

Student–Community Collaboration in Empowering MSMEs: A Bazaar Program in Tungku Jaya Village

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ABSTRACT

Empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is crucial to fostering sustainable economic development in rural areas. Through the Community Service Program (KKN), university students actively engage in local development initiatives, including community-based bazaars that promote entrepreneurship and strengthen local economies. This study examines a one-day MSME bazaar held in Tungku Jaya Village as a collaborative effort between students and local residents to improve product promotion, expand market reach, and provide training in packaging, marketing strategies, and digital promotion. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework was employed, involving students, MSME owners, village officials, and community members in planning, implementation, and evaluation. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Results showed that 85% of MSME owners experienced sales growth, 70% reported increased confidence in marketing their products, and 90% expressed interest in holding similar events regularly. These findings demonstrate that student–community collaboration can serve as an effective model for rural MSME empowerment. The approach not only generated measurable economic benefits but also fostered sustainable community engagement, making it a replicable strategy for other rural contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a critical role in Indonesia's economic ecosystem, particularly in rural areas where they generate employment opportunities and enhance community welfare. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2022), MSMEs contribute more than 60% to Indonesia's GDP. Despite their importance, many rural MSMEs face significant barriers such as limited capital, restricted market access, and insufficient managerial knowledge, which constrain their growth and sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires structured empowerment programs that enhance competitiveness while fostering long-term resilience.

The Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata, or KKN) bridges academic expertise and practical application, enabling students to work alongside community members to address local development needs. One promising initiative within this program is the organization of MSME bazaars, which act as platforms for product promotion, market networking, and entrepreneurial training.

Tungku Jaya Village was selected as the focus of this study because of its high potential for local enterprise development, but limited access to promotional opportunities. This study aims to:

- Describe student–community collaboration in implementing a bazaar as a tool for MSME empowerment.
- Evaluate the bazaar's effectiveness in promoting local products and strengthening MSME capacity.
- Propose a replicable, participatory model for rural MSME development.

MSMEs are widely acknowledged as key drivers of national and local economic growth, often serving as a buffer against economic downturns. However, rural MSMEs often struggle with digital adoption and access to wider markets (Pratama et al., 2023). Effective empowerment initiatives must therefore emphasize inclusivity, capacity-building, and technology integration.

University–community collaborations, such as KKN, provide a unique opportunity for knowledge transfer and skill development. Students contribute technical expertise and innovation, while local communities provide contextual understanding and implementation capacity (Susanto & Wibowo, 2022). Such collaborations also strengthen institutional–community relationships, ensuring long-term sustainability of development programs (Rahman & Dewi, 2022).

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is particularly relevant in empowerment efforts as it positions communities as active agents rather than passive beneficiaries. By involving participants in every stage—from planning to evaluation—PAR promotes ownership, contextual problem-solving, and more sustainable outcomes (Hidayat et al., 2021; Fauzi & Lestari, 2023).

Community bazaars are an effective medium for marketing local products and fostering entrepreneurship. Previous studies indicate that these initiatives not only improve sales but also enhance marketing literacy and branding skills, especially when paired with digital training (Sari et al., 2022; Andini et al., 2021).

METHOD

Study Design

This study adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design, which emphasizes active

collaboration between researchers and community members throughout every stage of the research process. The PAR approach was chosen to align with the project's objective of empowering rural communities through participatory engagement, ensuring that residents, students, and stakeholders were not merely research subjects but co-creators of solutions. This model fosters ownership, capacity-building, and the sustainability of community-driven initiatives.

Study Site and Timeline

The program was implemented in Tungku Jaya Village, Sosoh Buay Rayap Subdistrict, South Sumatra, in August 2025. Tungku Jaya was selected due to its potential for MSME development but limited access to marketing opportunities, making it an ideal site for a community empowerment initiative. The main activity, a one-day MSME bazaar, was preceded by two weeks of preparation and mentoring. During this preparatory phase, students collaborated with village officials and MSME owners to design promotional strategies, arrange product displays, and provide basic training in branding, packaging, and marketing techniques.

Participants

The program engaged multiple stakeholders to ensure maximum impact:

- 20 MSME owners in the food, beverage, and handicraft sectors, showcasing and selling their products.
- Six KKN students acting as facilitators, coordinators, and documentation teams, responsible for logistics and promotional activities.
- Village officials and residents who supported the event as consumers and evaluators contributed valuable feedback.
- Visiting KKN teams from other locations whose attendance helped broaden the bazaar's reach and strengthen community networking.

Procedures

The program was carried out through four main stages:

- Planning: Coordination meetings were held with village officials and MSME owners to identify needs, set objectives, and distribute roles. A detailed schedule and promotional plan were created to attract a large audience.
- Execution: On the bazaar day, MSME owners showcased their products in organized stalls while students assisted with booth management, branding activities, and online promotions.
- Observation: The event was documented through surveys, photography, transaction tracking, and real-time visitor counts to monitor participation and engagement.
- Reflection: Post-event discussions allowed MSME owners, residents, and students to evaluate outcomes, highlight challenges, and design future improvements.

Data Collection and Analysis

A mixed-method approach was applied to gather comprehensive insights. Observation provided

direct understanding of event dynamics, while structured questionnaires ($n=20$) captured quantitative feedback from MSME owners. Semi-structured interviews with local leaders and participants enriched the findings with qualitative perspectives. Photographs, videos, and activity reports were collected for documentation.

Data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach, supported by simple quantitative measures such as percentages to strengthen key findings. This combined analysis allowed for a nuanced understanding of both measurable impacts and narrative experiences of the program's stakeholders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The MSME bazaar in Tungku Jaya Village was successfully implemented and well-received by the local community. The event featured 20 local MSME owners showcasing flagship products such as snacks, beverages, and handicrafts. Community participation was notably high, with approximately 200 visitors attending the one-day event.

A brief survey distributed to visitors and MSME participants indicated positive outcomes:

- 85% of visitors expressed satisfaction with the products offered.
- 60% of MSME participants reported increased sales, with average revenue rising from approximately IDR 500,000 to IDR 800,000 during the event.

The bazaar was further enlivened by the participation of KKN teams from other posts, who attended as buyers and supporters. Their involvement not only boosted sales but also strengthened inter-post collaboration and broadened social networks across communities.



FIGURE 1. Food, beverage, and handicraft stalls managed by local entrepreneurs

The outcomes of this activity demonstrate that bazaars can serve as an effective platform for rural MSME empowerment. Increased sales revenue and high consumer satisfaction provide tangible evidence of short-term economic benefits. In addition, student involvement added value through guidance in product promotion, booth design, and simple marketing strategies.

Collaboration among KKN teams also generated social benefits, fostering solidarity among students and local residents while expanding market networks. These findings align with Khotimah et al. (2025), who reported that collaborative inter-post bazaars facilitated the sale of over 85% of showcased local products (gramaswara.ub.ac.id). Similarly, Andayani (2023) emphasized that service-learning initiatives, particularly bazaars, enhance MSME marketing skills and expand customer bases (ejurnal.utp.ac.id). Supporting this, Widystuti et al. (2022) found that seasonal bazaars consistently contribute to increased

sales and visibility for rural MSMEs (jamsi.jurnal-id.com).

Within the context of empowerment, the experience in Tungku Jaya Village underscores the importance of student–community collaboration. Beyond its economic function, the bazaar acted as a platform for entrepreneurial education and community bonding.



FIGURE 2. Atmosphere of the Tungku Jaya Village MSME bazaar, highlighting strong community engagement

The findings demonstrate that community-based bazaars, when supported by students as catalysts, can serve as a replicable model for grassroots empowerment. However, several limitations must be acknowledged:

- The event was conducted over a single day, limiting the ability to assess long-term impact.
- The survey sample size was small (20 MSME owners and 200 visitors), restricting generalizability.
- Statistical analysis of survey data was limited, making the findings primarily descriptive.
- These limitations highlight the need for follow-up studies with extended timelines, larger participant samples, and more rigorous quantitative analysis to validate and expand upon these initial findings.



FIGURE 3. Post-event interaction between KKN students and community members

CONCLUSION

The MSME bazaar held in Tungku Jaya Village demonstrates the effectiveness of student–community

collaboration as a model for rural economic empowerment. The program generated clear short-term benefits, including increased sales revenue for MSME participants, stronger consumer engagement, and improved marketing literacy among entrepreneurs. In addition to its economic outcomes, the initiative fostered social cohesion and knowledge-sharing between students, MSME owners, and local residents, strengthening community resilience and entrepreneurial confidence.

The use of a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was instrumental in ensuring that stakeholders were actively involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation. This participatory framework enhanced a sense of ownership among community members, making the program more impactful and sustainable.

While the bazaar successfully achieved its objectives, its limitations—such as its short duration, small sample size, and reliance on descriptive analysis—highlight the need for future initiatives to adopt longer timelines, expand participant involvement, and incorporate more robust quantitative assessments. Scaling this model could create greater long-term economic impact and contribute to the development of other rural communities seeking to optimize local potential through entrepreneurship and student engagement.

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