

Strengthening Local Snack MSME Branding through Community-Based Counseling for Kerupuk Klejat in Serangan Village, Bali

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Abstract.

Kerupuk Klejat is one of the local culinary products associated with Serangan Village, Bali. Although the product has been distributed to nearby stalls, its market communication remains highly dependent on local familiarity and word-of-mouth, making brand differentiation relatively limited. This community service article aims to describe a branding counseling program for a Kerupuk Klejat micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) conducted on 30 June 2026 in Serangan Village. The program used a descriptive qualitative community engagement approach involving one purposively selected MSME partner. The activity consisted of preliminary diagnosis, branding counseling, participatory discussion, and formulation of a practical branding roadmap. Data were collected through observation, informal interviews, and field notes, then analyzed using a before-after descriptive matrix focused on brand identity, packaging communication, distribution support, and promotional readiness. The findings indicate that the partner's initial branding practice was product-centered and distribution-oriented, while the counseling process helped translate local culinary uniqueness into clearer brand positioning, product storytelling, packaging message priorities, and retailer-oriented communication. The main contribution of this program is the Kerupuk Klejat Branding Readiness Framework, which integrates local authenticity, consistent identity, packaging communication, stall-based distribution support, and simple digital promotion readiness. Because this program did not use pre-test and post-test instruments, the findings should be interpreted as qualitative empowerment outcomes rather than measurable sales effects.

Keywords: Branding counseling; Community empowerment; Kerupuk Klejat; Local food MSME; Serangan Village.

I. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic position in Indonesia's economic structure because they absorb labor, sustain household income, and preserve local products. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reported that Indonesian MSMEs reached 56,142,687 units in 2024 and represented 99.90% of the total business population, while contributing 59.64% to national gross domestic product (Development, 2026). This role aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 8, which

emphasizes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, productive employment, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, and the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (Affairs, 2026). For local food enterprises, the issue is not only production continuity but also how products can be recognized, remembered, trusted, and differentiated in increasingly competitive markets.

Serangan Village in Bali has strong cultural, maritime, and culinary potential. The official Indonesian tourism village platform identifies Serangan as a destination known for culinary products such as grilled fish with local spices, rujak bulung, and Kerupuk Klejat, a cracker product that utilizes the maritime resources of Serangan Island (Kreatif, 2026). This context makes Kerupuk Klejat more than a food commodity. It has the potential to become a place-based product that carries local identity, cultural memory, and tourism-related value. However, many local food MSMEs still face limited branding capacity. Products may circulate in nearby stalls, yet the brand message, visual identity, packaging information, and customer communication are not always organized as strategic assets.

Branding is particularly important for small food enterprises because consumers frequently encounter many similar snack products in traditional stalls, souvenir shops, and local markets. A brand helps a product move from being merely available to being recognizable and meaningful. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020) explain that brand equity is built through consumer awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. (Kotler et al., 2022) further emphasize that marketing management must create value through segmentation, positioning, and consistent market communication. For MSMEs with limited resources, branding does not always begin with expensive campaigns. It can start from a clear product name, consistent visual identity, memorable story, readable label, and coherent communication to customers and retailers.

Recent studies also show that branding, packaging, and digital communication are closely connected to MSME competitiveness. (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023) found that strategic use of social media can support brand management capability and subsequently improve marketing and financial performance among SMEs. (Hartiani et al., 2025) similarly found that social media usage improves SME marketing capabilities and marketing performance, particularly when supported by capability development. (Ramdani & Fietroh, 2025) show that digital marketing, social media, and influencer marketing significantly influence MSME brand awareness. At the same time, (Sunggara et al., 2024) highlight that digital marketing can help MSMEs expand market reach at relatively low cost, although digital literacy remains a critical barrier. These findings indicate that MSME empowerment should not merely introduce platforms but must strengthen the capability to communicate value.

Packaging and visual identity are equally important for local snack MSMEs. (Pratama S et al., 2024) argue that packaging design can communicate product identity and convey messages from producers to consumers. (Asmin & Syamsu Alam, 2025) demonstrate that packaging development can serve as a marketing medium by displaying logo, color, and form, helping consumers recognize and remember a product. (Magdalena et al., 2025), in a community service program for a tofu-cracker MSME, report that logo and packaging improvement can support a more professional and recognizable brand image. These studies

are relevant for Kerupuk Klejat because snack products often depend on the immediate visual impression of packaging and the trust generated by product information.



Figure 1. Community service documentation with the Kerupuk Klejat MSME partner during the branding counseling activity in Serangan Village

The community service activity discussed in this article was conducted on 30 June 2026 in Serangan Village, Bali, with one Kerupuk Klejat MSME partner. Based on the information obtained from the partner, the product had been distributed to nearby stalls around the community. This distribution pattern indicates that the product already has local acceptance, but the branding aspect still needs to be strengthened so that the product can build a more coherent identity and potentially expand beyond informal local circulation. Therefore, the activity focused on branding counseling rather than mass training. The objective of this article is to describe the implementation process, analyze the partner's initial branding condition and post-counseling readiness, and formulate a practical branding readiness framework for Kerupuk Klejat MSMEs in a local tourism village context.

II. METHODS

This article uses a descriptive qualitative community service approach. The approach was selected because the activity involved one MSME partner and focused on understanding the partner's branding problems, facilitating knowledge transfer, and formulating a practical branding roadmap. The community service was conducted on 30 June 2026 in Serangan Village, Bali. The participant was one Kerupuk Klejat MSME selected purposively because the enterprise represents a local snack business associated with Serangan culinary identity and distributes products to nearby stalls.

The activity was implemented through four stages. The first stage was preliminary diagnosis, in which the team identified the partner's existing product distribution pattern, brand communication practices, and branding challenges. The second stage was branding counseling, which introduced basic concepts of brand identity, brand positioning, product story, packaging communication, and simple promotional planning. The third stage was participatory discussion, in

which the MSME partner explained actual business conditions, customer interactions, and limitations in implementing branding activities. The fourth stage was formulation of a practical branding roadmap that could be adopted gradually without requiring large financial investment.

Data collection used three techniques: direct observation of the partner's business context, informal interviews with the MSME representative, and field notes prepared by the community service team. Because the program did not include a formal pre-test, post-test, or customer survey, the evaluation focused on descriptive comparison of initial conditions and post-counseling readiness. The credibility of the data was strengthened by comparing information from observation, partner discussion, and team reflection. Data were analyzed through qualitative descriptive analysis by classifying findings into four themes: brand identity, packaging communication, distribution support, and promotional readiness. The analysis was then summarized in a before-after matrix to show practical changes in understanding and planning.

Ethical considerations were maintained by using the information provided by the partner only for academic and community service reporting purposes. No individual-sensitive data were included. Because no activity photos were provided at the time of manuscript preparation, this article does not include participant images. If photographs are later inserted for journal submission, consent from the partner and the participating community should be obtained, and images should meet the journal's minimum resolution requirements.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Initial Condition of the Partner

The Kerupuk Klejat MSME partner had already operated within a local distribution network by supplying products to stalls around Serangan. This indicates that the product had practical market access and was known at the community level. However, the initial branding practice was still closely attached to product availability and local familiarity.



Figure 2. Kerupuk Klejat crackers packaged in transparent plastic bags as the MSME partner's local snack product distributed to nearby stalls.

The product was sold through existing stall relationships, while the brand identity, value proposition, and promotional message had not yet been organized into a systematic branding strategy.

The counseling diagnosis identified four main areas requiring improvement. First, the product needed a clearer brand story that connects Kerupuk Klejat with Serangan's local culinary and maritime identity. Second, packaging communication needed to be positioned not only as a

container but also as a medium for identity, product information, and trust. Third, the distribution model through nearby stalls needed support from a simple retailer-facing message so that stall owners could explain the product consistently. Fourth, the business needed a gradual promotional roadmap, beginning with low-cost channels such as WhatsApp catalogs, simple social media content, and documentation of customer feedback.

Table 1. Initial Branding Condition and Counseling Response

Branding Aspect	Initial Condition	Counseling Response	Expected Readiness
Brand identity	The product was recognized mainly through local familiarity and stall distribution.	Introduced the need for a consistent name, visual identity, and value proposition.	The partner understands the role of identity consistency in building recognition.
Brand story	The local uniqueness of Kerupuk Klejat had not been translated into a structured story.	Discussed storytelling based on Serangan culinary identity and local maritime resources.	The partner has a narrative direction for communicating authenticity.
Packaging communication	Packaging was not yet treated as a complete communication medium.	Explained label priorities, including product name, local origin, contact, composition, and legal information when available.	The partner has a checklist for improving packaging information gradually.
Distribution support	The product was distributed to nearby stalls without a standardized selling message.	Developed simple retailer-facing messages to help stall owners explain the product.	Distribution can be supported by more consistent product communication.
Promotional readiness	Promotion relied mostly on word-of-mouth and local relationships.	Introduced simple content ideas and low-cost digital promotion options.	The partner has initial readiness for simple digital and offline promotion.

3.2 Implementation of Branding Counseling

The branding counseling session was designed as an interactive discussion rather than a one-way lecture. The team introduced branding as a practical effort to make the product easier to recognize, easier to explain, and easier to remember. The material began with the meaning of brand identity and continued with product positioning. The partner was encouraged to identify what makes Kerupuk Klejat different from ordinary crackers, including local origin, taste association, production story, and relationship with the Serangan community.

The second part of the counseling focused on packaging communication. The team emphasized that packaging for MSME food products should not only protect the product but also help consumers understand what the product is, where it comes from, who produces it, and why it is worth purchasing. The partner was advised to prepare a packaging information hierarchy: product name, product category, local origin, short brand story, composition, net weight, producer contact, storage information, and certification or legal numbers only when they have been officially obtained. This recommendation was presented carefully to avoid unsupported claims on the label.

The third part focused on distribution communication. Since the partner distributes products to nearby stalls, the team recommended developing a concise selling message that stall owners can easily repeat, such as a short description of Kerupuk Klejat as a local Serangan snack. This message can support consistency between producer, retailer, and consumer. The partner was also advised to collect feedback from stall owners regarding frequently asked customer questions, packaging visibility, preferred size, and repeat purchase patterns.

The final part of the activity discussed simple promotion readiness. Because the program did not yet include digital account creation or content production, the counseling emphasized preparation steps: documenting the product clearly, collecting customer testimonials when available, preparing short captions, and maintaining a product catalog through WhatsApp or social media. The recommended approach was gradual and realistic for a micro-scale enterprise.

3.3 Kerupuk Klejat Branding Readiness Framework

Based on the counseling process, this program formulated the Kerupuk Klejat Branding Readiness Framework. The framework consists of five elements: local authenticity, consistent identity, packaging communication, stall-based distribution support, and simple promotional readiness. Local authenticity refers to the ability to connect Kerupuk Klejat with Serangan's culinary identity. Consistent identity refers to the use of a stable product name, visual elements, and message. Packaging communication refers to the use of packaging as an information and trust-building medium. Stall-based distribution support refers to the preparation of simple messages and product information that can help local stalls explain the product. Simple promotional readiness refers to the preparation of basic content and digital documentation before entering broader online marketing activities.

The framework is suitable for a small-scale MSME because it does not require immediate technological investment. It begins with conceptual clarity and communication discipline. For a local snack business, these elements can become the foundation before developing advanced branding assets such as redesigned packaging, professional photography, marketplace registration, or tourism souvenir partnerships.

Table 2. Kerupuk Klejat Branding Readiness Framework

Element	Meaning	Practical Application
Local authenticity	The product is positioned as part of Serangan culinary identity.	Use a short story connecting Kerupuk Klejat with local food culture.
Consistent identity	The product uses stable identity elements.	Maintain consistent product name, colors, typography, and logo direction.
Packaging communication	Packaging functions as a trust-building medium.	Add clear product information, contact, and origin story without unsupported claims.
Distribution support	Local stalls are supported by simple selling messages.	Provide short product descriptions and feedback notes for retailers.
Promotional readiness	The partner prepares low-cost promotion assets.	Use WhatsApp catalog, simple social media posts, and customer testimonials.

3.4 Discussion

The findings show that branding counseling can be relevant even when an MSME already has a local distribution channel. Distribution to nearby stalls indicates that the product has access to consumers, yet access alone does not guarantee strong brand recognition. This supports the argument that MSME marketing performance depends not only on promotional tools but also on capability development.

(Hartiani et al., 2025) show that social media improves marketing performance through strengthened marketing capabilities. In the context of Kerupuk Klejat, the first capability that needed to be strengthened was not advanced digital advertising but the ability to define and communicate product identity.

The program also confirms that local food branding should be rooted in place-based authenticity. Serangan's tourism profile recognizes Kerupuk Klejat as part of its culinary attractions (Kreatif, 2026). This creates an opportunity to position Kerupuk Klejat not merely as a cracker but as a local snack connected to the identity of Serangan. Such positioning is important because local culinary products in tourism villages often compete not only on taste but also on story, origin, and memorability. (Kotler et al., 2021) argue that contemporary marketing increasingly emphasizes human-centered value and technology-supported engagement. However, technology will be more effective when the core brand message is already clear.

Packaging emerged as a critical area in the counseling. For food MSMEs, packaging is a visible brand touchpoint that can influence attention, trust, and perceived professionalism. This finding is consistent with (Pratama S et al., 2024), who emphasize that packaging design conveys messages

from producers to consumers, and with (Asmin & Syamsu Alam, 2025), who found that packaging can become a marketing medium through logo, color, and form. The Kerupuk Klejat partner can therefore use packaging improvement as a gradual branding strategy. The recommendation is not only to redesign the appearance but also to organize information hierarchy so that packaging can answer basic consumer questions.

The stall-based distribution pattern also offers a distinctive insight. Many MSME empowerment programs focus directly on social media or marketplace adoption, while Kerupuk Klejat's current business model remains strongly rooted in local retail stalls. This means branding should support existing distribution before pushing the partner into broader channels. A simple retailer-facing message can help stalls explain the product consistently. This approach is aligned with the concept that brand value is co-created through multiple touchpoints, including retailers and interpersonal communication. It also offers a practical path for micro-enterprises with limited resources.

From the perspective of SDG 8, this program contributes to entrepreneurship strengthening, local product development, and inclusive economic participation at the micro-enterprise level. UN DESA identifies SDG 8 Target 8.3 as supporting productive activities, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, and the growth of MSMEs, while Target 8.9 highlights sustainable tourism that promotes local culture and products (Affairs, 2026). The Kerupuk Klejat case is positioned at the intersection of MSME development, local culinary identity, and tourism village potential. Although the program did not measure income changes, it strengthened the partner's readiness to communicate product value more strategically.

This article has limitations. First, it involved only one MSME partner, so the findings cannot be generalized to all MSMEs in Serangan or Bali. Second, no formal pre-test, post-test, sales data, or customer survey was conducted. Third, no activity documentation was available at the time of manuscript preparation. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as qualitative evidence of empowerment readiness. Future programs should include baseline and endline instruments, customer perception surveys, packaging prototypes, social media performance monitoring, and sales tracking to evaluate branding impact more rigorously.

IV. CONCLUSION

The community service activity conducted on 30 June 2026 in Serangan Village, Bali, addressed the branding needs of one Kerupuk Klejat MSME that had distributed products to nearby stalls. The program showed that branding counseling is a relevant empowerment strategy for micro-scale local food enterprises because it helps business actors clarify product identity, translate local uniqueness into brand storytelling, organize packaging communication, and prepare simple promotional steps. The main output of this activity is the Kerupuk Klejat Branding Readiness Framework, consisting of local authenticity, consistent identity, packaging communication, stall-based distribution support, and simple promotional readiness.

The impact of the activity was primarily qualitative. The partner gained a clearer understanding of branding as a practical tool to support product recognition and market communication. However, because no quantitative evaluation instrument was used, this article does not claim measurable sales growth or statistically tested improvement. Future community service activities should include pre-test and post-test instruments, packaging prototype evaluation, customer feedback surveys, and

digital promotion monitoring. Further collaboration with village stakeholders, tourism actors, and local retailers is also recommended so that Kerupuk Klejat can be developed as a stronger local culinary brand associated with Serangan's tourism identity.

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