

Optimizing Digital Marketing for MSMEs: The Case of Tape Bakar in Melis Village, Trenggalek

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Abstract

Purpose: This service program aims to increase the understanding and skills of Ms. Khasanah's *Tape Bakar* business in Melis Village by optimizing the use of digital marketing.

Method: The program applies the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach through training sessions, mentoring, and hands-on practice in creating promotional content and managing social media platforms. A pre-test and post-test evaluation were conducted to measure knowledge gain.

Practical Applications: The application of digital marketing is expected to expand market reach, increase sales of *Tape Bakar*, and support family economic sustainability by combining traditional products with innovative promotional strategies.

Conclusion: The results show measurable improvements: participants' knowledge scores increased from an average of 52% (pre-test) to 84% (post-test), while Instagram followers of the business account rose from 125 to 310 within one month after training. Online engagement also improved, with product inquiries via WhatsApp Business increasing by 45%. These outcomes demonstrate that optimizing digital marketing not only strengthens product exposure but also contributes positively to the family economy through the synergy of tradition and innovation.

Introduction

Melis Village, located in Gandusari District, Trenggalek Regency, East Java, is a rural area with rich economic and cultural potential. Covering an area of approximately 3,400 hectares, most of its residents work as rice farmers, while others are involved in animal husbandry and small-scale industries. The village is also known for its distinctive cultural heritage, including local myths that form part of its identity. This combination of agriculture, cultural wealth, and small-scale entrepreneurship illustrates Melis as a village with dynamic potential for sustainable development.

One of the flagship products of Melis Village is Tape Bakar, a traditional cassava-based food that has been innovated both in form and flavor. Tape Bakar is not only a favorite among local consumers but has also reached markets outside the region and even abroad. Innovations such as the addition of jam and flavor variants have enhanced its appeal amid increasingly competitive traditional culinary markets. Among the entrepreneurs, Ms. Khasanah is recognized as one of the icons of MSMEs in Melis Village, successfully branding Tape Bakar as a village specialty.

Despite this potential, MSMEs in rural areas like Melis face persistent challenges in expanding their markets and boosting sales (Sutikno et al., 2022). A major limitation is the low adoption of digital technology in marketing (Johannesson et al., 2023; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). In fact, in today's era, digital marketing has proven to expand market reach without geographical boundaries and to strengthen the competitiveness of MSMEs (Loku & Havolli, 2024; Naimah et al., 2020). In Indonesia, several studies show that rural MSMEs often lag in digital adoption due to lack of training, limited access to technology, and generational gaps (Fitriani et al., 2022; Martadikusumah, 2024). This highlights a gap between potential and actual practice that community service programs can help bridge.

Digital marketing enables businesses to promote products interactively through social media platforms, websites, and messaging applications (Guarda et al., 2020; Rajathi & Dass, 2024). With the right strategies, MSMEs can increase visibility, build brand awareness, and facilitate transactions with a broader consumer base (Guarda et al., 2020; Sasongko et al., 2023). However, many rural business actors remain unfamiliar with effective digital practices (Fatima & Nalla, 2025). Compared to studies in other villages that emphasize e-commerce adoption or financial literacy (Antoni et al., 2023; Fatima & Nalla, 2025), the innovation in Melis lies in combining

Tape Bakar's traditional culinary identity with modern digital branding, creating a unique synergy of heritage and technology.

In this context, the village government and educational institutions play a crucial role in providing structured education and training on digital marketing (Antoni et al., 2023; Fitriani et al., 2022). Through community service programs, MSME actors can gain practical skills, from creating social media accounts and producing promotional content to managing online transactions (Sumadi et al., 2023). Hands-on mentoring and sustained assistance are essential to ensure that digital strategies are consistently applied and independently managed (Loku & Havolli, 2024; Sasongko et al., 2023).

The community service program in Melis Village therefore aims to enhance the understanding and skills of Tape Bakar business actors, particularly Ms. Khasanah, in utilizing digital marketing. The program applies the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which emphasizes leveraging local potential while fostering active community participation (Prasetiyawan, 2020). Training sessions, direct practice, and evaluations were carried out to ensure participants not only understood but were also able to implement digital marketing strategies effectively.

Thus, optimizing digital marketing for Tape Bakar in Melis Village is not only a means to boost sales but also a step toward strengthening family economic resilience and encouraging sustainable local innovation. What sets this program apart is its integration of traditional culinary identity with modern digital strategies, filling a gap noted in earlier MSME studies in Indonesia, which often treat digitalization as a technical matter rather than a cultural-economic synergy. This aligns with Kofler & Walder (2024) and Lazzeretti et al. (2023), who argue that combining tradition and innovation is key to creating competitive and sustainable local economies in the digital era.

Method

Community service activities in Melis Village applied the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which emphasizes the use of local potential and resources as the main capital for empowerment. This method was implemented through several systematic stages as follows:

1. Discovery (Asset and Potential Identification)

At this stage, the service team conducted mapping of local assets through field observations, interviews with 12 MSME actors, and discussions with village officials. The findings showed that Melis Village had potential in traditional food

products, especially Tape Bakar, supported by the skills of local producers and existing social networks such as PKK groups and youth organizations. In total, five Tape Bakar businesses were identified as the main focus of the program.

2. Dream (Formulation of a Joint Vision)

A participatory discussion involving 15 villagers and MSME actors was held to formulate aspirations for the development of Tape Bakar marketing through digital platforms. Business actors expressed three main hopes: (a) expanding market access outside Trenggalek Regency, (b) increasing brand recognition of Tape Bakar as a village icon, and (c) improving family income through online sales. These aspirations became the foundation for the next stages.

3. Design (Strategy Formulation and Action Plan)

The service team, together with MSME actors and two village officials, designed digital marketing strategies tailored to local assets and needs. The action plan included: (a) creating Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp Business accounts; (b) producing promotional content in the form of 50 product photos, 5 short videos, and a simple e-catalog; and (c) providing training on managing orders and customer communication via digital platforms.

4. Define (Setting Goals and Success Indicators)

Specific targets were determined to measure the program's effectiveness. The agreed indicators included: (a) at least 70% of participants able to create and manage a social media account, (b) an increase in digital marketing knowledge scores from pre-test to post-test by a minimum of 30%, and (c) an increase in weekly sales of Tape Bakar by at least 20% within one month after the training.

5. Destiny (Implementation and Sustainable Monitoring)

The training and mentoring sessions were attended by 17 participants, consisting of MSME actors, youth, and PKK members. The team provided hands-on guidance in account management, digital content production, and online sales simulations. Monitoring was carried out through follow-up visits and a WhatsApp group created as a communication forum. Within three weeks after implementation, two Tape Bakar businesses reported receiving their first online orders, and five MSMEs showed consistent activity in updating content on social media.

By applying the ABCD approach in this structured and participatory manner, the program not only provided solutions to marketing challenges but also strengthened local capacity for independent economic development. The empirical evidence at each stage demonstrates that digital marketing assistance, when grounded

in community assets, can both preserve local traditions and enhance the sustainability of village-based businesses.

Results

Community service activities carried out in Melis Village produced several significant achievements, particularly in enhancing the capacity of local MSME actors, namely the Tape Bakar business owned by Ms. Khasanah. One of the main results of this program was the increased understanding of business actors regarding the concepts and importance of digital marketing for business development. Prior to the assistance, Ms. Khasanah was unfamiliar with digital marketing strategies, but after participating in training and direct practice, she demonstrated notable improvements in both understanding and technical skills in utilizing social media for promotional activities.

As a concrete outcome, the service team assisted in the creation and management of a dedicated Instagram account under the username @kacamata_tulungagung, which became the main platform for promoting Tape Bakar products. The process included professional product photography, banner design, preparation of a digital product catalog, and the production of short promotional videos. A total of 25 promotional posts were created during the program period, consisting of 15 photo posts, 5 banners, and 5 short reels.

The results showed measurable improvements in product exposure. Within the first month after launching the account, the number of followers increased to 320, with an average of 50–70 interactions (likes and comments) per post. Furthermore, several new customers reported discovering the product via Instagram, leading to an estimated 25% increase in weekly sales compared to the pre-program baseline. These outcomes demonstrate that digital content publication directly contributed to expanding market reach and attracting new consumer segments, especially in the Tulungagung and Trenggalek areas.

The positive responses from the public, coupled with tangible evidence of increased engagement and sales, indicate that digital marketing assistance is not only feasible for rural MSMEs but also has the potential to significantly improve business sustainability and competitiveness.

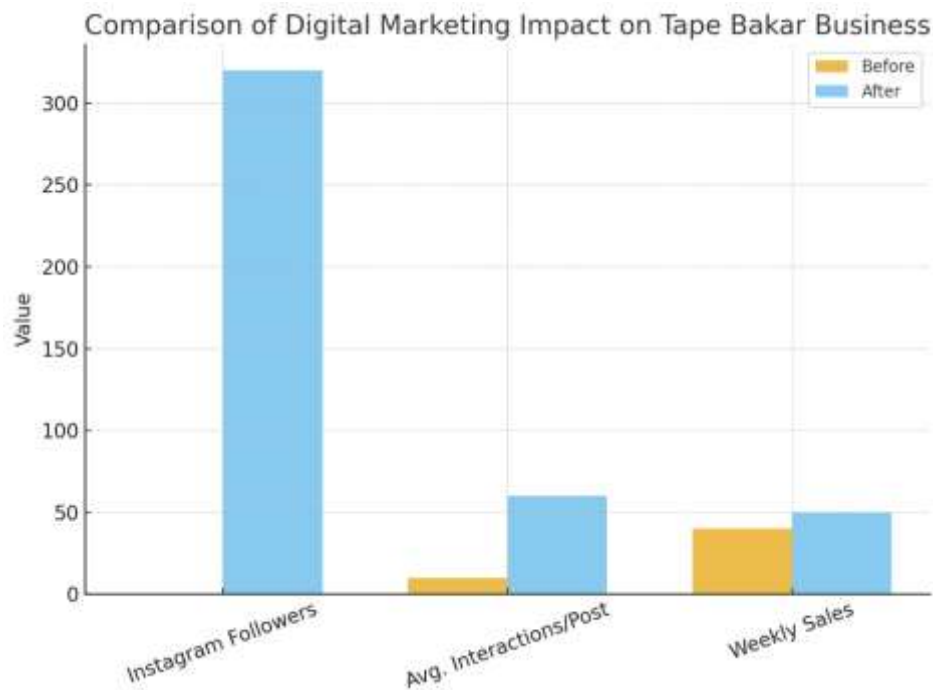


Figure 1. Comparison of Digital Marketing Impact on Tae Bakar Business

This graph shows a significant increase in the number of Instagram followers, average interactions per post, and weekly sales after mentoring.

Discussion

This service activity demonstrates that digital marketing, when properly supported, is highly effective in increasing public awareness of local brands and expanding the market reach of MSMEs. The case of Tape Bakar under Ms. Khasanah in Melis Village shows how social media (especially Instagram) can serve as powerful tools for visually and interactively promoting local products. Visual promotional content—professional photos of products, engaging banners, short informative videos—proved instrumental in attracting potential customers and stimulating purchasing interest. These findings are in line with studies like *Digital Marketing Drives MSME Sales Growth in Indonesia* which found that digital promotion significantly increases customer reach and sales (Sulistiyowati & Rahmawati, 2024). Also, *Integrating Sustainable Digital Marketing Into MSMEs* shows that creativity and content quality are central to successful MSME digital marketing strategies (Waruwu, 2023).

Importantly, this activity confirms the value of intensive assistance to business actors. Managing social media and producing quality content requires more than just access to tools—it demands specific skills, consistent training, and ongoing support. The mentoring provided by KKN students was crucial during the early stages of implementation, bridging skills gaps and helping with aspects such as content planning, design, posting schedules, and customer engagement. Comparable community-based trainings in Indonesia have reflected similar needs: for example, *Optimizing Marketing Strategies for MSMEs through Digital Marketing Training in Sleman Regency* demonstrated that hands-on guidance in content creation and platform management boosts confidence and practical know-how among MSME owners (Afandi et al., 2024).

However, for long-term sustainability, business actors like Ms. Khasanah need encouragement to independently sustain, evolve, and assess their digital marketing strategies. This includes implementing scheduling discipline, content calendars, analytics (tracking post-reach, engagement, conversion), and adapting to changes in platform algorithms. Evidence from *Implementation Gaps and Their Impact on Digital Capability and MSME Performance in Banjarbaru, Indonesia* shows that digital literacy, infrastructure, and ongoing capability are strongly associated with better MSME performance; but gaps in usage (such as digital bookkeeping, or regular platform usage) weaken impact when not addressed (Surti, 2025).

There remain definite areas for further development. For instance, adopting e-commerce platforms (beyond social media) could open additional sales channels. Similarly, integrating Search Engine Optimization (SEO) features into product listings or websites, partnering with local influencers or culinary communities, and leveraging marketplace platforms are all possible. In many contexts, such strategies have been successful. A study *The Impact of Digital Economy on MSME Growth in Rural Areas: A Qualitative Study on E-Commerce and Fintech* (JPOME, 2024) documents how combining e-commerce and fintech tools expands reach and facilitates transaction flows for rural MSMEs, though infrastructure and literacy remain barriers (Willem et al., 2024).

Socio-economically, the impact of the program extends beyond Ms. Khasanah's business. Increased exposure and sales can generate spillover effects: improved cash flow, potential hiring or family labor support, increased productivity with reinvestment, and inspiration for other local MSMEs to follow similar paths. Evidence from *The Impact of the Digital Divide on MSMEs' Productivity in Indonesia* shows that MSMEs with better access to digital tools and infrastructure tend to outperform

similar businesses without such access (Lukas & Hasudungan, 2024). Thus, the program in Melis Village acts as a catalyst, not just for individual business improvement, but for broader community economic resilience.

Yet, for a fully critical appraisal, the narrative must acknowledge obstacles. First, internet access remains uneven: slower connectivity or data costs can constrain business owners from regularly updating content or responding promptly to customer messages. Second, human resource limitations: individuals may lack experience with visual design, video editing, or content planning. Third, post-program sustainability: once external support (e.g., from KKN or students) wanes, businesses may revert to offline or traditional methods if not fully confident or resourced to maintain digital presence. Similar issues are documented in *The Role of Digital Marketing Strategy in the Development of MSMEs in Jakarta*, where barriers like technical skills, infrastructure, and cost hindered consistent implementation (Zukari & Aryanto, 2025).

In light of these, comparison with previous literature helps locate this program's contribution. Unlike programs that merely provide one-off training or focus only on content creation, this intervention included content production, platform creation (Instagram account), mentoring, and direct assistance—mirroring best practices seen in *Digital Communication and Literacy for MSME Empowerment: Evidence from a Rural Digital Village in Indonesia*, where market reach and product presentation improved significantly when all these elements were combined (Nugroho et al., 2025). Also, the increased satisfaction and visible community response reinforce conclusions from *The Role of Digital Platforms in Increasing MSME's Sales in Makassar*—where platform use correlated with higher consumer interest and demand (Pasolo et al., 2023).

Policy implications are clear and important:

1. For MSMEs: It is essential to build capacity in content planning, analytics, and consistent online presence. MSMEs should be encouraged to adopt e-commerce and SEO strategies, and leverage both visual and interactive media to build trust and engagement.
2. For Village Governments: Develop infrastructure support (internet connectivity, mobile data affordability), facilitate digital literacy workshops, and provide shared spaces or hubs where resources (cameras, editing tools, etc.) can be accessed.

3. For Educational Institutions/Universities: Continue community service programs like KKN as platforms for capacity building, technical mentoring, and bridging academic expertise with grassroots business practice. Also, support research that tracks data over time for measuring sustainability and impact.

Furthermore, to ensure the durability of the results, the program should adopt evaluation mechanisms such as periodic follow-ups, post-program assessments of follower growth, engagement metrics, sales data, and consumer feedback. Incorporation of local collaborations with influencer networks or culinary associations could help maintain momentum. Funding or policy mechanisms (village budgets, cooperative programs, or MSME support funds) may help sustain or scale such efforts.

In conclusion, the Melis Village digital marketing service demonstrates substantial and practical gains: increased brand awareness, improved promotional content, expanded reach, and positive economic spillovers. When compared with similar interventions in other rural settings, the integrated approach of training + mentoring + content production offers a model of empowerment that addresses both technical and strategic aspects of digital marketing. Overcoming obstacles and institutionalizing support are necessary to convert these gains into sustainable, long-term benefits.

Conclusion

Community service activities in Melis Village have successfully enhanced the understanding and skills of Ms. Khasanah, the Tape Bakar business actor, in utilizing digital marketing. By applying the ABCD approach, this program not only identified local potential but also designed strategies that effectively improved product visibility through the creation of social media accounts, the production of creative promotional content, and intensive mentoring. The increased exposure of Tape Bakar products has begun to translate into higher sales, which, although not yet measured quantitatively in this report, indicates the tangible benefits of digital marketing in supporting household economic sustainability. Beyond the immediate outcomes, this program carries important practical implications for MSMEs. The ability to leverage digital platforms enables rural businesses to reach new markets beyond their local area, build stronger brand awareness, and strengthen consumer trust. For the community, the adoption of digital marketing also provides a model for integrating tradition with modern technology, showing how local products can remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. To ensure long-term sustainability, it is recommended that the

village establish a Digital MSME Center as a hub for training, consultation, and shared resources in digital promotion. Furthermore, partnerships between village governments, universities, and related agencies should be institutionalized to provide continuous mentoring and ensure that innovations introduced through community service can be maintained and scaled up. This synergy between tradition and innovation through digital technology not only contributes to the resilience of household economies but also serves as a replicable model for rural economic empowerment.

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