

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FISH PROCESSING INTO SHREDDED FISH (ABON) AS A MSME PRODUCT IN KROMASAN VILLAGE, TULUNGAGUNG

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Abstract

This community service research was conducted in Kromasan Village, Tulungagung, with the main goal of empowering local communities through fish processing into shredded fish (abon) as a potential product for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Most fish farmers in Kromasan previously sold their harvests in raw form, resulting in limited economic value. This study highlights opportunities to increase added value by introducing fish processing and digital marketing strategies. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, involving direct participation from the local community. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation with fish farmers and MSME actors. Training was conducted on fish processing techniques, branding, packaging, and digital marketing platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Instagram, TikTok, Shopee, and Tokopedia. The results show that processing fish into shredded fish significantly increases product value and durability, while digital marketing expands market access and competitiveness. The program not only improved technical skills but also encouraged entrepreneurial initiatives, with several participants planning to establish joint business groups. Overall, this study demonstrates that community empowerment through product diversification and digital marketing is effective in increasing income, expanding consumer reach, and supporting sustainable village-based businesses.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Fish Processing, Shredded Fish, MSMEs, Digital Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Kromasan Village is a village located in Ngunut District, Tulungagung Regency. It is situated at an altitude of approximately ± 180 –200 meters above sea level, located about 10 km east of Tulungagung Regency and 3 km from the administrative center of Ngunut District. Kromasan Village is an area with flat and fertile topography, supported by an irrigation system that creates significant potential for agricultural development and the production of high-quality agricultural products. Land use development in Kromasan Village is predominantly focused on food crops and horticulture, including rice, corn, kaffir lime leaves, sugarcane, and others.

The availability of adequate technical irrigation from Lodoagung, supported by the construction of artificial wells, contributes to a well-functioning agricultural system. In addition, the

cultivation of gourami, catfish, and pangasius in Kromasan Village has become one of the local potentials that plays an important role in supporting the improvement of the community's economy. Furthermore, Kromasan Village has various types of MSMEs, including home-based tofu industries, onion crackers, peanut crackers, brooms, floor mats, and electric graters.

Kromasan Village has great potential in the fish cultivation sector, which has become one of the village's leading products. However, most of the fish cultivation output in this village is still sold in raw form, resulting in suboptimal selling value. This condition indicates the existence of broader development opportunities, especially if the community can process fishery products into ready-to-eat or value-added products. Limited knowledge and insight among the community regarding diversification of fish-based products also pose challenges in optimizing existing potential. Therefore, fish cultivation in Kromasan Village can serve as a relevant research object in the context of community empowerment while increasing the added value of fishery products (Fitriana et al., 2023).

Students from Waskita Dharma University Malang who were assigned to Kromasan Village as part of the KKN Unitama Team Group 01 directed their research focus toward community empowerment through processing fish into shredded fish (abon) products and implementing digital-based sales strategies. This step is expected to maximize marketing efforts so that local economic potential can develop more optimally. In line with current market trends that favor instant foods with long shelf lives, processed fish products such as fish abon actually have enormous market opportunities at both local and national levels. Fish abon is favored by many people due to its high nutritional value and long shelf life. This product has market competitiveness, although it still faces challenges such as manual processing, lack of product standardization, and limited use of advanced technology (Fatoni et al., 2025).

Considering that we live in the digital era, all forms of promotion increasingly utilize digital technology. Digital marketing is considered effective because it can be carried out anywhere and at any time. The term "digital marketing" refers to the marketing of goods or services that is targeted, measurable, and interactive through the use of digital technology. The main objectives of digital marketing are to promote brands, build customer preference, and increase sales traffic through various digital marketing techniques. In addition, digital marketing represents the development of the digital world in creating advertisements that can have a significant impact without requiring direct physical presence. Social media, which includes all forms of interactive media that allow two-way interaction and feedback, is an example of information technology widely used as a digital marketing tool and can help many businesses market and sell their products (Machfiroh et al., 2023).

Based on these issues, this research focuses on the processing of fishery products, particularly processing fish into abon, as well as the development of branding and digital marketing. These two aspects are considered the main problems as well as priorities in community service activities, as they have great potential to increase the added value of local products and expand market access. Thus, this activity is focused on empowering the community to manage fishery potential and utilize digital marketing strategies as an effort to encourage creativity, productivity, and improve the welfare of the Kromasan Village community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. This approach was chosen because the research is not only observational in nature but also actively involves the Kromasan Village community in the process of processing fish into abon and utilizing digital marketing strategies (Iga Bulan Yunita et al., 2023).

1. Location and Time of Research

The research was conducted in Kromasan Village, Tulungagung Regency, during the Community Service Program (KKN) in August 2025.

2. Research Subjects

The research subjects were members of the fish-farming community.

3. Data Collection Techniques:

- a. Observation: observation of processing and marketing methods used by the group.
- b. Interviews: conducted with MSME actors and local community members regarding constraints, opportunities, and expectations related to processed fish products and digital marketing.
- c. Documentation: including photographs, activity records, and secondary data related to MSMEs and village fishery potential.

4. Data Analysis:

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The activities began with a preparation stage, which included coordination with the village head regarding village project potential, collaboration with partners, conducting training socialization, preparing products and training materials, and finally providing knowledge on promotional strategies through social media.

In this community service research, participatory empowerment was applied through observation, discussion, training, and evaluation. In the initial stage, observations were conducted to understand the conditions of fish processing and marketing groups, particularly those involved in catfish processing and peanut cracker marketing. This observation covered the processing and marketing methods used by the training groups. Subsequently, discussions provided deeper insights into the needs and obstacles faced by the groups. The MSMEs involved as research subjects are located in Kromasan Village, Ngunut District, Tulungagung Regency, East Java. The research was conducted from August 2025 to September 2025.

The core training focus consisted of two stages: (1) training on processing fish into abon, which concentrated on improving product quality and production management, and (2) digital-based marketing training, which taught participants how to use social media and online marketplaces to expand market reach

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Figure 1. Process of Fish Abon Production Training



Figure 2. Socialization of Branding and Digital Marketing for Fish Abon Products.

The fish processing training into abon in Kromasan Village was carried out by a group of students together with several residents as pioneers of the activity. Subsequently, the results of the training were disseminated to the wider community through digital marketing activities. This socialization was attended by 25 participants, most of whom were women aged 25–50 years. The majority worked as housewives, while the rest were micro-entrepreneurs, with educational backgrounds predominantly high school graduates followed by junior high school graduates. These data indicate that the target group has productive potential as well as room for empowerment, especially in processing and digital marketing of fishery products.

This community service program covered two main aspects, namely training on processing catfish into abon and strengthening digital marketing capacity. The fish abon production training served as an entry point to provide the community with an understanding of product diversification based on cultivated fish. The results of fish abon processing showed an increase in selling value compared to raw fish, as well as providing an alternative product that is more durable and practical for consumption.

This research program placed greater emphasis on the digital marketing aspect. The results indicate that the use of digital technology to encourage community empowerment can have a greater impact on the potential for local economic growth. Participants were introduced to product branding concepts, including logo design, attractive packaging, and easy-to-remember product naming. These steps were taken to enhance product competitiveness in a broader market. In addition, participants received guidance on using digital platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Instagram, TikTok, and online marketplaces such as Shopee and Tokopedia. Prior to the training, most participants relied on conventional marketing strategies, namely direct sales in local markets.

Other results indicate that the community became more familiar with technology. Participants who previously used social media only for personal purposes began to understand its use as a marketing tool. In addition, they were trained to create simple promotional content utilizing customer testimonials, product photos, and short, engaging descriptions. Through these steps, marketing access was expanded to areas beyond Kromasan Village and its surroundings.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that although processing fish into abon can increase product selling value, the digital marketing component is the main key to maximizing economic potential. The shift from traditional to digital marketing provides the Kromasan Village community with opportunities to increase income, expand consumer networks, and build sustainable businesses based on local potential.

CONCLUSIONS

Community empowerment through training in fish processing into abon and the implementation of digital marketing is an effective strategy for increasing income and economic potential in Kromasan Village. The training not only enhanced community skills in local-based fish processing but also encouraged the use of digital technology for broader and more efficient marketing. Thus, the shift from conventional to digital marketing helps the community improve product competitiveness, expand market reach, and build sustainable businesses, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of village community welfare.

The people of Kromasan Village gained better skills and understanding through fish processing into abon and digital marketing activities. This training taught community members how to make fish abon, create product packaging and labels, and apply digital marketing strategies. The community showed strong interest in independent entrepreneurship, and there are even plans to establish a joint business group.

This activity demonstrates that village communities can develop local potential into value-added and competitive products with appropriate assistance. For these efforts to grow sustainably and have a significant impact on improving the community's economy, greater support from various stakeholders is expected.

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