

## The Assistance for Digitalisation of MSME Products in Bentakan Village, Baki Sub-district, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java

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**Abstrack.** This community service research aims to identify and analyse the barriers and problems faced by MSME players, especially in terms of product digitalisation, product photography, and online marketing. MSME players in Bentakan Village, Sukoharjo Regency, have been marketing their products directly and online, but face a number of problems. One of the main problems is a limited understanding of product digitisation, poor quality product photos, and difficulty attracting consumers optimally. The majority of MSME players do oral marketing of their products, selling only when there is an order, so their income is irregular and less than optimal. Although they can use simple equipment such as gadgets to take product photos, they do not know how to do it well. Similarly, they can edit photos with free apps on the Play Store, but limited education and age are obstacles. Most of the MSME players in Bentakan Village are housewives with an average age of 40 who are lagging behind in technological development. The Bentakan KKN 2023 team provided training in this regard, including photo-taking and editing techniques.

**Keywords:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Product Digitization.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

After going through an economic contraction due to the Covid pandemic, a number of countries are currently concerned about the issue of a recession threat due to an increase in global inflation due to supply disruption due to the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, which is accompanied by a tightening of monetary policy in developed countries (Blanchard & Pisani-Ferry, 2022).

According to Finance Minister Sri Mulyani, the Indonesian economy is faced with various rapid and fundamental changes, encouraging more stable economic conditions amid the recession issue. In general, an economic recession can be interpreted as a condition in which a country's economy experiences a decline based on gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment, and economic growth that is negative for two consecutive quarters. MSMEs have an important role in the Indonesian

economy, especially when a crisis occurs, MSMEs can get through the monetary crisis in 1998 and during the Covid-19 Pandemic. MSMEs are part of the independent Indonesian economy and have great potential to improve the welfare of the community, seen from the three roles of MSMEs in the Indonesian economy, including a means of equalising the economic level of small people, a means of alleviating poverty and a means of earning foreign exchange for the country (Sinurat et al., 2021).

Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (Ministry of KUKM) in 2021, the number of MSME players in Indonesia reached 64.2 million with a contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of 61.07 per cent or IDR 8,573.89 trillion. MSMEs are able to absorb 97 per cent of the total workforce and are able to raise up to 60.4 per cent of total investment in Indonesia. Based on the data above, Indonesia has the potential for a strong national economic base because of the large number of MSMEs and their huge labour absorption capacity. The percentage of MSMEs is increasing every year so that the reduction in the number of unemployment in Indonesia will also be reduced.

MSMEs have a big role in dealing with the global recession because MSMEs have contributed greatly to GDP, a lot of labour absorption is carried out by MSMEs, MSMEs are potential markets (Candraningrat et al., 2021). MSMEs are a potential market for the financial services industry, MSMEs are fast in finding potential export markets, and MSMEs absorb the largest credit (Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno).

This awareness of the importance of MSMEs must be accompanied by policies and regulations from the government in managing and increasing the role of MSMEs so that they can grow and develop. Strategic policies implemented by the Government include the National Economic Recovery Programme (PEN), the implementation of the Job Creation Law and its derivative regulations, as well as the *Bangka Buatan Indonesia* (BBI) programme.

Future challenges for MSMEs that must be addressed by stakeholders include innovation and technology, digital literacy, productivity, legality or licensing, financing, branding and marketing, human resources, standardisation and certification, equitable distribution of guidance, training and facilitation, and a single database (Cueto et al., 2022). In connection with these challenges, the low ability of human resources (HR) to deal with trading methods from conventional (offline) to online business methods. Business so that MSME actors must learn and understand technology to support business activities.

MSME players in Bentakan Village, Sukoharjo Regency have carried out product marketing both directly and online, but there are still several problems faced. Problems that often arise are that MSME owners do not understand how to digitise their products, product photos that are less attractive, and have not been able to attract consumers optimally. The majority of MSME players market their products by word of mouth, MSME players also only sell if someone orders their products so that the income they get is not regular and not optimal. In taking product photos, you don't have to use complete and high-quality equipment, product photos can actually be done with the gadgets they use in their daily lives, but in this case MSME actors do not know how to take product photos that are correct, good and attractive. In terms of photo editing, it can also be done with a gadget by using a photo editing application that can be downloaded on the play store for free, but MSME actors have not been able to do this because of the lack of education and also because of their age.

lack of education and also because of their age invoices. The majority of Bentakan Village MSME players are housewives with an average age of 40 years. Who do not keep up with technological developments.

## 2. THEORETICAL STUDIES

MSME product digitalisation mentoring is a process where micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) receive guidance and support to adapt and integrate digital technology in their business operations (Aji et al., 2024). The objective of the mentoring is to help MSMEs understand, implement, and utilise digital technology to increase operational efficiency, improve product or service quality, and expand their market reach.

The MSME product digitalisation assistance involves several stages, including an initial evaluation of MSMEs' digital needs, provision of training and education related to digital technology, and assistance in selecting and implementing digital solutions that suit their business type and business objectives (Biswas & Sikdar, 2020). In addition, the mentoring also includes assistance in taking attractive product photos, editing images, and using online platforms for product marketing and sales.

During the mentoring process, MSMEs can also gain an understanding of data security, digital inventory management, digital financial reporting, and various other aspects of business related to digitalization (Mohanty, 2021). The MSME product digitalisation mentoring aims to provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to better compete in the growing digital era and face the challenges of the global economy.

## 3. METHOD

The method used in community service is to provide assistance to MSMEs in Bentakan Village, Sukoharjo Regency. This activity was carried out on Saturday, 29 July 2023, at the home of Ibu Suji, an MSME player who lives in Bentakan Village. The problems faced by MSME players in Bentakan Village include three main things: first, lack of knowledge about product digitalisation; second, lack of expertise in taking product photos needed for digital platforms; and third, lack of ability to edit product photos. Mentoring activities are carried out to provide education and training on photo-taking techniques and editing processes for making digital product catalogues.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this community service research is to provide solutions and assistance to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) actors in Bentakan Village, Sukoharjo Regency, who experience a number of problems in marketing their products. The problems faced by MSME players include a lack of knowledge about product digitisation, a lack of expertise in taking attractive product photos, and a lack of ability to edit product photos. In addition, MSME players also face difficulties in attracting consumers optimally, as well as managing inefficient word-of-mouth product marketing, as for the form of activities, as shown in the following figure.



Figure 1 Training on Photo Taking Techniques for Digital Catalogue

In Figure 1 above, the Bentakan 2023 KKN Team provided education on photo-taking techniques. The materials presented included: a) How to arrange the product, which is also referred to as plating. Plating is done before taking photos and has two concepts, namely modern plating and traditional plating. b) Photo-taking time. In taking photos, knowledge of when the right time to take photos is required in order to produce photos with appropriate brightness. A good time to take photos is in the morning at 6.00-09.00 or in the afternoon at 15.00-17.00. At these times, the sunlight is perfect for taking photos so there is no need for additional lighting equipment. As for the form of training on the use of photo editing applications is as shown below.



Figure 2 Training on Editing Application Usage

In Figure 2 above, the Bentakan KKN Team provided training on the use of photo editing applications to create a digital catalogue used for promotion on various social media platforms. This training is an important step in supporting the digitalisation of MSME products in Bentakan Village. In the increasingly advanced digital era, the use of social media and online platforms has become an effective way to market products and reach a wider market. Therefore, training on photo editing and the use of photo editing applications are key steps to help MSMEs promote their products more professionally and attractively in the digital world.

With this training, it is hoped that MSME players in Bentakan Village can produce attractive and high-quality visual content for use in their digital catalogues. This will help them increase the appeal of their products and increase the likelihood of sales through social media and other online platforms. In this context, this training is one of the important steps in supporting the growth and development of MSMEs in the growing digital era. By understanding how to edit photos and use photo editing applications, MSME players can more effectively compete in the competitive digital market. As for the results of taking product photos by MSME actors, as shown below.



Figure 3 Yellow Rice Photo Results for MSME Digital Catalogue



In Figure 3, we can see the results of the Yellow Rice photo which is part of the Digital Catalogue for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This product photo is one example of a product that has been taken and edited in order to support the digitisation of MSME products in Bentakan Village. High-quality product photos are very important in the context of online marketing. Attractive product images can give a positive impression to potential buyers and influence their decision to buy the product. Therefore, the training and mentoring conducted by the Bentakan KKN 2023 Team in taking and editing product photos is a very relevant step.

By producing good product photos, MSMEs have a better chance of catching the attention of potential buyers and increasing their sales on digital platforms. It can also help MSMEs compete more effectively in an increasingly competitive market, especially in today's digital era where images and visual content have a key role in attracting consumers. Therefore, the product photos as seen in Figure 3 are concrete evidence of the MSME product digitalisation assistance efforts that have been carried out by the Bentakan 2023 KKN Team.

Thus, the results of this assistance are expected to help MSME players overcome the problem of ignorance in taking product photos and editing images, so that they can utilise digital technology more effectively in developing their business in the growing digital era.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation of community service activities and product digitalisation training, several important things can be concluded. First, MSME players in Bentakan Village tend to lag behind in following digital developments. Second, they have not maximised their ability to take product photos used in online promotions, so the quality of product photos is inadequate. Third, their knowledge of editing and photo-taking techniques is still minimal.

To overcome these problems, the Bentakan 2023 KKN Team gave advice to MSME players. MSME players should make the best use of the gadgets they have and are expected to increase their understanding and expertise in following current digital developments. They can learn by themselves through sources such as social media and YouTube to understand the latest trends and techniques in the digital world. With these efforts, it is hoped that MSME players can increase their competitiveness in the ever-evolving digital era.

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