

Strengthening MSME Marketing based on Cultural Festival

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this activity is to strengthen MSMEs in Balung Lor Village, Jember through collaboration with cultural festivals as a strategy for local economic development as well as the preservation of traditions. The method used is Focus Group Discussion to explore the needs and challenges of business actors, as well as participatory observation in cultural festivals as a medium for promoting local products. Data analysis was carried out with a qualitative approach, resulting in a deep understanding of the perceptions of association chairs, academics, local communities, and MSME actors. The results of the study show that this activity is able to open new market access, increase the selling value of products, strengthen community networks, and foster community pride in village cultural identity. The discussion emphasized that cultural integration and MSMEs are not just promotions, but holistic strategies that are sustainable, relevant to previous research, and able to create a double impact, namely strengthening the local economy while preserving cultural heritage.

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Received: 21-04-2026

Revised: 20-05-2026

Accepted: 25-06-2026

Published: 30-06-2026



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Keywords: Strengthening, MSMEs, Cultural Festivals, Promotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

A common phenomenon in MSME marketing in Indonesia is characterized by the dominance of social media as the main means of promotion, due to its relatively low costs and wide reach (Supriyadi & Ramadhan, 2025; Suliswanto & Rofik, 2019). Many MSME actors utilize digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and marketplaces to introduce their products to consumers (Sulistyan et al., 2022). However, the limitations of digital literacy are still a challenge, so marketing strategies are often inconsistent (Polizzi, 2025). In addition, MSMEs tend to rely on word of mouth and local networks to expand the market (Dyatmika et al., 2023). Another prominent phenomenon is the increasing consumer interest in local and sustainable products, which encourages MSMEs to highlight their cultural identity and sustainability values (Andrianata et al., 2024). Even so, limited capital and access to modern marketing technology make it difficult for some MSMEs to compete with big brands (Hendrawan et al., 2024). On the other hand, government support through digitalization programs and marketing training is an important factor in strengthening the competitiveness of MSMEs. This phenomenon shows that MSME marketing in Indonesia is in a transition phase to the digital era, with great opportunities as well as complex challenges.

MSME marketing has a very important role because it is the main key in expanding market reach and increasing the competitiveness of small businesses in the midst of increasingly fierce competition (Rusdana et al., 2022). Through digital marketing strategies, MSMEs can introduce their products more effectively to consumers, even at a relatively low cost (Sugiana et al., 2023). Marketing also helps build brand identity so that products are easier to recognize and trust by the public. In addition, marketing allows MSMEs to understand consumer trends and adjust

products according to market needs. With the right promotion, MSMEs can increase sales while strengthening relationships with customers. Marketing also functions as a means to highlight local and cultural values that are a particular attraction for consumers. Without good marketing, MSMEs are at risk of stagnation and difficulty developing. Therefore, marketing is not just an additional activity, but an important foundation for the sustainability and growth of MSMEs in Indonesia.

MSME marketing in collaboration with cultural festivals is a unique strategy that is able to strengthen local identity while expanding market reach. By taking advantage of the festival's momentum, MSMEs can showcase their products in a more valuable context, as consumers not only buy goods but also experience cultural experiences. This collaboration helps MSMEs build authentic brand storytelling, highlighting the values of tradition, creativity, and sustainability. In addition, culture-based marketing creates a strong differentiation over bulk products, thus increasing its appeal to tourists and local communities alike. Festivals are also an effective means to strengthen community networks and expand relationships with consumers directly. Thus, the marketing of MSMEs through cultural festivals is not only a promotion, but also a form of sustainable local economic empowerment.

MSME marketing in collaboration with cultural festivals such as the one that will be held in Kampung Budaya, Balung Lor Village, Jember Regency, has a very large strategic value. This festival is not only an entertainment venue, but also a forum to introduce local products to the wider community in an atmosphere full of cultural meaning. MSMEs can display their products with a touch of local identity, so that consumers feel a more authentic experience. This kind of collaboration strengthens culture-based branding while increasing the attractiveness of regional tourism. In addition, cultural festivals provide opportunities for MSMEs to build community networks and expand markets through direct interaction with visitors. The impact is not only on increased sales, but also on the sustainable empowerment of the local economy. Thus, the marketing of MSMEs through cultural festivals in Jember is a real example of how tradition and innovation can go hand in hand to create added value for the community.

The sustainability of MSME marketing activities, especially those in collaboration with cultural festivals, is very important so that businesses do not decline and remain relevant in the eyes of consumers. With regular activities, MSMEs can maintain brand consistency while building long-term trust. Sustainable activities also allow businesses to continue to adapt to market trends and dynamic consumer needs. In addition, marketing sustainability helps strengthen community networks so that MSMEs don't just rely on one festival momentum, but have a stable customer base. With an integrated strategy, MSMEs are able to maintain local economic growth while strengthening regional cultural identity. This makes sustainable marketing an important foundation to ensure that MSMEs continue to survive, develop, and have a positive impact on the surrounding community.

The purpose of MSME marketing activities in collaboration with cultural festivals in Balung Lor Village, Jember is to strengthen the position of MSMEs as drivers of the local economy while maintaining the sustainability of regional cultural identity. This activity aims to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs through tradition-based creative promotions, expand market access by attracting tourists and the public, and build authentic local branding. The resulting benefits include increasing product sales, forming stronger community networks, and creating sustainable community economic empowerment. In addition, this activity also provides social benefits in the form of cultural preservation and increasing public pride in local products. Thus, the goals and benefits of this activity are not only oriented towards economic benefits, but also on strengthening cultural identity and the sustainability of village development.

2. METHODS

The methods used in MSME strengthening activities in Balung Lor Village, Jember are Focus Group Discussions and cultural festivals, both of which complement each other to achieve sustainable goals. The Focus Group Discussion serves as a forum for dialogue between MSME

actors, academics, the government, and the community to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities for business development in a more targeted manner. Meanwhile, cultural festivals are a real implementation medium, where MSME products can be promoted in an atmosphere full of traditional values and local identity. The combination of these two methods not only strengthens community networks, but also creates a culture-based branding that distinguishes MSMEs from mass products. With an in-depth discussion approach and creative promotion, this activity is able to produce economic and social impacts, namely community empowerment and preservation of local culture.

Data analysis in MSME strengthening activities in Balung Lor Village, Jember uses a qualitative approach aimed at understanding in depth the experiences, perceptions, and needs of business actors and the community. This approach allows researchers to explore the meaning behind the interactions that occur in Focus Group Discussions and cultural festivals, so that the data obtained is not only in the form of numbers but also context-rich narratives. Qualitative analysis helps identify MSME challenges such as limited capital, digital literacy, and market access, as well as find local potential that can be developed. Through the process of coding, categorization, and interpretation, the results of the analysis can be used to formulate a more targeted local economic empowerment strategy. Thus, a qualitative approach not only results in a comprehensive understanding, but also provides a solid foundation for sustainable decision-making and program planning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The results of the interview with the head of the association in the Balung Lor Cultural Village show that cultural festival activities in collaboration with MSME marketing are seen as a strategic step to strengthen the local economy while maintaining the traditional identity of the community. The chairman of the association emphasized that MSMEs in this village have great potential, but are often constrained by market access and limited promotions. Through cultural festivals, local products can be introduced more widely to visitors, both from within and outside the region, thus creating more sustainable sales opportunities. He also highlighted the importance of community collaboration between business actors, the community, and the village government to ensure that this activity does not stop at just one momentum, but becomes a routine agenda that supports the sustainability of MSMEs. In addition to the economic aspect, the chairman of the association assessed that this activity has social benefits in the form of cultural preservation and increasing public pride in local products. Thus, this interview confirms that the integration between MSME culture and marketing is a strategy that is able to create a dual impact: strengthening small businesses while preserving the heritage of village traditions.

The results of an interview with an academic and art researcher in Jember show that the collaboration between MSMEs and cultural festivals in Balung Lor Village has strategic value that is not only oriented to the economy, but also to the preservation of traditional arts. According to him, MSMEs involved in the festival will have the opportunity to strengthen culture-based branding, because the products offered are not just merchandise, but part of the local cultural narrative. The academic emphasized that this activity can be a model of sustainable community empowerment, where the arts and the economy support each other. He also assessed that this approach was able to increase the added value of local products while strengthening the village's identity as a cultural center. In addition, the involvement of academics in the Focus Group Discussion makes an important contribution in formulating research-based strategies, so that the activities are not only ceremonial but also have a long-term impact. Thus, this interview confirms that the integration of art research and MSME marketing through cultural festivals is an innovative step to maintain tradition while strengthening the local economy.

The results of interviews with local people in Balung Lor Village, Jember show high enthusiasm for cultural festival activities in collaboration with MSME marketing. Residents

consider that this activity is not only an entertainment event, but also a real opportunity to introduce local products to visitors from outside the region. They feel proud because MSME products produced in the village can appear in line with the cultural values they inherited, thereby strengthening local identity. The community also emphasized that the sustainability of this activity will help maintain economic income while increasing togetherness between residents. In addition to the economic benefits, residents see a social impact in the form of preserving traditions and growing a sense of pride in their village. Thus, this interview confirms that the local community fully supports cultural integration and MSMEs, because it is believed to be able to bring prosperity while maintaining their cultural heritage.

The results of interviews with MSME actors in Balung Lor Village, Jember show that they are greatly helped by marketing collaboration through cultural festivals. The business actors said that this activity provided an opportunity to introduce their products to the wider community, including visitors from outside the region, thus opening up access to new markets. They also feel an increase in the selling value of products because the products displayed are not only seen as merchandise, but also as part of the local cultural identity. In addition, MSME actors emphasized the importance of sustainability of activities so that their businesses do not decline, because consistent promotion will maintain consumer loyalty. This interview also revealed that support from local communities and village governments is needed to strengthen the position of MSMEs. Thus, MSME actors see this activity as a strategic opportunity to increase income while maintaining the sustainability of their business in the long term.

From all interviews conducted with the heads of the association, art academics, local communities, and MSME actors in Balung Lor Village, Jember, it shows that there is an understanding that collaboration between MSME marketing and cultural festivals is an effective strategy to strengthen the economy while preserving traditions. All parties consider that this activity is able to open up new market access, increase the selling value of products, and build a stronger local identity. The chairman of the association emphasized the importance of sustainability of activities so as not to stop at one momentum, while academics see it as a model of sustainable research-based empowerment. Local communities feel pride and social benefits in the form of cultural preservation, while MSME actors consider this activity as a strategic opportunity to maintain consumer loyalty and increase income. Thus, the overall interview confirms that cultural integration and MSMEs not only generate economic impact, but also strengthen community networks, village identity, and the sustainability of local development.



Figure 1. Cultural Festivals
Source: Documentation of Activity Results (2026)

3.2. Discussion

The discussion of the overall interview results shows that the integration between MSMEs and cultural festivals in Balung Lor Village, Jember has mutually reinforcing economic, social, and cultural dimensions. From an economic perspective, this activity opens up new market access, increases the selling value of products, and strengthens consumer loyalty. From a social perspective, cultural festivals are an interaction space that strengthens community networks, builds togetherness, and fosters public pride in local products. Meanwhile, from the cultural side, this activity functions as a means of preserving traditions while strengthening the village's identity as a cultural center. Interviews with the head of the association emphasized the importance of sustainability, academics highlighted the value of research and empowerment, local communities emphasized pride and social benefits, and MSME actors emphasized strategic opportunities for business growth. Thus, this discussion emphasizes that MSME marketing collaboration through cultural festivals is not just a promotion, but a holistic strategy that is able to create a double impact, namely strengthening the local economy, maintaining traditions, and building the sustainability of village development.

The discussion linked to the results of previous research shows consistency that collaboration between MSMEs and cultural festivals is an effective strategy in strengthening the local economy while maintaining traditional identity (Sulistyan et al., 2026). Previous research on culture-based marketing confirms that the integration of art, traditions, and local products can increase tourist attraction and expand market access for MSMEs. This is in line with the findings of interviews in Balung Lor Village, where the heads of associations, academics, the community, and MSME actors all emphasized the importance of sustainability of activities so that the impact does not stop at one momentum. Previous research has also shown that community networks and government support are key factors in maintaining the sustainability of small businesses, which is again reflected in the interview results. Thus, this discussion strengthens the conclusion that MSME marketing strategies through cultural festivals are not only theoretically relevant, but also proven to be empirically effective in creating sustainable economic, social, and cultural impacts.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the overall activities and interviews in Balung Lor Village, Jember emphasized that the integration between MSMEs and cultural festivals is a holistic strategy that is able to have a dual impact, both economic and socio-cultural. The chairman of the association emphasized the importance of sustainability so that MSMEs do not experience a decline, academics see it as a model of research-based empowerment, local communities feel pride and social benefits in the form of preserving traditions, while MSME actors consider this activity as a strategic opportunity to expand market access and increase the selling value of products. Thus, this activity not only strengthens the position of MSMEs as a driver of the village economy, but also maintains local cultural identity as a heritage that must be preserved. The overall findings show that cultural collaboration and MSMEs are a sustainable approach that is relevant, effective, and able to support village development as a whole.

The limitations of strengthening MSME activities through cultural festivals in Balung Lor Village, Jember lie in the sustainability of implementation, limited capital, and low digital literacy so that the economic impact has not been fully quantitatively measured. Therefore, it is recommended that there be a sustainable program that integrates festivals with regular marketing, support for collaborative networks between the government, academia, and the community, and strengthen local branding so that products have a clear differentiation. Follow-up activities with a quantitative approach are also needed to measure economic impact in more detail so that the results can be used as the basis for culture-based MSME development policies in the future.

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