

## Strengthening the Competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs in the Malaysian Market

Muhammad Sholahuddin<sup>1</sup>, Nurizal Ismail<sup>2</sup>, Ratna Yunita Setiyani Subardjo<sup>3</sup>, Suranto<sup>4</sup>, Moechammad Nasir<sup>5</sup>, Mohamad Nisman Fadhil<sup>6</sup>, Muhammad Amir Anshori<sup>7</sup>, Tazkia Amalia<sup>8</sup>, Muhammad Fathi Salim<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1,5</sup> Department of Management, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

Email: [ms242@ums.ac.id](mailto:ms242@ums.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> KENMS, International Islamic University Malaysia

<sup>3</sup> Department of Psychology, Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta

<sup>4</sup> Head of the School of Vocational Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

<sup>6</sup> Master of Management, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

<sup>7</sup> Doctoral Programme in Management, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta and Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Karanganyar

<sup>8</sup> Study Programme in Nutrition Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

<sup>9</sup> Faculty of Quran-Sunnah, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

---

### Artikel info

---

**Abstract.** *This community engagement programme aimed to strengthen the competitiveness of Indonesian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the Malaysian market through practical entrepreneurship training for Indonesian citizens in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas. The programme was implemented at Rumah Hamka Malaysia and involved 30 existing and prospective entrepreneurs from various business sectors. Using a participatory training approach, the activities focused on target market identification, product attractiveness, business integrity, packaging improvement, and cost-effective promotional strategies. Evaluation was conducted through pre-test and post-test assessments, observation, worksheets, participant feedback, and satisfaction questionnaires. The data were analysed using descriptive analysis and a paired-samples t-test. The results showed a statistically significant improvement in participants' understanding after the programme. Participants became more capable of identifying market segments, formulating product value, building customer trust, improving packaging presentation, and designing simple promotional messages. This programme concludes that community-based practical training can support Indonesian diaspora entrepreneurs and strengthen the competitiveness of Indonesian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Malaysia.*

**Abstrak.** *Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat daya saing usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah Indonesia di pasar Malaysia melalui pelatihan*

*kewirausahaan praktis bagi warga negara Indonesia di Kuala Lumpur dan wilayah sekitarnya. Program ini dilaksanakan di Rumah Hamka Malaysia dan melibatkan 30 pelaku usaha yang telah berjalan maupun calon wirausahawan dari berbagai sektor bisnis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan pelatihan partisipatif, kegiatan ini berfokus pada identifikasi pasar sasaran, peningkatan daya tarik produk, penguatan integritas usaha, perbaikan kemasan, dan strategi promosi hemat biaya. Evaluasi dilakukan melalui asesmen sebelum dan sesudah pelatihan, observasi, lembar kerja, umpan balik peserta, dan kuesioner kepuasan. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan uji beda berpasangan. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pemahaman peserta yang signifikan setelah mengikuti program. Peserta menjadi lebih mampu mengidentifikasi segmen pasar, merumuskan nilai produk, membangun kepercayaan pelanggan, memperbaiki tampilan kemasan, dan menyusun pesan promosi sederhana. Program ini menyimpulkan bahwa pelatihan praktis berbasis komunitas dapat mendukung wirausahawan diaspora Indonesia dan memperkuat daya saing usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah Indonesia di Malaysia.*

---

**Keywords:**

*community engagement; Indonesian MSMEs; Malaysian market; entrepreneurship training; diaspora business*

**Corresponden author:**

Email: [ms242@ums.ac.id](mailto:ms242@ums.ac.id)



artikel dengan akses terbuka di bawah lisensi CC BY -4.0

---

## INTRODUCTION

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) play a significant role in strengthening community economic self-reliance, including among Indonesian citizens residing abroad, MSMEs function not only as sources of income but also as mechanisms for social integration and economic adaptation within host countries (Chen et al., 2024) (Fontefrancesco & Mendonce, 2022). In Malaysia, the potential for expanding Indonesian MSMEs is considerable, particularly given the size of the Indonesian population recorded through the self-reporting mechanism, which totalled 2,544,062 by December 2024. Of this figure, 51.97 per cent were based in Malaysia (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2024). This substantial community constitutes a valuable initial market, provides access to supportive social networks, and creates opportunities for business collaboration that may be leveraged to broaden the reach of Indonesian products (Pedone et al., 2023).

This potential is further reinforced by Malaysia's position as one of Indonesia's key economic partners. According to data from the Ministry of Trade, the value of Indonesia's non-oil and gas exports to Malaysia increased from USD 10,803.9 million in 2024 to USD 11,716.0 million in 2025. This upward trend suggests that the Malaysian market remains receptive to Indonesian products (Kementerian Perdagangan Republik Indonesia, 2025), including culinary goods, fashion, household items, services, and creative products, all of which offer promising opportunities for development by Indonesian citizens in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas.

Nevertheless, these opportunities have not yet been fully exploited by existing and prospective Indonesian MSME entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Many businesses continue to operate in a relatively informal and rudimentary manner, relying primarily on personal experience, friendship networks, and word-of-mouth promotion. Research on halal MSMEs in Malaysia likewise indicates that small business owners continue to face a range of challenges, particularly in relation to branding, innovation, certification, access to finance, and efforts to enhance market competitiveness (Saima et al., 2024)

These constraints limit business owners' ability to reach consumers, foster customer loyalty, and enhance the value of their products. When MSME actors lack an adequate understanding of target markets, product differentiation, trust-building strategies, and attractive packaging design, products with genuine commercial potential may nevertheless struggle to compete effectively. Studies on community-based entrepreneurship training further suggest that weak business management literacy constitutes one of the key factors inhibiting the growth of small enterprises and the improvement of entrepreneurs' welfare (Hairunisya et al., 2023)

A range of MSME training initiatives has been introduced to strengthen entrepreneurs' capabilities, particularly in marketing, packaging, and product licensing. However, many of these programmes remain generic and have not been adequately tailored to the needs of Indonesian citizens living abroad, who operate within distinct market conditions, consumer cultures, and business networks. For this reason, MSME support programmes should be designed to be more practical, context-sensitive, and readily applicable to participants' circumstances (Setiawan et al., 2023).

The novelty of this programme lies in its simple, practical design, tailored specifically to the needs of 30 Indonesian citizens residing in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas. The programme extends beyond product sales strategies by integrating five key components: selecting products that align with consumer preferences, identifying appropriate target markets, employing cost-effective promotional methods, fostering trust through honesty, and presenting products in attractive packaging. This approach accords with findings indicating that product distinctiveness, consumer trust, and packaging quality can enhance product appeal while also strengthening customer loyalty (Ramadhani et al., 2025).

The aim of this community engagement initiative is to enhance participants' understanding and practical skills in developing businesses that are simple, ethical, and commercially viable. Through this programme, participants are expected to be able to identify consumer needs, determine appropriate target markets, design cost-effective promotional strategies, build customer trust, and improve packaging presentation so that their products become more attractive and better aligned with the characteristics of the Malaysian market (Yang et al., 2022).

This initiative is expected to contribute to strengthening the economic capacity of Indonesian citizens in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding areas, particularly by promoting business independence, increasing the confidence of MSME entrepreneurs, and reinforcing the business networks of the Indonesian community in Malaysia. In addition, the programme has the potential to serve as a practical model of business support for other Indonesian diaspora communities seeking to develop small enterprises in ways that respond to local market needs (Pedone et al., 2023).

## METHODS

This international collaborative community engagement programme was implemented through a participatory training approach centred on practical application and mentoring. This approach was adopted because the programme sought to strengthen participants' understanding and practical capabilities in identifying consumer needs, defining target markets, designing cost-effective promotional strategies, building customer trust, and improving product packaging (Hairunisya et al., 2023) .

The activity was conducted on Sunday, 3 May 2026, from 09.00 to 14.00 at Rumah HAMKA Malaysia. It involved 30 Indonesian citizens residing in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding areas, primarily existing and prospective MSME entrepreneurs operating in the culinary, household goods, fashion, services, and creative sectors. Participants were selected purposively on the basis of their alignment with the objectives of the programme, namely to strengthen the business capacity of the Indonesian community in Malaysia (Pedone et al., 2023).

The preparatory stage involved coordination with partner organisations, selection of the venue, preparation of the schedule, appointment of speakers, and an initial assessment of participants' needs. This needs assessment focused on the common business challenges faced by participants, including product selection, target market identification, promotional strategies, efforts to build customer trust, and improvements to packaging. This stage was essential to ensure that the training materials addressed participants' actual problems and could be applied readily in their day-to-day business activities (Amalina et al., 2025).

The training materials were structured into five principal sessions. The first session, entitled *Target Market*, was delivered by M. Amir Anshori, S.M., M.M., an entrepreneur, a doctoral candidate in Management at UMS, and Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business at UMUKA. In this session, participants were guided to identify prospective buyers more precisely, understand consumer needs, and align their products with the most appropriate market segments (Ramadhani et al., 2025).

The second session, entitled *What Makes a Product Appealing to Consumers*, was delivered by Prof. M. Sholahuddin, S.E., M.Si., Ph.D., CSBA, in his capacity as Head of the UMS International Collaborative Community Engagement Team. The session explored strategies for developing product advantages, understanding the factors that influence consumer choice, and formulating a clear value proposition so that the products offered would possess stronger market appeal and greater differentiation from competitors (Ollanketo & Pylvanainen, 2025).

The third session, entitled *Demonstrating Integrity in the Digital Era*, was delivered by Assistant Professor Dr Nurizal Ismail, M.A., from KENMS, IUM. This session emphasised the importance of trustworthiness, the honest communication of product information, the effective use of customer testimonials, and consistency in service delivery as fundamental elements in building consumer trust (Yang et al., 2022).

The fourth session, entitled *Attractive Packaging, Increased Profitability*, was delivered by M. Nisman Fadhil, S.E., an entrepreneur and Master of Management student at UMS. This session aimed to help participants understand the role of packaging not merely as a means of protecting the product, but also as an element of business identity, a point of differentiation from competitors, and a strategic instrument for enhancing product value (Setiawan et al., 2023).

The fifth session, entitled *Cost-Effective Promotion, Maximum Returns*, was delivered by Ratna Yunita S. S., S.Psi., M.Psi., Ph.D., Psychologist, a lecturer at UNISA Yogyakarta. This session was designed to assist participants in developing promotional strategies that were simple, economical, engaging, and aligned with customer characteristics, without relying on substantial promotional expenditure (Maulana et al., 2025).

The programme was delivered through a combination of brief lectures, discussion, question-and-answer sessions, case studies, practical exercises, and mentoring. Participants were guided to develop target market profiles, formulate product advantages, draft sample promotional messages, identify forms of evidence capable of strengthening customer trust, and evaluate the visual presentation of product packaging. The use of practice-based methods was intended to ensure that participants not only understood the material at a theoretical level but were also able to apply it directly within their respective businesses (Yoga et al., 2025).

The programme was evaluated through pre-test and post-test assessments, observations of participant engagement, worksheets, satisfaction questionnaires, and activity documentation. The pre-test and post-test were used to measure changes in participants' understanding before and after the training. Observations and worksheets, meanwhile, served to assess participants' ability to apply the material that had been delivered. The satisfaction questionnaire was employed to obtain an overview of participants' responses to the implementation of the programme (Drieschner et al., 2025).

The data generated through the programme were analysed descriptively by comparing participants' conditions before and after the training. The success of the programme was assessed using several indicators, namely improvements in participants' understanding, their ability to identify target markets, their skills in devising simple promotional strategies, their capacity to explain approaches to building customer trust, and their ability to evaluate product packaging.

In addition, success was also measured by participants' level of engagement during discussions and practical activities, as well as by their overall satisfaction with the implementation of the programme (Husna et al., 2025).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Results

The Community Engagement programme was held on Sunday, 3 May 2026, at Rumah HAMKA Malaysia. It was attended by 30 Indonesian citizens residing in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding areas, comprising members of Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah in Malaysia, including both existing and prospective MSME entrepreneurs in the culinary, household goods, fashion, services, and creative sectors.



**Figure 1.** Speakers of the Jualan Laris Workshop at Rumah HAMKA Malaysia

Figure 1 shows the speakers involved in the Jualan Laris Workshop at Rumah HAMKA Malaysia. The speakers represented academic, business, and community backgrounds and delivered materials on target market identification, product attractiveness, business integrity in the digital era, attractive packaging, and cost-effective promotion. Their involvement strengthened the practical and multidisciplinary character of the community engagement programme.

All participants took part in the full series of activities, from the opening session and the launch of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School to the delivery of training materials, discussion, practical exercises, and the final evaluation.

**Table 1.** Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	8	26.7
	Female	22	73.3
Business status	Existing business owner	24	80.0
	Prospective entrepreneur	6	20.0
Type of business	Culinary	10	33.3
	Household products	7	23.3
	Fashion	6	20.0
	Services	4	13.4
	Creative products	3	10.0
Length of residence in Malaysia	< 1 year	5	16.7
	1–5 years	17	56.6
	> 5 years	8	26.7
Business experience	< 1 year	6	20.0
	1–3 years	16	53.3
	> 3 years	8	26.7
<b>Total</b>		30	100

The Jualan Laris workshop was organised into two principal components: the opening session, which also marked the launch of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School, and the main Jualan Laris workshop session. The programme began with participant registration and the administration of the pre-test, followed by an ice-breaking activity, the formal opening, remarks from the Chair of PCIM, an address by the Head of the UMS Community Engagement Team, and an introduction to the panel of speakers.

This session served as the formal beginning of the community engagement programme and reflected the institutional collaboration between UMS, PCIM–PCIA Malaysia, and the Indonesian community in Malaysia. The launch was intended to provide a sustainable learning platform for strengthening the capacity and competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs in the Malaysian market, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Opening session and launch of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School

The training sessions commenced with Target Market, delivered by M. Amir Anshori. This was followed by What Makes a Product Appealing to Consumers by Prof. M. Sholahuddin, and Demonstrating Integrity in the Digital Era by Dr Nurizal Ismail. Participants then received the session Attractive Packaging, Increased Profitability from M. Nisman Fadhil, before the instructional programme concluded with Cost-Effective Promotion, Maximum Returns, delivered by Dr Ratna Yunita.



**Figure 3.** Delivery of Entrepreneurship Training Materials by the Workshop Speakers

As shown in Figure 3, the workshop speakers delivered a series of entrepreneurship training materials to strengthen participants’ business capabilities. The sessions focused on product attractiveness, business integrity in the digital era, attractive packaging, and cost-effective promotion. Through these sessions, participants were encouraged to understand product value, customer trust, packaging quality, and promotional efficiency as key factors in improving MSME competitiveness in the Malaysian market.



**Figure 4.** Male Participants Attending the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) Session

Following the delivery of the training materials, the programme continued with a panel discussion and question-and-answer session, as shown in Figure 5. During this session, participants actively raised questions related to identifying prospective customers, improving product appeal, developing cost-effective promotional strategies, building customer trust, and enhancing packaging presentation. This interaction reflected the participatory nature of the workshop and confirmed that the materials were closely aligned with the practical business needs of Indonesian MSME actors in Malaysia.



**Figure 5.** Participants' Engagement during the Discussion and Question-and-Answer Session

Participants then completed the post-test and filled in worksheets as part of the evaluation of their understanding and practical skills. The programme concluded with participants sharing their reflections and feedback, followed by the formal closing of the event.



**Figure 6.** Female Participants Completing Workshop Worksheets

As shown in Figure 6, female participants completed worksheets as part of the practical evaluation activity during the *Jualan Laris* Workshop. Through this activity, participants were encouraged to apply the training materials by identifying target markets, formulating product advantages, preparing simple promotional messages, recognising ways to build customer trust, and evaluating product packaging. This activity helped assess participants' ability to translate the concepts discussed in the workshop into practical business plans.

Observational findings indicated that participants were actively engaged throughout the programme. This engagement was evident in the large number of questions raised, particularly concerning how to identify prospective customers, strategies for making products more appealing, cost-effective promotional methods, the importance of honesty in conducting business, and ways of improving packaging presentation. In addition, participants were able to articulate a range of business-related challenges they faced, including the lack of a clearly defined target market, relatively basic product packaging, and promotional strategies that had not yet been developed in a systematic manner.

A quantitative evaluation was conducted by comparing participants' pre-test and post-test scores. The normality test indicated that the data were normally distributed, as reflected in the Shapiro–Wilk result of  $p > 0.05$ . Accordingly, the subsequent statistical analysis was performed using a paired-samples t-test.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	30	58,4	10,2	40	75
Post-test	30	81,7	8,5	65	95

**Table 3.** Results of the Inferential Statistical Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Statistical Test	N	Mean Pre-test	Mean Post-test	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Paired sample t-test	30	58,4	81,7	23,3	12,45	< 0,001	Significant

The evaluation results indicate that participants' understanding improved following the programme, particularly with regard to identifying target markets, articulating product advantages, building customer trust, developing simple promotional strategies, and evaluating product packaging. A p-value of < 0.05 indicates that the increase in post-test scores relative to pre-test scores was statistically significant.

The worksheet findings indicate that participants were able to develop target market profiles, articulate the distinctive advantages of their products, draft examples of simple promotional messages, identify forms of evidence that demonstrate honesty in business, and evaluate the packaging of their respective products. These findings suggest that the programme contributed not only to improving participants' understanding, but also to fostering practical skills that can be applied directly in the management and development of their businesses.

Participant feedback indicated that the programme was perceived as both beneficial and closely aligned with their business needs. One female participant who was already running a business remarked that the sessions on target markets and packaging had helped her appreciate the importance of identifying core customers before offering a product. Meanwhile, a female participant who had not yet started a business stated that the programme had given her the confidence to begin planning one, as the material was presented in a simple and readily applicable manner. A male participant engaged in the sale of Islamic books considered the session on customer trust and product promotion to be highly relevant to his business. In his view, buyers require clear information regarding book content, benefits, price, and reading recommendations. In addition, a male participant working as a photographer noted that the session on brand presentation and promotion had helped him to understand the importance of a portfolio, service identity, and the clear communication of service value to prospective clients.

The satisfaction questionnaire results indicated that participants responded positively to the implementation of the programme. The material presented was regarded as easy to understand, relevant to their business needs, and readily applicable in practice. Participants also expressed a need for follow-up initiatives, including business mentoring, packaging consultation, product catalogue development, and the strengthening of MSME networks among Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah members in Malaysia.

**Figure 7.** Presentation of appreciation souvenirs



**Figure 8.** Appreciation session with speakers and organising team



**Figure 9.** Group Photo Session with Participants and Speakers

## 2. Discussion

The findings indicate that the *Jualan Laris* workshop succeeded in significantly improving participants' understanding. This is evident in the increase in the mean pre-test score from 58.4 to 81.7 in the post-test, with a p-value of  $< 0.001$ . These results accord with the principles of participatory training, which emphasise that learning is more effective when participants do not merely receive material passively, but also engage actively through discussion, practical exercises, worksheet completion, and reflection. The findings likewise support those of Hairunisya et al., who demonstrated that community-based entrepreneurship training can enhance participants' knowledge, skills, and awareness in managing small enterprises (Hairunisya et al., 2023).

This PKM-KI initiative is closely connected to the community engagement programme conducted by (Sholahuddin, Wiyadi, et al., 2024) at PCIM Malaysia. That programme demonstrated that digital marketing training was effective in increasing Instagram followers, business income, and the overall promotional effectiveness of participating entrepreneurs. The use of social media emerged as an important response to earlier promotional constraints, which had relied largely on WhatsApp. Taken

together, these findings suggest that a participatory approach combined with digital training can serve as an effective strategy for strengthening the capacity of MSMEs.

The improvement in participants' ability to identify target markets reflects a clear alignment with the concept of market orientation. In developing a business, MSME entrepreneurs need to understand clearly who their target consumers are, what needs those consumers have, and how the products offered can meet those needs. Prior to the programme, most participants still understood the notion of a target market in overly broad terms and were not yet fully able to recognise indicators of digital fraud.

This condition is consistent with the findings of a community engagement programme conducted by UMS in collaboration with MSU Malaysia in November 2024, which reported that participants' mean pre-test score was only 53.2 (Sholahuddin, Wiyadi, et al., 2024). Following the training, participants became better able to classify prospective customers according to need, purchasing power, location, and buying behaviour. This finding is further supported by (Ramadhani et al., 2025), who argue that market segmentation and the alignment of products with consumer characteristics play an important role in enhancing the appeal of MSME products.

The mentoring programme examined by (Suranto et al., 2021) demonstrates that targeted digital marketing training, including the creation of Instagram, Facebook, and Shopee accounts, can assist MSMEs in identifying and reaching their target markets more effectively. Such training also helps to expand marketing networks that were previously confined to offline channels by enabling businesses to operate through online platforms. The findings of the present programme further reinforce the evidence that a strong market orientation can have a positive effect on enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs.

The findings also indicate that participants were able to identify and articulate their products' distinctive advantages, including taste, the quality of ingredients, service, pricing, ease of ordering, and their connection with the Indonesian community in Malaysia. This finding is consistent with a customer-centred business approach, which emphasises that business development should be grounded in an understanding of the values that customers consider important. These capabilities were further strengthened through product packaging training delivered alongside the digital marketing sessions.

In the programme conducted by (Suranto et al., 2021) with the Gading Sukowati MSMEs, improvements in packaging, combined with digital marketing training, resulted in processed mushroom products being presented in packaging that was more effective and visually appealing. These improvements subsequently supported stronger product marketing through online media. This finding is also consistent with the study by (M. Anshori et al., 2023), which highlights the importance of MSME product design as a strategic means of creating employment opportunities and improving community quality of life.

The study emphasises that introducing new ideas in entrepreneurship and innovative product design can encourage communities to become more creative in developing their businesses. The effects extend beyond improved understanding, as such developments also contribute to strengthening household economies. In the context of the present programme, participants' ability to formulate clear product advantages constitutes an important foundation for differentiating their products from those of competitors, while simultaneously creating more distinct added value in the eyes of consumers.

Clearly articulated product advantages can help customers recognise, remember, and distinguish a product from competing offerings (M. A. Anshori, 2024). For this reason, a sound understanding of a strong value proposition represents an important factor in the success of MSMEs operating in competitive markets. This finding is also reflected in the significant improvement observed in participants' post-test scores.

With regard to customer trust, participants came to recognise that trustworthiness, honesty in communicating product information, consistency in quality, and responsible service are essential elements in building strong relationships with consumers. This finding is consistent with the principles of Sharia-based business, which place honesty, fairness, and accountability at the core of every transaction. The results also support the study by (Yang et al., 2022), which found that trust in halal brands influences MSME performance and can strengthen a firm's position in the market.

This finding is further reinforced by the study of (Mukhlisin et al., 2022) which underscores the importance of strengthening theoretical foundations in accounting, finance, Islamic economics, and Islamic business management. Business practice should not be oriented solely towards profit

maximisation; rather, it should also be conducted in accordance with Islamic ethical values. Moreover, in the context of digital transactions, customer trust must be safeguarded against a range of risks, including phishing, personal data theft, and fraudulent investment schemes.

These risks were specifically identified in the digital business management socialisation programme conducted by (Sholahuddin, Wiyadi, et al., 2024). The programme recommended several preventive measures, including the use of strong passwords, the implementation of two-factor authentication, and the verification of the legitimacy of digital platforms before any transaction is undertaken. Customer trust should therefore be regarded as an integral element of MSME development strategies in the digital era.

In relation to packaging, participants demonstrated the ability to assess product presentation, the completeness of label information, the neatness of packaging, and its overall visual appeal. These findings support the session entitled *Attractive Packaging, Increased Profitability*, delivered by M. Nisman Fadhil, which emphasised that packaging functions not only as a means of protecting the product, but also as an expression of business identity, a point of differentiation from competing products, and a mechanism for enhancing commercial value. This finding is further reinforced by the community engagement programme conducted with the Gading Sukowati MSMEs, which showed that the provision of plastic packaging and product stickers constituted an important initial step in creating packaging that appeared more professional and visually attractive (Suranto et al., 2021). Similar evidence was reported by Pardono et al. (2022), who found that training in digital marketing, brand education, and label design helped small-scale producers improve product packaging, strengthen brand image, and use online promotional media more effectively (Pardono et al., 2022).

These findings are therefore consistent with the theory of product added value, which suggests that a product's external presentation can shape consumers' perceptions of both quality and business professionalism. In addition, the mentoring programme reported by (Putri et al., 2024) demonstrates that weak inventory recording systems may constitute a significant obstacle for MSMEs in managing their business processes effectively. Accordingly, robust record-keeping systems, such as cloud-based inventory management, form an essential component of business professionalism, as reflected in more orderly and efficient internal governance.

This finding is also consistent with (Setiawati et al., 2020), who show that assistance in simple bookkeeping through the *Laporan Keuangan Mikro (LAMIKRO)* application can facilitate MSMEs in preparing financial reports. Such capability constitutes an important element in supporting business professionalism and long-term sustainability. Accordingly, product packaging and internal governance are closely interconnected in shaping a more professional business image.

The findings concerning low-cost promotion indicate that participants were able to formulate promotional messages that were clearer, simpler, and better aligned with the characteristics of prospective customers. This result is consistent with the concept of entrepreneurial marketing, a marketing approach that emphasises creativity, close engagement with customers, and the effective use of limited resources. The finding is further supported by the community engagement programme reported by (Suranto et al., 2021), which enabled the Gading Sukowati MSMEs to establish Instagram, Facebook, and Shopee accounts as marketing platforms. The programme also provided a laptop grant to support the more effective implementation of online product marketing. This finding is consistent with Herawati et al. (2022), who found that digital marketing training and mentoring through Instagram improved product photo quality, feed design, followers, account reach, customer orders, and business turnover (Herawati et al., 2022).

Through this initiative, the mushroom products of the Gading Sukowati MSMEs were expected to gain wider public recognition and achieve stronger sales performance, particularly during the pandemic, when offline marketing activities faced substantial disruption. This finding is also consistent with (Tresnasari & Zulganef, 2023), who argue that strengthening entrepreneurship and marketing strategies can contribute to improved MSME performance. Such performance gains become especially significant when business owners are operating under resource constraints.

Although the programme produced a positive and statistically significant improvement, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the intervention was conducted over a single day; consequently, the changes observed are more likely to reflect short-term gains in participants' understanding than sustained changes in business behaviour. This differs from continuous training models, which place greater emphasis on ongoing mentoring, periodic evaluation, and the sustained strengthening of business networks.

(Pauli, 2020) argues that MSME training is likely to have a more tangible impact on business performance when it is delivered through a continuous process encompassing needs identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, the participants in this programme were drawn from the Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah communities in Malaysia, meaning that the outcomes were strongly shaped by the particular characteristics of these community networks. Accordingly, the findings cannot be assumed to be directly generalisable to all Indonesian MSME entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

This community context, however, may itself be regarded as a key strength, as the presence of social networks can encourage participants to support one another, share experiences, and expand business opportunities. This finding is consistent with the concept of strengthening network capacity in community-based entrepreneurial empowerment, which emphasises that the success of small enterprises does not depend solely on individual skills. Support from social and institutional networks also plays a crucial role in sustaining business development (Badriyah et al., 2023).

Therefore, ensuring the sustainability of the programme through regular mentoring and the further development of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School represents a highly strategic step. This is essential to ensure that the understanding gained by participants does not remain at the level of knowledge alone, but is translated into consistent, trustworthy, and sustainable business practice. Through continuous mentoring, participants' skills are expected to develop further, thereby fostering the growth of more self-reliant enterprises.

Overall, the findings of this programme are consistent with its stated objective, namely to enhance participants' practical skills in understanding consumers, identifying target markets, building customer trust, developing simple promotional strategies, and improving product packaging. In addition, the programme further strengthened the role of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School as a platform for MSME development among Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah members in Malaysia. This platform is intended to support the establishment of enterprises that are self-reliant, trustworthy, and competitive.

This is also consistent with the community engagement programme conducted by Sholahuddin et al. (2024), which demonstrated that an interactive workshop model could improve participants' understanding of financial awareness, personal branding, the avoidance of *riba*, and the risks of high-risk online transactions (Sholahuddin, Nasir, et al., 2024). Their programme showed a substantial increase in participants' average scores from 53.2 in the pre-test to 82.1 in the post-test, indicating that practical learning methods such as discussions, simulations, case-based activities, and mentoring were effective in strengthening participants' knowledge and applied skills. In this regard, the *Jualan Laris* workshop extends this previous initiative by focusing more specifically on entrepreneurship, target market identification, product value, customer trust, packaging, and promotional strategies for Indonesian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Malaysia.

## CONCLUSION

The Community Engagement programme delivered through the *Jualan Laris* workshop demonstrates that practical training designed around partners' needs can enhance the understanding and business capabilities of Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah members in Malaysia. Participants showed improvement across several important areas, including identifying target markets, formulating product advantages, building customer trust, developing cost-effective promotional strategies, and evaluating product packaging to create a more attractive presentation. The programme also demonstrated that training materials designed to be simple, practical, and closely aligned with participants' business experience were more readily understood and applied. The involvement of speakers from academic, business, and community backgrounds further enriched the learning process, as participants were exposed to concrete examples directly relevant to the circumstances of diaspora MSMEs in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding areas. This initiative contributes to strengthening the

economic capacity of the Indonesian community in Malaysia, particularly among existing and prospective MSME entrepreneurs. In addition to enhancing business skills, the programme has also reinforced the Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah networks as spaces for learning, the exchange of experience, and mutual support in business development. Follow-up efforts should focus on regular mentoring, packaging consultation, the strengthening of promotional strategies, the development of product catalogues, and the further development of the PCIM–PCIA Malaysia Business School as a platform for sustained business support. Through consistent mentoring, the skills acquired by participants are expected not merely to enhance their understanding, but to develop into business practices that are more self-reliant, trustworthy, and competitive.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) for its financial and institutional support through a community service grant under the International Collaboration Scheme (Contract No. 215.36/A.3-III/DRPPS/XI/2025). The authors also extend their sincere appreciation to all participants involved in this programme. Special thanks are also addressed to BKKPI and MEK PCIM–PCIA Malaysia for their valuable support in facilitating the implementation of the programme in Malaysia.

## REFERENCES

- Amalina, A., Sari, D. P., & Wulandari, R. (2025). Identifikasi kebutuhan pelatihan UMKM berbasis komunitas. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 11(1), 45–58.
- Anshori, M. A. (2024). Brand association sebagai strategi peningkatan loyalitas pelanggan UMKM. *Governance: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 14(2), 123–135.
- Anshori, M., Suyati, E. S., & Rezki, I. (2023). Desain produk UMKM sebagai upaya untuk menciptakan peluang kerja dan kualitas hidup masyarakat Mandomai. *Bijaksana: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(1), 15–18. <https://doi.org/10.33084/bijaksana.v1i1.5207>
- Badriyah, N., Wahyudi, S. T., Prastiwi, A., Nur, M., Sari, K., Nabella, R. S., & Radeetha, R. (2023). Economic empowerment through the development of food and beverage micro enterprises. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 8(2), 101–115.
- Chen, W., Zhang, Y., & Liu, H. (2024). Migrant entrepreneurship and economic integration in host countries. *Economic Sociology Review*, 15(2), 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/esr.2024.02.005>
- Drieschner, C., Schmidt, T., & Meier, L. (2025). Community service program evaluation: Methods and best practices. *Journal of Community Engagement*, 12(1), 45–58.
- Fontefrancesco, M. F., & Mendonce, J. (2022). Migrant entrepreneurship and social inclusion: Exploring transnational dynamics. *International Migration Review*, 56(3), 765–789. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183221084567>
- Hairunisya, N., Rindrayani, S. R., & Subiyantoro, H. (2023). Community development and social welfare through entrepreneurship management training. *Asian Management and Business Review*, 3(2), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.20885/AMBR.vol3.iss2.art1>
- Herawati, V. D., Rahmaningtyas, A., Zulfatirrohman, A. I., Pratiwi, H. E., Indriawan, T., Dutyama Fiddien, G., Yang, L., Taki, S., & Suswardany, D. L. (2022). Increasing the Revenue Through Digital Marketing: A lesson learned from a Small Business Enterprise Run by Volunteers of Community with Disability. *Journal of Community Services and Engagement: Voice of Community* |, 2(2), 3. <https://doi.org/10.23917/voc.v2i2.1521>
- Husna, A., Fitriani, N., & Cahyono, B. (2025). Analisis kepuasan peserta program pelatihan UMKM. *Jurnal Inovasi Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 7(2), 89–102.
- Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia. (2024). *Data persebaran WNI berdasarkan jenis kelamin tahun 2018-2024*.
- Kementerian Perdagangan Republik Indonesia. (2025). *Data ekspor nonmigas Indonesia ke Malaysia 2024-2025*.
- Maulana, R., Suryadi, E., & Lestari, P. (2025). Strategi promosi hemat dan efektif bagi UMKM pemula. *Jurnal Pemasaran Digital*, 9(1), 34–49.

- Mukhlisin, M., Ismail, N., & Fikri, R. J. (2022). Mind the gap: Theories in Islamic accounting and finance, Islamic economics and business management studies. *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance*, 14(3), 333–348.
- Ollanketo, S., & Pylvanainen, P. (2025). Customer-centric business training for micro-entrepreneurs: Impacts on consumer needs understanding and business strategy improvement. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 28(3), 201–218.
- Pardono, Muhammad, D. R. A., Khomah, I., Ihsaniyati, H., & Setyowati, N. (2022). Peningkatan Brand Image Kopi Robusta Temanggung Berbasis Indikasi Geografis. *Jurnal Warta LPM*, 25(1), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.23917/warta.v25i1.602>
- Pauli, U. (2020). Training and its impact on SME performance: A comprehensive review. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 24(4), 312–329.
- Pedone, S., Koinova, M., & van der Zwet, A. (2023). Capacity-building and diasporic civil society. *Development in Practice*, 33(4), 411–425.
- Putri, E., Bandi, Widardjo, W., & Arifin, T. (2024). Cloud inventory: Cara mudah UMKM mengetahui persediaan barang dagang. *Abdi Psikonomi*, 5(2), 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.23917/psikonomi.v5i2.7379>
- Ramadhani, A., Wibowo, H., & Suryani, T. (2025). Segmentasi pasar, keunikan produk, dan pengemasan dalam meningkatkan daya tarik UMKM. *Jurnal Bisnis Dan Kewirausahaan*, 13(1), 45–62.
- Saima, S., Hassan, R., & Abdullah, N. (2024). Challenges and ways forward for the Malaysian SMEs in the Halal food industry: A systematic review. *Journal of Halal Research and Policy*, 7(1), 15–32.
- Setiawan, V., Krisnawan, A. H., & Indarini, I. (2023). Penguatan usaha mandiri diversifikasi produk jahe melalui penyuluhan pemilihan kemasan, pemasaran digital, dan perizinan produk. *Amalee: Indonesian Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 4(1), 319–328.
- Setiawati, E., Sasongko, N., Trisnawati, R., & Kusumawati, E. D. (2020). Pembukuan akuntansi sederhana untuk usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM) menggunakan aplikasi Laporan Keuangan Mikro (Lamikro) pada Forum UMKM Surakarta. *Abdi Psikonomi*, 1(2), 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.23917/psikonomi.v1i2.182>
- Sholahuddin, M., Nasir, M., Bawono, A. D. B., Permatasari, Q., & Annisa, W. (2024). Building Financial Awareness and Personal Branding: Strategies to Avoid Riba and High-Risk Online Transactions. *Unram Journal of Community Service*, 5(4), 297–305. <https://doi.org/10.29303/ujcs.v5i4.756>
- Sholahuddin, M., Wiyadi, Abas, N. I., Rahmawati, S. D., & Rahmawati, R. Y. (2024). Strategi digital marketing untuk peningkatan usaha UMKM binaan PCIM Malaysia. *INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(1), 4147–4161.
- Suranto, S., Ambarwati, A., Suparti, S., Sofyan, A., Agustina, L., Salsa Bella, S., Oktaviana, D. E., Pri Afandi, A., Rizki Haya, L., & Zuhri, T. S. (2021). Pelatihan digital marketing untuk meningkatkan pemasaran produk jamur tiram dimasa pandemi Covid-19 pada UMKM Gading Sukowati, Sragen. *Abdi Psikonomi*, 2(4), 175–180. <https://doi.org/10.23917/psikonomi.v2i4.446>
- Tresnasari, R., & Zulganef, Z. (2023). Penguatan kewirausahaan dan strategi pemasaran untuk meningkatkan kinerja UMKM dengan keterbatasan sumber daya. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pemasaran*, 11(2), 67–82.
- Yang, M., Jaafar, N., Yeng, S. K., & Al Mamun, A. (2022). Modelling the significance of global mind-set and halal brand trust to determine the performance of halal SMEs. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 23(2), 987–1004. <https://doi.org/10.33736/ijbs.4854.2022>
- Yoga, I. M. S., Putra, I. K. A., & Dewi, N. L. P. (2025). Metode praktik dalam pelatihan kewirausahaan: Meningkatkan keterampilan terapan peserta. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pelatihan*, 15(1), 23–38.

