

Strengthening The Competitive Advantage Of Beginner Self-Employed Workers Through Digital Marketing Literacy And Product Branding

Yulia Nurendah, Ani Mekaniwati, Mumuh Mulyana, Ita Rosita, Resa Sukmawati, Alvira Nur Dzikriyah

Institut Bisnis dan Informatika Kesatuan

Bogor, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Yulia Nurendah. E-mail: yulia@ibik.ac.id



Abstract— Strengthening digital marketing literacy and product branding strategies for Beginner Self-Employed Workers (TKMP) in Cileungsi represents an urgent priority to enhance business competitiveness and market access. This community engagement program was designed to improve participants' skills through training and mentoring in social media– and marketplace-based marketing, as well as in building strong product branding through logo design, standardized packaging, and consistent storytelling. The implementation consisted of three stages: preparation and socialization, execution, and reporting. The results indicate that participants significantly improved their knowledge and skills in utilizing digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and online marketplaces. Moreover, the branding training enabled participants to develop basic visual identities and strengthen their understanding of differentiation and product positioning. The program's effectiveness was supported by participants' enthusiasm, the relevance of the materials, and the practical approach that allowed direct application of skills. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including limited access to devices, disparities in digital literacy, and constraints in training duration. Overall, the program had a positive impact by raising awareness of the importance of digital marketing and branding, equipping participants with initial capabilities to increase competitiveness, expand market reach, and foster economic independence

Keywords— Digital Marketing Literacy; Product Branding; Beginner Self-Employed Workers (TKMP)

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNER'S PROBLEMS

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed consumption patterns and business practices. Digital transformation not only reshapes operational models but also fundamentally alters consumer behavior, making them more critical and selective due to broader, faster, and more transparent access to information. Real-time access to price comparisons, product reviews, and quality assessments has heightened consumer expectations, compelling businesses to adopt adaptive, interactive, and data-driven marketing strategies.

According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023), internet users in Indonesia reached 215 million (78% of the population), with over 80% actively using social media for product searches, reviews, and digital transactions. This development underscores the role of digital platforms as primary arenas for business interaction, brand-building, and consumer decision-making. Similarly, data from the Bogor Regency Statistics Office (BPS, 2022) highlight a sharp rise in digital consumption trends, reflecting urban lifestyles that prioritize speed, convenience, and accessibility. For MSMEs, this transformation offers

opportunities to expand markets and enhance competitiveness through e-commerce, social media, and other digital platforms, while simultaneously creating challenges in digital literacy, content innovation, and technological adaptation.

Cileungsi, a densely populated subdistrict in Bogor Regency dominated by a productive-age workforce, has shown potential for the emergence of Beginner Self-Employed Workers (TKMP). Many originate from factory workers, daily laborers, or high school graduates transitioning into small-scale entrepreneurs. Their businesses range from simple culinary ventures (iced tea, nasi uduk, fried chicken) and beverages to screen-printing services, small shops, and mobile credit kiosks. The local market potential is considerable due to the presence of residential areas, industrial zones, and commercial centers.

Despite this potential, MSMEs in Cileungsi remain less competitive compared to those in nearby urban centers such as Depok or Jakarta. The main constraint lies in limited access to digital marketing and weak product branding capabilities—factors crucial for building consumer trust, shaping business identity, and expanding market reach. Strengthening digital marketing literacy and branding strategies for TKMP is therefore an urgent necessity. Evidence from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) shows that SMEs adopting digital platforms report sales growth of 20–30% compared to those relying on conventional methods. Leveraging platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp Business presents opportunities for TKMP in Cileungsi to broaden consumer networks and introduce local products to wider markets, thereby enhancing competitiveness and supporting sustainable economic independence

1.2. PROFILE AND CONDITION OF TARGET PARTNERS

The target partners of this program are Beginner Self-Employed Workers (TKMP) in Cileungsi, consisting of individual entrepreneurs engaged in culinary, beverage, service, and small retail sectors. The characteristics of the partners' current condition can be outlined as follows:

1. Raw Materials – Business inputs are generally sourced from local markets with relatively stable availability. However, production processes remain simple and often lack standardized procedures, resulting in inconsistent product quality.
2. Types of Products – The majority of businesses are concentrated in culinary products (iced tea *kampul*, nasi uduk, fried chicken), fresh beverages, screen-printing services, and small convenience shops. Daily production volume is relatively limited, with small-scale capacity and no established strategies to increase output in response to market demand.
3. Product Quality – The quality of products largely depends on individual skills and lacks standardized benchmarks. Hygiene, packaging design, and product differentiation remain suboptimal.
4. Distribution Systems – Most distribution is carried out directly at business locations or through customer orders on-site. Only a few entrepreneurs have attempted to use ride-hailing applications for delivery, which remain underutilized.
5. Business Administration – Financial and operational records are not managed professionally, leading to difficulties in calculating net profits and developing business growth strategies.
6. Marketing Practices – Marketing approaches are still basic. Pricing follows market trends without differentiation strategies. Customer reach is limited to the local community, with relatively narrow market penetration. Social media platforms are used sporadically, with inconsistent content and weak branding.
7. Facilities and Support – Business facilities are limited, with most relying on simple equipment. Access to training and mentoring in digital marketing and product branding is also minimal.

The main challenges faced by the partners are **low digital marketing literacy** and **weak product branding**, which collectively hinder their competitiveness. Without immediate intervention, the sustainability of these businesses is at risk, as they will struggle to compete with better-prepared competitors in terms of managerial capacity and digital adaptation.

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

1. To enhance the digital marketing literacy of TKMP Cileungsi members through training and mentoring on social media– and marketplace-based marketing strategies.
2. To strengthen the product branding literacy of TKMP Cileungsi members by providing training and mentoring in developing strong product identity and branding through standardized logo design, packaging, and consistent storytelling.
3. To improve the competitiveness and market access of TKMP Cileungsi products.

1.4. ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAM WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING–INDEPENDENT CAMPUS (MBKM) FRAMEWORK, HIGHER EDUCATION KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (IKU), ASTA CITA, AND THE NATIONAL RESEARCH MASTER PLAN (RIRN).

1. Supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).
2. The objective of this activity is to provide students with experiential learning opportunities through community-based projects aimed at enhancing digital marketing and branding literacy. Participating students are entitled to academic recognition in the form of credit conversion equivalent to 6 credits. Specifically, for students of the Applied Bachelor Program in Digital Business, the converted courses include *E-Commerce* (3 credits) and *Technopreneurship* (3 credits). For students of the Applied Bachelor Program in Digital Business Accounting, the converted courses are *Management and Business* (2 credits), *Business Communication* (2 credits), and *Digital Business* (2 credits). Meanwhile, for students of the Bachelor Program in Bio-Entrepreneurship, the converted courses are *Digital Marketing* (3 credits) and *Digital Business* (3 credits).
3. Aligning with Higher Education Key Performance Indicators (IKU), specifically IKU 3 (student participation in off-campus activities) and IKU 5 (faculty engagement with the community). This program contributes to achieving these indicators by: (1) enabling students to gain experiential learning through village-based projects, and (2) ensuring that faculty outputs are utilized by the community. Recognition of this activity is also embedded in the courses *Technopreneurship* and *E-Commerce*.
4. Consistent with *Asta Cita*, particularly the agenda of enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as a driving force of the national economy.
5. Contributing to the national research priorities in the field of social sciences and humanities (RIRN), particularly in the development of the creative economy supported by digital technology. This aligns with the RIRN's focus on economic improvement and human resource development for MSMEs, as well as the advancement of creative economy and business digitalization to strengthen national competitiveness in the era of digital transformation.

1.5. Problems and Solutions

1.5.1. Priority Issues

1. Challenges in Digital Marketing
 - a. Limited digital marketing literacy
 - b. Restricted proficiency in utilizing digital platforms
 - c. Lack of engaging promotional content
2. Challenges in Product Branding
 - a. Undefined brand identity
 - b. Insufficient understanding of branding strategies
 - c. Unprofessional product packaging

1.5.2. Program Impacts and Benefits

1. Enhancing the digital skills of TKMP members to effectively leverage social media, online marketplaces, and digital marketing strategies for broader market reach.
2. Establishing strong brand identities through logo design, taglines, and appealing packaging, thereby ensuring product differentiation and improved consumer recognition.
3. Strengthening business competitiveness through effective digital marketing strategies, which are expected to contribute to increased sales and revenue.

1.5.3. Proposed Solutions

1. Solutions to Digital Marketing Challenges
 - a. Integrated digital marketing literacy training
 - b. Optimization of marketplaces and social media platforms
 - c. Training and mentoring on establishing online stores within digital marketplaces
2. Solutions to Product Branding Challenges
 - a. Training on brand identity development
 - b. Improvement of product packaging design
 - c. Adoption of digital branding strategies, particularly through the introduction of brand storytelling techniques via digital content

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. COMPETITIVENESS

The concept of competitiveness has emerged as a strategic issue in modern economics and management, as it directly relates to the capacity of organizations, industries, and nations to survive and grow amid global competition. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2020), competitiveness is defined as a set of institutions, policies, and productivity-related factors that determine the ability of a country or organization to achieve sustainable growth. Competitiveness is not merely associated with cost advantages but also encompasses innovation, quality, technology, and adaptability to change.

In line with this perspective, Ketels (2021) emphasizes that competitiveness reflects an entity's ability to create sustainable value through effective resource utilization, innovation development, and integration within the global ecosystem. This view highlights the dynamic nature of competitiveness, which is heavily influenced by technological change and shifting consumption patterns. In the Indonesian context, the Ministry of Industry (2021) explains that industrial competitiveness is reflected in the ability to produce high-quality, marketable products with recognized added value in both domestic and international markets. This form of competitiveness is closely tied to labor productivity, mastery of digital technologies, and innovation capacity.

Furthermore, Rohman and Ardyan (2022) define the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as the capacity of small-scale entrepreneurs to exploit market opportunities through product differentiation, service quality, and relevant digital marketing strategies. This is particularly critical in the digital era, where intensified competition requires enterprises to adapt rapidly to evolving consumer behavior.

The WEF (2020) identifies several key determinants of competitiveness, including macroeconomic stability, institutional quality, infrastructure, digital technology adoption, workforce skills, product market efficiency, and innovation capacity. These factors shape the ability of both nations and organizations to navigate global dynamics.

Building on this, Ketels (2021) underscores the importance of strong cluster development, inter-industry collaboration, and integration into global value chains as drivers of competitiveness. This reinforces the notion that collaborative business ecosystems are central to generating sustainable added value.

Within the SMEs context, Rohman and Ardyan (2022) highlight that competitiveness is influenced by digital marketing capability, product innovation, service quality, and customer relationship management. Given their limited resources, MSMEs must prioritize efficiency and creativity in establishing product differentiation.

2.2. BEGINNER SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS (TKMP)

The community empowerment program through Beginner Self-Employed Workers (Tenaga Kerja Mandiri Pemula/TKMP) represents one of the employment expansion schemes under the mandate of the Directorate of Employment Opportunity Expansion, Directorate General of Manpower Placement Development and Employment Opportunity Expansion (Ditjen Binapenta and PKK), Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. This program is designed to foster the creation of beginner self-employed workers in accordance with regional potential, while simultaneously generating broader employment opportunities for local communities. The target participants of the TKMP program consist primarily of unemployed and underemployed individuals, as well as job seekers who do not belong to the categories of Civil Servants (PNS), members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), or the National Police (Polri). Additionally, they must not be bound by contractual employment with either government or private institutions, nor have received similar assistance within the past year. Beyond these general criteria, TKMP also provides opportunities for individuals in priority and vulnerable regions, including outermost, frontier, and underdeveloped areas, regions with extreme poverty, areas targeted for employment expansion, productive migrant villages, high-unemployment zones, disaster-affected regions, as well as individuals with disabilities and manual dockworkers. In doing so, the program seeks to ensure inclusivity and equitable access to entrepreneurship opportunities, thereby addressing diverse socioeconomic challenges faced by marginalized groups (Majalah Senta, Ministry of Manpower, 2024).

2.3 DIGITAL MARKETING LITERACY

According to Murray et al. (2020), *digital marketing literacy* refers to the ability of individuals or organizations to understand, manage, and utilize various digital channels (such as social media, websites, and e-commerce platforms) to support effective marketing strategies. This literacy encompasses not only technical skills but also strategic understanding of digital consumer behavior.

Similarly, Rahman and Prabowo (2021) define digital marketing literacy as the capacity of business actors, particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), to access, analyze, and apply digital technologies to expand markets, build brands, and strengthen customer relationships. A strong level of digital literacy enables MSMEs to be more adaptive to shifting consumer trends and market dynamics.

The Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics (2021) emphasizes that digital marketing literacy is one of the key pillars of the national digital literacy agenda. It involves the ability of business actors to understand social media algorithms, content creation techniques, consumer data analysis, and the strategic use of targeted digital advertising.

Furthermore, Aksoy (2022) argues that digital marketing literacy is a multidimensional skill set that integrates technical aspects (use of devices and applications), conceptual aspects (understanding digital marketing strategies), and critical aspects (evaluating the effectiveness of digital campaigns and their impact on consumers).

In a broader sense, digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand, utilize, and harness digital technologies in daily activities. UNESCO (2018) defines digital literacy as a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable individuals to access, comprehend, evaluate, and create content through digital technologies. In the context of business and economics, digital literacy serves as a critical foundation for entrepreneurs to capitalize on opportunities brought by digital transformation.

In Indonesia, enhancing digital literacy has become a national priority, particularly given the gap between high internet penetration and the limited capacity of society to leverage it productively (APJII, 2023). Thus, digital literacy extends beyond technical competence, encompassing ethical awareness, security considerations, and strategic application in marketing contexts.

Digital marketing literacy, therefore, represents mastery of the skills required to utilize digital technologies for marketing activities. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define digital marketing as the use of digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives through the integration of platforms such as social media, search engines, websites, and mobile applications. Consequently,

digital marketing literacy implies that business actors are not only able to operate digital platforms but also capable of developing strategies, creating relevant content, and managing consumer interactions effectively.

Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), within the framework of *Marketing 4.0*, highlight that modern consumers do not solely rely on corporate-driven information but also on peer-driven digital communities. Hence, entrepreneurs with strong digital marketing literacy are better positioned to build brand awareness, enhance engagement, and drive sales conversion.

2.4. PRODUCT BRANDING

In the modern business landscape, product branding constitutes a pivotal element in determining marketing success. Branding functions not only as a visual identity but also as a strategic approach to shaping perceptions, images, and added value that distinguish a product from its competitors.

According to Keller (2020), product branding is a strategic process aimed at building awareness, associations, and positive consumer perceptions toward a product through the integration of visual, emotional, and functional elements. The primary objective is to establish strong brand equity, making the product more memorable, trustworthy, and preferable to consumers.

In the context of digital business, Hanaysha and Al-Shaikh (2021) highlight that product branding involves the ability of companies or SMEs to utilize various communication channels, including social media and e-commerce platforms, to strengthen product identity and enhance consumer loyalty. Digital branding emphasizes message consistency and relevant interactions with the target market.

Similarly, Suryanto (2021) defines product branding as a systematic effort by entrepreneurs to cultivate a positive image in the minds of consumers through product differentiation, competitive advantage, and the delivery of value aligned with market needs. For SMEs, branding goes beyond logos or packaging design; it also encompasses reputation, service quality, and consumer experience.

Furthermore, Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2021) argue that modern branding must integrate human values with technology, referred to as human-centric branding. This approach not only communicates product features but also delivers meaningful experiences that foster emotional connections with consumers.

Product branding is thus a key determinant in building business identity and competitiveness in increasingly dynamic markets. Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasize that a brand serves not only as a product identifier but also as a value promise offered by the company to its customers. An effective branding process can generate positive perceptions, strengthen loyalty, and differentiate a product from competitors.

In the contemporary marketing context, branding extends beyond creating names, logos, or symbols; it encompasses consistent communication strategies designed to deliver emotional experiences to consumers (Aaker, 2009). Consequently, a strong brand is capable of generating valuable brand equity, which includes perceived quality, brand associations, and consumer loyalty, ultimately enhancing product value (Keller, 2013).

III. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The implementation methodology was carried out collaboratively by the proposing team and the partner organization through the following sequential stages:

1. Preparation and Socialization Phase

- a. Conducting field observations to identify the extent of challenges related to digital marketing literacy and product branding.
- b. Organizing socialization sessions to raise awareness of the importance of digital marketing and product branding.
- c. At this stage, TKMP was actively involved in providing preliminary information regarding their current conditions.
- d. This stage was conducted during Months 1 and 2.

2. Implementation Phase

- a. Delivering training modules and workshops covering: integrated digital marketing literacy, creative content development, marketplace and social media optimization, brand identity reinforcement, product packaging improvement, and digital branding strategies.
- b. During this stage, TKMP participated as training participants, provided facilities for training activities, and implemented the knowledge shared by the proposing team.
- c. University students supported the process by assisting in the development of digital media and e-commerce platforms for TKMP's product marketing.
- d. This stage was conducted during Months 3 to 5.

3. Reporting Phase

- a. Preparing the final report of the Community Service Program.
- b. At this stage, the partner organization actively contributed by providing feedback on perceived benefits and reporting progress on the implementation of the system.
- c. This stage was conducted in Month 6.

The implementation method was designed based on the problems previously identified and linked to the proposed solutions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. General Overview

Cileungsi, as one of the sub-districts in Bogor Regency characterized by dynamic population growth and high economic activity, possesses significant potential for the development of Independent Workers (Tenaga Kerja Mandiri, TKM). The increasing population growth rate has driven the diversification of community needs, both in terms of daily consumption and lifestyle-related services. This condition generates broad demand for various products and services, thereby opening significant opportunities for local communities to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

The presence of industrial zones in Cileungsi represents a critical factor supporting such potential. Industry not only creates formal employment opportunities but also stimulates demand for supporting services such as food and beverages, transportation, retail trade, and logistics. In parallel, the rapid expansion of residential areas—ranging from medium- to large-scale housing developments—strengthens the local consumer base with diverse purchasing power. This creates new entrepreneurial opportunities for TKM, particularly in food and beverage services, cleaning services, non-formal education, and digital-based services.

Moreover, the existence of traditional markets and trading centers adds to the region's economic dynamism. The intensive commercial activities provide a strategic platform for TKM to market local products and establish business networks. The interaction between small, medium, and large enterprises has the potential to create an inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Given these combined factors, Cileungsi holds strategic advantages for developing TKM in terms of market availability, infrastructure support, and a continuously growing consumer base. To maximize this potential, interventions in the form of entrepreneurship training, access to capital, and business management assistance are required. If managed effectively, Cileungsi can not only cultivate productive independent workers but also emerge as a center for entrepreneurship-driven economic growth in Bogor Regency.

Population growth, density, and demographic composition serve as key supporting factors in creating broad entrepreneurial opportunities. With a population of approximately 340,000 and a density of ±4,846 people per km², Cileungsi is categorized as a densely populated and socioeconomically active area (BPS Bogor Regency, 2022). This high density reflects the considerable potential for local demand and business opportunities that extend beyond the community itself. The diverse labor composition—

including private employees, entrepreneurs, and informal workers—indicates the community’s capacity to adapt to various business types, including independent ventures. These demographic conditions highlight the potential for TKMs not only in traditional sectors but also in digital-based services, creative industries, and fast-response businesses tailored to urban needs.

The Independent Worker (TKM) program initiated by the Indonesian government aims to foster economic self-reliance, reduce unemployment, and generate new employment opportunities through entrepreneurship. In Cileungsi, TKM activities are concentrated in culinary businesses, small-scale trade, creative services, and digital-based enterprises. Examples include food stalls, contemporary beverage outlets, screen-printing services, design services, and online trading that utilizes social media and e-commerce platforms.

The potential of TKM in Cileungsi is further reinforced by shifting urban consumption patterns, which increasingly prioritize practicality, speed, and product variety. This trend provides broad opportunities for TKMs to develop products tailored to local and regional market demands. Additionally, Cileungsi’s strategic location—bordering Jakarta, Bekasi, and Depok—offers wider market access, enabling independent enterprises to reach larger consumer bases.

Nevertheless, TKMs in Cileungsi still face notable challenges, including limited access to capital, inadequate managerial skills, and insufficient digital marketing literacy. The ability to leverage digital technology has become an essential factor for enhancing business competitiveness in the modern economy. Therefore, support in the form of entrepreneurship training, capital facilitation, business mentoring, and digital marketing assistance is crucial to ensure the sustainable development of TKMs.

Field findings further indicate that Beginner Independent Workers (Tenaga Kerja Mandiri Pemula, TKMP) in Cileungsi are groups of individuals striving to build independent enterprises as a means of improving household economic resilience. Their primary characteristic is a strong entrepreneurial spirit, despite limitations in business experience, initial capital, and managerial capacity. This suggests that both economic motivation and local market opportunities are the main driving forces behind the emergence of beginner entrepreneurs in this area.

In terms of business sectors, TKMPs in Cileungsi tend to focus on activities closely related to daily community needs, such as culinary services, small-scale trade, skilled services, and creative industries. Examples observed include food stalls, contemporary beverages, screen-printing businesses, and graphic design services utilizing social media. This sectoral selection aligns with Cileungsi’s socio-economic dynamics, characterized by industrial growth, expanding residential areas, and active trading hubs. These factors create a broad consumer base while expanding marketing opportunities for TKMPs.

Despite this potential, TKMPs face significant challenges, particularly in terms of limited initial capital, weak financial management, and low levels of digital marketing literacy. Moreover, intense competition with similar enterprises and larger-scale businesses compels TKMPs to establish product and service differentiation. These findings indicate that the competitiveness of TKMPs is strongly influenced by their ability to adapt to market trends and effectively utilize digital technology.

On the other hand, the potential for TKMP development in Cileungsi remains substantial, provided appropriate interventions are introduced. With consistent support, TKMPs can not only improve household income but also contribute to job creation, strengthen local economic structures, and foster a more sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Bogor Regency.

4.2. Results

The community engagement program entitled “*Strengthening the Competitiveness of Beginner Independent Workers through Digital Marketing Literacy and Product Branding*” was implemented as a response to the pressing challenges faced by Beginner Independent Workers (TKMP) in Cileungsi District. Preliminary surveys revealed that the majority of entrepreneurs in this area continue to rely on conventional marketing approaches, such as word-of-mouth promotion, direct selling, and limited personal networks. These methods have proven relatively ineffective in reaching wider consumer segments, particularly in an era where consumer behavior has increasingly shifted toward digital consumption.

The main challenges identified include limited digital literacy, inadequate mastery of social media platforms, a lack of creativity in promotional content development, and weak brand identity. Such conditions make it difficult for TKMP products to remain competitive despite their sufficient potential and quality. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association

(APJII, 2023), internet users in Indonesia have reached 215 million, representing approximately 78% of the population, with more than 80% actively utilizing social media to search for products, read consumer reviews, and conduct transactions. This highlights that digital media has evolved beyond its role as a communication tool to become the primary arena for business activity and consumer purchasing decisions. Based on this context, the program was designed with a focus on two main components:

1. Strengthening Digital Marketing Literacy
2. Enhancing Product Branding

By integrating these two dimensions, the program not only provided participants with technical skills but also fostered strategic awareness among TKMP to adapt to the evolving consumption patterns of society. The overarching goal was to enable TKMP in Cileungsi District to optimize the vast digital market potential, enhance competitiveness, and ensure the sustainability of their enterprises.

4.2.1. Enhancing Digital Marketing Literacy

The most pressing issue identified was the low level of digital literacy. Many participants lacked an understanding of online marketing strategies, were unable to define target audiences, and had never utilized digital advertising tools.

1. Integrated Digital Marketing Literacy Training was delivered using interactive lectures, case studies, and hands-on practice. This methodological combination ensured that participants not only acquired theoretical knowledge but also contextual understanding and the ability to directly apply digital marketing strategies to their businesses.
2. Interactive lectures introduced fundamental concepts of digital marketing, including the digital marketing ecosystem, the use of social media, and the role of online marketplaces in business expansion. The sessions encouraged two-way engagement, enabling participants to ask questions, share experiences, and critically compare traditional and digital strategies.
3. Case study discussions analyzed real-world practices of successful micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), both locally and nationally. These examples illustrated the application of digital marketing strategies, from building brand awareness and managing consumer interactions to driving sales conversions. Participants were encouraged to critically reflect on challenges and opportunities relevant to their own businesses.
4. Practical sessions focused on operational skills, including the management of digital platforms. Training materials covered social media algorithms—demonstrating how content could reach broader audiences through engagement, interaction, and consistent posting—and audience analysis techniques, such as interpreting insights from Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok analytics to better understand consumer profiles.

This combination of methods ensured that the training was not merely theoretical but highly applicable. Participants acquired tangible skills, such as creating business accounts on social media, developing content calendars, and evaluating the effectiveness of digital promotions. The training yielded measurable improvements, as participants were able to more clearly identify their target markets, craft more focused content strategies, and establish consistent branding. Key outcomes include:

1. Prior to the training, only 20% of participants knew how to use social media for promotion; this figure increased to 75% after the training.
2. Participants successfully developed simple strategies, such as selecting appropriate platforms for target segments and scheduling posts.
3. Improved digital marketing literacy enabled participants to expand market reach, reduce promotional costs, and enhance competitiveness.

These results corroborate Kotler and Keller's (2016) assertion that digital marketing is not merely an auxiliary activity but an integral component of modern marketing strategy.

4.2.2. Creative Content Development

The lack of creative promotional content has rendered participants' products less appealing to consumers. Most products were promoted with simple photographs, without persuasive design elements or narrative storytelling. The creative content development training was therefore designed as a key strategy to enhance the digital marketing skills of novice independent workers (Tenaga Kerja Mandiri Pemula, TKMP). This training emphasized mastery of visual, narrative, and interactive aspects that underpin the effectiveness of product promotion across social media and online marketplaces. The overarching objective was to enable participants to produce content that is not only aesthetically engaging, but also relevant, communicative, and capable of generating consumer engagement. The training covered the following key components:

1. Participants were trained to use Canva, a user-friendly digital graphic design tool, to produce promotional posters, Instagram feeds, and marketplace banners. Through the use of available templates, participants were able to create professional-looking materials without requiring advanced design expertise.
2. Short promotional videos were introduced as an emerging trend in digital marketing. Participants learned essential skills in storyboard planning, video shooting techniques, and editing. The focus was on leveraging TikTok and Instagram Reels, which are known for high engagement levels.
3. Participants were introduced to effective copywriting techniques, specifically the crafting of persuasive and concise product descriptions that highlight product strengths. This skill was expected to improve sales conversion rates by producing text that is both engaging and informative.
4. In addition to visual and video-based content, participants practiced creating interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and participatory prompts on social media. Such content was designed to foster consumer interaction, strengthen emotional connection, and enhance product loyalty.
5. The training adopted a learning-by-doing approach, whereby participants immediately applied content creation techniques during the sessions. Outputs were reviewed collaboratively, with constructive feedback from facilitators. This approach ensured that participants not only understood theoretical concepts but also gained practical skills applicable to their businesses.

Results:

The training significantly improved participants' capacity for digital communication, expanded their market reach, and enhanced their ability to build professional and competitive product images. Participants successfully produced digital flyers, simple promotional videos, and persuasive product descriptions using storytelling techniques. Several products experienced a two- to threefold increase in social media interactions following the adoption of copywriting techniques. Creative content thus emerged as a pivotal factor in fostering consumer trust. These findings align with Priyono, Moin, and Putri (2020), who assert that creativity in digital promotional content positively correlates with both consumer engagement and sales conversion.



Figure 1. Example of Content Produced from the TKMP Training

4.2.3. Online Store Training

Although online marketplaces represent a promising distribution channel, most participants had not yet established accounts, relying instead on offline sales or personal social media networks. The training on online store establishment was therefore aimed at empowering TKMP to leverage major e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada as scalable sales channels. Delivered through hands-on training, the program emphasized practical application over theory, ensuring participants could independently execute each step of store creation. The core training modules included:

1. Step-by-step guidance in creating official seller accounts on Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada. This involved filling in personal data, email, phone number, and completing account security verification.
2. Instruction on systematic product uploads, including title, category, description, and high-quality product photos. Attention was given to SEO-driven descriptions, enabling greater product visibility in searches.
3. Training on competitive pricing strategies that accounted for production costs, profit margins, and competitor benchmarks. Participants were also introduced to promotional features, including flash sales, discount vouchers, and free shipping, to boost product attractiveness.
4. Integration of digital payment systems such as ShopeePay, OVO, GoPay, and bank transfers was taught, ensuring transactions could be conducted quickly and securely in line with prevailing consumer preferences for cashless payments.

During the training, it was revealed that most participants had never independently established an online store. As a result, this activity provided not only technical skills but also confidence in engaging with a digital marketplace ecosystem.

Results:

The training emphasized the importance of consistency in managing online stores—such as updating inventory, responding to consumer inquiries promptly, and maintaining store ratings. Consequently, participants developed the ability not only to open but also to sustain and manage their online businesses effectively. Approximately 85% of participants successfully created online stores, with several even securing their first orders from customers outside Cileungsi. Furthermore, participants gained exposure to keyword optimization techniques, enhancing product discoverability. These outcomes align with data from APJII (2023), which highlight the prevalence of digital transactions among Indonesian consumers. By leveraging online marketplaces, TKMP participants transcended local boundaries, gaining access to a national market.

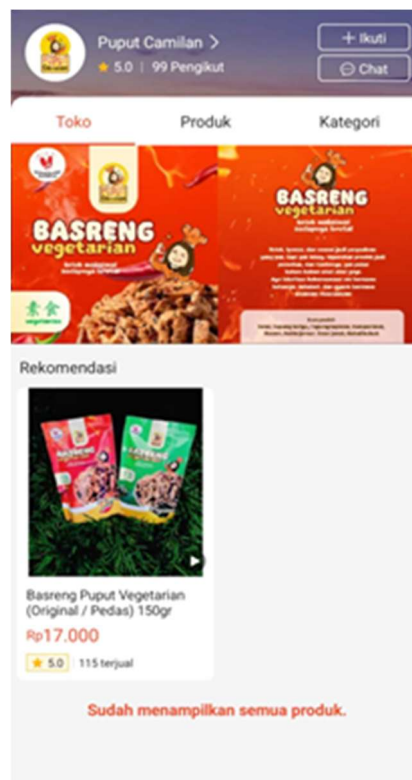


Figure 2. Example of an Online Store Created from the TKMP Training

4.2.4. Product Branding Enhancement

Weak brand identity was identified as a significant obstacle to competitiveness, as many products lacked consistent names, logos, or taglines. The product branding enhancement training was therefore designed to strengthen participants' understanding of the strategic importance of brand identity in market competition. Branding was approached holistically, extending beyond visual elements to include the cultivation of positive consumer perceptions. The training consisted of the following elements:

1. Introduction to the concept of brand differentiation, emphasizing product quality, packaging, service, and value-added offerings as key identifiers in competitive markets.
2. Hands-on practice in logo design using digital tools such as Canva, enabling participants to create simple, memorable, and relevant visual identities without requiring advanced design skills.
3. Development of taglines or slogans that concisely conveyed product uniqueness. For instance, a herbal beverage product might use the slogan: "Fresh and Natural, Healthy Every Day."
4. Instruction on brand positioning strategies, helping participants identify their product's placement in terms of price, quality, and consumer segmentation. Clear positioning was emphasized as a way to avoid direct competition and to target specific market niches.

The training employed a blended approach of interactive lectures, case studies, and practical exercises. Participants were required to create comprehensive brand identities, including logos, taglines, and simple positioning strategies.

Results:

The training substantially improved participants' awareness of brand identity as a competitive asset. For example, snack products that previously had no name or visual representation were redesigned with logos, improved packaging, and simple slogans.

Participants became more conscious of the importance of visual consistency, thereby enhancing product recognition. Strong branding was shown to foster consumer trust, customer loyalty, and broader market reach.

This finding echoes Aaker (2009), who argues that strong brands create brand equity, encompassing perceived quality, positive associations, and consumer loyalty. With enhanced branding, participants' products gained competitiveness not only on the basis of price but also through improved identity and image.

4.3. Evaluation of Program Outcomes

The evaluation of the program was conducted both during and after the training sessions, focusing on two primary dimensions: (1) the achievement of training objectives and (2) the quality of training implementation. Process and outcome evaluations were carried out through questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation, while the evaluation of organizational aspects of the training relied on structured questionnaires. Two approaches were adopted to assess training effectiveness: ongoing evaluation during program implementation and post-training evaluation.

The post-training evaluation results, as presented in Table 5.5, revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback from all participants. Among the 26 respondents, none reported that the training was unhelpful or of limited value. All responses fell into the categories of *beneficial* (53 responses) and *highly beneficial* (207 responses). These findings confirm that the training content was directly relevant to the real needs of novice independent workers (TKMP) in Cileungsi.

A more detailed analysis of the evaluation instruments shows consistently high levels of participant appreciation across nearly all training components. Technical modules—such as digital marketing strategies, social media utilization, and marketplace optimization—were rated as *highly beneficial* by 21 participants and *beneficial* by 5 participants. A similar pattern was observed for training on interactive promotional content creation, the use of design applications like Canva, and the establishment of online stores in marketplaces. These results underscore the urgent demand for practical digital skills among TKMP, especially in addressing the challenges of modern marketing.

Content related to copywriting and short video production for social media promotion received slightly more varied responses, with 6 participants rating the material as *beneficial* and 20 as *highly beneficial*. This reflects a growing awareness among participants of the strategic role of creativity in marketing communication. One participant highlighted this shift, stating: *“Initially, I only relied on simple product photos. After learning how to create short videos and incorporate compelling promotional text, I noticed a significant increase in consumer responses on social media.”*

Similarly, modules focusing on brand strengthening—including brand concepts, differentiation, positioning, and the creation of logos, taglines, and consistent visual identities—were also highly appreciated, with 21 participants rating the material as *highly beneficial* and 5 as *beneficial*. These responses indicate participants' growing recognition of the importance of brand identity in building a professional and sustainable business image.

Overall, the evaluation results demonstrate that the training was not only well-aligned with participants' needs but also provided practical benefits that could be directly applied to business operations. The high proportion of *highly beneficial* ratings highlights the training's relevance to the challenges faced by TKMP in Cileungsi, such as limited access to promotional channels, insufficient digital skills, and weak product differentiation. A participant in the beverage sector expressed this realization: *“I only realized that a logo and tagline are important. After trying Canva, my product looks more attractive and easier for people to remember.”*

Another culinary entrepreneur noted: *“Previously, I only depended on nearby customers. After the training, I opened an online store, and it has helped me increase my orders.”* Such testimonials illustrate how the training not only delivered knowledge but also opened new perspectives and practical pathways for business growth.

In conclusion, the training proved effective not only as a medium for knowledge transfer but also in generating tangible improvements in participants' practical capacities. This success provides a critical foundation for enhancing the competitiveness of TKMP through the adoption of digital marketing strategies and more professional branding practices. Moving forward, program sustainability—particularly in the form of continuous mentoring and field-based practice—will be essential to ensure that these

positive outcomes translate into long-term improvements in business performance and the sustainability of TKMP in Cileungsi District.

4.4. Discussion

The Community Service Program (PKM) entitled “*Strengthening the Competitiveness of Beginner Self-Employed Workers (TKMP) through Digital Marketing Literacy and Product Branding*” was successfully implemented in alignment with its intended objectives, yielding positive outcomes. TKMP participants in the Cileungsi area gained valuable knowledge and experiential insights through this program. In general, the TKMP participants in Cileungsi responded positively to the program’s implementation. The training participants expressed their expectation that such capacity-building initiatives be continued in the future, given the program’s practical benefits.

Supporting and Constraining Factors

1. Supporting Factors. Based on observations and interviews, several key enabling factors were identified:
 - a. High participant motivation, driven by tangible opportunities (e.g., customer orders and market reach), fostering commitment to learning.
 - b. Training materials directly addressed participants’ business needs, which facilitated faster comprehension.
 - c. Demonstrations and hands-on practice accelerated skill transfer through experiential learning.
 - d. Peer-to-peer support fostered a local promotional network.
 - e. Despite limitations, most participants possessed smartphones adequate for basic digital marketing activities.
 - f. The geographical proximity of Cileungsi to major market hubs facilitated distribution and access to raw materials.
2. Constraining Factors. Challenges were classified into three categories: participant-level, program-level, and external/infrastructural.
 - a. *Participant-level*: (1) varying levels of digital literacy; (2) limited availability of time; (3) insufficient operational capital.
 - b. *Program-level*: (1) limited time allocated for intensive training; (2) constraints on facilitators’ capacity to provide follow-up support.
 - c. *External/infrastructure*: (1) inconsistent internet connectivity; (2) challenges in logistics and payment systems; (3) competitive market pressures.

Key Outcomes

The training series conducted under this PKM program demonstrated significant impacts on enhancing digital marketing literacy and strengthening branding capacity among the 26 participating TKMP members. Evaluation results revealed notable achievements in several domains: the ability to create more engaging promotional content, the successful establishment of online stores via e-commerce platforms, and the initial development of brand identity as the foundation for product branding.

These achievements were largely attributable to the relevance of training content to participants’ real business needs, the application-oriented learning methods employed, and the strong motivation of participants to expand their enterprises.

Nonetheless, several challenges were identified, including participants’ limited access to adequate digital devices, uneven internet connectivity, restricted time due to ongoing daily business activities, and the need for more intensive operational mentoring beyond the training phase. To ensure sustained long-term impact and competitiveness, follow-up strategies are recommended, such as continuous mentoring, the establishment of learning communities or TKMP peer networks for knowledge sharing, and targeted interventions to address infrastructural barriers while enhancing operational capacities.

Theoretical and Practical Relevance

From the perspective of modern marketing theory, the improvement in digital literacy and creative content development aligns with the concept of the customer journey, which is increasingly dominated by digital touchpoints (Kotler & Keller, 2016). With consumer engagement now primarily occurring in digital spaces, participants' success in leveraging social media and e-commerce platforms represents a strategic step toward strengthening customer interactions.

Furthermore, participants' initial efforts in brand identity development can be considered a foundational stage in building brand equity (Aaker, 2009). Although progress remains at an early stage, this process constitutes a critical step toward enhancing product image, credibility, and consumer loyalty in the future. However, the literature emphasizes that brand equity evolves only through consistent and long-term management.

Additionally, participants' adoption of marketplaces reflects a broader transformation of MSMEs toward platform-based business models. This phenomenon is consistent with Priyono et al. (2020), who found that digital platforms accelerate market access and expand consumer reach. Nonetheless, this transformation also necessitates improved operational capabilities, particularly in inventory management, customer service, and digital transaction handling.

Overall, the outcomes of this training not only enhanced participants' individual capacities but also underscored the practical relevance of modern marketing theory and the dynamics of the digital economy. To sustain and amplify these achievements, a comprehensive approach is required, integrating digital literacy development, brand strengthening, continuous mentoring, and adequate infrastructural support.

V. CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusions

1. The training program successfully enhanced the knowledge and skills of Early-Stage Independent Workers (Tenaga Kerja Mandiri Pemula, TKMP) in utilizing social media, online marketplaces, and digital marketing strategies more effectively. Participants who had previously relied on conventional promotional methods are now actively using digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and e-commerce marketplaces to expand their market reach.
2. The branding component of the training enabled participants to better understand the importance of brand identity, differentiation, and product positioning. As a result, the majority of participants developed logos, taglines, and simple visual identity designs that can be leveraged to build brand consistency and enhance product appeal in the marketplace.
3. The program's success was supported by participants' enthusiasm, the relevance of the training content to their business needs, and the hands-on approach that allowed participants to directly practice the acquired skills. In addition, access to digital devices among several participants facilitated the faster adoption of digital marketing technologies.
4. The main challenges encountered included limited access to digital devices (smartphones/laptops) for some participants, varying levels of digital literacy, and time constraints during the training, which limited deeper exploration of certain topics. Furthermore, participants' consistency in applying the acquired skills remains an ongoing challenge.
5. Overall, the program demonstrated a positive impact on TKMP in Cileungsi, both in terms of improving digital marketing skills and raising awareness of the significance of branding. This constitutes an important initial foundation for enhancing business competitiveness, expanding market access, and fostering participants' economic independence.

5.2. Recommendations

1. For Participants (TKMP in Cileungsi):
 - a. Consistency is required in applying the acquired digital marketing and branding skills to ensure tangible impacts on sales performance.

- b. Participants are encouraged to continuously innovate in creating engaging promotional content and to actively monitor emerging digital trends to maintain business relevance.
2. For Program Organizers:
 - a. Similar initiatives should be sustained through follow-up mentoring to provide ongoing support in addressing technical challenges and marketing strategies.
 - b. Training content should be further developed to include advanced topics such as digital marketing analytics, paid advertising strategies, and technology-based customer relationship management.
 3. For Policy Makers (Local Government/Stakeholders):
 - a. Provision of affordable internet access and digital device support programs for early-stage MSMEs is necessary.
 - b. Local governments could establish partnerships with e-commerce platforms or technology providers to deliver more structured and continuous training.
 - c. Through sustained enhancement of digital marketing literacy and branding practices, TKMP in Cileungsi are expected to strengthen their competitiveness, expand marketing networks, and contribute to regional economic growth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to the Institut Bisnis dan Informatika Kesatuan for providing excellent support and funding for the implementation of this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aksoy, H. (2022). Digital literacy and digital marketing: The role of knowledge in business performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 1372–1385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.10.063>
- [2] APJII. (2023). Laporan Survei Internet APJII 2023. Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia.
- [3] Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bogor. (2022). Kabupaten Bogor dalam Angka 2022. BPS Kabupaten Bogor.
- [4] Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital Marketing (7th ed.)*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- [5] Hanaysha, J. R., & Al-Shaikh, M. E. (2021). The impact of product branding on consumer buying behavior: Evidence from Malaysian SMEs. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(3), 123–131. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no3.0123>
- [6] Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. Harlow: Pearson
- [7] Keller, K. L. (2020). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity (5th ed.)*. New Jersey: Pearson
- [8] Ketels, C. (2021). Competitiveness and Clusters: Implications for a New European Growth Strategy. *European Journal of Development Research*, 33(2), 207–226. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-020-00327-9>
- [9] Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia. (2021). *Indonesia Digital Literacy Index 2021*. Jakarta: Kominfo RI.
- [10] Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM Republik Indonesia. (2022). *Laporan Tahunan Kemenkop UKM 2022*. Jakarta: Kemenkop UKM RI.
- [11] Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM RI. (2023). *Laporan Perkembangan UMKM 2023*. Jakarta: Kemenkop UKM.
- [12] Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management (15th ed.)*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

-
- [13] Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital*. Wiley.
- [14] Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons
- [15] Murray, A., Papa, A., Cuzzo, B., & Russo, G. (2020). Evaluating the innovation of the digital marketing strategies in SMEs. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 27(7), 1205–1226. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-12-2019-0385>
- [16] Rahman, A., & Prabowo, H. (2021). Digital marketing literacy for SMEs competitiveness in Indonesia. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 44(2), 213–229. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESB.2021.115894>
- [17] Rohman, A., & Ardyan, E. (2022). Digital marketing capabilities and SMEs' competitiveness: The mediating role of customer relationship management. *Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies*, 29(3), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JABES-12-2020-0156>
- [18] Suryanto, A. (2021). Branding produk UMKM di era digital: Strategi meningkatkan daya saing. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 23(2), 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.9744/jmk.23.2.145-156>
- [19] UNESCO. (2018). *A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills for Indicator 4.4.2*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- [20] World Economic Forum. (2020). *The Global Competitiveness Report: How Countries are Performing on the Road to Recovery*. Geneva: WEF