

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY OF JANJI MANAON VILLAGE BATANG ANGKOLA DISTRICT THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS

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Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the main pillars of Indonesia's economy, contributing significantly to the national GDP and employment absorption. However, MSMEs face serious challenges such as limited access to capital, low digital literacy, and marketing constraints that are still predominantly carried out through traditional methods. Janji Manaon Village, Batang Angkola District, South Tapanuli Regency, has great potential in developing MSMEs based on local products. Unfortunately, most business actors still market their products in a limited way through traditional markets, making it difficult to reach a wider range of consumers. Changes in consumer behavior in the digital era open up great opportunities for MSMEs to enhance competitiveness, especially through digital marketing strategies that have proven to be more effective, affordable, and capable of expanding markets. This community service activity aims to empower MSMEs in Janji Manaon Village through training and mentoring in digital marketing. The methods used include a participatory approach, digital literacy training, hands-on practice in using social media and marketplaces, as well as continuous mentoring. The results of the activities show a significant increase in the community's digital literacy, the establishment of online business accounts, improved skills in creating promotional content, and the expansion of product marketing reach beyond the village. Several MSME actors also experienced increased sales, and local change agents emerged to serve as mentors for other business actors. Overall, this program has proven effective in strengthening the capacity of village MSMEs to utilize digital technology for product marketing, reinforcing community economic independence, and generating positive impacts on local economic development. This success is expected to serve as a best practice that can be replicated in other villages with similar conditions.

Keywords: *Janji Manaon Village, Digital Marketing, MSMEs, digital literacy, community empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the fundamental pillar of Indonesia's economy, serving as the largest creator of employment and a driver of economic growth, particularly as a safeguard during economic crises (Toisuta, 2012; Munthe et al., 2023). MSMEs make a significant contribution to income distribution and national stability (Munthe et al., 2023). However, this sector faces substantial challenges, including limited access to capital, inadequate supporting infrastructure, as well as marketing and distribution constraints (Yolanda, 2024). The fundamental weaknesses of MSMEs include a low market orientation and weak competitiveness in complex competition (Toisuta, 2012). At the village level, MSMEs encounter operational difficulties and limited market access. To enhance competitiveness, web-based information technology support and effective digital marketing strategies are required (Toisuta, 2012). Well-targeted policies are therefore essential to support inclusive and sustainable MSME growth (Yolanda, 2024).

Janji Manaon Village, located in Batang Angkola District, South Tapanuli Regency, has great potential in developing MSME products, ranging from food, handicrafts, to other local products. Unfortunately, most MSME actors in this village still rely on traditional marketing systems, such as selling products only in local markets or through close family networks. This condition makes it difficult for their products to reach wider consumer markets. The digital era has fundamentally transformed consumer behavior, creating both opportunities and challenges for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Changes in consumer behavior have increased dependence on

digital platforms, with limitations on physical interaction acting as a catalyst for MSME digital adoption (Nugroho et al., 2023). This shift represents a significant opportunity for market expansion but also presents adaptation challenges (Fuadi et al., 2021). Digital marketing strategies can influence up to 78% of MSMEs' competitive advantage in product marketing (Mavilinda et al., 2021). The transformation of market structures in the digital era directly affects MSME development, as transactions increasingly take place in virtual spaces without the need for physical buildings or direct meetings between sellers and buyers (Arifianto et al., 2020). However, many MSMEs still struggle to optimize digital marketing, with some yet to adopt digital technology in their operations (Mavilinda et al., 2021). Success in this area requires digital literacy, particularly in product branding strategies and the optimal use of social media (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Low digital literacy among the people of Janji Manaon Village has become one of the main challenges. Many MSME actors have not yet understood how to utilize digital technology, whether in creating promotional content, using social media effectively, or managing online sales. In fact, digital marketing has proven to be more affordable, more effective, and able to expand market reach beyond local areas. In addition to limited knowledge, another challenge faced is the lack of external assistance and training. So far, MSMEs in Janji Manaon Village have developed independently without a well-directed marketing strategy. As a result, local products that are actually of high quality are not widely recognized and their selling value remains suboptimal. Considering these conditions, community empowerment through digital marketing becomes a strategic step to strengthen the capacity of village MSMEs. This empowerment does not only focus on improving technical skills but also provides understanding of branding strategies, business management, and product packaging to make them more appealing to modern consumers.

The community service program carried out in Janji Manaon Village aims to help MSME actors master digital marketing techniques. Through training and mentoring, it is expected that the community will be able to use social media and online marketplaces as their main tools for marketing products. This will expand market reach, increase sales, and ultimately boost the village economy. The success of digital marketing in this village is also expected to create a domino effect on other communities. If MSMEs in Janji Manaon succeed in increasing their income through digital strategies, other villages in Batang Angkola can adopt it as a best practice for technology-based economic development. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of Janji Manaon Village's community in digital marketing represents a concrete solution to overcome the barriers faced by village MSMEs. This empowerment program is expected not only to provide new skills but also to create long-term economic independence for the village community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1) Community Empowerment

Community empowerment through digital marketing training has proven effective in enhancing the capacity, independence, and competitiveness of MSMEs in various regions of Indonesia. Branding and digital promotion strategy training improve MSME actors' understanding of the importance of brand image and the utilization of digital media, which contributes to increased sales growth and product competitiveness (Liena Prajogi, 2024). Community-based programs and local asset development, such as in Jetis Hamlet and Dukuh Menanggal Village, have successfully improved digital literacy, marketing skills, and social media promotion activities, thereby expanding market reach and supporting local economic growth. The use of andragogical approaches and entrepreneurial skills training has also strengthened MSME independence through digital marketing-based business management and improved product packaging (A. Kurniawan & Anas Alhifni, 2022). Collaboration between government, academia, and local communities has become the key factor in the success of such empowerment programs (Liena Prajogi, 2024).

2) The Role of MSMEs in the Economy

MSMEs are the backbone of Indonesia's economy, contributing 61% to the national GDP and absorbing around 97% of the workforce (Winduro et al., 2025). This sector plays a strategic role in creating jobs, reducing unemployment and poverty, and supporting national economic stability (Sarfiah et al., 2019). MSMEs have proven resilient during economic crises and continue to grow year by year (Sarfiah et al., 2019). However, MSMEs face significant challenges such as limited access to capital, lack of supporting infrastructure, and constraints in product marketing and distribution (Yolanda, 2024). In the digital era, marketing strategies through social media and digital platforms have become vital solutions to expand markets and improve competitiveness (Winduro et al., 2025). Nevertheless, MSMEs still face obstacles including limited human resources with digital competence and lack of consistency in creating promotional content (Winduro et al., 2025).

3) Digital Marketing

Digital marketing has transformed the paradigm of traditional marketing, offering significant opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to expand market reach and enhance competitiveness. Research indicates that MSMEs implementing digital marketing strategies experience increased sales, making them prefer online product marketing over traditional methods (Uli & Anggraini, 2024). Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok serve as the primary channels for digital marketing initiatives (Rohmah *et al.*, 2023; Uli & Anggraini, 2024). Digital marketing enables MSMEs to connect with a broader online consumer base, expand market access, and strengthen customer relationships while improving operational efficiency and profitability (Sifwah *et al.*, 2024). However, implementation faces several challenges, including unstable internet connections, delivery delays, transaction fraud risks, and manipulation of administrative data (Uli & Anggraini, 2024). Additionally, resource limitations and readiness for technological adaptation remain significant barriers, necessitating training programs and support systems (Sifwah *et al.*, 2024).

4) Digital Literacy in Rural Communities

Digital literacy training has emerged as a critical strategy to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs in rural areas of Indonesia. Studies show that structured digital literacy programs can significantly enhance the ability of MSME operators to utilize digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and e-commerce marketplaces for product marketing (Damayanti & Suwandi, 2025). Digital literacy encompasses not only basic computer and internet skills but also critical information evaluation, online communication, digital security, and digital ethics (Wijana, 2024).

Research further highlights that most MSME entrepreneurs in rural areas face substantial challenges, including limited technological knowledge, restricted access to devices and networks, as well as concerns about digital security (Susano, 2024). However, comprehensive training programs that integrate observation, practical approaches, and continuous mentoring have proven effective in helping MSME communities understand and utilize information and communication technologies (Wijana, 2024). Furthermore, adequate digital literacy is crucial for preparing MSMEs to penetrate international markets, as the use of digital technologies opens significant opportunities for market expansion and operational efficiency (Susilowati *et al.*, 2025).

5) Empowerment Models Through Digital Marketing for MSMEs

Recent studies demonstrate that empowering MSMEs through digital marketing training has proven effective in improving business performance and community independence. Prajogi (2024) found that digital marketing branding training in Rawajati Village successfully enhanced MSME actors' understanding of brand image and the use of digital media, contributing to increased product competitiveness and sales growth. Kurniawan & Alhifni (2022) showed that digital marketing development programs improve MSME independence by fostering creativity in business management and online marketing skills. Prihatiningtyas *et al.* (2024) demonstrated that digital marketing training using e-commerce and social media has a positive impact on market expansion and community income growth. Satria *et al.* (2025) confirmed that local potential-based digital marketing training effectively improves MSME competitiveness and independence, showing significant improvements in digital marketing skills and product sales growth.

METHOD

1) Activity Approach

The method used in this community service program was participatory and based on continuous assistance. The participatory approach was carried out by directly involving the community and MSME actors of Janji Manaon Village in every stage of the program, starting from problem identification, training, to evaluation. Thus, the community was not only the object but also an active subject in the empowerment process.

2) Location and Target of Activities

The program was conducted in Janji Manaon Village, Batang Angkola District, South Tapanuli Regency. The main targets were village MSME actors engaged in various fields such as processed food, handicrafts, and other local products. In addition, the program also involved village officials, youth organizations, and the general community who have the potential to develop digital-based businesses. The activities were held on September 20–21, 2025.

3) Stages of Implementation

The methodology of the program consisted of several key stages as follows:

- a) Observation and Problem Identification. A preliminary survey was conducted to identify the conditions of village MSMEs, local product potential, and the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in marketing. This stage included community interviews, group discussions, and field data collection.

- b) Program Socialization. The socialization stage aimed to introduce the importance of digital marketing to the community of Janji Manaon Village. At this stage, the objectives, benefits, and forms of activities were explained to motivate the community to participate.
 - c) Digital Marketing Training. The training was carried out in several sessions, including:
 - The use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) for product promotion.
 - Introduction to online marketplaces (Shopee, Tokopedia, Bukalapak) as sales platforms.
 - Techniques for creating promotional content (product photography, writing attractive descriptions, branding strategies).
 - Digital transaction management (online payments and product delivery).
 - d) Assistance and Field Practice. After the training, participants were intensively mentored in applying the knowledge they had acquired. Assistance included helping participants create online business accounts, upload products, and manage customer orders directly.
 - e) Monitoring and Evaluation. Monitoring was conducted to assess the extent to which participants' understanding and skills had improved. Evaluation covered the increase in the number of products marketed digitally, community involvement, and the impact on MSME sales.
- 4) Evaluation Method

Evaluation was carried out using two approaches:

- Qualitative evaluation through interviews and discussions with participants to assess satisfaction levels and challenges encountered.
- Quantitative evaluation by comparing sales data before and after the program, as well as the number of MSMEs that successfully marketed their products digitally.

5) Expected Outcomes

Through this methodology, it is expected that:

- The community of Janji Manaon Village will acquire basic digital marketing skills.
- Village MSME products can be marketed more widely through social media and online marketplaces.
- MSME actors' income will increase after the program.
- A foundation for digital technology-based economic independence within the community will be established.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results





Results of the Community Service Program:

1) Improvement of Community Digital Literacy

- a) Training participants understood the basics of using social media and online marketplaces for product promotion.
- b) There was an increase in awareness of the importance of digital marketing for MSME business development.
- 2) Establishment of Online Business Accounts
 - a) Most MSME actors successfully created business accounts on digital platforms (Instagram, Facebook Page, WhatsApp Business, Shopee, Tokopedia).
 - b) Local products began to be promoted regularly through social media.
- 3) Enhanced Promotional Content Creation Skill
 - a) Participants were able to produce more attractive product photos using simple techniques.
 - b) The community was trained to create persuasive product descriptions to attract consumers.
- 4) Expanded Marketing Reach
 - a) Products from Janji Manaon Village MSMEs were no longer marketed only within the local area but began to gain recognition outside the village.
 - b) Several MSMEs successfully received orders from consumers outside the region through online marketplaces.
- 5) Emergence of MSME Collaboration
 - a) Initiatives emerged to create joint promotional groups using a single village social media account.
 - b) MSME actors shared experiences and digital marketing strategies with one another.
- 6) Increased Product Sales
 - a) Some participants reported an increase in sales after adopting digital marketing.
 - b) Online transaction values began to be recorded as additional income for MSMEs.
- 7) Development of Local Change Agents (Local Champions)
 - a) Several participants who quickly mastered digital marketing began serving as mentors for other MSME actors.
 - b) This created program sustainability without constant reliance on external facilitators.
- 8) Improved Community Confidence
 - a) MSME actors felt more confident in marketing their products in the digital space.
 - b) Motivation was built to continuously develop technology-based businesses.

The results of this Community Service Program demonstrate that digital marketing-based training not only enhanced the capacity of the Janji Manaon Village community in Batang Angkola District, South Tapanuli Regency, but also opened new opportunities to improve their economic welfare. This positive impact serves as concrete evidence that digital technology-based empowerment is a strategic solution to support rural community development.





Discussion

Discussion of the Community Service Program:

- 1) Relevance of the Program to Community Needs
 - a) The digital marketing training conducted was aligned with the needs of MSMEs in Janji Manaon Village, which had previously relied on traditional marketing.
 - b) This activity successfully addressed the challenges of limited market access and the community's lack of understanding of digital technology.
- 2) Enhancement of Capacity and Digital Literacy
 - a) After the training, participants understood the importance of digital marketing and were able to operate social media platforms as well as online marketplaces.
 - b) This indicates an improvement in digital literacy, which serves as a fundamental asset for developing technology-based MSMEs.
- 3) Impact on MSME Market Expansion
 - a) Products that were previously only known in local markets began to be marketed outside the village through social media and e-commerce platforms.
 - b) A positive impact was seen in the increase in orders, although still on a relatively small scale.
- 4) Independence and Sustainability of the Program
 - a) Several participants became local champions who acted as mentors for other MSMEs, enabling the empowerment process to continue independently.
 - b) The collaboration among MSMEs in creating joint promotional accounts is evidence that the community has started to build program sustainability.
- 5) Challenges Encountered
 - a) Not all participants owned adequate digital devices (smartphones/laptops).

- b) Limited internet access in the village remained a barrier to consistent digital marketing.
 - c) Continuous mentoring is needed to ensure that the acquired skills are retained and applied in business practices.
- 6) Implications for Village Economic Empowerment
- a) The program has proven to contribute tangibly to increasing MSME income, although it is still in its early stages.
 - b) With the support of the village government and external stakeholders, digital marketing can become a long-term strategy for strengthening the village economy.

This discussion highlights that the digital marketing training program for MSMEs had a significant impact on enhancing the capacity and welfare of the Janji Manaon Village community in Batang Angkola District, South Tapanuli Regency. However, the challenges faced during implementation also provided valuable lessons for improving the program in the future.

CLOSING

Conclusion

- 1) The community service program successfully improved the digital literacy of Janji Manaon Village residents, particularly among MSME actors.
- 2) Participants were able to create online business accounts on social media and marketplace platforms as tools for product promotion and sales.
- 3) MSME actors began to develop skills in creating promotional content, including product photography, persuasive descriptions, and basic branding strategies.
- 4) The program contributed to expanding MSME product markets, shifting from being limited to the local area to becoming more recognized beyond the village.
- 5) An increase in sales, although still on a small scale, demonstrated the effectiveness of digital marketing as a business development strategy.
- 6) Collaboration among MSMEs was established, and local champions emerged who were capable of mentoring other business actors.
- 7) The main challenges that remain are the limited availability of digital devices, internet access, and the need for continuous mentoring to ensure program sustainability.
- 8) Overall, this activity has had a positive impact on the economic empowerment of the village community and serves as a model that can be replicated in other villages.

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