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## **Building Digital Marketing Readiness of BUMDes and Rural MSMEs in Rancakalong Village**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This community service program aimed to build the digital marketing readiness of BUMDes managers, women farmer groups, rural micro, small, and medium enterprise actors, local product producers, and village tourism representatives in Rancakalong Village, Sumedang Regency, West Java. The activity was conducted on 19 May 2026 and involved 21 participants. A participatory and experiential approach was applied through needs assessment, short lectures, demonstrations, smartphone-based practice, mentoring, output review, and follow-up planning. The training covered product mapping, smartphone product photography, promotional caption writing, WhatsApp Business, online marketplace preparation, product labels and packaging, and digital promotion of village tourism resources. The implementation evidence showed that the partner community had diverse economic potential, including local food, herbal beverages, coffee, processed fish products, cultural attractions, and nature-based tourism. However, marketing activities still relied mainly on personal WhatsApp accounts, word-of-mouth communication, and local customer networks. The program generated an initial mapping of priority products and tourism resources, draft promotional content, product-information components, and recommendations for developing shared digital marketing channels under BUMDes coordination. The principal practical finding was that village digital marketing readiness depends not only on access to digital devices but also on product presentation, content quality, customer-oriented communication, product legality, and institutional coordination. Continued mentoring is required to strengthen packaging, certification, marketplace management, and consistent content production.



## 1. Introduction

Rural economic development requires local institutions capable of transforming village resources into value-added products, employment opportunities, and sustainable sources of community income (Kania et al., 2021). In Indonesia, Village-Owned Enterprises, locally known as *Badan Usaha Milik Desa* or BUMDes, are expected to organize local economic activities, stimulate rural entrepreneurship, and strengthen village economic independence (Kania et al., 2021). Their contribution is not limited to financial returns because BUMDes may also generate social value through community participation, local business development, and the distribution of economic opportunities (Wulandari & Wardani, 2024). However, the effectiveness of BUMDes depends on managerial capability, innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, collaboration, and the capacity to convert local potential into marketable products and services (Wulandari & Wardani, 2024).

Digital transformation provides new opportunities for BUMDes and rural micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to communicate with customers, expand market access, and develop more flexible business models (Matarazzo et al., 2021). Digital platforms can reduce geographical barriers and enable small businesses to promote products beyond their immediate local networks without relying entirely on conventional marketing infrastructure (Cenamor et al., 2019). Digital tools also support customer interaction, market-information collection, network development, and coordination across business activities (Cenamor et al., 2019). Nevertheless, digital technology does not automatically improve business performance because its adoption requires technological knowledge, organizational readiness, appropriate human resources, and consistent management routines (Eller et al., 2020). Small enterprises may possess smartphones and social media accounts while still lacking the capability to integrate digital tools into a planned marketing process (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015).

Digital marketing involves the use of digital technologies, data, media, and customer touchpoints to create, communicate, deliver, and maintain value for customers (Kannan & Li, 2017). For rural MSMEs, digital marketing may include social media, WhatsApp Business, online marketplaces, search platforms, digital catalogues, product photographs, and promotional content adapted to target customers (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). These channels can help small businesses distribute product information, build brand awareness, receive feedback, and maintain customer relationships at relatively affordable costs (Ainin et al., 2015; Olanrewaju et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of digital marketing depends on more than the creation of an account because business actors must be able to present product value, prepare reliable information, produce relevant content, respond to customers, and maintain regular digital activity (Ritz et al., 2019). Digital readiness therefore includes technical skills, information management, communication, creativity, problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate market responses through digital environments (van Laar et al., 2017).

The preliminary assessment identified that Rancakalong Village, located in Rancakalong District, Sumedang Regency, West Java, has diverse economic resources that can support village-based business development. The identified local products included herbal and spice-based products, traditional beverages, spinach crackers, *rengginang*, sweet potato-based snacks, fermented sticky rice, local coffee, processed fish products, and food products produced by women farmer groups. The

village also possessed cultural and natural tourism resources, including Tarawangsa traditional performing arts, Situ Lembang, Kampung Nila, coffee cultivation, local culinary activities, and educational activities related to forest conservation. These resources provide a foundation for rural entrepreneurship, collective product promotion, village branding, and community-based tourism. However, the preliminary assessment conducted through observation, discussion, and interviews showed that product promotion still relied mainly on personal WhatsApp accounts, word-of-mouth communication, repeat customers, and local networks. Social media and online marketplaces had not been consistently organized as integrated business channels, while several products still used simple packaging, incomplete labels, non-standardized photographs, and promotional messages without clear customer benefits or calls to action.

The conditions identified in Rancakalong are consistent with the challenges reported in previous community-service programs. Digital marketing assistance for batik entrepreneurs in Klampar Village demonstrated that practical training using WhatsApp Business and online marketplaces can help local producers understand digital promotion, although its continued application requires follow-up assistance (Ni'mah et al., 2023). Branding and digital marketing assistance for shuttlecock MSMEs showed that practical mentoring can produce logos, marketplace accounts, and promotional assets directly related to participants' products (Kelly et al., 2025). A community empowerment program in Tanggul Wetan Village similarly combined branding optimization, product diversification, and digital marketing to strengthen the utilization of local economic potential (Adawiyah & Kristiana, 2025). More specifically, mentoring for BUMDes Guyub Rukun integrated branding, digital marketing, MSME development, and village-tourism package preparation, indicating that digital promotion should be connected to institutional capacity and tourism-product readiness (Yuliani et al., 2025). Training for village MSMEs also demonstrated that the utilization of WhatsApp Business requires education, technical practice, mentoring, and continued monitoring rather than a one-time application demonstration (Santoso et al., 2025). These five studies and their DOI metadata were verified through their official journal pages.

Although previous programs demonstrate the relevance of digital marketing assistance, several implementation gaps remain. Many activities focus on a single platform, a specific product group, or the creation of digital accounts, whereas rural economic ecosystems commonly involve multiple product categories, producers, institutions, and tourism resources. Platform adoption alone is insufficient when product information, packaging, visual presentation, ordering procedures, legal readiness, and channel-management responsibilities remain unclear (Eller et al., 2020; Ritz et al., 2019). Community-service programs also require evaluation that distinguishes between the delivery of training, the production of immediate outputs, and longer-term outcomes such as consistent platform use, market expansion, and increased sales. Accordingly, the distinctive feature of the Rancakalong program was the integration of product mapping, smartphone-based content production, WhatsApp Business and marketplace preparation, packaging and label awareness, village-tourism promotion, and institutional coordination through BUMDes.

The program adopted a participatory and experiential orientation because practical digital skills are more effectively developed when participants work with their own products, perform relevant tasks, receive feedback, and revise their outputs (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Rather than positioning community members as passive recipients of information, the activity involved participants in identifying product benefits, preparing promotional photographs, writing captions, organizing

catalogue information, and selecting realistic digital channels. The collaboration of Telkom University lecturers, final-year students, and academic support staff also supported a service-learning process that connected academic knowledge with community needs and direct problem-solving (Salam et al., 2019). Lecturers provided conceptual and strategic guidance, students assisted participants during smartphone-based practice, and academic support staff facilitated coordination, technical implementation, and documentation. This collaborative structure was intended to provide more contextual assistance to participants with different levels of digital familiarity.

Based on the identified problems, this community service program aimed to build the digital marketing readiness of BUMDes managers, women farmer groups, rural MSME actors, local product producers, and village-tourism representatives in Rancakalong Village. Specifically, the program sought to help participants identify product value, improve product presentation, prepare customer-oriented promotional messages, organize basic digital catalogue information, and understand the use of WhatsApp Business and online marketplaces. The program also aimed to support BUMDes in mapping priority products and tourism resources and in formulating shared digital marketing directions for the village. Its practical contribution lies in a needs-based mentoring model that combines accessible smartphone technology, content development, product readiness, experiential learning, and university–community collaboration. The program was designed to generate initial marketing assets and institutional recommendations rather than to claim immediate increases in sales or statistically verified changes in digital competence.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Program Design**

This community service program employed a participatory, practice-oriented training and mentoring design. The intervention was developed based on the problems, resources, and priorities identified jointly by the Telkom University team and BUMDes Rancakalong. A participatory approach was considered appropriate because community members were involved in confirming the problems, identifying priority products, participating in practical activities, and formulating follow-up actions. Participatory community programs emphasize collaboration, contextual adaptation, reciprocal knowledge exchange, and the active involvement of community members in developing practical solutions (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010).

The program combined a preliminary needs assessment, focused instructional sessions, facilitator demonstrations, smartphone-based practice, individual and small-group mentoring, output review, and follow-up planning. The activity was designed as an applied capacity-building intervention rather than an experimental study. Consequently, the program evaluation focused on implementation quality, participant involvement, practical outputs, and partner readiness for subsequent digital marketing activities.

The instructional process was informed by experiential learning. This approach emphasizes learning through concrete experience, reflection, feedback, and direct application to actual problems (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Participants therefore did not only receive conceptual explanations about digital marketing but also worked with their own products and tourism resources to prepare photographs, promotional messages, catalogue information, and simple digital marketing materials.

The involvement of final-year students reflected a service-learning approach that connects academic knowledge, field experience, community needs, and student competency development (Salam et al., 2019). Lecturers provided conceptual and strategic direction, students supported

participants during practical activities, and academic support staff facilitated technical coordination, documentation, and communication with the partner.

## **2.2 Program Site and Community Partner**

The activity was conducted on 19 May 2026 in Rancakalong Village, Rancakalong District, Sumedang Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The principal institutional partner was BUMDes Rancakalong, the Village-Owned Enterprise responsible for supporting and coordinating several village economic activities.

Rancakalong Village was selected because it possesses diverse economic and tourism resources that can be developed through improved digital promotion. The identified products included herbal and spice-based products, traditional beverages, spinach crackers, *rengginang*, sweet potato-based snacks, fermented sticky rice, local coffee, processed fish products, and food products produced by women farmer groups. The village also has cultural and natural tourism resources, including Tarawangsa traditional performing arts, Situ Lembang, Kampung Nila, coffee cultivation, culinary activities, and educational activities related to forest conservation.

BUMDes Rancakalong was involved in identifying the participants, confirming the priority problems, providing information about village products and tourism resources, and discussing possible follow-up actions. The partner was also expected to support the future coordination of product data, shared promotional content, and digital marketing channels.

## **2.3 Participants and Implementation Team**

The program involved 21 participants. They consisted of BUMDes managers, members of women farmer groups, local MSME actors, village product producers, and community representatives involved in product promotion or village tourism activities. Participants were recruited purposively by BUMDes Rancakalong based on their involvement in village economic activities and their relevance to the program objectives. Eligible participants included individuals who produced or managed local products, participated in BUMDes business activities, belonged to women farmer groups or local MSMEs, managed cultural or tourism resources, or had responsibilities related to product promotion and customer communication. All 21 participants who attended the activity and participated in the training and practical sessions were included in the descriptive program evaluation. The program did not use probability-based sampling because it was designed as a targeted community capacity-building activity rather than a population survey.

The implementation team consisted of Telkom University lecturers, final-year students, academic support staff, and representatives of BUMDes Rancakalong. The lecturers conducted the needs assessment, designed the materials, delivered the principal sessions, demonstrated digital marketing practices, supervised practical activities, reviewed participant outputs, and prepared follow-up recommendations. The final-year students assisted participants in operating smartphones and digital applications, taking product photographs, preparing promotional captions, organizing catalogue information, and completing simple digital marketing tasks. Academic support staff supported participant registration, administrative preparation, venue organization, technical implementation, communication with the partner, and the collection of photographs, videos, and program documentation. BUMDes representatives mobilized participants, explained local business conditions, identified priority products and tourism resources, and facilitated follow-up discussions.

## **2.4 Preliminary Needs Assessment**

The preliminary needs assessment was conducted through discussions, interviews, and observation involving representatives of BUMDes Rancakalong and relevant village stakeholders. The

assessment focused on five areas: existing marketing practices, product readiness, use of digital platforms, packaging and labelling, and tourism promotion. The assessment found that product marketing still depended mainly on personal WhatsApp accounts, word-of-mouth communication, repeat customers, and local networks. Social media and online marketplaces had not yet been consistently managed as integrated business channels. Several products also lacked standardized photographs, structured promotional messages, digital catalogues, and complete customer contact information.

The assessment further indicated that some labels and packages had not been regularly updated. Information concerning ingredients, net weight, producer identity, business contact details, halal certification, and product legality was not consistently presented across products. In the tourism sector, cultural attractions, natural resources, culinary products, and local events had not yet been organized into clear digital narratives for potential visitors. The identified problems were confirmed with the partner and used to determine the training priorities. Community involvement in the identification and prioritization of problems was important because interventions are more likely to be relevant when community stakeholders participate in defining the problems and adapting the proposed solutions to local conditions (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010).

## **2.5 Training Materials and Equipment**

The training materials were prepared in simple, practice-oriented language and designed for smartphone-based implementation. Smartphones were selected as the principal devices because they were more accessible and familiar to the participants than laptops or desktop computers. Digital marketing adoption among small businesses is more feasible when the technology is perceived as useful, manageable, and compatible with existing resources and business practices (Ritz et al., 2019). The program covered six main topics:

1. identification and mapping of priority products and tourism resources;
2. smartphone-based product photography;
3. preparation of promotional captions and calls to action;
4. use of WhatsApp Business for business profiles and digital catalogues;
5. preparation of product information for online marketplaces; and
6. development of short digital narratives for village tourism resources.

The equipment used during the activity included presentation materials, smartphones, internet access where available, sample products, existing product packages, simple photography backgrounds, available natural or indoor lighting, stationery, product-mapping worksheets, caption templates, and output-review sheets. Participants were encouraged to use their own products so that the practical activities generated materials directly relevant to their businesses.

## **2.6 Program Implementation**

The program was implemented through five stages: preparation and coordination, orientation and problem confirmation, material delivery and demonstration, mentored practical application, and evaluation and follow-up planning.

### **2.6.1 Preparation and Coordination**

The first stage involved coordination between the Telkom University team and BUMDes Rancakalong. The implementation team reviewed the results of the preliminary assessment, identified priority participant groups, and prepared practical examples and worksheets. The facilitators prepared

examples of product photographs, promotional captions, WhatsApp Business profiles, catalogue entries, marketplace descriptions, and tourism narratives. The materials were designed to help participants identify product identity, customer benefits, prices, production locations, contact details, and appropriate calls to action.

### ***2.6.2 Orientation and Problem Confirmation***

At the beginning of the activity, the facilitators explained the program objectives, implementation stages, expected participant involvement, and intended outputs. Participants were then invited to describe their products, existing marketing methods, customer communication practices, and difficulties in using digital platforms.

This discussion confirmed the relevance of the problems identified during the preliminary assessment. It also allowed the facilitators to adapt the examples and instructions to the types of products and tourism resources represented by the participants.

### ***2.6.3 Material Delivery and Demonstration***

The material-delivery session combined a concise conceptual explanation with direct demonstrations. Participants were introduced to the role of digital marketing in communicating customer value, improving product visibility, supporting customer interaction, and expanding promotional reach.

The product-photography demonstration covered lighting, focus, shooting angle, background selection, product arrangement, and visual consistency. The facilitator emphasized that acceptable promotional photographs could be produced using smartphones, natural lighting, and simple backgrounds.

The caption-writing demonstration introduced a basic structure consisting of a headline, product identity, customer benefit, price or promotional offer, location, contact information, and call to action. Participants were encouraged to prepare messages that helped customers understand both the value of the product and the procedure for making a purchase.

The WhatsApp Business session introduced business profiles, catalogues, business hours, quick replies, customer labels, and direct-ordering links. The marketplace session focused on the product information that should be prepared before uploading a product, including title, category, description, price, packaging size, stock, shipping information, photographs, and seller contact details. The tourism-promotion session introduced a visitor-oriented narrative that explained what visitors could see, do, learn, taste, purchase, and access at a village attraction.

### ***2.6.4 Mentored Practical Application***

After the demonstrations, participants completed practical activities using their own products or tourism resources. The activities were designed to apply experiential learning by allowing participants to perform tasks, receive feedback, revise their outputs, and relate the new knowledge to their existing business activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Participants were guided to:

- a) identify one priority product or tourism resource;
- b) formulate its principal customer benefit;
- c) take or select an appropriate promotional photograph;
- d) write a short promotional caption;
- e) include relevant contact information and a call to action;

- f) prepare basic information for a WhatsApp Business catalogue or marketplace listing; and
- g) select a realistic digital channel for publication.

Final-year students provided individual and small-group assistance to participants who required technical support. Lecturers reviewed the relevance, clarity, and completeness of the outputs, while academic support staff organized the activity documentation.

#### ***2.6.5 Evaluation and Follow-up Planning***

Evaluation was conducted formatively during the practical sessions through observation, questions and answers, direct feedback, troubleshooting, and revision of participant outputs. Formative and process-oriented evaluation is useful for examining how an intervention was delivered and which contextual factors influenced its implementation (Scott et al., 2019).

At the end of the activity, the participants and partner representatives discussed the actions that could be continued after the training. The follow-up priorities included product and tourism mapping, improvement of product information, preparation of digital content, activation of appropriate digital channels, packaging improvement, business legality, halal certification, and the assignment of responsibilities for future channel management.

#### **2.7 Data Sources and Evaluation**

The program evaluation used descriptive and output-based evidence. The data sources consisted of:

- a) preliminary discussion and interview notes;
- b) the participant attendance sheet;
- c) product and tourism mapping materials;
- d) photographs and videos of the activity;
- e) participant-generated promotional materials;
- f) draft captions, catalogues, product information, and tourism narratives;
- g) partner feedback and follow-up discussion notes; and
- h) the online news publication documenting the activity.

The evaluation focused on whether the program was implemented as planned, whether the targeted participant groups were involved, whether practical materials were introduced and produced, and whether follow-up needs were identified.

The activity did not use a complete paired pre-test and post-test instrument. Therefore, the program did not claim statistically significant improvement in digital literacy, marketing competence, customer engagement, market reach, or sales performance. The findings were interpreted as evidence of implementation, participant involvement, practical exposure, initial output production, and digital marketing readiness.

#### **2.8 Data Analysis**

Quantitative information was analyzed descriptively using the total number of participants and the documented completion of program activities. Because participant-level output records were not consistently available for every practical task, no percentage-based competence score or inferential statistical analysis was conducted.

Qualitative evidence from discussions, participant outputs, partner feedback, facilitator notes, photographs, videos, and follow-up planning was organized into thematic categories. The categories included initial marketing conditions, digital-skill constraints, product readiness, content-development needs, participant involvement, practical outputs, institutional coordination, and follow-up priorities.

The analysis followed the general principles of thematic analysis, including familiarization with the evidence, identification of recurring issues, organization of related information into categories, review of the categories, and interpretation in relation to the program objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Evidence from different sources was compared to improve the consistency of the interpretation.

## **2.9 Program Outputs**

The expected and documented outputs of the program included:

- a) an initial mapping of priority village products and tourism resources;
- b) promotional-photography practice;
- c) draft promotional captions;
- d) digital catalogue or product-information drafts;
- e) preliminary recommendations for product labels and packaging;
- f) short tourism-promotion narratives;
- g) follow-up recommendations for digital channel development;
- h) photographic and video documentation;
- i) an online news publication; and
- j) a community service journal article.

These outputs were selected because the partner required practical materials and institutional directions that could be further developed after the activity. The program therefore emphasized initial readiness and directly applicable outputs rather than claiming immediate long-term changes in sales or business performance.

## **3. Results and discussion**

### ***3.1 Partner Conditions and Identified Digital Marketing Needs***

The community service program involved 21 participants representing BUMDes Rancakalong, women farmer groups, local micro, small, and medium enterprises, village product producers, and community members involved in local tourism activities. Their participation reflected the diversity of the economic resources available in Rancakalong Village, including processed food, herbal beverages, local coffee, fish-based products, agricultural products, cultural attractions, and nature-based tourism resources.

The preliminary assessment confirmed that the partner community possessed considerable product and tourism potential but had not yet organized these resources through a coordinated digital marketing system. Most marketing activities still relied on personal WhatsApp accounts, word-of-mouth communication, repeat customers, and local community networks. These channels supported direct communication with existing customers but offered limited capacity for building a consistent product identity, reaching consumers outside the village, and managing promotional information systematically.

The assessment also showed that digital-channel availability did not necessarily indicate digital marketing readiness. Several business actors already used smartphones and messaging applications, but their use was primarily limited to personal communication and occasional product promotion. Product information was not consistently organized into digital catalogues, while social media and online marketplaces had not been managed as integrated business channels.

This condition is consistent with Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015), who found that small enterprises frequently use digital channels in a fragmented manner without integrating them into a structured marketing strategy. Eller et al. (2020) similarly explained that SME digitalization depends not only on access to technology but also on human capability, organizational readiness, resource availability, and the development of routine business practices. Therefore, the challenge experienced by the partner was not simply the absence of digital platforms but the limited ability to connect product information, visual content, customer communication, and channel management.

Product presentation represented another important concern. Several local products were still promoted using simple labels, non-standardized photographs, and incomplete product descriptions. Information such as product benefits, packaging size, price, producer identity, ordering procedure, and customer contact details was not always presented consistently. Promotional messages also tended to describe the product without clearly explaining its customer value or including a call to action.

The tourism sector faced a similar problem. Rancakalong Village possesses cultural and natural resources, including Tarawangsa traditional performing arts, Situ Lembang, Kampung Nila, coffee cultivation, local culinary products, and educational activities related to forest conservation. However, these resources had not yet been consistently presented through visitor-oriented digital narratives explaining the activities, experiences, locations, schedules, contact persons, and access procedures available to prospective visitors. Table 1 summarizes the conditions identified during the preliminary assessment and the corresponding responses developed through the program.

**Table 1. Partner Conditions and Program Responses**

| <b>Identified aspect</b> | <b>Initial condition</b>                                                                                        | <b>Program response</b>                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marketing channels       | Promotion relied mainly on personal WhatsApp accounts, word-of-mouth communication, and local customer networks | Introduction to structured business communication through WhatsApp Business, social media, and marketplace preparation |
| Product identity         | Product benefits and distinctive characteristics were not consistently communicated                             | Product mapping and identification of customer benefits and principal selling points                                   |
| Product photography      | Photographs were not specifically prepared for digital promotional purposes                                     | Smartphone-based photography demonstration and guided practice                                                         |
| Promotional messages     | Captions did not consistently contain product benefits, prices, contact details, or calls to action             | Development of customer-oriented promotional-caption structures                                                        |
| Product information      | Information was scattered and had not been organized into digital catalogues                                    | Preparation of basic product and catalogue information                                                                 |
| Packaging and labels     | Several products used simple packaging and incomplete labels                                                    | Review of packaging, product identity, and minimum information requirements                                            |
| Marketplace              | Products were not yet consistently                                                                              | Preparation of product titles, descriptions,                                                                           |

| Identified aspect          | Initial condition                                                                 | Program response                                                  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| utilization                | prepared for marketplace listing                                                  | prices, stock, shipping, and seller information                   |
| Tourism promotion          | Local attractions had not been organized into visitor-oriented digital narratives | Mapping and development of short tourism-promotion narratives     |
| Institutional coordination | Marketing was undertaken mainly by individual producers                           | Discussion of BUMDes coordination and shared promotional channels |

The assessment demonstrated that digital marketing readiness needs to be understood as a combination of technological use, product readiness, marketing communication, and organizational coordination. Kannan and Li (2017) emphasized that digital marketing involves the creation and communication of customer value across multiple digital touchpoints. Accordingly, simply uploading a product photograph is insufficient when the content does not explain what the product offers, why it is relevant, and how the customer can complete a purchase.

### 3.2 Program Implementation and Practical Outputs

The program was implemented through presentations, demonstrations, guided practice, discussion, and individual or small-group mentoring. Telkom University lecturers delivered the principal materials and connected digital marketing concepts with the actual problems experienced by the partner community. Final-year students assisted participants during smartphone-based practice, while academic support staff facilitated technical preparation, participant administration, communication with the partner, and activity documentation.

The practical orientation distinguished the program from a lecture-only activity. Participants were invited to describe their products, identify their main customer benefits, review their existing promotional practices, and consider how their product information could be organized for digital channels. The activity therefore treated the participants as active partners rather than passive recipients of information.

The product-mapping activity identified several categories of products and tourism resources that could be considered for future promotion. The identified product categories included herbal and traditional beverages, local food and snacks, coffee products, fish-based products, agricultural products, and products developed by women farmer groups. Cultural, natural, culinary, and educational tourism resources were also included in the initial mapping.

The mapping process helped clarify that products require minimum information before they can be effectively promoted. This information includes the product name, producer identity, principal benefits, packaging size, price, stock availability, production location, customer contact, and purchasing procedure. For tourism resources, the required information includes the attraction, visitor experience, location, operating schedule, available activities, contact person, and reservation or access procedure.

The program also provided practical exposure to smartphone product photography. Participants were introduced to the use of available lighting, appropriate shooting angles, clear focus, simple backgrounds, product arrangement, and visual consistency. The activity emphasized that acceptable promotional images could be prepared without professional cameras or expensive studio equipment. The use of familiar and accessible devices was important because technology adoption among small businesses is more feasible when the tools are considered manageable and compatible with existing resources (Ritz et al., 2019).

The promotional-content activity focused on organizing product information into a concise, customer-oriented message. Participants were introduced to a structure comprising a headline, product identity, customer benefit, price or promotional offer, location, contact details, and call to action. The principal issue identified during this activity was not the participants' inability to produce lengthy text but their difficulty in selecting the most important information and presenting it from the customer's perspective.

The program documentation indicated that the activity generated initial product and tourism mapping, promotional-content drafts, basic product-information components, and follow-up recommendations. However, participant-level output completion was not recorded consistently for every activity. Consequently, the results are reported as documented program outputs rather than as quantitative evidence that all 21 participants independently mastered each task.

**Table 2. Documented Outputs and Evaluation Status**

| Program output                            | Documented evidence                                                                                                                                     | Evaluation status                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Participation of target community groups  | Twenty-one participants representing BUMDes, women farmer groups, MSMEs, product producers, and tourism-related community members attended the activity | Documented                                         |
| Identification of marketing problems      | Existing channel use, content limitations, packaging issues, and coordination needs were identified through assessment and discussion                   | Documented                                         |
| Initial product and tourism mapping       | Local product categories and cultural, natural, culinary, and educational tourism resources were identified                                             | Documented at the initial-mapping level            |
| Smartphone product-photography practice   | Photography principles were demonstrated and practised using available products and smartphones                                                         | Documented at the training-process level           |
| Promotional-content preparation           | Caption structures and customer-oriented product information were introduced and drafted                                                                | Initiated; not quantified per participant          |
| WhatsApp Business readiness               | Business profiles, catalogues, quick replies, customer labels, and direct-order links were introduced                                                   | Initiated; full application was not verified       |
| Marketplace readiness                     | Required marketplace information was identified and discussed                                                                                           | Initiated; marketplace activation was not verified |
| Packaging and label readiness             | Product-information and visual-identity requirements were reviewed                                                                                      | Improvement needs identified                       |
| Shared BUMDes marketing channel           | The potential role of BUMDes in product curation and shared promotion was discussed                                                                     | Recommended for follow-up                          |
| Business legality and halal certification | Uneven legal and certification readiness was identified                                                                                                 | Outside the scope of the completed activity        |
| Online dissemination                      | The activity was documented and published through an online news platform                                                                               | Documented                                         |
| Sales and market expansion                | No longitudinal sales, transaction, or market-reach data were collected                                                                                 | Not measured                                       |

The findings align with previous community-service programs that emphasized the value of direct mentoring and practical output development. Ni'mah et al. (2023) reported that digital marketing

assistance for village business actors requires continued practice and follow-up rather than a one-time introduction to platforms. Kelly et al. (2025) similarly demonstrated that branding and digital marketing mentoring becomes more practically relevant when it produces outputs connected directly to participants' products. The Rancakalong program extended this approach by connecting product mapping, digital content, marketplace preparation, packaging readiness, tourism promotion, and BUMDes coordination within one village economic context.



**Figure 1.** Delivery of digital marketing materials to BUMDes managers, women farmer groups, MSME actors, and local product producers in Rancakalong Village.

**Source:** Authors' documentation, 2026.

### 3.3 Digital Marketing Readiness and Channel Management

The program indicated that digital marketing readiness among the partner community was at an initial development stage. Participants were familiar with WhatsApp as a communication application, but the use of its business functions had not yet become a regular organizational practice. The activity therefore introduced WhatsApp Business as an accessible entry point for organizing product information and customer communication.

Features discussed during the program included business profiles, product catalogues, business hours, quick replies, customer labels, and direct-ordering links. These features were relevant because they used a platform already familiar to the participants while adding more structured business functions. Santoso et al. (2025) similarly found that the effective use of WhatsApp Business by village MSMEs requires education, practical training, mentoring, and monitoring rather than application installation alone.

The program did not interpret account creation as evidence of successful digital adoption. A WhatsApp Business account will not improve marketing performance when the catalogue is incomplete, product information is inaccurate, responses are delayed, or the product is unavailable. Digital adoption requires continued updating, customer-response routines, and coordination between promotional activities and operational capacity (Eller et al., 2020).

The marketplace component also emphasized preparation rather than immediate activation. Participants and partner representatives were introduced to the minimum information required for a product listing, including the product title, category, description, price, packaging size, stock, photographs, shipping arrangements, and seller information. However, establishing a fully operational marketplace requires further decisions concerning account ownership, stock responsibility, payment administration, shipping, complaints, and transaction recording.

The distinction between platform introduction and operational readiness is important. Small businesses may adopt digital platforms without developing the organizational routines needed to manage them sustainably. Ritz et al. (2019) explained that digital marketing adoption is influenced by perceived usefulness, usability, and compatibility, while successful use additionally requires the capacity to integrate technology into everyday business practices.

The findings suggest that BUMDes Rancakalong should avoid immediately opening numerous digital accounts without assigning clear responsibilities. An inactive or outdated account may weaken customer trust and create confusion. A more appropriate approach would be to begin with one or two manageable channels supported by complete product information and designated administrators.

A hybrid channel-management model may be suitable for the partner. Under this model, BUMDes could coordinate product curation, collective branding, shared promotional content, and village-level campaigns, while individual producers remain responsible for stock, transactions, and product fulfilment. This arrangement could reduce fragmented branding without transferring all operational responsibilities to BUMDes.

The institutional role of BUMDes is important because rural entrepreneurship requires coordination between local producers, community organizations, market information, and external support (Kania et al., 2021). Wulandari and Wardani (2024) further showed that the performance of Village-Owned Enterprises is associated with entrepreneurial orientation, innovation, and collaboration. Digital marketing readiness should therefore be developed as an institutional capability rather than relying solely on the personal digital skills of individual producers.

### ***3.4 University–Community Collaboration and Follow-Up Priorities***

The collaboration among lecturers, final-year students, academic support staff, and the partner community supported the practice-oriented implementation of the program. Lecturers provided conceptual direction and reviewed the relevance of the materials, while students offered individual and small-group assistance during smartphone-based activities. Academic support staff ensured that participant registration, technical preparation, communication, and documentation were appropriately organized.

Student assistance was particularly relevant because participants had different levels of familiarity with smartphone functions and digital applications. Small-group mentoring allowed participants to receive technical support without interrupting the main session. The collaborative model is consistent with service learning, which connects academic knowledge with practical community needs and provides reciprocal learning opportunities for students and community partners (Salam et al., 2019).

For participants, the collaboration provided access to more direct technical assistance. For students, the activity offered experience in translating academic concepts into accessible instructions, responding to practical business problems, and communicating with participants from different community backgrounds. For lecturers, the activity generated contextual understanding that can support future teaching, research, and community engagement.

The program also indicated that short-term training should be followed by staged assistance. Five follow-up priorities were identified.

First, BUMDes should consolidate product and tourism data using a standardized format. The database should contain product names, categories, prices, packaging sizes, producer information, stock availability, legal status, photographs, contact details, and marketing-channel information.

Second, product curation should be conducted according to market readiness. Products with adequate packaging, complete information, reliable stock, and appropriate legal documentation can be prioritized for promotion. Products that are not yet ready should receive further assistance before being offered through shared digital channels.

Third, the partner should develop a realistic content-production routine. A simple content calendar can be used to determine which product, tourism resource, cultural event, or village activity will be promoted within a particular period. Content consistency is more valuable than opening many accounts that cannot be maintained.

Fourth, responsibilities for digital-channel management should be formally assigned. The partner needs to determine who will prepare content, update catalogues, respond to customer enquiries, manage transactions, monitor stock, and record simple performance indicators.

Fifth, digital promotion should be integrated with packaging improvement, business legality, halal certification, production readiness, and tourism management. Attractive promotional content cannot compensate for incomplete product information, inconsistent quality, unclear prices, or operationally unprepared tourism attractions.

This integrated approach is consistent with Yuliani et al. (2025), who found that BUMDes empowerment benefits from combining branding, digital marketing, MSME development, and tourism readiness. Adawiyah and Kristiana (2025) also emphasized that local economic empowerment is strengthened when branding, product development, and digital marketing are addressed together rather than as separate interventions.

### ***3.5 Evaluation Boundaries and Program Limitations***

The results of this program should be interpreted within the limits of the available evidence. The program successfully involved 21 participants, delivered the planned digital marketing materials, facilitated practical activities, identified product and tourism resources, and formulated follow-up priorities. However, these achievements represent implementation evidence and initial readiness rather than statistically verified improvements in digital competence or business performance.

The activity did not use a complete matched pre-test and post-test instrument. Therefore, changes in participants' knowledge, confidence, or practical skills could not be statistically assessed. Participant-level outputs were also not recorded consistently using an identical scoring rubric, preventing the calculation of reliable output-completion percentages.

The program was implemented as a short-term training and mentoring activity. It did not include longitudinal observation of catalogue updating, content consistency, customer responses, marketplace transactions, sales growth, repeat purchases, or market expansion. Consequently, the program does not claim that digital marketing increased participant income or business performance.

The participant group also consisted of different types of business and community actors with varying levels of digital experience. The evaluation did not classify participants according to age, education, business scale, previous platform use, or baseline digital capability. These differences may influence how easily participants adopt and continue using digital tools.

Future programs should employ identical pre-test and post-test instruments, participant-specific output checklists, and practical-performance rubrics. Follow-up evaluation should be conducted approximately one to three months after the activity to assess whether participants continue preparing content, updating product catalogues, responding to customers, and using digital channels. Simple platform indicators, such as catalogue completeness, number of promotional posts, customer enquiries, digital orders, and active producers, could provide more objective evidence of program sustainability.

Despite these limitations, the program established a relevant initial foundation for digital marketing development in Rancakalong Village. Its principal practical contribution lies in demonstrating that rural digital marketing assistance should combine accessible technology, product and content readiness, direct mentoring, institutional coordination, and realistic follow-up planning.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This community service program achieved its objective of building the initial digital marketing readiness of BUMDes managers, women farmer groups, rural MSME actors, local product producers, and village tourism representatives in Rancakalong Village. The principal practical finding is that digital marketing readiness is not determined solely by access to smartphones or digital platforms but also by the ability to organize product information, communicate customer value, prepare appropriate visual content, develop clear ordering procedures, and coordinate channel management institutionally. The participatory and smartphone-based approach enabled the 21 participants to engage directly with product mapping, promotional-content preparation, digital catalogue information, marketplace requirements, and tourism-promotion narratives. The collaboration among Telkom University lecturers, final-year students, academic support staff, and BUMDes Rancakalong provided a contextual mentoring model that connected academic knowledge with the actual needs of village business actors. The program also showed that digital promotion should be integrated with product readiness, packaging quality, business legality, halal certification, stock availability, and clear administrative responsibilities. Because the activity did not employ complete matched pre-test and post-test measurements or long-term business-performance data, its findings represent evidence of implementation, practical exposure, and initial readiness rather than statistically verified improvement in competence or sales. Future programs should include structured participant assessments, output-based rubrics, and follow-up evaluations to examine the continuity of digital content production, catalogue management, customer engagement, and transactions through digital channels.

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#### **6. Authors Note**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. This manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration by another journal. All authors have approved the final manuscript, and all sources have been appropriately cited.

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