

Increasing Wedang Uwuh's International Competitiveness through Social Media Optimization to Support Sustainable Business

Sholikhah¹, Dewi Agustin Pratama Sari^{2*}, Meta Bara Berutu³, Syifa Aulia Akfina⁴

¹ Digital Marketing, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

² Digital Marketing, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

³ Digital Business, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Digital Marketing, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: dewiagustin@unj.ac.id

Abstract.

Bantul Regency in Yogyakarta has natural and cultural wealth that makes it a popular tourist destination with 2.3 million visitors by 2024. One of the typical products developed is Wedang Uwuh. Wedang Uwuh is a traditional drink consisting of various spices that can be produced in the Bantul area and its surroundings. However, the existence of this potential has not been supported by optimal digital marketing. The presence of various foreign tourists who attended could not recognize Wedang Uwuh as one of the typical products of the area. Therefore, This service activity was carried out through direct training held on May 20, 2025 in Wukirsari Village, Bantul Yogyakarta. The participants of this training consisted of Wedang Uwuh business actors in Wukirsari Village, Bantul, Yogyakarta. The result of this training is an increase in the level of awareness of Wedang Uwuh business actors regarding the importance of using social media as one of the current digital marketing tools to attract consumers both locally and internationally. In addition, through this training, Wedang Uwuh business actors also have an overview of the content they need to create on their social media.

Keywords: Digital marketing; Social media; Wedang Uwuh.

I. INTRODUCTION

Bantul Regency is one of the strategic areas in Yogyakarta and is known as one of the tourist destinations both locally and internationally. Bantul has the attraction of natural beauty, cultural richness, and various local traditions. Data shows that in 2024, Bantul will be visited by around 2.3 million tourists. This means that Bantul is one of the main tourist destinations in Yogyakarta in the Yogyakarta area (Lubis & Lubis, 2024). The Bantul local government continues to strive to improve the tourism sector through various promotional programs that not only focus on natural tourism but also on the development of creative industries and handicrafts that are increasingly in demand by domestic and international tourists. One of the efforts made by the Bantul government is to hold an annual event called Bantul Creative Expo which features various opportunities for local artisans and MSMEs to gain exposure at the regional, national, and international levels (Salsabila, 2024). In this context, one of the exhibition's signature products, such as Wedang Uwuh, can be promoted in the category of local culinary or health products based on natural ingredients. Wedang Uwuh is a traditional

drink that has its own uniqueness with various health benefits that can attract tourists who are interested in traditional and environmentally friendly products (Nafilah, 2021). However, previous research has shown that despite having great potential, Wedang Uwuh still faces challenges in terms of marketing, especially in reaching a wider market outside Yogyakarta (Poetri et al., 2022). A study conducted by Sari et al., (2023) explains that micro, small, and medium enterprises in Indonesia are still not good enough in their knowledge of digital marketing optimization. This is in line with the condition of Wedang Uwuh business actors who on average do not have a digital marketing background so they have difficulties in adapting to optimize social media in their business processes. Another study conducted by Aulia et al. (2023) explains that the existence of correct guidelines for the use of social media will help MSME actors in developing their businesses in a sustainable manner. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 12 regarding responsible consumption and production, one of which is the implementation of sustainable business practices. The implementation of the right digital marketing strategy can support the achievement of these goals by improving business sustainability through a wider market reach and a steady increase in demand (Yadi et al., 2025). Based on the analysis of these problems, this community service activity aims to improve the understanding and skills of Wedang Uwuh business actors in terms of sustainable promotion, implement effective digital marketing practices, increase the efficiency of the marketing process, and encourage more sustainable business practices among Wedang Uwuh business actors in Bantul.

II. METHODS

The method of implementing this community service activity consists of four stages designed to achieve optimal effectiveness and efficiency. Each stage is systematically designed by involving the active participation of partners, namely business actors Wedang Uwuh and Mamun University as international collaboration partners. The first stage is socialization, where the lecturer team provides information to Wedang Uwuh MSME actors about the activities to be carried out. In this socialization, a team of lecturers with partners from Mamun University explained the series of activities and opened a question and answer session and discussion with Wedang Uwuh business actors. On this occasion, partners as one of the resource persons provided several materials related to global marketing opportunities for Wedang Uwuh products. The second stage is intensive training on digital marketing which includes social media management, and good content creation. This training is designed to be adaptable to Wedang Uwuh business actors with diverse educational backgrounds through simple and easy-to-understand learning methods.

The third stage is the application of technology, where the team assists MSMEs in practicing digital marketing activities directly. At this stage, business actors are assisted in creating social media accounts, designing promotional content, and optimizing digital platforms for their businesses. The fourth stage is periodic mentoring and evaluation to ensure that MSMEs carry out digital marketing optimization in their business processes. Data from the results of mentoring is collected and analyzed to measure the success of implementation. If deficiencies are found, a review of the delivery method and discussion of improvements will be carried out. Partner participation in the implementation of the program includes providing target information, disseminating activity information, and providing facilities such as venues, equipment, and

equipment during the activity. A strong commitment from Wedang Uwuh business actors is also needed by appointing a coordinator to facilitate communication during the activity.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of this community service activity **has succeeded** in achieving the target that has been set with satisfactory results. The activity began with socialization attended by several Wedang Uwuh business actors from Wukirsari Village in Bantul. The enthusiasm of the participants can be seen from the high participation in the question and answer session, especially related to international marketing opportunities presented by partners from Mamun University. The results of the digital marketing training showed a significant increase in participants' understanding of the importance of management on social media in building a good image of the Wedang Uwuh brand. Before the training, most business actors (80%) did not understand the concept of branding and storytelling for their products. After the training, 100% of participants were able to identify the unique selling proposition (USP) of their Wedang Uwuh products and create compelling narratives about the product's historical value and health benefits. This is in line with research by Amaral et al. (2024) which emphasizes the importance of perceived value in increasing consumer purchase intention for traditional products. In the aspect of digital marketing of Wedang Uwuh business actors, there is a fairly good change in the ability of participants to use social media platforms. Before the activity, only 20% of participants had business accounts on Instagram and Facebook. After mentoring, 100% of the participants successfully created and managed a complete business account with quality content. On the occasion of the training, Wedang Uwuh business actors also tried to make content ideas relevant to their current conditions into a series of stories to be further poured into content on their social media. So that these Wedang Uwuh business actors not only always focus on direct sales in each content but also the story behind the making of Wedang Uwuh itself which is expected to also increase the attention of the public, especially local and international tourists. These results support the findings of Amalia et al. (2024) about the importance of shopping orientation in influencing the shopping behavior of e-commerce consumers. The implementation of sustainable marketing strategies has also shown positive results. Participants began to understand the importance of the communication aspect through their social media as a form of sustainability in their promotions. This reflects the commitment to SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, as emphasised in Kurnia et al.(2023) research on the circular economy in encouraging sustainable business practices. Post-activity evaluation shows that on average, Wedang Uwuh business actors will optimize their social media by trying to actively fill in content that is quite varied. The collaboration with Mamun University also provides valuable international perspectives, especially in understanding international consumer preferences for local products such as Wedang Uwuh. This insight helps participants adjust communication and packaging strategies to appeal to the broader regional market. The obstacles faced during the implementation include limited access in several areas so that not all Wedang Uwuh business actors can gather and take part in this training. However, this problem can be overcome through the existence of a business actor coordinator to make Balaidesa a gathering place and intensive assistance.

IV. CONCLUSION

This community service activity has succeeded in increasing the capacity of Wedang Uwuh business actors in Bantul in developing sustainable and internationally competitive businesses. On average, business actors said that after the training they will actively fill out their social media content in the hope that this will increase their sales. The success of this program is reflected in the transformation of business actors who previously relied on conventional marketing to be able to utilize digital platforms, especially social media, to develop their businesses. The partnership with Mamun University provides a valuable international dimension in understanding regional and global market opportunities for Wedang Uwuh products. This collaboration not only enhances the understanding of international marketing strategies, but also strengthens business networks that can support future market expansion. The program has also succeeded in integrating sustainable business principles in accordance with SDG 12, where business actors are beginning to understand the importance of maintaining the quality of local raw materials and communicating the value of sustainability in their marketing strategies. The long-term impact of this activity is expected to contribute to improving the economy of the Bantul region and strengthening Wedang Uwuh's position as a superior product that can compete in the international market. The success of the program shows that a community-based approach with technology support and international partnerships can be an effective model for the development of traditional MSMEs towards sustainable and globally competitive businesses..

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