating social media accounts and creating content (messages to be conveyed). The hope is that after this training, it can generate clever tricks and fresh ideas in managing good digital marketing. In managing social media, personal and business accounts must be separated. Business accounts should not be used to post personal matters. To manage a business account, a content calendar plan must be created, such as when to post products, special events or promotions related to certain relevant days related to the products sold, testimonials, product knowledge, and so on. This training will be conducted using a presentations and Q&A method regarding the digital marketing issues faced by partners.

Assistance in Implementing Digital Marketing with Social Media

In addition to digital marketing training, spice coffee SMEs in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency also need assistance in implementing digital marketing. This is in accordance with Naimah et al. (2020), whose states that the use of digital marketing strategies should be followed up with regular guidance so that they can be effective and optimal in supporting marketing activities and increasing sales of
MSME products. This mentoring activity in implementing digital marketing provides understanding for partners to prepare their products to be introduced online, thereby expanding their consumer network through the use of social media in marketing their products and can increase competitive advantage for the partners themselves. This activity introduces SMEs to using social media such as Whatsapp Groups, Instagram, and Facebook as digital marketing tools. These media were chosen because apart from being cheaper and not requiring special expertise to manufacture, these media are also considered capable of directly reaching consumers because they are very commonly used in society.

**Evaluation Stage**

In measuring the increase in partners’ knowledge, understanding, and skills, it is necessary to evaluate the process of internalization and adoption. Evaluation is carried out to see the effectiveness of implementing program activities, both educational activities, training & digital marketing assistance. From the results of the evaluation that has been carried out, it will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the activity program, so that if the results of the evaluation require improvement, then an improvement plan will be carried out by carrying out ongoing coaching to partners by applying the consultative method with in-depth interviews, this method is expected to provide feedback for the activities carried out and can help find solutions to problems faced by partners and help partners formulate their business strategies.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Results**

Based on in-depth interviews with the partners, it was found that they experienced a decrease in sales during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, to maintain their business after the pandemic, they need to strengthen their digital marketing efforts, as they have previously only focused on their personal network. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the marketing performance of SMEs, thus they need to improve their marketing strategy towards digital marketing. This means that implementing a digital marketing strategy for SME products will provide greater opportunities for MSMEs to attract consumers, as it expands their market reach and covers all areas connected to the internet, thus leading to an increase in SME product sales (Ikramuddin et al., 2021). Digital marketing refers to all efforts and businesses conducted to market a product through digital media. Digital marketing can use several social media platforms that are currently popular among consumers. Social media allows users to connect with friends by adding them to their networks, which facilitates communication, especially among peer groups. Marketing on social media provides an opportunity for consumers and marketers to interact and share experiences wherever they are. This is in line with research findings stating that the numerous benefits that can be gained by SMEs from the use of social media are strong motivators for SMEs to continue utilizing social media to develop products, communicate with consumers, suppliers, and distributors, as well as to expand their market networks (Priambada, 2015). The obstacles faced by partners related to digital marketing are a lack of ability in content creation, uploading, and updating content. In addition, time constraints, lack of skilled IT personnel, and internet connectivity issues also pose challenges in their online marketing. Research has shown that not only are there benefits to be gained from implementing digital marketing, but SMEs often face difficulties in its implementation. Therefore, the implementation of digital marketing has a significant impact on improving SMEs’ marketing efforts, but there are many challenges that come with it (Az-Zahra, 2021). Therefore, the partner needs reinforcement in digital marketing to increase sales of their coffee and spice products. Based on this, digital marketing is urgently needed to be implemented post the COVID-19 pandemic in order to boost the partner’s sales.
On Friday, August 19th, 2022, the partner was educated to understand the concept of digital marketing by the PKM team as seen in Figure 2. This education is a form of knowledge transfer that is expected to increase the partner’s motivation and commitment to implementing the concept of digital marketing in their business.

Figure 2. Digital marketing concept education

The results that have been achieved from this education are partners understanding the importance of digital marketing. This education aims to motivate partners to immediately enter the digital sector, and commit to implementing aspects of digital marketing to market its spice coffee products. Motivation is a series of processes that generate, direct and maintain human behavior to achieve goals (Greenberg & Baron, 2010). One of the variables that support business success is the motivation of business actors (Ningrum et al., 2020). This education is also aimed at increasing partners’ insight into digital marketing, so that partners are able to maintain resilience so that they continue to be able to pump up the enthusiasm (passion) of partners in implementing digital marketing in their business after the COVID 19 pandemic.

On Saturday, 20 August 2022, through the Community Partnership Program, digital marketing training activities were carried out for partners by the PKM Team as shown in Figure 3. This training is a form of knowledge transfer which results in increased insight and knowledge of partners about digital marketing. Apart from that, as a result of the skill transfer process, partners have also improved their skills in managing social media accounts to boost sales. This is in accordance with previous research which concluded that social media is a very effective marketing communication medium, can increase consumer interest in the brands offered, so that ultimately can increase sales (Uitz, 2012). Partners have been trained on how to create accounts and upload content on social media and how to create content in the form of photos and videos that are creative and attract attention.

Figure 3. Digital marketing training
As a community service team and assisted by a team of students, they have provided successful tricks for implementing digital marketing and increasing interaction on social media. Partners who before the implementation of this community partnership program did not have social media accounts, for this reason on Sunday, August 21, 2022 through this Community Partnership program, assistance activities were carried out in creating social media accounts as shown in Figure 4.

![Figure 4. Assistance in creating social media accounts and content](image)

From the implementation of mentoring activities for the use of digital marketing, it was found that partners were interested in using digital marketing and making optimal use of social media (Wardhana, 2015) states that the introduction of marketing strategies has an effect of up to 78% on the competitive advantage of SMEs in marketing their products. For this reason, SMEs participating in the assistance are directed to provide a number of things related to the spice coffee products they have, including: (1) Providing all complete information about the resulting spice coffee products; (2) Making pictures and illustrations of spice coffee products; (3) Providing video that visualizes the spice coffee product; (4) Provides online communication tools; (5) Availability of payment media and online transaction tools; (6) Availability of product testimonial displays.

Partners consider this to be something new and can foster partner creativity in marketing their spice coffee products. All spice coffee SME partners involved are required to produce an illustration in the form of a logo image related to the spice coffee product to be marketed. As a result, partners already have product logos and several social media accounts as illustrated in Figure 5.

![Figure 5. Logo illustrations, Facebook accounts, Instagram accounts, and Youtube accounts made by partners](image)

The community service team in mentoring provides suggestions that are easy to implement regarding digital marketing and the use of social media. This is to answer some of the obstacles presented by partners during the training, such as lack of knowledge about information and communication.
technology, lack of experience in how to use and use social media properly, lack of understanding of how to create attractive product posts, and the importance of creativity and patience in the process digital product marketing. The conditions and situations of different partners mean that mentoring materials and techniques are carried out in different ways. Several important matters related to digital marketing using social media were emphasized by the PKM team to partners so that they could retain their spice coffee consumers. These include: (1) Creating social media accounts that are separate for personal and business; (2) Account names are made simple and easy and easy for other parties to remember; (3) Making posts regularly by taking advantage of the right times (golden moments) in display it; (4) Make a unique hastag that characterizes the business and write it every time you make a post; (5) Always answer every question from consumers to indicate that the social media account is active and cooperative, thus providing convenience for consumers; and (6) Avoiding posts that are not in accordance with product image, so as not to affect the level of consumer confidence. Every spice coffee SME partner who takes part in this mentoring activity must practice each of these important things on the social media accounts that have been created.

**Discussion**

One of the results that need to be seen in the activities of this community partnership program is the evaluation stage. After the mentoring activities for utilizing digital marketing were completed, the PKM team evaluated the success of the behaviors of the spice coffee SMEs that participated in this activity. The results of this evaluation are expected to be used as indicators in implementing the same activities at other times. The evaluation stage for the implementation of the Community Partnership Program will be carried out on Sunday, September 11, 2022 by conducting a survey with in-depth interviews with partners who have participated in this PKM activity as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

![Figure 6](image.png)  
**Figure 6.** Evaluation stage of with in-depth interviews with partners

![Figure 7](image.png)  
**Figure 7.** The community service team with partners after the evaluation stage

The results of an evaluation of digital marketing strengthening activities that have been carried out for partners show that partners who have participated in this activity have used several social media, and the most widely used in marketing partner spice coffee products, including WhatsApp Group, Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube. Results of interviews In-depth analysis shows that partners are satisfied with the PKM activities carried out in utilizing social media for marketing their spice coffee. Partners have maintained their social media accounts by regularly uploading content about their coffee and spice products, including information about the types of products offered, product prices, how to order and pay, when to order, order delivery facilities, and other information. Furthermore, to see the response from viewers and followers on social media, product postings have been made on the Facebook account.
10 times as shown in Figure 8. There are 12 posts on spice coffee products on Instagram accounts as shown in Figure 9. Uploading educational content about the spice coffee production process in video form to Youtube as shown in Figure 10.

![Figure 8. Al Jaidi Spice Coffee product posting on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086109474735)](Image 1)

![Figure 9. Spice Coffee Product post on Instagram (https://instagram.com/kopi.al_jaidi?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=)](Image 2)

![Figure 10. Educational video content for the production process of spice coffee products on Youtube](Image 3)

Based on the recorded achievements, it appears that after routinely uploading content on social media by partners, the development of the number of followers on social media has become more than before. This shows that there is social media life which can be seen from regular content uploads, getting the attention of viewers, and attracting interest to follow the spice coffee social media.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This community partnership program aims to provide an understanding of spice coffee SMEs in Pertakina, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency as partners regarding strengthening digital marketing, providing excellent results for partners. The lack of partners’ knowledge about digital marketing at the beginning of the activities could be improved after the PKM activities were carried out. The spice coffee UKM partners in Pertakina, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency are increasingly understanding the importance of digital marketing, especially after the COVID 19 Pandemic, as a means of marketing communication for their spice coffee products, and have practiced it directly by utilizing social media which can be used easily and accessed by many parties.

The results of this community partnership program are expected to be carried out properly by the Partners, so that the partner spice coffee business can develop in the future, so that it is expected to increase employment opportunities for the surrounding community to be involved in marketing their spice coffee products.
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