

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PURPLE SWEET POTATO CHIPS MSMES THROUGH DIGITALIZATION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING IN THE TECHNOLOGY ERA

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Artikel info

Abstract. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kapasitas usaha UMKM Keripik Ubi Jalar Ungu "3 Saudara" melalui pendampingan legalitas usaha (Halal dan P-IRT), pelaksanaan *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD) bersama mitra dan masyarakat, serta pendampingan pengelolaan keuangan dan pemasaran digital. Metode pelaksanaan dilakukan secara bertahap selama delapan bulan dengan pendekatan partisipatif. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa mitra berhasil memperoleh legalitas usaha berupa pencantuman sertifikasi halal dan nomor P-IRT, meningkatkan pemahaman manajemen keuangan berbasis digital, serta memperluas jangkauan pemasaran melalui media sosial. Program ini berdampak pada peningkatan kepercayaan konsumen, kenaikan penjualan, serta peningkatan daya saing produk.

Abstract. *This community service activity aims to increase the business capacity of the "3 Saudara" Purple Sweet Potato Chips MSME through business legality assistance (Halal and P-IRT), the implementation of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with partners and the community, and assistance in financial management and digital marketing. The implementation method was carried out in stages over eight months with a participatory approach. The results of the activity showed that partners succeeded in obtaining business legality in the form of halal certification and P-IRT numbers, improving understanding of digital-based financial management, and expanding marketing reach through social media. This program has an impact on increasing consumer trust, increasing sales, and increasing product competitiveness.*

Keywords:

MSMEs;
Digitalization;
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INTRODUCTION

Parepare City is a small city with a significant number of MSMEs, around 23,000 businesses spread across various sub-districts. One sub-district with a significant number of MSMEs is Ujung District, with 1,254 businesses. However, Ujung District's economic contribution remains relatively low. Most residents operate traditional household businesses, without the support of adequate marketing technology and financial management. This situation indicates that the economic potential of the community, particularly housewives, is not being optimally utilized.

This situation demonstrates the need for more targeted empowerment efforts for MSMEs, particularly in improving entrepreneurial capacity, utilizing digital technology, and improving business financial management. Through appropriate mentoring and training, communities in Ujung District, particularly housewives running home-based businesses, can be encouraged to develop their businesses more productively and sustainably. With the support of knowledge, skills, and access to broader marketing, it is hoped that MSMEs in this region will be able to increase product competitiveness, expand markets, and make a greater contribution to the regional economy.

One MSME with potential for development is the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips business, established in 2022 and already employing seven local workers. This business is supported by the abundant availability of raw materials and the high nutritional value of its products. Numerous scientific studies have proven that the nutritional quality of sweet potatoes, especially purple sweet potatoes, is on par with other carbohydrate sources.

Besides being a source of carbohydrates, purple sweet potatoes are also known to have a high antioxidant content, particularly anthocyanins, which are beneficial for body health. This content plays a role in helping ward off free radicals, maintaining heart health, and boosting the immune system. This high nutritional value makes purple sweet potatoes not only potential as an alternative food ingredient but also as a processed product with high sales value and market appeal. Therefore, the development of the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips business has significant potential to be developed as a superior product with economic value and the potential to increase the income of business owners and the surrounding community.

Sweet potato production in South Sulawesi reached 41,602 tons in 2022, indicating abundant raw material availability for the development of the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips business. However, partners still face various obstacles, including suboptimal business legality, manual financial management, limited marketing strategies, and minimal use of digital technology. Therefore, this PKM program focuses on strengthening the capacity of MSMEs through the implementation of financial and marketing digitization, with the goal of improving managerial skills, expanding market networks, and improving app-based financial management systems to make the business more competitive and sustainable.

Facing numerous competitors, the "3 Saudara" chip business must remain competitive, given that it was founded by women struggling to support their families financially. One strategy to compete in the market share is maintaining the business's financial health to increase profitability and product differentiation, including unique and attractive packaging and brand personality.

The challenges faced by partners include 1) non-digitalized financial management, 2) Lack of understanding and use of digital marketing technology, and 3) Limited access to appropriate technology. Therefore, this PKM activity offers solutions, including providing digital literacy training, educating MSMEs about online marketing using social media, and implementing technology through branding and more attractive packaging.

Data and Methodology

The implementation methods to be implemented by the Entrepreneurship-Based PKM Team are:

1. Observation and Program Identification

The initial stage involves direct observation of partners to determine the actual conditions of the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips business. This activity includes an analysis of business potential, challenges faced (finance, marketing, packaging), and specific needs to strengthen business capacity.

2. Program Socialization

At this stage, we socialize the program activities through Forum Group Discussions (FGDs) with business owners and gather input from partners to ensure the program truly meets their needs.

3. Training and Mentoring

Monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out to ensure that the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips community service (PKM) program is running according to its stated objectives. Monitoring is conducted to oversee activity implementation, including the effectiveness of training, mentoring, and technology adoption by partners. Meanwhile, evaluation aims to assess the program's outcomes and impacts, such as increased productivity, product quality, financial management, marketing, and understanding of the nutritional content of purple sweet potato chips. The results of this evaluation will be used to identify obstacles, provide feedback, and develop strategies for future program improvement and sustainability.

The entrepreneurship-based Community Service Program (PKM) also involves the participation of partners. Partner participation in these community service activities is crucial to the program's success. Partners play an active role in several aspects, including participation in training, collaboration in mentoring, and implementation of digital technology. Partners are expected to implement the digital technologies introduced during the training and mentoring, such as the use of financial applications, online marketing media, and the branding and packaging processes for the "3 Saudara" business. The PKM program takes place at the partner's location in Lapadde Village, Ujung District, Parepare City.

The PKM program lasts for eight months. Evaluations are conducted on the implementation of each stage of the program, including training and mentoring in introducing digital financial and marketing systems. Partner satisfaction with the program, including the support provided and the ease of implementing digital technology, are also assessed. For the program to be sustainable, partners are crucial for continuing to utilize the skills and knowledge they have acquired. Sustainability can also be strengthened by building relationships with government, financial institutions, and academics to provide ongoing technical and non-technical support to partners.

Results and Discussion

To support the smooth implementation of entrepreneurship-based community service, the Community Service Program (PKM) team conducted several stages of activities, including:

- a. Partner Needs Survey

The PKM team visited the locations and conducted interviews and discussions with MSME business owners. Through this survey, the PKM team sought to identify the specific needs of partners and potential opportunities for further development. The results of this survey will be used as the basis for developing effective, relevant, and sustainable programs to increase the partners' entrepreneurial capacity, thereby maximizing the achievement of community service goals. The partner needs survey revealed that the '3 Saudara' purple sweet potato chips business lacked halal certification and P-IRT (Industrial Property Management System), maintained manual financial

reporting, and lacked product labeling. Therefore, the goal of this community service activity was to provide innovative solutions to partners.

Furthermore, the survey results also indicated that partners still face limitations in utilizing digital technology to support their business activities. Product marketing remains rudimentary and digital media has not yet been utilized optimally to expand market reach. This situation has resulted in the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips being largely unknown to consumers outside the business's immediate vicinity. However, with the support of digital marketing and attractive packaging, the product has significant potential to compete in a broader market.

Based on these identified issues, the PKM team designed several mentoring programs, including facilitation of halal certification and P-IRT (Household Property Ownership), training in preparing simple and more systematic financial reports, and assistance in designing attractive and informative product labels. Through these programs, partners are expected to improve the quality of their business management, strengthen product legality, and enhance their competitiveness in the market. Thus, the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips business can develop more professionally and sustainably, providing a greater economic impact for business owners.

b. Business Legality Assistance (Halal and P-IRT)

Assistance was provided in collaboration with Rumah BUMN (State-Owned Enterprises House) to assist partners in the process of obtaining halal and P-IRT certification. This legality is crucial for increasing consumer trust and expanding market access. With a P-IRT number and halal label, products become more competitive and can be marketed more widely, both through offline and online marketing channels.

Furthermore, having halal certification and P-IRT also demonstrates a business's commitment to maintaining product quality, safety, and hygiene in accordance with established standards. This not only improves the business's image in the eyes of consumers but also opens up opportunities for collaboration with various parties, such as modern retailers, marketplaces, and MSME empowerment programs. Thus, business legality is expected to encourage sustainable business growth and increase MSME competitiveness in the broader market.



Figure 1. Partner Needs Survey



Figure 2. Business legality assistance

c. Implementation of FGD with Partners and the Community

Entrepreneurship outreach activities took the form of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving various stakeholders, including local business owners and academics. During these FGDs, the PKM Team shared knowledge, experiences, and strategies for overcoming various challenges in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, these activities provided a platform for discussing potential interdisciplinary collaborations and innovations that could be implemented in the businesses of the "3 Saudara" MSMEs.

During these outreach activities, the Team Leader and other Team members presented several points related to more standardized financial management and how the cassava chip

development strategy involves various aspects, from improving product quality to broader marketing, both locally and through digital platforms.

Through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), MSMEs were also provided with an understanding of the importance of business legality and product standards in enhancing consumer trust. The PKM team explained that halal certification and P-IRT certification are not merely administrative requirements but also provide added value that can enhance product competitiveness in the market. The interactive discussion provided an opportunity for partners to share the challenges they face and obtain applicable solutions and guidance for future business development.

Furthermore, this outreach activity encouraged MSMEs to be more innovative in developing processed purple sweet potato products. The PKM team provided motivation and insight into the importance of creativity in product packaging, branding, and promotional strategies to make products more attractive to consumers. With the mentoring and constructive discussions through this FGD, it is hoped that the "3 Saudara" MSMEs will be able to improve their managerial and entrepreneurial skills, enabling their businesses to grow sustainably and contribute to the economic well-being of the surrounding community.



Figure 3. FGD activities with partners



Figure 4. Product Results "3 Saudara"

d. Financial Management and Marketing Assistance

Financial assistance was provided by introducing Excel-based bookkeeping and simple applications for recording cash flow and profit and loss. From a marketing perspective, partners received training in designing more attractive packaging and developing promotional strategies through Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

The assistance results demonstrated improved product display quality, increased consumer trust, and increased sales. Social media promotions were able to reach consumers beyond the local area.

Furthermore, during the financial mentoring activities, the PKM team also provided an understanding of the importance of separating personal and business finances. Partners were taught how to record transactions routinely, from recording income and expenses to simply calculating business profits. With a more structured recording system, entrepreneurs are expected to gain a clearer understanding of their business's financial condition, thus facilitating business decision-making and future business development planning.

Furthermore, marketing mentoring focused not only on creating attractive packaging designs but also on strategies for building product identity (branding) to enhance consumer recognition. The PKM team provided guidance on creating creative and informative promotional content on social media, such as showcasing the production process, product advantages, and customer testimonials. Through this strategy, it is hoped that the "3 Saudara" purple sweet potato chips will

achieve a more professional image, increase consumer appeal, and sustainably expand market share.



Figure 5 . assistance tool for partners

Conclusion

This entrepreneurship-based community service program was implemented by the PKM team through various stages to ensure its success. This activity successfully increased the capacity of the "3 Saudara" MSMEs through business legality assistance, participatory focus group discussions (FGDs), and strengthening financial management and digital marketing. Halal certification and P-IRT (Household-Based Business Ownership) increased market confidence, while financial digitization and social media promotion increased business competitiveness. Therefore, it is recommended that partners continue to maintain product quality and consistently maintain digital financial records. Regular social media content development is necessary to maintain customer loyalty. Similar programs can be expanded to other MSMEs to encourage equitable digital transformation.

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