

## The Role of Packaging and Marketing in MSME Development in Mekarjaya Village, Arjasari District, Bandung Regency

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### Volume

6

### Issue

2

### Edition

November

### Page

558-566

### Year

2025

### Abstract

**Purpose:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Mekarjaya Village face significant challenges in product packaging and marketing, resulting in limited market competitiveness. This research aims to increase MSME capacity through education, training, and mentoring in innovative packaging design and digital marketing strategies.

**Method:** The study employed Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology with qualitative data collection through surveys, observations, and interviews, involving active community participation throughout the research process in Mekarjaya Village, Bandung Regency.

**Practical Applications:** The implemented activities including socialization, packaging training, labeling, and social media marketing resulted in significant improvements, with a 20% sales increase and expanded market reach for assisted MSMEs through enhanced product presentation and digital marketing approaches.

**Conclusion:** This empowerment strategy demonstrates potential in improving MSME branding and competitiveness through digital media utilization. Ensuring sustainability and enabling replication in other regions requires institutional support, long-term evaluation, and contextual adjustments to local conditions.

### Article History

Submission: 06-08-2025

Review: 09-08-2025

Accepted: 16-08-2025

### Keyword

MSME;  
Packaging;  
Marketing;  
Sustainable;  
Mekarjaya;

### How to cite

Nurhalisa, S., Hartono, K., Syamsiah, N., & Sayanti, D. (2025). The Role of Packaging and Marketing in MSME Development in Mekarjaya Village, Arjasari District, Bandung Regency. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, Volume 6(2), 558-566 <https://doi.org/10.32815/jpm.v6i2.2774>



## Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the productive economic sectors managed by individuals or small business entities that stand independently, without direct affiliation with large companies (DPR RI, 2008). Referring to Law Number 20 of 2008, MSMEs have a strategic role in supporting the national economy, including through job creation, provision of economic services to the community, and supporting income distribution and maintaining national economic stability. MSMEs have also proven to be resilient in the face of global economic dynamics. With these advantages, this sector opens up many new business opportunities that contribute positively to economic growth. The role of MSMEs in the national economy is very significant. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022, this sector contributes around 61.07% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs more than 97% of the workforce in Indonesia. With this contribution, MSMEs are clearly the backbone of the economy, especially in the regional context. As small and medium business entities that dominate the national business structure, MSMEs have a large capacity to absorb labor and improve community welfare through the expansion of business opportunities. In rural areas, MSMEs also drive local economic dynamics and community empowerment.

For example, Mekarjaya Village in Arjasari District, Bandung Regency, shows great potential in developing MSMEs due to its rich natural resources, which allow the development of various superior products. Based on data from the Head of RW (2025), this village has 43 MSME units spread across 13 RW, including food businesses (cassava chips, sweet potato, peyek, opak aci, brownies), non-food (convection, handicrafts), agriculture (rice, coffee, tobacco), to tourism services. The average MSME turnover is in the range of less than IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000 per month, with the majority of actors having secondary education and limited internet access.

However, MSMEs in Mekarjaya Village still face various challenges, especially in terms of product packaging and marketing. This issue is prioritized compared to other problems such as capital, distribution, or raw materials because weaknesses in design and packaging function directly affect the image, competitiveness, and ability of products to penetrate markets outside the village (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Bahri, 2021). Weaknesses in packaging design and function, such as too simple and unattractive displays, and the lack of strong visual identity, are one of the obstacles in increasing competitiveness in the market. In addition, limited digital marketing literacy makes MSME actors not optimally utilize online platforms to expand their market. Field observations show that some MSME actors have never attended official training related to packaging and marketing strategies. This limitation is exacerbated by the lack of access to adequate information and technology. The absence of complete product information on packaging also has a negative impact on the competitiveness of MSME products compared to products from large companies. This challenge is reinforced by the existence of digital inequality in rural areas, which limits business actors' access to training, technology, and wider marketing networks (Prasetyo, 2020).

The role of packaging and marketing becomes the main focus for MSMEs in Mekarjaya Village. From the results of field observations, MSME actors in Mekarjaya Village have various processed products produced from natural resources for sale. Such as, from processed cassava, coffee beans, and other types of products. However, despite adequate production quantities, sales volume remains low. This indicates that the problem is not with the availability of raw materials, production capacity, but rather with how the product is presented to the market. Products from Mekarjaya Village not only compete with similar products from neighboring villages, but also with products from large industries that already have brands and are packaged attractively. Without good packaging and the right marketing strategy, products from Mekarjaya Village will find it difficult to penetrate a wider market.

Based on these conditions, this community service program is designed to explore and strengthen the role of packaging and marketing in supporting MSMEs in Mekarjaya Village.

Various activities such as surveys, counseling, packaging and labeling training, digital promotion through social media, and evaluation are carried out as part of community empowerment efforts. This activity aims to increase the competitiveness of local MSMEs so that they are able to adapt and compete in a wider market. In this case, aspects such as capital, raw materials will become more relevant and easier to overcome after a strong marketing foundation has been built. It is expected that through this intervention, MSME actors will get benefits both practically and theoretically. Practically, the results of this activity can be used as a reference for business actors, local governments, and related parties in formulating sustainable packaging and marketing strategies. In addition, the success of this program is expected to open up more job opportunities and improve the standard of living of the local community.

## Method

The implementation of this community service program was carried out in Mekarjaya Village, Arjasari District, Bandung Regency with a postal code of 40379. The geographical location of the Mekarjaya Village Office is at coordinates 7°4'58.94"LS 107°37'51.42"BT with an area of 722 Ha and a population of more than 6,154 people. Mekarjaya Village is directly bordered by several areas, namely Mekarjaya Village and Baros Village to the north, Patolsari Village and Wargaluyu Village to the east, Batukarut Village and Lebakwangi Village to the south, and Arjasari Village to the west. The distance from Mekarjaya Village to the center of Bandung Regency Government is a) Distance from District Government: 7 Km, b) Distance from Regency Capital: 12-15 Km, c) Distance from Provincial Capital: 35 Km.

The method used is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that involves active collaboration between researchers and participants in the cycle of planning, implementation, observation, and evaluation of actions. This approach was chosen to optimize MSME empowerment in Mekarjaya Village through the collection of qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documentation, so that it can understand the process of change in depth and contextually (Ramadhani et al., 2024). The PAR method itself is a research approach that is oriented towards real action and collaborative problem-solving between researchers and communities. Its cycle consists of stages of joint planning, action, observation of the impact of the action, and joint reflection to formulate further steps (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

The selection of three assisted MSMEs (kecimping, peyek, and brownies) was carried out based on criteria that include: (1) active participation in initial socialization activities, (2) readiness and willingness to receive assistance, (3) product potential to be developed through packaging and marketing improvements, and (4) representation of local food business types. This selection was carried out openly based on attendance records and initial discussions with RW representatives to maintain objectivity. The application of PAR in this activity not only relies on one-way socialization but also involves MSME actors in identifying priority problems and designing solutions that are suitable for their conditions. Feedback was collected through question-and-answer sessions, small group discussions, and post-training evaluations, which were used to adjust the material and methods of assistance. For example, based on participant input, social media training was focused on platforms that are commonly used in the village (WhatsApp and Facebook) to make it more relevant and easy to implement.

Data analysis was carried out descriptively qualitatively with triangulation to ensure the validity of the results. The steps of this method include:

1. Data collection was carried out comprehensively through field surveys of MSME actors, participatory observations, activity documentation, and direct interviews in stages to obtain in-depth information about their needs and obstacles. In addition, material socialization related to packaging and digital marketing as well as intensive training was given to selected MSMEs. Regular monitoring and evaluation were also carried out to monitor the development of MSME coaching.
2. Data Analysis Procedure The collected data was then analyzed using a qualitative

descriptive approach that started with cleaning and filtering the data so that only relevant information was processed. The data was arranged thematically and triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the validity and accuracy of the analysis results.

3. Interpretation of Results The interpretation of the results focused on changes in behavior, business strategies, and economic achievements of MSME actors. The evaluation includes the application of new knowledge, product and packaging innovations, and the use of digital media. Success indicators are seen from increased sales and market expansion, which is supported by testimonials and visual documentation. These results become the basis for recommendations for improving the effectiveness of MSME coaching programs in the future.

## Result

This community service activity was carried out in Mekarjaya Village, with the main target being MSME actors in 13 RW. Mekarjaya Village has various types of MSMEs that produce processed agricultural products such as coffee, sweet potatoes, handicrafts, and other processed products such as opak aci, peyek, and brownies. This product diversity is a great potential that can be developed. Initial surveys conducted by the KKN student team in the first week per RW showed that the majority of MSME actors, especially micro-enterprises, do not yet understand about business development, especially the importance of attractive packaging and the use of digital media in marketing.

Picture 1. MSME Survey



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

As a follow-up, on June 12, 2025, MSME Education Socialization was held with the theme "Local Heroes, Global Business" at PKBM Bina Warga, attended by 21 MSME participants and the PKK Task Force. This socialization aims to improve business development skills related to packaging and digital marketing. During the event, participants showed high enthusiasm and actively asked questions. The material was delivered by a team of students from the Faculty of Economics, including packaging design, branding, and digital marketing strategies using social media.

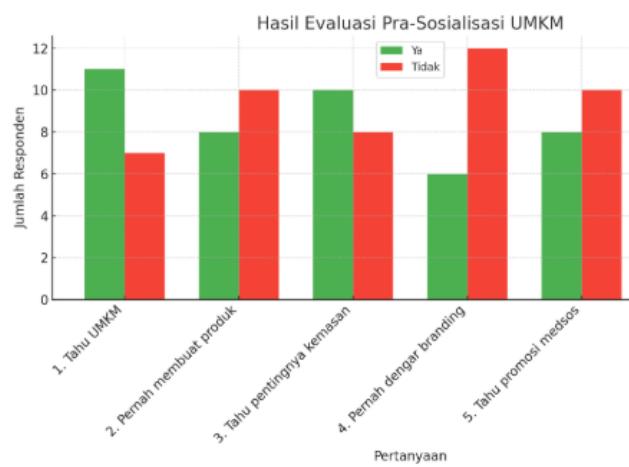
Based on a pre-socialization survey, 66.7% of respondents understood the basic concept of MSMEs, but technical understanding such as branding (33.3%), social media promotion (38.9%), and packaging design (50%) was still moderate, with only 27.8% having tried active entrepreneurship. After socialization, there was a significant increase in understanding; 89% were able to answer MSME knowledge correctly, 83% recognized the main elements of branding, and awareness of digital marketing increased. This increase in understanding is an early indication of the success of the intervention in the cognitive aspects of MSME actors.

Picture 2. MSME Socialization Activities



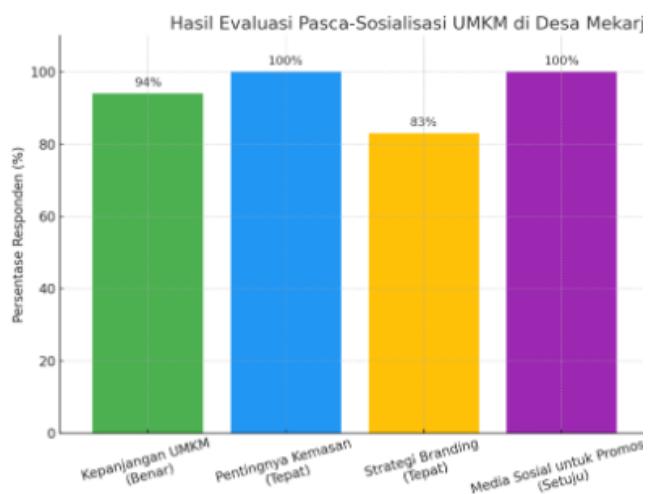
Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

Figure 1. Results of MSME Pre-Socialization



Source: Author's Work, 2025.

Figure 2. Post-Socialization Results for MSMEs



Source: Author's Work, 2025.

Intensive training and mentoring were provided to three selected MSMEs in the fields of kicimpring, peyek, and brownies, with a focus on improving product visuals through packaging labels and online and offline marketing strategies. Previously, promotions and sales were only done traditionally without attractive packaging. The training also taught the selection of packaging that considers aesthetics and product safety with limited capital considerations.

Figure 3. Product After Packaging Labeling



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

After the training, MSME actors were able to create packaging designs with product brands, compositions, variants, and easily contactable contacts. Online marketing assistance was focused on WhatsApp and Facebook platforms, according to local access and habits. Monitoring for two weeks after mentoring showed a 20% increase in sales at kicimpring MSMEs, expansion of peyek market to outside the village through Facebook, and addition of new brownies customers through WhatsApp.

Figure 4. Screenshot of MSME Product Promotion via Facebook



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

However, during the monitoring process, several obstacles were found that affected the effectiveness of the program. Some MSME actors experienced limitations in mastering digital technology, especially in operating certain features on social media, thus requiring longer assistance. Additionally, the limited time for assistance made the adaptation process to new marketing techniques not optimal. External factors such as unstable internet networks in some RWs and the busyness of MSME actors who had to divide their time between production and sales also posed challenges.

On the marketing side, dependence on WhatsApp and Facebook platforms limited market reach because they were not yet connected to e-commerce platforms that have a wider audience. These obstacles are important notes for improving coaching strategies in the future. Although there was an increase in initial indicators such as knowledge and turnover, evidence of sustainability and independence post-assistance has not been confirmed.

There is no data to show whether MSME actors will be able to consistently maintain new practices without external support, or whether local change agents have emerged who are ready to continue the training. Documentation of activities in the form of photos of all activities was also collected as evidence to support the success of the program.

Testimonials delivered by the three assisted businesses showed satisfaction and hope that similar activities could continue. To see firsthand their expressions of appreciation and experience, you can watch the testimonial video we uploaded on TikTok. <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSB7GLK7G/>. The included visual documentation and testimonial videos mostly highlight positive narratives and do not yet capture criticisms or significant obstacles, potentially providing a biased picture. Therefore, further evaluation in the medium term is necessary to measure the sustained impact on the socio-economic structure of Mekarjaya Village.

## Discussion

Based on the results of community service activities in Mekarjaya Village, it can be seen that the understanding of MSME actors regarding packaging and digital marketing is still quite limited before being given socialization and training. This is a major obstacle in increasing the competitiveness of their products in an increasingly competitive market. This condition is in line with observations in the literature that emphasize that attractive packaging and appropriate digital marketing strategies can provide significant added value to MSME products (Bahri, 2021; Politis et al., 2019). The increase in understanding shown by participants after attending socialization and training proves that education and direct guidance are very effective in improving the capacity of MSME actors. Knowledge about attractive packaging design, branding, and the use of social media as a digital marketing channel not only provides insight but also encourages changes in business behavior that are more professional and adaptive to technological developments (Ruhiyat et al., 2022; Kurniawan, 2022).

Real changes in product packaging that become more eye-catching and informative have had a positive impact on consumer perceptions and allow MSMEs to increase the selling price of products without reducing buyer interest. This is in line with marketing theory which states that packaging is an important communication tool that influences consumer purchasing decisions and provides product differentiation in a crowded market (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Although MSME actors face capital limitations, the strategy of adjusting selling prices with better packaging quality is a successful step in increasing the economic value of products.

The use of a combination of offline and digital marketing also shows an effective approach. Conventional marketing approaches through local stores and markets are maintained to maintain traditional markets, while digital marketing with WhatsApp and Facebook platforms utilizes the ease of access and user familiarity in the area. This strategy increases market penetration opportunities and increases interaction with consumers, thereby strengthening loyalty and expanding networks (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2023; Kusuma, 2023).

Monitoring and evaluation during the mentoring period showed a strong positive correlation between packaging quality, use of social media as a marketing tool, and increased sales volume. These results reinforce previous findings that structured training and ongoing mentoring are key factors in the success of MSME development (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023; Wati et al., 2024). However, although the use of WhatsApp and Facebook as marketing media has been proven effective, too much dependence on these two platforms also has negative sides. Limitations of content distribution algorithms can make promotional reach limited, especially if not supported by a consistent content marketing strategy (Lin et al., 2021).

In addition, these two platforms tend to reach audiences who are already in close social circles (existing networks), making it difficult to expand the market to truly new areas without additional paid advertising costs (Simic et al., 2019). Data security factors and the risk of accounts being blocked are also potential threats that can disrupt the smoothness of marketing (Rusere et al., 2022). Therefore, diversification of digital marketing channels, such as entering e-commerce platforms or other social media with a wider audience reach, becomes an important strategy to reduce this risk.

Overall, the application of packaging and digital marketing strategies supported by active training and mentoring has been proven to have a positive short-term impact on MSMEs in Mekarjaya Village. However, to ensure sustainability and maintain this success, MSMEs need to develop more diverse marketing strategies and not just rely on WhatsApp and Facebook. Furthermore, risk mitigation strategies against dependence on digital platforms, expansion of mentoring coverage, and integration with policies and institutional support are needed so that this model can be replicated effectively in other villages with different contexts.

## **Conclusion**

The community service activities in Mekarjaya Village, which focus on enhancing the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through marketing education and digital packaging, have shown positive results in terms of knowledge, technical skills, and sales increase. Based on the perspective of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the concept of sustainable empowerment, this intervention provides an initial indication of the occurrence of digital transformation of rural MSMEs, although it is still limited to the short term.

The success in improving packaging creativity and utilizing social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp proves the potential of digital technology to expand the market, but also reveals structural challenges such as limited capital, internet access, and dependence on certain platforms that are vulnerable to algorithm changes.

To ensure the sustainability of this positive impact, strategic steps are needed that involve the village government, cooperatives office, and universities as long-term partners. Operational recommendations include: (1) institutionalizing digital marketing training and creative packaging in the village's annual work program, (2) forming local change agents from MSME actors who have been trained to train their peers, (3) integrating mentoring with government programs or microfinance institutions to support access to capital, and (4) setting long-term success indicators such as marketing independence, increased turnover, and expansion of distribution networks. Thus, this intervention model can not only be replicated in other villages by adjusting the local context, but also has the potential to become part of an inclusive and sustainable village economic empowerment strategy.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to express our gratitude to all parties who have provided support and contributions in the implementation of this community service, especially to MSME actors in Mekarjaya Village who have actively participated and opened themselves to the learning and mentoring process. We give special appreciation to the Faculty of Economics, KKN student team, village government, and all relevant stakeholders for their cooperation, guidance, and

adequate facilities so that the development of packaging and digital marketing activities can run smoothly and provide real benefits for improving local community welfare. May the results of this activity become a stepping stone in the development of sustainable and continuously advancing MSMEs.

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