

Enhancing The Competitiveness Of Free-Range Chicken Farming MSMEs Through Digital Literacy And The Creation Of Digital Marketing Accounts

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity aims to enhance the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in native chicken farming through strengthening digital literacy and providing assistance in creating digital marketing accounts. The program was initiated in response to the limited utilization of information technology among local farmers, who continue to rely primarily on conventional marketing systems. This condition has resulted in limited market reach and relatively low business competitiveness. The main challenges faced by the partners include limited understanding of digital marketing, the absence of dedicated business social media accounts, and inadequate skills in creating informative and attractive promotional content. The program was implemented through four systematic stages: identifying the partners' needs, providing digital literacy and product branding training, providing technical assistance in creating and optimizing digital marketing accounts, including WhatsApp Business, Facebook, Instagram, and online marketplaces, and conducting program monitoring and evaluation. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in participants' knowledge and skills in managing business social media platforms. The activity successfully assisted the partners in establishing official marketing accounts, presenting product information in a professional manner, and independently producing simple promotional content. Through this assistance, MSMEs engaged in native chicken farming are expected to adapt more effectively to digital technology, expand their marketing networks, increase sales volume, and strengthen their business competitiveness in a sustainable manner.

Keyword: Free-Range Chicken; Competitiveness; Digital Marketing; Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a highly strategic role in supporting the national economy through their contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment generation. One promising business sector with considerable development potential is the native chicken farming industry. Within the agribusiness sector, native chicken farming represents a subsector with significant economic potential due to relatively stable market demand, as well as the distinctive taste and perceived quality of its products as natural food. Native chicken is generally sold at a higher price than commercial broiler chickens because of its distinctive taste and the perception of higher product quality (Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health).

This potential can serve as a source of income for the community when supported by appropriate business management and effective marketing strategies. However, this economic potential has not yet been fully accompanied by strengthened marketing strategies. Among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in native chicken farming, the use of social media as a promotional tool remains limited or has not yet been adopted. Although the native chicken farming sector has considerable economic potential due to stable market demand, most business operators still rely on conventional marketing methods, resulting in limited market reach.

Based on the results of observations conducted at Cahaya Berkah, a small-scale village chicken farming enterprise located in Kota Bangun Village, Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency, product marketing is still carried out conventionally through word-of-mouth communication and local markets. The business partner also does not yet have a dedicated business social media account for promoting its products and communicating with customers. This condition has resulted in a limited marketing reach, largely confined to consumers in the surrounding area, while opportunities to attract new customers have not yet been utilized optimally.

In the course of their development, the ability of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to maintain and enhance their competitiveness is determined not only by their production capacity but also by their ability to utilize technology to access markets and establish relationships with consumers. The advancement of information technology has created opportunities for MSMEs to expand their marketing reach through digital media at relatively affordable costs. However, the utilization of these opportunities continues to face challenges, particularly among MSMEs that lack the knowledge and skills required to use digital media effectively as a marketing instrument.

Based on these conditions, the community service team proposed a solution in the form of digital literacy training and assistance in creating social media marketing accounts to enhance the marketing capacity and competitiveness of the businesses. The solution offered through this community service activity consists of education and mentoring on the use of digital marketing, tailored to the conditions and needs of the partners. The activities focused on introducing the basic concepts of digital marketing, product branding, and the utilization of social media as a means of promotion and communication with consumers.

The expected outcomes of this activity include increased digital literacy among the partners, the establishment of business marketing accounts, and improved capacity among the partners to create and upload promotional content. As part of the activity plan, participants' understanding of digital marketing is targeted to increase by at least 70%, while all partners are expected to have and be able to operate business accounts on the selected digital marketing platforms. The partners are also expected to be able to produce promotional content containing

information about the products, prices, product advantages, and calls to purchase. From a marketing perspective, the activity is designed to increase customer engagement and expand market access through the utilization of digital media. Therefore, this community service activity is expected to go beyond merely establishing social media accounts and instead foster a meaningful improvement in the partners' capacity to utilize digital technology as an integral part of their marketing strategies and efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in native chicken farming.

The solution offered through this community service activity is education and assistance in utilizing digital marketing strategies tailored to the conditions and needs of the partners. The activity focuses on introducing the basic concepts of digital marketing, product branding, and the use of social media as a means of promotion and communication with consumers. The solution is implemented through several stages, including coordination and identification of partners' needs, digital literacy training, hands-on practice in creating marketing media accounts, assistance in managing business profiles and promotional content, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The digital platforms introduced and practiced during the activity include WhatsApp Business and Instagram. Through a hands-on practical approach, the partners not only gain knowledge of digital marketing but also develop practical skills in creating and managing digital marketing platforms that can be utilized to support and strengthen their business activities.

The implementation of the proposed solution was carried out through a participatory approach, positioning the partners as the primary actors in the application of the knowledge and skills provided. The partners participated in every stage of the activity by contributing ideas and information regarding their business conditions, providing the necessary data for the preparation of business profiles, and practicing the use of social media to market their products. This approach was expected to enhance the partners' capacity to independently manage digital marketing media after the completion of the community service activities. Monitoring and evaluation were conducted to assess participant engagement and ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired could be effectively applied to business marketing activities in a sustainable manner.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity was conducted over a one-month period in April 2026 in Kota Bangun Village, Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The target participants were micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) owners engaged in free-range chicken farming, particularly members of the Cahaya Berkah Free-Range Chicken Farmers MSME group. A total of 15 participants took part in the activity, all of whom were engaged in free-range chicken farming. Most participants had a secondary-level

educational background, and some had limited or no prior experience in running a business. These conditions were taken into consideration when determining the approach to the activity, which emphasized a communicative, practical, and easily applicable method that participants could directly implement in their business marketing activities.

The implementation method of the program combines awareness-raising and knowledge enhancement, training, and mentoring. The initial stage involved coordination with partners and the identification of problems encountered in product marketing. This stage was intended to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the partners' marketing conditions while determining the appropriate training materials based on their needs. The identification results indicated that the partners still relied primarily on conventional marketing methods, had not established business-oriented social media accounts, and had not optimally utilized digital media to promote their products and communicate with customers.

The next stage involved digital literacy training. The training materials covered an introduction to the basic concepts of digital marketing, the use of social media for business activities, product branding, and customer communication strategies through digital platforms. The materials were delivered in a communicative and practical manner so that participants could not only understand the concepts of digital marketing but also relate them to the marketing needs of free-range chicken products. The training was designed to enhance participants' understanding of the benefits of digital media in expanding market reach, promoting products, and building relationships with consumers.

The next stage involved hands-on practice and mentoring in the creation of digital marketing accounts. Participants received direct assistance in creating and optimizing business social media accounts, particularly WhatsApp Business and Facebook/Instagram. The mentoring covered the completion of business profiles, preparation of product information, creation of product catalogs, as well as an introduction to strategies for writing effective captions and using relevant hashtags. A hands-on approach was employed to provide participants with practical experience in operating digital marketing platforms and to enable them to effectively utilize these platforms to promote free-range chicken products.

Partner participation was actively involved at every stage of the activity. The partners were committed to participating in the community service activities, contributing ideas and suggestions during discussions, providing information and data related to their businesses, and practicing the use of social media for product marketing. Such involvement was an essential component of the knowledge and skills transfer process, as the partners did not merely serve as recipients of the training materials but also actively implemented the solutions provided.

The final stage involved monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring was conducted to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired during the training could be effectively applied by the partners, particularly in creating and using digital marketing accounts. Evaluation was carried out by observing participants' engagement and assessing the realization of knowledge and skill transfer in the creation and utilization of social media accounts. Mentoring was also provided to ensure that the use of digital marketing media could be sustained after the completion of the program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial assessment identified that the partners' main challenge was the limited utilization of digital technology for marketing purposes. Prior to the implementation of the program, the partners relied primarily on conventional marketing methods, including direct sales, local markets, and personal networks. The partners also did not have dedicated business social media accounts for promoting their products and communicating with customers. As a result, their marketing activities remained largely dependent on the reach of local consumers and had not yet been able to capitalize on opportunities to access a broader market.

This condition is consistent with the findings of the OECD (2021), which indicate that digital transformation can help businesses expand their market reach and improve efficiency through the utilization of digital platforms. In the trade sector, digitalization also enables businesses to reach broader markets by adopting business models that combine offline and online activities.

Enhancing Digital Literacy as a Foundation for Competitiveness

Digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to access, understand, evaluate, and utilize information technology effectively and responsibly. According to UNESCO (2018), digital literacy is not limited to technical skills but also encompasses critical thinking and productive digital communication skills. In the context of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), digital literacy serves as a fundamental foundation for entering and participating in the digital economy ecosystem.

The solution was implemented by enhancing digital literacy as an initial step to develop the partners' understanding of the importance of technology-based marketing. The materials provided covered the basic concepts of digital marketing, the use of social media as a promotional tool, product branding, and customer communication. The results of the implementation indicated that participants began to understand the function of digital media not only as a means of communication but also as a marketing instrument that can be utilized to introduce products, establish business identities, and build relationships with consumers. The activity report demonstrated an improvement in participants' understanding of digital marketing and their ability to utilize social media as a promotional tool.

The activities conducted consisted of digital literacy education, digital marketing training, hands-on practice in creating marketing media accounts, and assistance in utilizing social media for business activities. The participants demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm throughout the activities. The materials were delivered in a communicative and practical manner, enabling participants to follow each stage of the program while directly practicing the use of digital media according to their marketing needs for free-range chicken products.



Figure 1. Information Dissemination on the Importance of Technology-Based Marketing

The training materials covered the basic concepts of digital marketing, the use of social media as a promotional tool, product branding, and customer communication. The implementation of the activity demonstrated that participants began to understand the function of digital media not only as a means of communication but also as a marketing instrument that can be used to introduce products, establish business identity, and build relationships with consumers. The activity report also indicated an improvement in participants' understanding of digital marketing and their ability to utilize social media as a promotional medium.

This improvement in understanding is important because the adoption of digital technology involves not only the technical ability to use devices or applications but also the capacity to integrate technology into business activities. The OECD (2021) explains that digitalization can generate various benefits for businesses, including increased efficiency, product differentiation, and expanded market reach. Therefore, the digital literacy provided to the partners serves as a foundation for ensuring that the use of social media does not remain merely a means of communication but evolves into an integral component of their business marketing strategy.

The improvement in digital literacy served as the foundation for implementing hands-on training in the creation of digital marketing accounts. The participants were assisted in creating and optimizing business accounts, particularly through WhatsApp Business and Facebook/Instagram. The assistance covered completing

business profiles, preparing product information, creating product catalogs, and introducing strategies for developing effective captions and hashtags. The results of the activity showed that the partners had successfully established digital marketing accounts that could be used to promote free-range chicken products to consumers. The establishment of these accounts represented one of the tangible outcomes of the program, as the partners had previously lacked dedicated digital marketing platforms specifically managed for their business.

The Creation of Marketing Media Accounts as a Differentiation Strategy

Creating business accounts on platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Facebook/Instagram, and online marketplaces is a strategic step toward establishing a digital business identity. These platforms enable MSME owners to present their business profiles, showcase product catalogs, and engage in direct two-way communication with customers.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), digital marketing offers several advantages, including interactivity, personalization, and greater cost efficiency in promotional activities compared to conventional marketing methods. In practice, the use of WhatsApp Business enables partners to respond promptly to customers, manage automated messages, and display product catalogs in a professional manner. Meanwhile, Facebook and Instagram serve as visual showcases that help strengthen the image and appeal of free-range chicken products through engaging photos and videos.

From a competitiveness perspective, this strategy is consistent with Porter's (1990) theory of competitive advantage, which posits that businesses can gain a competitive advantage through differentiation and expanded market access. By establishing a digital presence, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in native chicken farming are no longer competing solely on price but also on the quality of communication, brand image, and ease of ordering.

The implementation of digital marketing media has also brought about changes in the pattern of interaction between the partners and their customers. After establishing digital marketing accounts, the partners began receiving messages from customers, inquiries regarding product prices and availability, as well as orders through digital platforms. This condition indicates a shift from previously conventional and passive marketing practices toward a more proactive marketing approach through digital communication. The partners also gained opportunities to reach consumers beyond their existing customer networks, which had previously been developed primarily through direct marketing.

This change in interaction patterns is consistent with the findings of Tajvidi and Karami (2021), which demonstrate a positive relationship between social media use and business performance, with marketing capabilities playing a mediating role in this relationship. Similarly, research on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia has shown that social media marketing has a significant

influence on MSME performance. In the context of this activity, interactions through digital media can be regarded as an initial indicator of success, as they demonstrate that the newly created accounts have begun to function as marketing communication channels rather than merely serving as accounts established to fulfill the expected outputs of the program.



Figure 2. Product Promotional Flyer



Figure 3. Facebook Accounts as a Marketing Tool

The results of the activity showed that the partner had established a dedicated marketing account that could be used to promote free-range chicken products to consumers. The establishment of this account represents one of the tangible outputs of the program, as the partner had previously lacked a dedicated digital marketing platform specifically managed for the business.

In addition to account creation, the activities resulted in improved practical skills among the partners in developing promotional content. Participants began to demonstrate the ability to present product information in a more structured manner, create simple promotional materials, and utilize digital media to communicate product information to potential consumers. This change indicates that the solution provided went beyond knowledge transfer and was directed toward the direct application of practical skills. Thus, digital media has begun to function as a business storefront, enabling local chicken products to be presented in a more informative and professional manner.

From the program output perspective, the results of the activity can be observed through three main achievements: increased understanding of digital marketing, the establishment of business marketing accounts on digital platforms,

and improved practical skills in creating and delivering promotional content. These three achievements are directly related to the partners' priority challenges, namely limited digital literacy and the suboptimal utilization of digital media for marketing purposes. The availability of digital marketing platforms provides partners with new means to increase product visibility, strengthen communication with consumers, and create opportunities for market expansion.

More broadly, the implementation of digital marketing has significant implications for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in free range chicken farming. Digital media enables promotion to be conducted at relatively lower costs, allows product information to be disseminated more quickly, and facilitates the development of direct communication and relationships with customers. Paransa (2024), through a study of digital marketing among SMEs in Indonesia, demonstrated that social media marketing can help increase visibility, build consumer trust, strengthen customer engagement, and support SME performance. These findings reinforce the results of the community service program, indicating that the utilization of digital media can serve as an important instrument for enhancing partners' competitiveness, particularly in terms of marketing effectiveness and market access.

Thus, the competitiveness of the partners is determined not only by the products they produce but also by their ability to enhance visibility, provide comprehensive product information, respond to consumers, and capitalize on market opportunities through digital technology. The results of the activity demonstrate that digital marketing can serve as a relevant strategy for strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in free range chicken farming.

The use of social media also has the potential to strengthen business sustainability when supported by innovation capabilities and consistent digital management. Tajvidi and Karami (2022) demonstrated that social media use can contribute to the sustainable performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through innovation capabilities and digital leadership. In the context of the partner, the ability to create content, update product information, and maintain communication with customers represents an initial form of these capabilities. Therefore, the community service activity not only provides a short-term solution through the creation of social media accounts but also establishes a foundation for partners to develop more sustainable marketing capabilities.



Figure 4. PKM Team in Collaboration with Cahaya Berkah Village Chicken Farming Partner

The successful implementation of the activities was supported by the active participation of the partners. The partners were willing to participate in every stage of the activities, provide ideas and information regarding the conditions of their businesses, supply the necessary data, and practice using social media as a marketing tool. The participants' enthusiasm throughout the training also served as a supporting factor in the process of transferring knowledge and skills. A communicative and practical approach enabled the participants to understand and apply the materials and practices according to their respective levels of ability.

On the other hand, the sustainability of digital media utilization remains an aspect that requires further attention. The success of the program cannot be measured solely by the establishment of digital marketing accounts, but also depends on the partners' consistency in managing their accounts, producing content, updating product information, and responding to customers. Therefore, continued assistance and periodic evaluation are necessary to ensure that the skills acquired are sustained beyond the completion of the training. The activity report also emphasizes that the sustainability of the program largely depends on the partners' consistency in producing content and actively utilizing their digital accounts.

Overall, the community service activities resulted in improvements in the partners' marketing capacity, shifting from reliance on conventional marketing channels toward the utilization of digital media. The outcomes, including increased understanding, the establishment of digital marketing accounts, and improved skills in creating promotional content, demonstrate that the solutions provided have established a foundation for partners to independently develop and implement digital marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation of the community service activities, it can be concluded that the community assistance program, through the introduction of digital marketing concepts and the creation of business social media accounts, was successfully carried out in a participatory manner and received a positive response from the participants. The majority of participants demonstrated high enthusiasm throughout the training and gained an understanding of the importance of utilizing digital marketing to enhance business competitiveness. Digital marketing has proven to be an alternative marketing tool for business actors, particularly livestock farmers, and continues to develop alongside advances in information technology. This potential provides considerable opportunities, as digital marketing can reduce promotional costs while improving time efficiency in its implementation. Furthermore, the activity enhanced the practical skills of some participants in utilizing social media as a means of promoting and developing their businesses.

To optimize the sustainability and impact of the activities, several recommendations can be proposed. These include providing further training in digital financial management, integrating the businesses with national online marketplaces, and conducting regular evaluations to ensure the sustained adoption and effective utilization of digital technology.

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