

Developing the Village Economy: The Role of Community Service Programs in Creating Digital Technology-Based Entrepreneurial Villages

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Abstract: Village economic development is a crucial pillar in strengthening the national economic structure, particularly through the development of entrepreneurship based on local potential and digital technology. This article examines the role of the Community Service Program (KKN) in driving the economy of Gedangan Village through digital entrepreneurship training and mentoring, particularly for pottery artisans and MSMEs. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with participatory methods, involving observation, interviews, and documentation throughout the training process. The results indicated that limited digital literacy and the mindset of entrepreneurs were key obstacles to village economic development. However, through digital marketing training conducted by KKN students, the community demonstrated enthusiasm and improved skills in marketing products online. The program established an official village social media account as a means of product promotion and opened the door to further training in video content creation. Thus, KKN's role has proven effective in strengthening the capacity of village entrepreneurs towards a sustainable digital economic ecosystem.

Introduction

Village economic development is an integral part of strengthening the national economy. Villages are not only centers of natural resource production but also hold significant potential for developing a local entrepreneurial sector based on local wisdom. However, this potential is often underutilized due to low entrepreneurial literacy and limited access to information technology (Sari & Nugroho, 2021). Amidst the

development of the digital economy, integrating technology into village economic activities is an urgent need to ensure villages are not left behind in the digital transformation. Once a business is running, it is necessary to find ways to improve and expand it. To improve and expand a business, one of the necessary factors is reliable marketing, as entrepreneurship requires creativity and innovation when marketing a product or service. Without mature and reliable marketing, a business can experience setbacks or failure, especially in the current era of Industry 4.0 and the era of Society 5.0, where all sectors have begun to transform from conventional to digital. *Internet of Thing*(IoT) (Hendarsyah, 2020).

The diverse nature of digital marketing encompasses various channels such as social media, content marketing, and online advertising. Research (Kurdi et al., 2022) explains that these channels have been shown to significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Digital marketing technology has also been used to promote cultural heritage, with social media platforms like Shopee, TikTok Shop, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook being highly effective due to their ability to engage and attract audiences (Sono et al., 2023)

Gedangan Village is an area with local economic potential, particularly in the agricultural sector, processed household products (pottery), and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). However, entrepreneurs in this village still face challenges in marketing their products widely due to limited knowledge of technology, digital marketing, and effective business management (Rahmawati et al., 2020). Low digital literacy and access to technology training are major obstacles to the development of local MSMEs. Efforts to develop technology-based entrepreneurial villages require support from synergy between village officials, community members, and KKN students.

In this context, the role of the Community Service Program (KKN) is highly strategic. The collaborative work of KKN students from various study programs is expected to foster or enhance leadership skills in implementing the KKN work program. Students' leadership skills can develop through various experiences in carrying out their duties as leaders, such as increasing self-confidence, courage to speak in front of large audiences, developing better communication skills, gaining extensive experience, providing benefits to those in need, such as through community service, and demonstrating responsibility (Mardin et al., n.d.). KKN students, as agents of change, bring innovation, knowledge, and skills that can help village communities implement technology-based innovations, improve business systems, and build a digital entrepreneurship ecosystem (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Through training programs and digital integration into marketing systems, KKN not only serves as an educational platform for students but also a catalyst for empowering village communities to become economically independent and competitive in the digital era.

This community service article aims to describe the process and impact of

community service (KKN) activities in stimulating the economy of Gedangan Village by strengthening technology-based entrepreneurial capacity. The primary focus is on how KKN students become facilitators in establishing a technology-based entrepreneurial village, with the hope of improving local product competitiveness, business efficiency, and the overall well-being of the village community (Hakim et al., 2022).

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a participatory community service-based method, where KKN students were directly involved in the social and economic activities of Gedangan Village. This model was chosen because it aligns with the principles of community empowerment, which emphasize active collaboration between program implementers (students) and village residents as the primary subjects. Data collection techniques included field observations and data collection, interviews with MSMEs, and documentation of training and mentoring activities for digital account creation (Wulandari, R., & Hidayat, D., 2021). This information was then developed and implemented to achieve the objectives. To determine the effectiveness of each strategy, the relationship between theory and strategy was used (Holiseh & Izzatusholekha, 2023).

The research location was Gedangan Village, chosen because it has local economic potential that has not been optimally managed and because technology has not been widely implemented in community entrepreneurial activities. This location selection was supported by initial survey results indicating low involvement of MSMEs in digital platforms and limited access to technology-based entrepreneurship training (Lestari, F., & Sudrajat, A., 2020).

The main instruments for data collection were interview guides, observation sheets, and activity documentation, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The data obtained were categorized based on strategic themes such as digitalization challenges, changes in business patterns, and community responses to technology use. Validation was carried out through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the validity of the results (Dewi, N. K. P., & Susanto, B., 2019). The implementation of this program consists of several points, as follows:

1. Activity Planning

The planning process for this activity included preparing a permit from the village government and a pamphlet to inform the community about the digital marketing training on social media platforms for the future and well-being of MSMEs. After obtaining permission from the Gedangan village government, the next step was to develop a schedule of activities, starting with the presentation of digital marketing materials, then assisting with the creation of social media accounts, and also assisting in the creation of promotional videos for MSMEs in Gedangan village.

2. Implementation of Activities

This Community Service Program (KKN) program will begin in July 2024, starting with a visit to the Gedangan village hall and MSME businesses, particularly pottery artisans and sellers in Gedangan Village. The program will aim to convey the purpose of the program, and obtain permits from the Gedangan village government, prepare materials, and document the materials. The program will begin in July 2025.

3. Training Participants

This training offered opportunities for 20 targeted participants. These participants were selected from MSME representatives from each neighborhood unit (Rukun Tetangga), who coordinated directly with the Gedangan village head. As a result, the training was conducted with enthusiastic participants, ensuring its smooth running.

Discussion

A digital marketing training program for the economic development of Gedangan Village was held on Sunday, July 13, 2025, at Mts Muhammadiyah 29 Gedangan, involving all KKN students from Darul 'Ulum Islamic University, Lamongan, from various study programs. The results obtained during the implementation of this work program consisted of several stages, namely:

1. Identification through surveys and observations of MSME actors in villages, especially pottery sellers,
2. Socialization of training and mentoring in creating social media accounts, including digital literacy and the use of social media platforms for marketing local products,
3. Mentoring and evaluation, where students monitor to help the digital adaptation process and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention (Nugroho, T., & Mulyani, D., 2022).

The following is an explanation of the results and discussions obtained:

1. The first stage is a survey and observation of MSME actors

To obtain data for providing training to develop the Gedangan Village community's businesses, prior observations were conducted to obtain available resources and interviews with the village head and several pottery artisans. This was necessary because the training activities also required approval from the village government, which would later partner with the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), the institution that plays a technical role in the business process.



Figure 1. Survey and Observation on the Community and MSME Actors

Based on information obtained from the village head, village secretary, community leaders, and direct visits to business owners, it was discovered that Gedangan villagers prefer to go out of town to work, either as laborers or to start businesses, despite the village's promising potential. The low desire to stay in the village and start businesses is partly due to the difficulty of business development related to marketing, technology, and intense competition. Several business owners interviewed gave similar statements, and it turned out that the mindset of these business owners was limited to "as long as it's just enough to make ends meet," meaning they opened a business just to make ends meet, with no desire to expand their business with more employees that would ultimately reduce unemployment. It is important to find a solution to this problem so that the community has an entrepreneurial mindset and achieves a better level of well-being. If this continues, it is very likely that Gedangan villagers will be filled only by the older generation, and poverty levels will increase.

The next step is to inventory business potential to measure the extent to which existing businesses can be accepted by the market. It turns out that the pottery products produced by the community have been able to open markets outside the city and even abroad, such as Malaysia, and have been well received, only the transaction process is carried out conventionally.

The inventory revealed the need for digital-based marketing training for pottery artisans. The training was attended by the village head and village government officials, community leaders, and business owners in Gedangan Village.

2. Stages of Digital Marketing Training Socialization

Sosialisasi strategi digital marketing dalam bSocializing digital marketing strategies in the form of utilizing social media is very important because it can provide knowledge to MSMEs regarding the methods and stages in expanding consumer networks through the use of social media in marketing their products so that it can increase competitive advantages for MSMEs themselves.

The event began with a presentation for MSMEs on how to utilize social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, as effective advertising tools. The training covered a basic understanding of the platforms, how to create engaging content, and digital marketing techniques to increase awareness of village products.



Figure 2. Presentation of Digital Marketing Material

To determine the pottery artisans' understanding of the material, the event continued with an interactive question-and-answer session. Participants were given the opportunity to raise any misunderstandings, voice their opinions, and share their experiences and challenges in pottery production and marketing.



Figure 3. Q&A Session

The Q&A session revealed that the pottery artisans responded positively, understanding the importance of online marketing and even requesting further training in creating video product content for marketing on other social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and other marketplaces. The training was well-received and revitalized their entrepreneurial spirit. The program's success was evident in the creation of Gedangan Village's Instagram and TikTok accounts.



Figure 4. Group Photo Session with the Speaker

3. Steps to Create and Manage TikTok and Instagram Accounts

Following the digital marketing training material socialization, the workshop continued with assistance in creating social media accounts for the Gedangan village platforms TikTok and Instagram, and continued with the creation of videos about MSME products in the village, particularly focusing on MSME pottery products. In this case, we assisted in creating product videos to be sold on social media. By utilizing social media platforms and websites, it is hoped that products from Gedangan village can reach a wider audience, attract the attention of new buyers, and strengthen competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. With this activity, it is hoped that local MSMEs can further develop and become an integral part of the regional economy. This activity also reflects the commitment of Darul Ulum Islamic University Lamongan to supporting community development and building mutually beneficial partnerships between academics and local business actors.



Figure 5. Assistance in Creating Social Media Accounts

Conclusion

Developing the economy in Gedangan Village through a digital technology-based entrepreneurial approach has proven effective in increasing the participation of local businesses, particularly pottery artisans. Low digital literacy and a conventional business mindset were key challenges identified during initial observations. Through community service (KKN) activities, students successfully facilitated digital marketing training that introduced marketing concepts and practices through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The training results demonstrated a positive response from the community, marked by increased awareness of the importance of business digitalization and the creation of official social media accounts to promote village products. This activity not only improved the community's technical skills in digital marketing but also encouraged a shift in mindset toward more competitive entrepreneurship.

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