

Strengthening Online Marketing Skills and Digital Literacy for Youth-led Poultry MSMEs in Bojong Tengah Village

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ABSTRACT

This community service program in Bojong Tengah Village aims to strengthen rural youth entrepreneurship by integrating training in laying hen cultivation with digital marketing for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This initiative is a response to the limited and informal use of digital platforms, where sales rely solely on word of mouth despite increasing access to smartphones and social media. Using a participatory approach, this program combines dialogue-based needs assessments, practice-based workshops, and post-training mentoring that focuses on optimizing WhatsApp Business accounts and social media. The impact of the program on digital marketing practices was an increase in the average score in six aspects, namely account profile, product photos, captions, content variations, posting consistency, and feature use. Prior to the program, average scores ranged from 1.5 to 2.0 (low – moderate), indicating an untidy profile, weak product visuals, and minimal use of features. After training and mentoring, scores increased to 2.9–3.5 (medium–high), with the highest improvements in product photos and account profiles, followed by text and content variety. These results indicate a shift from informal sales towards more structured and digitally supported microenterprise management among rural youth.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital economy in the last decade has encouraged micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to transform from conventional business patterns toward technology-based ecosystems. Digitalisation is not only related to the use of devices or applications, but also to the digital literacy skills of business actors in understanding, processing, and utilising information strategically (Hermansyah et al., 2025; Queiroz et al., 2022). Several studies show that the adoption of digital technology and the use of online platforms have become key determinants of competitiveness and business sustainability for MSMEs in a knowledge-based economy (Wardana et al., 2023). In this context, digital literacy is understood as a set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable MSME actors to participate productively in digital spaces, rather than merely “being able to use” basic applications (Arninda et al., 2025; Diptyana et al., 2022).

Various international and national studies emphasise that digital literacy is positively related to MSME performance and sustainability. Research in Indonesia shows that financial literacy and digital literacy make a significant contribution to the performance of micro and small enterprises, particularly in financing decisions and expansion strategies (Diptyana et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2023). Similar findings are evident in a study in Malang City, where digital literacy and economic literacy are strongly correlated with the ability of MSMEs to maintain their businesses during times of crisis (Arninda et al., 2025). Other studies stress that low levels of digital literacy make business actors struggle to take advantage of market opportunities, access policy information, and optimise online marketing channels (Reynara & Pangestuty, 2023). These findings indicate that strengthening digital literacy cannot be viewed merely as an additional technical training activity, but rather as a strategic intervention to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of MSMEs.

At the same time, the use of social media and digital marketing opens up major opportunities for MSMEs to reach wider markets at relatively low cost. Research on social media marketing strategies in MSMEs shows that platform choice, content consistency, and closeness to online communities contribute significantly to business performance (Dos Santos & Duffett, 2021; Wibawa et al., 2022). Community service activities focusing on digital marketing training in various regions have also reported improvements in MSME actors’ ability to create content, manage business accounts, and use WhatsApp Business, Instagram, or marketplaces as promotional channels (Saputri et al., 2024; Tarmizi & Damayanti, 2025). Community-based digital business training that is practice-oriented enables participants to directly modify promotional strategies and product displays, so that competency changes can be immediately reflected in everyday marketing behaviour (Tarmizi & Damayanti, 2025).

Beyond technical skills, several scholars argue that digital literacy for MSMEs should also incorporate elements of 21st-century literacy, such as critical, creative, and communicative competencies. These dimensions support business actors in reading market opportunities, interpreting data, and crafting brand narratives that are relevant to their target audiences, rather than merely uploading products without a clear communication strategy (Angela et al., 2025). In addition, digital transformation in the MSME domain increasingly involves business legality and identity. Programmes that facilitate Business Identification Numbers (Nomor Induk Berusaha, NIB), strengthen branding, and promote the use of platforms such as Google Maps have shown that the combination of business identity and digital visibility can increase consumer trust and market access (Salim et al., 2025).

Bojong Tengah Village is one of the areas with fairly diverse MSME activities, including home-based culinary businesses, handicrafts, and processed products. However, as in many other villages, a

proportion of MSME actors still rely on conventional marketing and limited social networks, with relatively low digital literacy. This condition has the potential to limit market reach, make them vulnerable to business-related disinformation, and hinder the utilisation of digital facilities provided by the government and private sector. In recent years, youth groups in Bojong Tengah have begun developing laying hen cultivation as a potential microenterprise, but their marketing practices remain largely offline and informal. When compared to findings from the literature on the role of digital literacy in MSME performance, the gap between the economic potential of Bojong Tengah Village and the actual use of digital technology appears quite evident (Hermansyah et al., 2025; Arninda et al., 2025).

A number of community service programmes related to digital marketing show that practical training combined with mentoring can produce deeper changes in MSME marketing practices. Digital marketing training in various villages reports increased participant capacity in designing visual content, managing social media accounts, and using features such as catalogues, status updates, or stories for promotion (Saputri et al., 2024; Tarmizi & Damayanti, 2025). Literature on the role of digital literacy for MSMEs also emphasises that effective interventions generally combine training, mentoring, and policy support, so that business actors have the opportunity to try, fail, reflect, and refine their marketing strategies (Athia et al., 2023; Hermansyah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, relatively few programmes explicitly integrate a literacy perspective understood as critical, creative, and communicative competence into the design of digital marketing training and mentoring at the village level, particularly in agriculture-based youth enterprises such as poultry microenterprises.

Based on the above discussion, there is a clear gap between the urgency of strengthening MSME digital literacy and the availability of programmes that integratively combine training, hands-on practice, and community-based online marketing mentoring in rural contexts. Many studies highlight the importance of digital literacy and social media marketing for MSME performance, but only a few examine how such transformations are contextually designed and implemented in villages with particular socio-economic characteristics, such as Bojong Tengah Village (Arninda et al., 2025; Reynara & Pangestuty, 2023). Therefore, the programme “Strengthening Digital Literacy and Online Marketing Skills for Youth-led Poultry MSMEs in Bojong Tengah Village” is directed at addressing this need by combining digital literacy strengthening, capacity development in online marketing, and intensive mentoring for youth involved in laying hen cultivation. This article aims to describe the design, implementation, and impact of the programme on changes in knowledge, skills, and digital marketing practices of youth-led MSMEs in Bojong Tengah Village, as well as to propose a model of digital literacy strengthening for rural MSMEs that can be replicated in similar contexts.

METHOD

The community service programme was implemented in Bojong Tengah Village and focused on youth-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in laying hen cultivation as a potential income-generating activity. The main participants were rural youth who had joined the poultry microenterprise group and were responsible for managing production and marketing activities. Participants were selected purposively, namely, youth who were actively involved in the laying hen initiative, willing to follow the full series of activities, and interested in developing digital marketing skills. In total, 20 youth participated in the programme.

A participatory, practice-based approach was applied through a combination of training and intensive mentoring. The implementation consisted of four main stages: preparation, training, practice, and mentoring. In the preparation stage, the team coordinated with village authorities and youth representatives, conducted a simple needs assessment (focusing on current marketing practices and

digital literacy levels), and designed training materials adapted to the context of poultry-based MSMEs. The training stage included (1) basic technical reinforcement on laying hen management, and (2) the delivery of materials on digital literacy and online marketing, covering the use of platforms such as WhatsApp Business and social media, as well as basic principles for creating promotional content (product photos, captions, and posting routines).

In the practice stage, participants engaged in hands-on activities to optimise their business profiles and create initial promotional posts under facilitator guidance. They were introduced to six key indicators of digital marketing practice: account profile, product photos, captions, content variety, posting consistency, and use of platform features. For each indicator, participants were supported to improve concrete elements such as profile completeness, visual quality of product photos, clarity and persuasiveness of captions, variation in content types, regularity of posting, and the use of features such as status/story and catalogues.

Subsequently, mentoring was conducted periodically, both face-to-face and via messaging groups, to help participants revise their content, plan posting strategies, and resolve technical obstacles that emerged in real practice. Data on the impact of the programme were collected through observation of participant engagement, brief question-and-answer sessions regarding their understanding and perceived ease of application, and documentation of digital content (screenshots and links to business accounts). In addition, the six digital marketing indicators were rated using a simple 4-point scale (1 = very low, 4 = high) before and after the programme, based on a joint review by the facilitation team of the participants' actual online accounts. The average scores for each indicator in the pre- and post-programme conditions were then summarised descriptively and visualised in a bar chart (Figure 3) to illustrate changes in youth digital marketing practices

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The community service activities in Bojong Tengah Village were attended by youth from RW 02 who were members of a start-up business group cultivating laying hens. In the initial stage, the team held an informal but participatory discussion with youth and community representatives on the terrace of a local community leader's house to map their needs, constraints, and business potential. This atmosphere is illustrated in Figure 1, where youth, village officials, and the service team sit together to determine the most appropriate form of training for their context. The discussion revealed that most youth did not yet have a complete understanding of laying hen business management or basic marketing strategies, and that selling practices were still largely conventional and unstructured.



FIGURE 1. Initial Discussion and Programme Socialization with RW 02 Youth in Bojong Tengah Village

The training component of the programme then focused on two main aspects: (1) strengthening technical knowledge of laying hen cultivation, and (2) strengthening digital literacy to support the marketing of eggs as youth-led MSME products. After an indoor explanation session, participants were invited to observe directly at the poultry shed to see how the material was applied in the field, including cage arrangement, feed management, and environmental hygiene. Figure 2 shows the service team together with the youth coordinator and participant representatives in front of the laying hen coop, marking a shared commitment to develop this business as one of the productive economic bases for youth in Bojong Tengah Village.



FIGURE 2. Service Team and Youth Participants at the Laying Hen Cultivation Site in Bojong Tengah Village

The impact of the programme on youth digital marketing practices is summarised in Figure 3, which presents a bar chart comparing average scores before and after the programme on six indicators: (1) account profile, (2) product photos, (3) captions, (4) content variety, (5) posting consistency, and (6) use of features. These scores were derived from a 4-point rating (1 = very low, 4 = high) based on a joint review by the facilitation team of participants' actual online accounts. Before the programme, average scores for each indicator ranged from 1.5 to 2.0 (low-medium category), indicating that youth did not

yet have well-organised business profiles, sufficiently attractive product photos, or optimal use of platform features. After training and mentoring, the average scores increased to a range of 2.9–3.5 (medium–high category). The largest improvements were observed in product photos and account profiles, followed by captions and content variety.

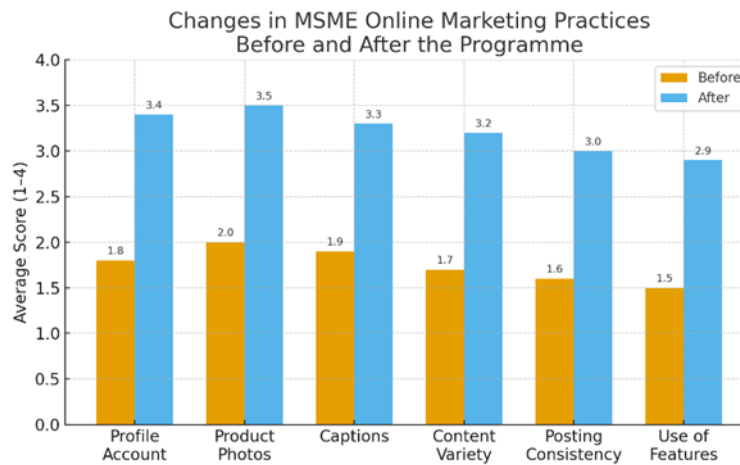


FIGURE 3. Changes in Digital Marketing Practices: Youth-Led Poultry in Bojong Village Before and After the Program

More specifically, participants began to adjust the appearance of their WhatsApp Business and other social media accounts by using consistent business names, posting profile photos representing eggs or coops, and adding short business descriptions and clear contact information. Product photos that were previously taken casually with poor lighting started to be replaced with images that had cleaner backgrounds and more appealing shooting angles. Captions, which initially contained only prices or minimal information, gradually became more informative by including product advantages, stock availability, and simple calls to action such as “Order now” or “Ready to deliver in the Bojong Tengah area.”

Post-training mentoring further encouraged youth to upload content more consistently and to experiment with additional features such as status or stories for quick promotion and product catalogues to display different egg package options. This development is reflected in the increased scores for posting consistency and use of features in Figure 3. Although not all participants were able to maintain a fully stable posting frequency every week, there was a clear emerging tendency to use digital platforms as regular promotional spaces. Some participants also reported receiving orders from new contacts who learned about their business through social media posts.

Overall, the quantitative results depicted in the bar chart and the qualitative evidence from observations and photographic documentation indicate that the programme successfully enhanced both technical knowledge of laying hen cultivation and digital marketing practices among youth in Bojong Tengah Village. Active youth participation, the supportive discussion atmosphere (Figure 1), and direct mentoring at the business site (Figure 2) appear to be key factors that strengthened programme acceptance and initiated a broader transformation of youth-led poultry microenterprises into digitally supported MSMEs.

Discussion

The findings of this community service program at Bojong Tengah Village demonstrate that integrating technical training in laying hen cultivation with digital marketing literacy can significantly

improve the entrepreneurial capabilities of rural youth. The increase in participants' scores across six digital marketing indicators, profile completeness, product photos, captions, content variety, posting consistency, and feature utilization, shows a shift in mindset from informal selling practices toward more structured micro-enterprise management. Studies show that such programmes enable MSME actors to improve the quality of visual product presentation, optimise their social media profiles, and apply platform features such as catalogues, stories, and status updates more strategically (Sharabati et al., 2024; Tafesse & Wien, 2018). These findings resonate with the outcomes of the present programme in Bojong Tengah Village, where participating youth demonstrated significant progress in account profile management, product photo quality, caption development, and content variation after the training.

Research on digital literacy for small businesses also emphasises that impactful interventions typically adopt a multi-component approach that blends training, guided practice, and continuous mentoring. Such an approach allows MSME actors to experiment with digital tools, receive immediate feedback, and iteratively refine their marketing strategies (Erlanitasari et al., 2020; Nurlina et al., 2023). This pattern is evident in the post-training mentoring delivered to youth in Bojong Tengah Village, which encouraged them to maintain more consistent posting habits and begin exploring additional features on platforms such as WhatsApp Business and social media feeds.

In the agricultural and livestock sector, recent international studies specifically highlight the increasing relevance of digital tools for small-scale poultry farmers. Evidence from poultry communities in Tanzania, for example, shows that farmers who use social media platforms gain better access to market information, price updates, and customer networks compared to those relying only on conventional methods (Almasi et al., 2023). These studies support the idea that the adoption of digital marketing practices can expand economic opportunities for rural youth involved in livestock-based enterprises, including egg production.

Despite these promising developments, literature also notes that relatively few programmes explicitly integrate a broader literacy perspective, one that includes critical thinking, creativity, and communicative competence into the design of digital marketing training at the village level. As UNESCO (2006) emphasises, digital literacy for rural communities should not be limited to technical know-how but should empower individuals to understand audiences, craft persuasive messages, and critically evaluate their own communication strategies (UNESCO, 2006). The Bojong Tengah programme shows early signs of this integrative approach, as youth began producing more purposeful captions, aligning brand identity with product visuals, and experimenting with content strategies aimed at increasing engagement rather than merely "posting products".

Overall, the combination of technical poultry training, dialogue-based needs assessment, and digital marketing mentoring appears to foster both practical skills and communicative awareness among young entrepreneurs. The observed changes improved product photos, clearer business profiles, more consistent social media activity, and increased engagement, demonstrating that youth in Bojong Tengah Village are beginning to develop not only digital marketing competence but also a foundational literacy mindset necessary for sustaining digitally supported MSMEs in rural settings.

CONCLUSION

This community service programme in Bojong Tengah Village shows that integrating technical training in laying hen cultivation with digital marketing literacy can effectively strengthen the entrepreneurial capacity of rural youth. By focusing on six concrete indicators: account profile, product photos, captions, content variety, posting consistency, and feature utilisation, the programme was able to document a clear

shift from informal selling practices toward more structured, digitally supported micro-enterprise management. The increase in average scores from the low–medium range (1.5–2.0) to the medium–high range (2.9–3.5) across these indicators illustrates that youth participants not only acquired new knowledge, but also translated it into observable changes in their online business practices.

The findings further underscore the value of a multi-component, participatory approach that combines dialogue-based needs assessment, practice-oriented workshops, and continuous mentoring. Technical reinforcement on poultry management ensured that youth understood the production side of their business, while digital marketing training and mentoring helped them present their products more professionally, plan content more intentionally, and engage with customers through social media features such as status, stories, and catalogues. This combination appears to foster both practical skills and a foundational literacy mindset, critical, creative, and communicative, that is essential for sustaining youth-led poultry MSMEs in a digital economy.

At the same time, the programme has limitations. The number of participants was relatively small, the assessment relied on descriptive scores rather than more rigorous impact evaluation, and posting consistency remains a challenge for some youth due to time and resource constraints. Future initiatives could therefore expand the scale of participation, incorporate simple quantitative or mixed-method evaluation designs, and offer follow-up modules on branding, financial management, and collaborative content planning among youth groups. Even with these limitations, the Bojong Tengah experience provides a replicable model for rural community service programmes that aim to link technical agribusiness skills with digital literacy and online marketing, particularly for youth in livestock-based microenterprises.

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