

Empowering Women of the Karangpawitan Majelis Taklim Through Utilizing Digital-Based Local MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

Empowering women within the Majelis Taklim community and harnessing local digital-based MSMEs represent innovative and efficacious strategies aimed at enhancing women's welfare and economic autonomy. This approach not only fosters individual capacity development but also fortifies communities through digital-based marketing strategy training initiatives. Employing the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, the community service was executed within the Majelis Taklim Karangpawitan women's community, commencing with field transects in September, with training activities subsequently conducted in December 2022. The outcomes of this service endeavor can be delineated through the phases of activity planning, implementation, and evaluation. The service activities were bolstered by the participation of marketing experts who delivered training sessions on utilizing digital platforms for marketing purposes, enhancing skills in packaging goods attractively, and deploying digital platforms to market local products effectively. The overarching goal of this service intervention is to augment the creativity of the women's community, empowering them to produce innovative products, appealingly package them, label them appropriately, and market them via digital platforms. Ultimately, it is envisaged that these efforts will engender positive economic outcomes, thereby contributing to the overall welfare of the community.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the struggle period, women have sought freedom by gaining opportunities to improve their standard of living, ranging from achieving equality in education to obtaining decent work (Arif, 2019). Women's roles are multifaceted, encompassing not only being housewives but also participating in the workforce, thus playing roles in both the domestic sector and the public sector (Setyoningrum, 2020; Mannan et al., 2021). A woman's primary responsibility is to be a housewife and educate her children (Intan, 2014; Masitoh et al., 2021). The Prophet said, "A woman manages and is responsible for the affairs of her husband's house." Women, as mothers, are considered the first madrasa for their children (Tania et al., 2021). From this statement, it can be interpreted that women are not required to fully support the family economy by helping their husbands meet the family's needs. Islam positions women to remain largely at home. However, the Prophet also said that "the best thing a Muslim can do in his house is weaving," which explains that women can contribute to their families without being idle. There are specific criteria for work that Muslim women can do, namely work that does not involve immoral acts and does not tarnish family honor (Saleh, 2022). Women must also possess a high level of knowledge to cultivate a caring and sensitive attitude toward problems in their family environment and the wider community (Mannan et al., 2021).

Working women play a significant role in supporting the family economy. Arisandi (2015) and Novirensi (2018) have empirically demonstrated several benefits of working women, including enhancing self-quality, earning respect from family and society, maintaining economic stability, and preserving their quality through continuous productivity and skill improvement (Tania et al., 2021). Therefore, women demonstrate flexibility by effectively managing dual roles as both housewives and influential contributors to the external world (Wutsqah & Mukaddamah, 2023). Importantly, there is no prohibition against women working, and this right serves as a motivation for them to exhibit their creativity and fulfill their diverse needs (Rahman et al., 2021).

According to Sambodo (2016), women play a pivotal role in contributing to the family's economic well-being (Rahman et al., 2021). Their contributions encompass various facets, including increasing family and household income, enhancing the nutrition and health of family members, particularly children under five years old, and fostering family literacy in areas such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and management (Bambang Agus Windusancono & M. Daeni, 2022). In Indonesia, as per data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2021, female entrepreneurs dominate 64.5% of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Marini et al., 2022). Moreover, the Indonesian government, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2020), has effectively positioned women as key players in the creative economy, boasting a female participation rate of 56.62%. This not only creates avenues for women's involvement but also significantly contributes to Indonesia's GDP, amounting to 7.44%, equivalent to 922.59 trillion rupiah (Khairunnisa et al., 2022), thus underscoring the critical role of women in driving economic growth and stability.

The progress of the MSME sector, recognized as the backbone of many economies (Yuliani et al., 2024), underscores the importance of empowering MSMEs to stimulate employment opportunities and offer diverse economic services to communities. Such empowerment efforts are instrumental in resource equalization, income enhancement, fostering economic development, and bolstering national stability. Empowerment, as emphasized in various studies (Ulfiana et al., 2021), entails delegating power, authority, or control to individuals—particularly women—to govern themselves and their surroundings in alignment with their potential.

Women's empowerment represents a novel paradigm emphasizing person-centered, participative development traits, thereby enhancing sustainability. While interpretations of women's empowerment may vary, the overarching objective remains consistent: to cultivate power by encouraging, motivating, and raising awareness of potential, with endeavors aimed at fostering improved development. This new

paradigm of empowering women involves the cultivation of participatory principles, the reinforcement of sustainability, the cultivation of resilience, motivational efforts, encouragement, and heightened awareness of their potential for self-development in a more conducive direction. Women's empowerment serves as a critical focal point for building the fabric of national and state life, as well as for realizing governmental programs and community advancement across all spheres of life (Eryadini et al., 2021). MSMEs assume a crucial role in the economic landscape of many nations by generating employment opportunities, diversifying economic activities, and facilitating inclusive economic participation, particularly for women (Roekhudin et al., 2023).

Likewise, the women of *Majlis Taklim Karangpawitan*, most of whom manage home industry businesses traditionally, produce products that have the potential to increase the wealth of traditional culinary commodities in Karangpawitan. These products are traditional foods passed down from generation to generation. However, they face the obstacle of lacking skills in packaging and marketing their products. Currently, marketing is limited to the local community. On the one hand, the opportunity to expand the business is significant, as public interest in these products is high and they are in demand. On the other hand, local governments do not organize these products centrally by establishing MSMEs, which would help manage product marketing more effectively and improve the family economy.

Not all women affiliated with the *Majlis Taklim* possess internet connectivity, and a considerable portion lacks familiarity with technology or existing digital platforms, resulting in the continued promotion of traditional products. In an endeavor to revitalize the national economy, emphasis is placed on bolstering the productivity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). As posited by Kusjuniati, the government aims to digitalize 30 million MSMEs across Indonesia by 2030. However, a mere 25.6% of MSMEs have embraced the digital ecosystem, signifying that only 16.4 million MSMEs have been digitally facilitated by governmental initiatives (Kusjuniati, 2022). In the context of digital MSMEs, according to Bagale et al (2021), it is the application of digital technology in data processing in MSME business activities to increase productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. (Heryana et al., 2023).

A survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020 revealed that approximately 17.18% of the 16,277 e-commerce enterprises experienced favorable outcomes upon transitioning to digital platforms. Analysis indicates that transactions predominantly occur via the Internet. Women in Indonesia face a notable digital divide, with internet access levels standing at 46.87%, compared to 53.13% for men. Consequently, numerous women lack access to digital platforms for conducting trade transactions. Digital marketing, particularly through social media channels, furnishes enterprises with innovative and efficacious mechanisms to engage a broader consumer base. This approach not only enhances consumer visibility and interaction but also fosters sustainable business expansion by aligning with the evolving preferences and behaviors of digital consumers (Andriani et al., 2024; Ni Putu Natasya Amelia Putri & Ida Nyoman Basmantra, 2023).

Several research and service projects utilize digital platforms, such as Andriani's service project (2024), which explains that to advance the MSME sector, digital platforms must be utilized. It is very difficult for business entrepreneurs to develop their businesses, especially in utilizing the online market, packaging products, and showing creativity in packaging and processing products to make them innovative (Andriani et al., 2024). The results of Dwi & Rochmaniah's service project (2024) focused on utilizing social media to develop businesses for MSME managers (Jandhini et al., 2024). This shows that the service we carry out is an effort to build on the work of other service teams, aiming to create a prosperous society by managing digital-based MSMEs.

It is imperative to support women in *Majlis Taklim Karangpawitan* in their entrepreneurial transition toward digitalization to ensure their adaptation to evolving market dynamics. This assistance is essential to facilitate broader accessibility to their local products, aligning with the evolving consumer preferences.

Moreover, the assistance process must be meticulously tailored to meet the specific needs of these women entrepreneurs, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in fostering their digital transformation journey.

METHOD

The method employed in this service is Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Afandi, 2013), which aligns strategies with community needs, positioning facilitation over expertise. The service team manages partnerships with educational and business institutions, collaborating with stakeholders (Tameon et al., 2022). PAR serves as an alternative research approach in empowerment studies and societal actions, predicated on the belief that research should catalyze societal change rather than merely uncover truths. Prioritizing active community participation, PAR is deemed effective in community empowerment endeavors, with the potential to devise contextually relevant strategies (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020).

Community service activities were conducted within the Majelis Taklim Karangpawitan group in Garut Regency, West Java, with the focal events transpiring from December 7th to 8th, 2022. The assistance program encompassed training sessions spanning various themes, including digital-based marketing strategies, product packaging standards, and labeling protocols.

The implementation of Participatory Action Research commences with transect mapping, aiming to elucidate the social milieu and conditions within the assisted community. This participatory process facilitates the identification of geographical, demographic, cultural, and economic parameters. Data collection for this service endeavor was undertaken collaboratively among members of the local MSME business community in Karangpawitan.

According to Rahmat & Mirnawati (2020), Participatory Action Research comprises five cycles: To Know, To Understand, To Plan, To Action, and Reflection, executed within three phases: Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. The ensuing delineation illustrates the flow of Participatory Action Research implementation in this service endeavor:

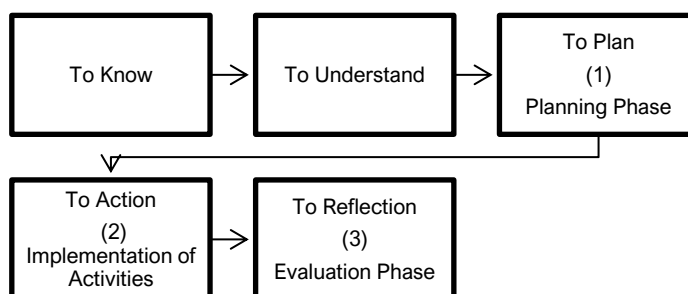


FIGURE 1. Cycles of Participatory Action Research (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020)

This research paradigm epitomizes an inclusive and collaborative partnership between researchers and participants, characterized by mutual respect and co-equal engagement in the research endeavor. Emphasizing active participation at every stage, from conceptualization to dissemination, this approach aims to bolster the validity, reliability, and generalizability of research outcomes. Through the implementation of community service utilizing the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, it is envisaged that a resilient community organization will be cultivated, empowering the community to instigate transformative changes more effectively, notably through the establishment of learning centers (Afandi, 2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Drawing from data gleaned through transect surveys involving numerous participants, it is evident that the economic endeavors of women within the Majelis Taklim congregation community in Karangpawitan

are predominantly spearheaded by industrious women aged 40-60 years. The recipients and focal points of the assistance initiative were meticulously chosen from among 7 Jamaah mosques situated across the Karangpawitan region of Garut. Presented below is a comprehensive enumeration of the Jamaah mosques alongside their corresponding schedules for Majelis Taklim women's recitation activities:

TABLE 1. The names of the Karangpawitan Taklim Majelis which are the objects of suppression

No	Village	Jami' Mosque Congregation	Regular Study Schedule
1	Sukaraja	Darul Ulum	Sunday, Monday
2	Tabrik	Al Barokah	Friday, every day at Ba'da Maghrib
3	Sukamanah	Al Hidayah	Friday, Tuesday
4	Bojong	Fathul Ulum	Sunday, Friday
5	Babakan Panembong	Al Dahlan	Saturday, Tuesday
6	Babakan Huni	Ar Rohman	Friday, Monday

(Village and Participants Monograph)

The Majelis Taklim congregation, the primary focus of assistance, predominantly comprises small and medium enterprises engaged in the culinary sector, specializing in the production and sale of traditional regional cuisine. The businesses cultivated by the Majelis Taklim community entail traditional fare that may have waned in familiarity among the millennial generation but remains highly esteemed and in demand among discerning patrons. Often characterized by limited availability, these distinctive culinary offerings are cherished for their rarity and are perceived as challenging to procure due to their niche market presence. The ensuing list enumerates the business products overseen by the Karangpawitan Majelis Taklim congregation:

TABLE 2. Distribution of Traditional Food Producers in the Majelis Taklim Karangpawitan Congregation

No	Village	Product
1	Tabrik, Sukaraja	Wajit, Angleng, Dodol, Ranggining, Ranggining, Peuyeum Ketan, Ciker, Jitrek
2	Bojong & BabakanHuni	Dodol, Opak, Kolontong, Ranggining, Angleng, Wajit,
3	Cihuni, Cijoho, Sukamanah	Sele Pisang, Kripik Pisang, Kripik umbi-umbian
4	Babakan Panembong	Kripik umbi-umbian, Opak, Kolontong, Angleng, wajit, Dodol
5	Cidahu	Keripik umbi-umbian, opak, ranggining, Angleng, wajit
6	Suci Kaler	Dodol, wajit, angleng, renggining, renggining, sale pisang

(Village and Participants Monograph)

The image below depicts the activities of women belonging to the Majelis Taklim Karangpawitan in managing their businesses:



(a)



(b)



FIGURE 1. (a), (b), (c). and (d)The activities of female entrepreneurs in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) at the Majelis Taklim Karangpawitan.

Following the team's investigation, it can be deduced that the management of women's businesses in Karangpawitan faces several challenges. These encountered issues are delineated in the subsequent problem tree diagram (Figure 2):

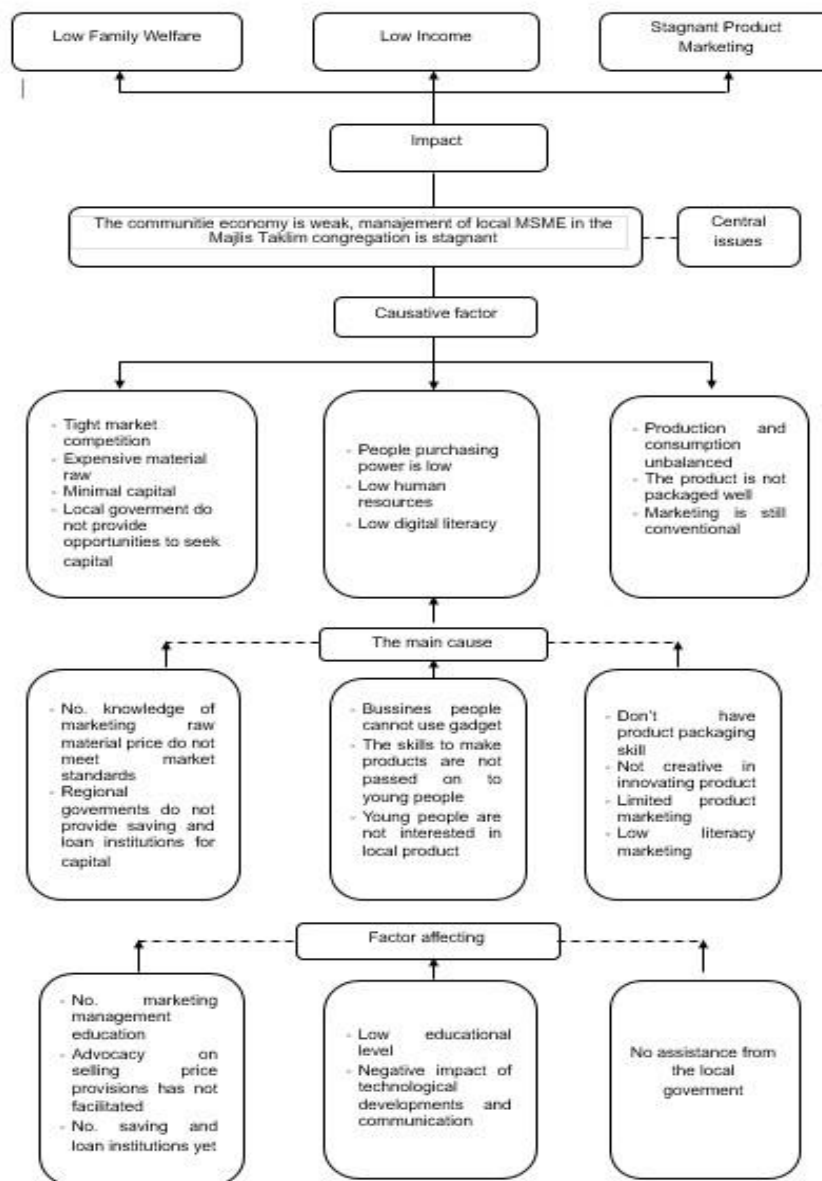


FIGURE 2. Problem Tree

The problem tree analysis is employed to ascertain the core issues, thereby enabling the service team to engage in Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities with the assisted community to deliberate on potential solutions. The outcomes of these discussions are visually represented in the subsequent "wishing tree" diagram (Figure 3).

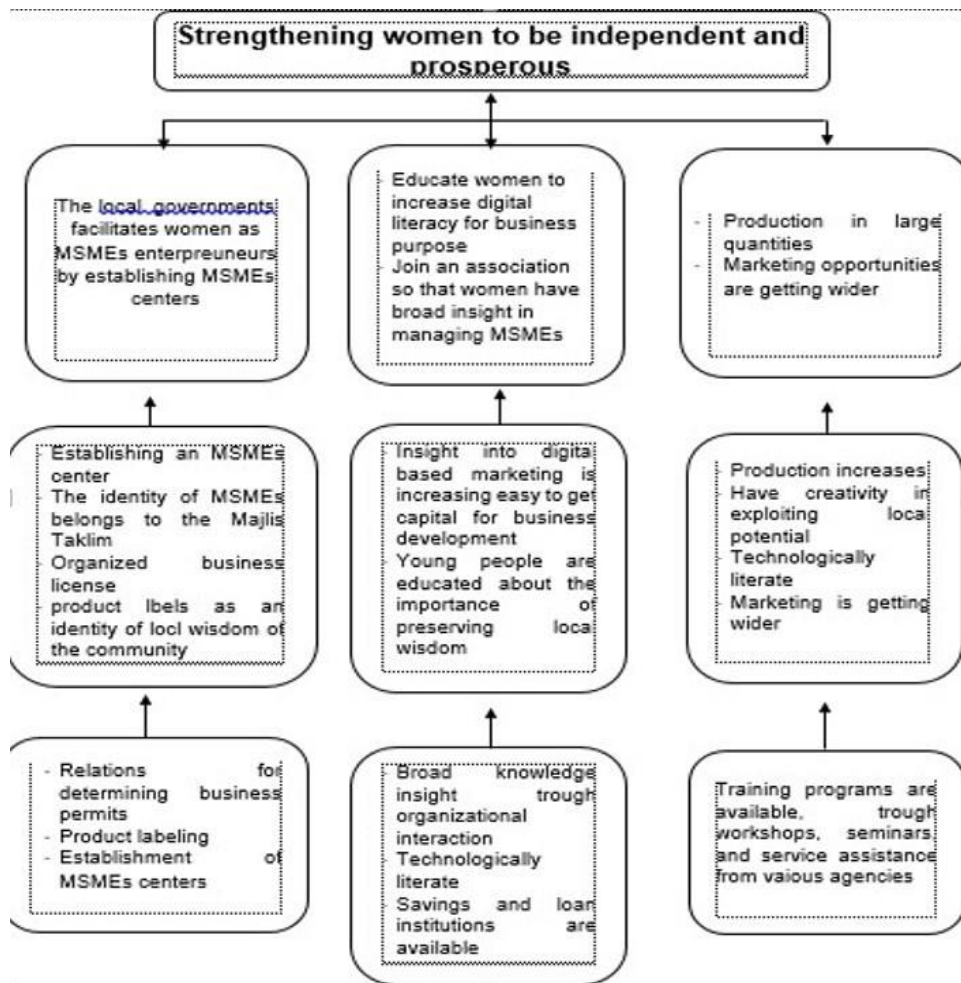


FIGURE 3. Wishing Tree

Women entrepreneurs endeavor to navigate economic challenges independently. However, the local government's current efforts have not adequately addressed these issues or provided optimal support to establish a collective business hub for MSME owners in Karangpawitan. Insufficient digital literacy presents a significant barrier to expanding businesses through online marketing channels. Consequently, the outcomes of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) underscored the necessity for technological literacy assistance and additional training to enhance the attractiveness of their products through proper packaging and labeling.

Acknowledging these challenges, the local government has endorsed the service team's proposal to conduct digital-based marketing training. The anticipated outcome of this assistance is to effectively address the prevailing issues encountered by business owners, particularly those managed by women affiliated with the Majlis Taklim congregation in Karangpawitan.

The community service team serves as facilitators within the community, adhering to the principles of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, which emphasizes the empowerment of community members to drive change. It is essential for at least one individual among those receiving assistance to

demonstrate robust leadership skills and expertise in their domain. This individual assumes a critical role in ensuring the program's longevity beyond the intervention, thereby nurturing enduring transformative efforts within the community (Afandi, 2013). The stakeholders engaged in this activity program and their associated responsibilities are delineated as follows:

- Community Service Team: Comprised of two lecturers from the Faculty of Islamic Education and Teacher Training, complemented by a supporting team of students.
- Majelis Ta'lim women who own MSMEs: Actively engage in training activities tailored to augment their marketing strategy competencies.
- Local Village Government and its staff, in collaboration with the Mosque Prosperity Council (DKM).
- Team of marketing strategists: Tasked with delivering specialized training sessions aimed at empowering the women of Majelis Ta'lim with enhanced marketing skills.

Each stakeholder group contributes to the overarching objective of fostering community empowerment and facilitating sustainable development initiatives.

The implementation process follows several phases, aligned with the Participatory Action Research cycle (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020):

Planning Phase

Commencing on December 1, 2022, this phase encompasses various activities, including:

- Coordinating with the service team to devise field activities and manage necessary permits from the Institute.
- Engaging with the village government, community leaders, and DKM to secure authorization for conducting the FGD program and training sessions.
- Formulating a comprehensive training agenda and extending invitations to business actors from diverse hamlets.
- Organizing the committee and outlining the schedule of events.
- Extending invitations to the expert team, community leaders, and the Village Head, who assumes responsibility for overseeing the activities.
- Seeking recommendations from the village for a suitable assistance location.
- Preparing requisite materials for the activities, including product labeling designs, packaging samples (e.g., standing pouches), banners, stationery, product samples, and administrative equipment such as attendance sheets and certificates.

Implementation of Activities

In respect to the core activities, the implementation will take place on December 7-8, 2022. The event will commence at 08:00 and conclude at Albarokah Madrasah. The schedule of events for implementing the program is outlined in Table 3:

TABLE 3. Schedule of Activities

No.	SCHEDULE	SUBJECT MATTER	INFORMATION
First day of training, Wednesday, December 7, 2022			
1	08.00 - 09.00	Participant Registration	Committee
Opening Ceremony			
2	09.00 - 10.00	MC	Gina Mustika
		Reading of the Holy Qur'an	Irsyad
		Singing Indonesia Raya	Commetee
		Massage from the Chair of the Committee	Dr. Ani Siti Anisah., M.Pd
		DKM	Drs. H. Uun Hidayat
		Kepala Desa	Dadan Daman
		Prayer	Iman Saifullah., M.Pd.I
Event			
3	10.15 - 12.00	Development of the business world in the digital era	Iman Saifullah., M.Pd.I
Rest for pray			
4	13.00 - 14.00	Development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the marketplace	Dr. Ani Siti Anisah., M.Pd
5	14.00 - 15.30	Optimizing the Productivity of Local MSMEs through GO Digital	Dr. Muslim Al Kautsar., M.Si
The second day, Thursday, December 8, 2024			
6	09.00 -12.00	Packaging Practices: standard packaging	Dr. Muslim Al Kaustar., M.Si
7	13.00 - 14.30	practice of creating a shop in the marketplace	Sopa Siti Marwah., M.Pd

On the inaugural day of the program, the highlight commenced with a presentation on the "Development of the Business World in the Digital Era" delivered by Iman Saifullah., M.Pd.I. Subsequently, Dr. Ani Siti Anisah., M.Pd. elucidated on the "Development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the Marketplace." The third segment featured Dr. Muslim Al Kaustar., M.Si. as the keynote speaker, addressing the theme of "Optimizing Local MSME Productivity Through Go Digital and Go Legal."



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 4: (a) The First Speaker: Iman Saifullah., M.Pd.I;
(b) The second Speaker: Dr. Ani Siti Anisah., M.Pd.



FIGURE 5. (a) and (b) The third speaker Dr. Muslim Al Kautsar., M.Si.

The activity attracted 30 participants hailing from diverse hamlets, all affiliated with the Majelis Taklim. These participants meet the criterion of being small – scale business operators.

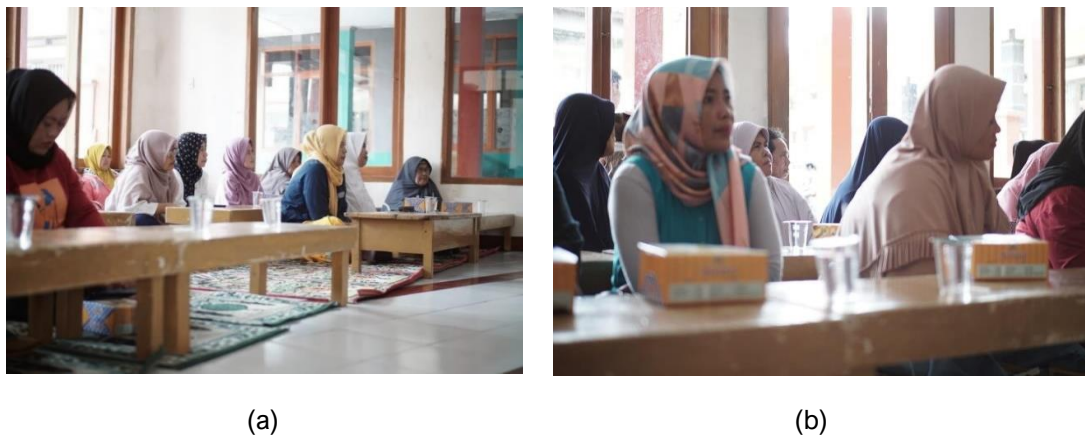


FIGURE 6. (a) and (b) Participants in the Mentoring of Majelis Ta'lim Women for MSME Business Actors

On the second day of the service program, two distinct activities were conducted. The initial activity focused on the dissemination of instructional material by the instructor, addressing the practice of packaging aimed at meeting standardized requirements. Subsequently, the second activity centered on the theme of "Establishing an Online Shop in the Marketplace," overseen by Dr. Muslim Al Kaustar M.Si and facilitated by Sopa Siti Marwah, M.Pd. This session was further supported by a team of accompanying students, notably including Siti Nurazizah and colleagues.

As delineated by Apriadi (2017), the marketplace serves as an electronic platform facilitating product marketing, and enabling transactions among numerous sellers and buyers (Ulum et al., 2023). The advent of marketplaces alleviates sellers from the complexities associated with online commerce, offering a streamlined avenue for sales. Registration serves as the sole prerequisite for commencing sales operations, with all procedural aspects meticulously managed by the marketplace administration. Through the provision of marketplace training and the establishment of online shops, the envisaged outcome is the enhancement of product marketing skills among MSME business practitioners in Karangpawitan.



FIGURE 7. (a), (b), (c), and (d) Product Labeling & Packaging assistance process

A well-crafted packaging design exerts a considerable influence on consumer interest and purchasing behavior. The aesthetic appeal and functionality of packaging play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences (Samsiyah et al., 2022). The MSME entrepreneurs are provided with knowledge and experience in utilizing various digital applications, enabling them to design their brands and packaging to be appealing (Wahyu et al., 2023).

This assistance is indispensable for business actors, as it enhances the marketability and perceived value of their products. Following the completion of assistance implementation, our service team orchestrates dissemination activities. The dissemination of research or service outcomes constitutes an integral component of academic accountability, wherein researchers are duty-bound to communicate the findings of their endeavors to stakeholders and the broader community. In this context, students are targeted as recipients of dissemination efforts, aiming to instill in them a sense of social responsibility by acquainting them with the service outcomes in their respective communities. Moreover, dissemination activities serve as a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions in the target village. To track the progress of post-service activities, a comprehensive follow-up plan must be meticulously devised and executed.





(c)



(d)

FIGURE 8: (a), (b), (c), and (d) Dissemination of the results of service

Evaluation Phase

The evaluation of community service outcomes about women's empowerment constitutes a pivotal process in assessing the effectiveness and ramifications of undertaken activities. This evaluation encompasses multifaceted dimensions, encompassing the augmentation of women's capacities and self-reliance, mitigating gender disparities (Zaenudin et al., 2023), and fostering positive societal transformations (Samsiyah et al., 2022). The primary aim of this evaluative endeavor is to gauge the efficacy of mentoring interventions, followed by the dissemination of evaluation findings. The dissemination initiative endeavors to disseminate pertinent information to a wider audience (Husin & Nur, 2020), thereby augmenting public awareness regarding commendable practices and catalyzing the uptake of innovative methodologies (Rahmawati et al., 2023), or eliciting more efficacious solutions.

Through this community service initiative, the aspiration is to enhance women's proficiency in marketing products utilizing digital platforms. The research findings posited by Juddi et al. (2023) substantiate the transformative potential inherent in digital literacy programs. By facilitating access to knowledge and practical skills pertinent to digital tools, women can harness these platforms not solely for economic enrichment but also for personal and communal empowerment (Juddi et al., 2023). This community empowerment endeavor is envisaged to stimulate the harnessing of communal resources, thereby engendering a palpable amelioration in individual welfare (As'ad et al., 2020). The empowerment of women within the MSME sector holds promise in attenuating poverty levels, engendering augmented income streams, enhancing knowledge dissemination, bolstering human resource quality, and fostering the emergence of economically productive communities among women cohorts (Marthalina, 2018).

Central to the ethos of women's empowerment is the imperative to afford women the agency to make life choices and influence the trajectory of societal transformation by virtue of their ability to exercise control over material and immaterial resources. The efficacy of this mentoring program transcends mere quantifiable metrics related to community welfare enhancement or poverty reduction; rather, it pivots on the extent to which it catalyzes women (Ihsan, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of community service in Women's Empowerment activities at Majlis Taklim Karangpawitan, through the utilization of digital-based local MSMEs, is poised to garner acceptance within the community. There exists a palpable need for enlightenment concerning the proper packaging, socialization, and marketing of products. Initial transect results were meticulously mapped following the community's requisites, namely, the provision of training on packaging methodologies, marketing strategies,

and product safety protocols. This community service initiative is conducted via the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, aimed at effecting a paradigm shift from conventional trading practices. Participants are coached to enhance their skill sets, acquainting themselves with various market platforms, and mastering the art of crafting alluring packaging to augment product value. Expert facilitators in the realms of marketing and digital business are enlisted to furnish guidance throughout this transformative process.

The assistance is distinctly geared towards harnessing the inherent potential within the community, particularly in the domain of traditional culinary production characterized by distinctive flavors. These culinary offerings, cherished as gastronomic delights, are deemed imperative for preservation and dissemination to the broader populace. Through the collaborative efforts of lecturers and students from the PGMI and PAI Study Programs, operating within the precincts of Madrasah Al Barokah, it is envisaged that these endeavors will yield tangible benefits for the target demographic – women affiliated with Majelis Taklim in Karangpawitan engaged in small and medium-scale enterprises. The aspiration is for their products to gain widespread recognition and to be effectively disseminated, engendering a surge in popularity.

Concomitantly, through this intervention, it is anticipated that the village administration will evince a heightened awareness of the culinary/traditional souvenir MSMEs, culminating in collaborative endeavors aimed at preserving local cultural heritage. One envisioned strategy entails the establishment of a community MSME hub proximate to the village office, thereby amplifying visibility and underscoring the uniqueness of regionally sourced culinary treasures.

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