

Strengthening Community Businesses Through Creative Digital Promotion and Education

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ABSTRACT

In 2020-2022, digital marketing practices will become increasingly prominent in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has driven the transformation of society towards broader use of the digital realm. Apart from being a marketing tool, digital applications also play an essential role as a source of inspiration for individuals interested in starting an independent business. Within the framework of community service activities, the service team from Merdeka University Malang, together with students, carried out community service activities through the creative promotion of MSMEs and video tutorials that were beneficial to the community. This service activity involves the active participation of twenty students who are members of two different teams, namely the team responsible for its implementation.

Keywords: Digital, Empowerment, Promotion, Video

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1. INTRODUCTION

The current global situation is in the midst of significant changes during the transition to the third phase of the new normal era, driven by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In response to unprecedented public health challenges, various countries, including Indonesia, have implemented a series of measures that have significantly altered the daily life arrangements. All aspects of community life, including social, economic, and behavioral elements, have undergone adaptation to reduce the risk of broader and more serious spread. In this lengthy journey, adaptation has become a prominent keyword, accompanied by collective efforts to adjust to the 'new normal' conditions, which demand more careful and disciplined management of daily activities (Oemiati et al., 2022; Triatmanto et al., 2020).

The third phase of this new normal era marks a crucial turning point in the global recovery process. Recovery extends beyond societal behavior to encompass economic sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic has globally damaged economies, including in Indonesia. Key sectors such as tourism, creative industries, and trade have experienced significant declines in their performance, with detrimental implications for economic growth and social well-being. While there are signs of slow and gradual recovery, the resilience and economic stamina of the community have become key determinants in sustaining businesses and employment (Amrulla, 2021).

Nevertheless, sustained recovery is not without ongoing challenges. Despite the gradual economic recovery, the continued spread of the virus and emerging new variants indicate that the pandemic is still ongoing. This underscores the importance of adopting and strengthening sustainable and adaptive prevention strategies. In addressing these challenges, the concept of the new normal not only serves as a guide for daily life but also forms the foundation for the development of effective and holistic policies. These policies aim not only to revive the economy but also to maintain overall stability (Sufiyanto et al., 2020).

Between 2020 and 2022, digital marketing practices have become increasingly prominent in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, driving societal transformation towards broader

digital usage. The significant increase in the effectiveness of digital marketing aligns with the rapid growth in internet usage and increased active participation in social media platforms. Official data from the Ministry of Communication and Information in Indonesia indicates approximately 202.6 million individuals using the internet. Additionally, the digital service sector has recorded a 37% increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. While digital marketing practices have been an integral part of business strategies in recent years, the accelerated adoption of modern technology is more noticeable as a direct result of the need to adapt to social interaction restrictions imposed by the pandemic (Tasmilah et al., 2022).

Beyond marketing, digital applications also play a crucial role as a source of inspiration for individuals interested in starting their own businesses, as indicated by Lustono & Laila Cahyani's research (2020). One significant digital platform is YouTube, where in Indonesia, the viewer penetration rate reaches 88% of the total population, surpassing the usage of WhatsApp and Facebook in the country. Furthermore, based on data from wearesocial.com, in 2021, 53% of total platform viewers are interested in tutorial content, demonstrating a strong demand for relevant information and guidance in the pandemic context. In this framework, creating engaging business profiles or social education and disseminating them through social media will be essential if the content can adapt to the needs (Purwaningwulan & Ramdan, 2022).

Therefore, the promotion of marketing for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and attractive tutorial videos (educational videos) is expected to serve as effective promotional and educational tools, enabling broader access to information on products, business locations, and useful creative tutorials. By leveraging video tutorial formats and digital marketing strategies, it is hoped that MSME owners can be empowered more effectively. This encourages wider adoption of digital marketing techniques to strengthen the position of MSMEs in the market and specific knowledge of the community (Bargandini & Arsawati, 2022; Castro et al., 2017).

An in-depth analysis of this situation highlights the significance of expanding reach to support the development and growth of MSMEs. Geographic and local environmental factors play a central role in determining the scale and nature of these challenges. In the marketing context, increasing consumer reach is a crucial step in expanding customer bases and boosting business revenue (Wicaksono et al., 2023).

Well-planned strategies, supported by technical and marketing aspects, will help overcome these challenges (Sopannah et al, 2022; Kirana et al; 2023). This underscores the importance of integration between promotional aspects, marketing, and accessibility to optimize the exposure of MSMEs in the local tourism industry. Thus, the expansion efforts are directed towards strengthening the positions of both MSMEs in the local and regional markets, simultaneously raising public awareness of the potential and services offered by both (Oemiati et al., 2022).

2. METHODS

As part of community service activities, the community service team from Universitas Merdeka Malang (Unmer) provides students with the opportunity to observe and analyze the conditions of the environment around their residences. Students are given the freedom to choose the category of video they will create, with the community service team setting the options as either a promotional video for MSMEs or a useful tutorial video.

An in-depth analysis of the situation underscores the significance of expanding reach to support the development and growth of MSMEs or the factual conditions of the community. Geographic and local environmental factors play a central role in determining the scale and nature of these challenges. In the marketing context, increasing consumer reach is a crucial step in expanding customer bases and boosting business revenue.

Therefore, well-planned strategies, supported by technical and marketing aspects, will help overcome these challenges. This emphasizes the importance of integrating promotional aspects, marketing, and accessibility to optimize the exposure of MSMEs in the local tourism industry (Kussanti et al., 2021). Thus, the expansion efforts are directed towards strengthening the

positions of both MSMEs in the local and regional markets, simultaneously raising public awareness of the potential and services offered by both.

In the context of tutorial videos, the use of digital media as a learning and educational tool is highlighted. Digital media can serve as a powerful platform for sharing information, collaborating with others, and accessing educational resources. Some benefits of using digital media for learning include increased engagement, personalized learning, and improved communication skills (Setiawan & Fadillah, 2020; Widyastuty et al., 2022).

The community service activities took place over a three-week period, from July 18 to August 14, 2022. The activities involved the active participation of twenty students divided into two teams—one responsible for promoting creative tutorial videos and the other focusing on marketing strategies for MSMEs.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall series of activities is divided into three main phases: the preparation phase, the implementation phase, and the program evaluation phase. In the initial stage, the execution team initiates the process by coordinating to plan the schedule and sequence of activities that align with the functions of each team. This includes the team responsible for creating tutorial videos and the team focusing on marketing strategies for MSMEs. Both teams identify the necessary data and requirements for the smooth implementation of the program. The next stage involves technical guidance from the Universitas Merdeka Malang (Unmer) Research and Community Service Institution (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat or LPPM), supporting the development of narratives and scripts needed to map out the basic structure of the video content.

During the implementation phase, the team proceeds with the formulated narrative and script concepts. They continue to record video content, following the prepared narrative and script guidelines. After recording, the material is then merged and organized through the editing process to produce a video that aligns with the program. Before starting the editing process, the team refers to the second technical guide, which includes information on the steps in the editing process and the final stages of video production. The subsequent process includes designing the video structure, covering the opening, introduction, tutorial content or business profile, and conclusion. The targeted duration for editing the video ranges from 3 to 5 minutes.

The assessment process involves storing relevant program documentation during implementation. This documentation is then included as additional information in the individual descriptions of each video uploaded to social media platforms. The included information covers details such as raw materials, product composition, production process stages for tutorial videos, and information about the name, location, type of product, and price for MSME business profile videos. After the editing process is complete, the community service team uploads their finished videos to social media platforms as part of a digital promotion strategy to expand information outreach to the wider community.

The community service activities are divided into two core programs: the tutorial video creation program and the MSME marketing program. The primary mission of the tutorial video creation program is to provide education to the community on how to apply tutorial video protocols in the context of life during the New Normal. Some topics covered in the tutorial video educational content include:

- 1) Analysis of the Potential of Yacon Leaves in the Context of Diabetes Prevention
- 2) Innovation in Hydroponic Growing Media Creation from Recycled Materials, Using Tofu Wastewater as Plant Nutrition



Figure 1. Yacon Leaf Processing



Figure 2. The Results of Brewing Yacon Leaves



Figure 3. Hydroponic Growing Media

The focus of this initiative is on the development of the local industry. The promotional efforts aim to shape the destination image, which is expected to become the projected online destination image. This image is then introduced to the audience through social media with the goal of making the message go viral. In the current era, popular promotion approaches significantly impact the interest of multi-level tourists.

In addition to video creation, the Unmer Malang community service team encourages the expansion of promotional media by developing promotions with their partners. In the current digital era, video content production has become a crucial strategy for introducing and promoting products or services, especially in the context of MSME development. The editing and finishing process of the video plays a crucial role in ensuring that the content aligns with planned standards and has a structure that suits the content's needs.

A significant aspect of the editing process is adjusting the video duration to fit the needs and preferences of the target audience. Setting the right duration ensures that the intended message remains clear without exceeding the attention span of viewers. Thus, editing involves not only technical aspects but also strategic elements in determining how the content will be received and understood by the audience.

Furthermore, to ensure effective communication through video, the addition of information through text elements is equally important. Text elements serve as reinforcements for the conveyed message, especially in educational and essential promotional contexts that require easily remembered information for the viewers. With the addition of appropriate information through text, key messages can be clarified and emphasized, thus providing a more effective impact on the audience (Bargandini & Arsawati, 2022; Wicaksono et al., 2023; Tasmilah et al., 2022).

The implementation of this strategy can be seen in the results of the tutorial video and MSME promotional videos that have been prepared. The screenshot images below demonstrate the real implementation of the editing and finishing process. Clearly visible are several MSME videos introduced, depicting the applied editing process to introduce these businesses to the audience.

Meanwhile, the next image shows the results of the tutorial video program introducing the production of products such as Yacon leaf drinks and hydroponic techniques using tofu waste as plant nutrition. The addition of text information in the tutorial videos effectively clarifies the steps and procedures to be followed by the viewers in following the tutorial.

Thus, through proper editing and the addition of relevant information, the production of MSME-related videos can deliver a stronger and clearer message to the audience, supporting more effective promotion and education for the respective MSMEs. This will create greater opportunities for MSMEs to thrive and increase their exposure in an increasingly competitive market. The images below are snippets from the produced videos.



Figure 4. Tutorial Video

To expand the reach of education and promotion for MSMEs to the general public, products in the form of tutorial videos and MSME company profile videos are uploaded through the YouTube platform, specifically on the channel of the Research and Community Service Institution (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat or LPPM) of Universitas Merdeka Malang. The LPPM Unmer Malang Channel is specifically utilized as a means to disseminate various research and community service activities produced by various parties in the academic environment of Unmer.

The existence of this channel is a strategic effort to expand coverage and improve accessibility to information related to MSMEs and useful tutorial videos to the audience through popular digital platforms like YouTube. Figure 8 displays the view of the YouTube channel LPPM Unmer Malang Channel, playing a crucial role in disseminating information related to ongoing MSME education and promotion activities. With this platform, it is expected that access to information related to MSMEs will be more easily reached by the general public, serving as a strategic step in promoting the sustainable growth and development of the MSME sector (Fitriani, 2021).

The use of digital platforms as a presentation tool for educational content or promotional efforts has significant benefits. When social media is used as a platform for delivering educational content and digital promotions, it can positively contribute to users by expanding their knowledge and insights and introducing them to new destinations. Moreover, through content distributed via social media, the quality of users' learning can be enhanced, helping them become more independent and increasing their interest in exploring new information. Therefore, it is expected that users will be more competent in choosing social media platforms that align with the material they want to learn and the experiences they want to gain (Assegaff, 2017; Dewa & Safitri, 2021; Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019).

4. CONCLUSION

Through the tutorial video initiative, this activity has successfully provided new knowledge and innovative inspiration to the community regarding various business ideas that positively respond to consumer needs in the midst of the pandemic.

In the context of empowering the economy of MSMEs, the core objective of this activity is to assist in enhancing the promotion for small and medium-sized businesses affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. By producing promotional videos for MSMEs, this community service activity has made a significant contribution to introducing the products and business profiles of the involved MSMEs.

Recommendations that can be drawn from the implementation of this activity include the need for more thoughtful planning regarding creative digital promotion. A more focused strategy is required to optimize digital platforms such as social media, websites, and video streaming platforms like YouTube so that the potential reach of a wider audience can be utilized more effectively. Moreover, collaboration with relevant entities, including private and government sectors, is necessary to ensure that MSME economic empowerment programs can run sustainably and have a positive impact on local economic growth.

Furthermore, to enhance the impact of empowerment programs, it is essential to conduct training and ongoing guidance for MSME actors related to marketing strategies, production management, and product quality improvement. With a holistic and sustainable approach, it is expected that MSMEs can endure and even grow in the midst of the challenging situation caused by the pandemic. Thus, efforts to empower the economy of MSMEs can make a greater contribution to the overall economic recovery of the local community.

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