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Empowering Cassava Chips MSMEs in Jaro Village through Packaging and Label Innovation

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Abstract

This community service program aims to strengthen the marketing capacity of cassava chips MSMEs in Jaro Village through packaging innovation, the development of informative product labels, and the establishment of brand identity. The activity employed a participatory and descriptive qualitative approach through counseling, discussions, and technical mentoring conducted on-site. Data were collected using observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and reflective evaluation before and after the activity. The results show increased partner understanding of the strategic role of packaging and labeling in shaping consumer perception and product value. Practical outputs included new stand-up pouch packaging, labels containing key product information, and a simple brand identity to support market recognition. These outputs also encouraged motivation to improve legality and expand marketing channels. In conclusion, the program effectively enhanced partner readiness to adopt affordable innovations to strengthen competitiveness. It is recommended that future programs provide continuous assistance related to licensing and digital marketing to sustain the program's impact.

Abstrak

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat kapasitas pemasaran UMKM keripik singkong di Desa Jaro melalui inovasi kemasan, pengembangan label produk yang informatif, serta pembentukan identitas merek. Kegiatan ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dan partisipatif melalui penyuluhan, diskusi, serta pendampingan teknis yang dilaksanakan secara langsung di lokasi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dokumentasi, serta evaluasi reflektif sebelum dan sesudah kegiatan. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pemahaman mitra mengenai peran strategis kemasan dan pelabelan dalam membentuk persepsi konsumen dan meningkatkan nilai produk. Luaran praktis yang dihasilkan meliputi kemasan baru berbentuk stand-up pouch, label yang memuat informasi utama produk, serta identitas merek sederhana untuk mendukung pengenalan di pasar. Luaran tersebut juga mendorong motivasi mitra untuk meningkatkan legalitas usaha dan memperluas saluran pemasaran.

Sebagai kesimpulan, program ini efektif dalam meningkatkan kesiapan mitra untuk mengadopsi inovasi yang terjangkau guna memperkuat daya saing. Disarankan agar program selanjutnya memberikan pendampingan berkelanjutan terkait perizinan dan pemasaran digital guna menjaga keberlanjutan dampak program.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are integral to the Indonesian economy, providing significant employment opportunities, fostering business development, and generating value within communities. Their resilience has enabled them to adapt and even thrive during economic challenges (Tantriadisti et al., 2024); (Chancharoenchai & Saraithong, 2022). In South Kalimantan, local MSMEs are rapidly innovating, particularly in the processing of agricultural products such as cassava into marketable goods, exemplified by the production of cassava chips, which can enhance household incomes (Chancharoenchai & Saraithong, 2022; Rozi et al., 2022).

While Jaro Village's cassava chips are recognized for their unique flavor, competitive packaging remains essential for market viability. Products packaged in plain bags often lack the branding and identifiers necessary to build consumer confidence, leading to challenges in competing with more established brands (Austin et al., 2023); (Buyung Adi Dharma et al., 2023). Effective packaging protects the product and improves visual communication, which can significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Dharma et al., 2023). Thus, enhancing packaging strategies can substantially empower MSMEs, potentially leading to better market positioning and increased consumer trust.

Besides packaging, product labels are a critical aspect of consumer goods, providing essential information such as ingredient composition, net weight, and production details. Labels enhance transparency and demonstrate the manufacturer's knowledge of food safety, which is vital for building consumer trust. (Moreira et al., 2021) highlight that well-designed labels significantly increase consumer confidence in food products, as they provide necessary information that informs purchasing decisions. When MSMEs neglect labeling, they hinder their market expansion potential by failing to supply consumers adequate points of reference for assessing product safety, ultimately stifling competition with more established brands (Moreira et al., 2021).

Moreover, a comprehensive brand identity encompassing not just the name and logo but also the core values of the product is essential for establishing a memorable business image. Research by (Handayani et al., 2022) indicates that effective branding can lead to increased consumer loyalty and enhanced sales. In Jaro Village, the lack of a distinct brand identity for cassava chips impedes their recognition in the marketplace, despite their potential as a regional specialty. Coupled with challenges like limited marketing literacy and insufficient understanding of business legality, Jaro Village MSMEs must innovate to survive and succeed in the competitive digital economy. Without adaptation to evolving consumer preferences for modern and hygienic packaging, these enterprises risk stagnation and dwindling market presence, as observed in numerous studies (Handayani et al., 2022).

Field conditions show that the chip entrepreneurs in Jaro Village want to grow their businesses, but they often don't know how to do it. Insufficient guidance on technical aspects of packaging and labeling that meet market standards poses a significant barrier. Furthermore, access to modern packaging materials and tools, such as sealers, is limited (Arimbawa et al., 2022). Therefore, community service activities play a vital role as they provide education and empowerment to these micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These kinds of programs can teach local businesses about the basics of packaging innovation, the importance of labeling, and how to use design in a practical way (Arimbawa et al., 2022).

Mentorship in these areas imparts practical knowledge and minimizes the financial burden associated with developing new packaging and branding strategies. By improving packaging and labeling, Jaro Village's cassava chips can tap into new markets, enhancing both competitiveness and economic impact for local family businesses (Syahlan et al., 2023). Additionally, this mentoring initiative emphasizes the importance of business legality, such as securing licensing (PIRT), which facilitates distribution in modern retail environments. To foster greater marketing confidence, these community service efforts must concentrate on packaging innovation and brand identity, which would ultimately promote MSME independence and enhance overall community welfare (Syahlan et al., 2023).



Photo 1. Photo of Cassava Chips UMKM in Jaro Village

RESEARCH METHOD

The empowerment approach employed in the community service activities in Jaro Village, Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan, is based on a community-based capacity-building model. This model positions MSMEs as active participants with relevant local expertise, while the community service team takes on the role of facilitators in the learning process. Effective capacity building goes beyond mere information dissemination; it incorporates collective reflection that fosters awareness of the necessity for business innovation. This participatory approach has been found to enhance program sustainability by engaging business actors actively in decision-making processes (Sulistiyorini et al., 2024). Research indicates that empowerment initiatives that regard MSMEs as collaborative learners result in more sustainable improvements in business practices than traditional unidirectional teaching methods (Endris & Kassegn, 2022).

From a methodological perspective, the support provided for product packaging and labeling aligns with the concept of design-driven innovation, which posits that packaging design transcends visual appeal; it serves as a crucial tool in shaping the product's meaning for consumers. Involving MSMEs in the design processes of labels and brands creates authentic product identities that reflect the essence of the business. Research shows that collaborative design interventions can make

MSME products more ready for the market and help producers and their products connect on an emotional level (Zamani, 2022).

The community service approach implemented in Jaro Village, Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan, is grounded in consumer behavior theory, particularly the concepts of perceived quality and information clarity. People often decide how good food is based on how it looks on the packaging. As such, clear, readable, and informative labels are essential in reducing consumer uncertainty regarding product safety and quality. Research indicates that the transparency of label information—such as ingredient details and producer identity—can significantly enhance consumer trust and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. Despite the paucity of specific studies on food labeling in Indonesia, comparable research in other contexts confirms the crucial role of packaging in consumer decision-making.

In the realm of MSME sustainability, the mentoring methods employed also align with the principle of inclusive business development, which illustrates the importance of elevating small business competitiveness through simple, accessible, and easily adoptable innovations. Enhancing product packaging and brand identity exemplifies incremental innovation, which does not necessitate substantial financial outlay yet profoundly affects business image and market accessibility. Recent studies affirm that incremental innovations that fit MSMEs' capacities are more likely to be consistently implemented than complex or expensive innovations (Nurhayati et al., 2021). Therefore, the methodological approach in this community service initiative aligns with contemporary MSME development theory, which is focused on sustainable business practices and bolstering local capacities.

The community service program for the Cassava Chips MSMEs in Jaro Village unfolds through three distinct phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation, focusing on packaging innovation, product labeling, and brand identity reinforcement. The structured approach aims to directly benefit partners and align with the technical capabilities of business owners (He & Sun, 2023).

1. Preparation Stage

The empowerment approach employed in the community service activities in Jaro Village, Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan, is based on a community-based capacity-building model. This model positions MSMEs as active participants with relevant local expertise, while the

community service team takes on the role of facilitators in the learning process. Effective capacity building goes beyond mere information dissemination; it incorporates collective reflection that fosters awareness of the necessity for business innovation. By actively engaging business actors in decision-making processes, this participatory approach enhances program sustainability (Sulistiyorini et al., 2024). Research indicates that empowerment initiatives that regard MSMEs as collaborative learners result in more sustainable improvements in business practices than traditional unidirectional teaching methods (Endris & Kassegn, 2022).

From a methodological perspective, the support provided for product packaging and labeling aligns with the concept of design-driven innovation, which posits that packaging design transcends visual appeal; it serves as a crucial tool in shaping the product's meaning for consumers. Involving MSMEs in the design processes of labels and brands creates authentic product identities that reflect the essence of the business. Research indicates that collaborative design interventions can boost the market readiness of MSME products and strengthen the emotional connections between producers and their offerings (Zamani, 2022).

2. Implementation Stage

The implementation phase will be carried out at a time agreed upon with the village. Activities include a combination of preliminary interviews, presentations, discussions, and technical assistance with packaging and label design.

1. Preliminary Interview

Interviews were conducted directly with owners of cassava chip businesses to determine their initial understanding of packaging, labels, and product identity. The interviews revealed that business owners did not fully understand the function of modern packaging and were unaware of the types of labels that meet household food standards. This information served as the basis for adjusting the outreach method to make the material more accessible.

2. Delivery of Material

After the interview, the team provided an explanation regarding:

- the importance of packaging in increasing product attractiveness,
- the function of labels as an information medium for consumers,

Food labels need to incorporate certain elements.

- basic concepts of brand identity, including logo and business name,
- examples of modern packaging models that are suitable for cassava chips.

The material was presented in a simple and communicative manner, allowing partners to follow the explanations clearly. The team also provided examples of similar product packaging to provide a concrete illustration of attractive and marketable packaging standards.



Photo 2. Photo of Presentation of Extension Material

3. Technical Assistance

At this stage, the team accompanies partners to:

- determine the right business name,
- designing a simple logo design,
- compile product labels containing composition, net weight, production address, and business contact,
- Choose a type of stand-up pouch packaging that is strong, hygienic, and attractive.
- Explains how to use a sealer to package products so they are neater and last longer.

Mentoring is carried out directly by providing design examples and packaging simulations.

3. Evaluation Stage

The evaluation was conducted by soliciting feedback from partners regarding the implementation of the activity. Partners found the activity very beneficial and gave them fresh ideas about the importance of packaging and labeling in increasing product sales value. The evaluation also included pre- and post-training comprehension questionnaires to determine the partners' increased knowledge regarding food product packaging and labeling.

The evaluation revealed that partners experienced a significant increase in understanding. While previously partners viewed packaging as merely a protective measure for the product, after the activity, they realized that packaging is part of their marketing strategy and builds their business image. Similarly, with labels, partners now understand that information such as ingredients, company contact information, and production date are crucial for building consumer trust.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the results of community service activities for cassava chips MSMEs in Jaro Village and discusses them based on descriptive-qualitative analysis methods obtained through observations, interviews, and evaluations before and after the mentoring activities. The presentation of the results is structured to demonstrate changes in the partners' conditions as a result of the community service interventions that have been implemented.

1. Presentation of Initial Condition Results of MSMEs

The initial analysis revealed that the main challenges facing the cassava chip MSME in Jaro Village were packaging, product labeling, and business identity. Although the product had good taste, it lacked adequate product presentation and information.

Table 1. Initial Condition of Cassava Chips MSMEs in Jaro Village

Aspects Analyzed	Initial Conditions
Product packaging	Plain plastic without sealer
Product label	Not available
Business identity	Don't have a brand yet
Product information	Does not include composition and weight
Business actors' perceptions	Packaging is considered to have no effect
Marketing reach	Village surroundings

Table 1 Description.

This table illustrates that before the community service activities, MSMEs had not implemented basic standards for product packaging and labeling, so that visual appeal and consumer trust were still low.

These results confirm that the problem of MSMEs is not in the production process, but rather in the low understanding of food product marketing strategies, especially through packaging and labels.

2. Results of Analysis of Increasing Partner Understanding and Capacity

Partner capacity building was evaluated by comparing understanding before and after the outreach and mentoring activities. The analysis revealed significant changes in business actors' perspectives and understanding.

Table 2. Comparison of Partner Understanding Before and After the Activity

Understanding Indicators	Before the Activity	After Activity
Packaging function	Low	Tall
Function of product labels	Don't understand	Understand
The importance of brand identity	Don't understand	Understand
The relationship between packaging and marketing	Don't understand	Understand
Motivation to innovate	Low	Tall

Table 2 Description.

This table shows an increase in partners' understanding of all indicators after the community service activities were carried out.

These results indicate that the extension approach combined with technical assistance is able to effectively increase the marketing literacy of MSME actors.

3. Results of Development of Packaging, Labels, and Business Identity

The main output of this community service activity is the preparation of packaging designs, product labels, and business identities that can be directly implemented by partners.

Table 3. Output of Community Service Activities

Component	Community Service Results
Type of packaging	<i>Stand-up pouch</i>
Packaging system	<i>Sealermanual</i>
Product label	Product name, composition, net weight, address & contact
Business identity	Simple business name and logo
Visual display	Contrasting colors, easy to read, informative

Table 3 Description.

This table explains the concrete outputs of community service that focus on improving the quality of product displays and information conveyed to consumers.

The new packaging gives a more professional, hygienic and marketable impression, thus improving the perception of product quality in the eyes of consumers.



Photo 3. Manual Sealer Photo



Photo 4. Example of Product Label Photo



Photo 5. Sample PhotoStand-up pouch

4. Discussion of Results Based on the Objectives of Community Service Activities

The first objective of the community service initiative to enhance MSMEs' understanding of the importance of product packaging and labeling was met through meaningful changes in partners' perceptions. Businesses transitioned from viewing packaging merely as a wrapper to recognizing it as a vital marketing communication tool. The reference given (Hussain et al., 2021) does not back up the claim that packaging affects how people think about the quality of food products. Instead, it talks about how people think about labeling terms in a different context (Harr et al., 2022).

The second objective involved mentoring the development of market-friendly packaging and labels, which was achieved through practical outputs that directly align with the capabilities of the partners. This initiative produced actionable outputs, demonstrating tangible value for the involved entrepreneurs, unlike some previous community service efforts that offered abstract recommendations. However, the reference cited (Francisco Javier et al., 2024) does not support the assertion regarding actionable outputs in community service efforts, as it discusses brand values in tourism, not specifically MSMEs or packaging. Lastly, the third objective, focused on strengthening business identity, was achieved through the creation of a simple business name and logo, which enhances product recognition and differentiation from competitors. These efforts support the claim regarding the importance of branding in building consumer trust and loyalty; however, the cited reference (Gao et al., 2022) contradicts this claim, as it pertains to insect physiology instead of branding or consumer products.

Given the lack of appropriate supporting references, we cannot adequately substantiate the claims made in the response.

CONCLUSION

The community service program implemented for cassava chips MSMEs in Jaro Village has successfully enhanced the understanding and awareness of business actors regarding the strategic role of modern packaging, informative product labels, and brand identity in strengthening product competitiveness. The active participation and positive response of partners throughout the counselling, discussion, and technical mentoring sessions reflect this success. Partners, who initially perceived packaging merely as a protective layer, now recognize it as an integral marketing instrument that builds consumer trust and increases product value. Likewise, product labels are now regarded as essential information that must be included to support product legitimacy and safety. Through this program, partners gained not only conceptual understanding but also tangible outputs in the form of new packaging and label designs that are more attractive, hygienic, informative, and market-oriented. These outputs enable their products to be more competitive and ready to enter wider marketing channels, including souvenir outlets and digital platforms.

Moving forward, the continuity of these positive outcomes requires sustained support from multiple stakeholders. Further assistance remains necessary, particularly in strengthening digital marketing capabilities, managing business legality such as PIRT certification, and improving technical and administrative competencies, including financial management and basic branding strategy. Collaboration between MSMEs, village authorities, and relevant government agencies is expected to facilitate access to equipment, packaging resources, and small-scale capital, thereby ensuring consistent application of innovation. Academic institutions may also play a role in monitoring business development to ensure that the introduced improvements are implemented effectively and generate real economic benefits. At the MSME level, continuous innovation in taste, packaging, visual identity, and promotion is essential so that cassava chips from Jaro Village are able to compete sustainably in an increasingly dynamic market while contributing to local economic welfare.

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