

## EMPOWERING THE WARA VILLAGE COMMUNITY IN DETERMINING MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL RICE MSME PRODUCTS THROUGH BRAND INTRODUCTION & FORMATION

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### Abstract

MSMEs in Wara Village, Wamena, produce a superior product, high-quality local rice, which has not been fully maximized in terms of marketing. The main obstacles faced by the local community are a lack of understanding of modern marketing strategies and the suboptimal use of digital technology. Marketing activities still rely on conventional methods without proper packaging, branding, or promotion through digital media. Furthermore, limited internet access and low levels of digital literacy exacerbate the situation. As a result, local rice products struggle to compete and lack adequate bargaining power in the market. Therefore, capacity building in the marketing sector is necessary to support the optimal development of product potential. The solution is to organize a socialization of product marketing strategies tailored to the real needs of local businesses. Using concrete case studies and a participatory approach, this socialization increases knowledge of marketing mix concepts and brand creation. This activity significantly contributes to strengthening the marketing capacity of MSMEs and building the identity of local rice products. Going forward, through ongoing mentoring, it is hoped that the Wara Village community will be able to independently expand the market and increase the economic value of their products.

**Keywords:** Product, Local Rice, Wara

### INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in supporting economic growth, particularly in developing regions (Sofyan, 2017). Many MSMEs still rely on traditional marketing methods (word of mouth or direct sales on-site), without utilizing digital technology. One such area is Wara Village, situated in the Pisugi District of Jayawijaya Regency, Papua Mountains Province.

Wara Village is located in Pisugi District, Jayawijaya Regency, Papua Mountains

Province. This area is located in the highlands with a cool climate and fairly even rainfall throughout the year, making it highly fertile and suitable for agricultural activities. Local communities rely on local rice as one of their main commodities, which is grown using traditional agricultural methods passed down through generations and based on local wisdom (Isdiantoni, 2024). Rice from Wara Village is known for its distinctive flavor, strong aroma, and good texture, thanks to the ideal agro-climatic conditions.

However, despite their high-quality products, local MSMEs and farmers have not been able to optimize marketing efforts to reach a broader and more competitive market (Fatima Virgiyanti et al., 2025). Initial observations indicate that most businesses still rely on traditional marketing strategies, such as direct sales and word-of-mouth promotion. They do not yet understand the importance of modern marketing, which includes branding, market segmentation, pricing strategies, and the use of digital media (Hamid, 2023). This lack of understanding is exacerbated by limited digital literacy, technological infrastructure, and unequal internet access in the region (Firdaus et al., 2024).

This situation impacts the low competitiveness of local rice products due to the lack of a strong product identity, such as labels, attractive packaging, or brand image. Product distribution is still dominated by middlemen, which weakens farmers' bargaining power and suboptimal product added value (Sofyan, 2017). This situation indicates a significant gap between the potential of existing agricultural products and the community's capacity to market them effectively and sustainably (Manggu & Beni, 2021).

This community service program was implemented in response to the real needs faced by the Kampung Wara community. The goal was to increase the capacity of MSMEs in modern marketing management through training in marketing strategies and the creation of product identities. This activity adopted a participatory approach, presenting contextual and applicable materials so that business owners could practically understand marketing concepts relevant to their circumstances.

With this intervention, it is hoped that the Kampung Wara community will be able to develop digital-based marketing strategies, create a distinctive brand, and expand the distribution network for local rice products. This capacity building will boost competitiveness, improve farmers' bargaining position in the market, and contribute to the long-term improvement of local community welfare.

In response to various problems faced by business actors and farmers in Kampung Wara, the solution designed focuses on increasing human resource capacity through applicable and contextual training and mentoring. With the target output of implementing training and mentoring that can improve the understanding and skills of local business actors and farmers in implementing modern and digital marketing strategies, local rice products from Kampung Wara are starting to be known in markets outside the region due to improved packaging quality, brand identity, and more effective marketing strategies, and the existence of a mentoring process during and after training to ensure the implementation of digital marketing and branding runs optimally.

## IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity was implemented as a response to the challenges faced by business owners and farmers in Wara Village, Pisugi District, Jayawijaya Regency, particularly in marketing local products. The implementation method was designed using a participatory approach and based on the actual needs of partners through a series of systematic stages: outreach, needs identification, mentoring, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 1. Socialization and Identification of Partner Needs

The initial stage began with program socialization to partner communities, aiming to transparently convey the program's aims, objectives, benefits, and stages. This process used the Socialization method to explore partner expectations and align the program's direction with local needs. Simultaneously, a mapping of the initial capacity of business owners was conducted, including aspects of marketing understanding and product conditions. This technique was based on the principle of community needs assessment.

### 2. Design and Implementation of Modern Marketing Strategy Training

Based on the identification results, relevant and contextual training materials were developed. The training was implemented using an andragogical approach (Mukharomah et al., 2023), which emphasizes the active involvement of adult participants and the connection to their practical experiences. The training materials include:

- Basic marketing concepts: Marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion),
- Branding and market segmentation strategies,
- Pricing and product identity creation.

To ensure effective understanding, the training is delivered interactively using visual media, local case studies (local rice products from Kampung Wara), and branding practice simulations. This method aligns with the experiential learning approach (Fanni Virskya et al., 2025), which emphasizes learning from real-world experiences.

### 3. Mentoring and Direct Application

After the training, participants receive regular mentoring in implementing digital and offline marketing strategies. Mentoring focuses on the use of social media as a promotional channel and attractive product packaging. This technique refers to the capacity building model (Saepudin Ruhimat, Agroforestry Technology Research Center, Jl. Raya Ciamis, Banjar km., 2015), which emphasizes knowledge transfer through coaching and mentoring in the field.

### 4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback

Monitoring and evaluation were conducted using a formative evaluation approach, assessing participant progress during and after training (Damanik et al., n.d.).

Evaluation data were used as a basis for continuous program improvement and to support replication of activities in other areas. Triangulation techniques were applied in the evaluation process to increase data validity.

Through this implementation method, business actors and farmers in Wara Village not only gained increased marketing capacity but were also able to integrate digital approaches to expand markets and build a strong product identity. This approach has proven effective and

aligns with the principles of community service that empower communities based on local potential.

The targets of this activity include: First, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), especially those engaged in the agricultural sector and processing of local rice products in Wara Village, who have so far relied on conventional marketing methods and do not have an adequate understanding of modern and digital marketing. Second, farmers who directly produce local rice but have not obtained optimal added value due to limitations in market access, promotional strategies, and the lack of product identity. Third, Community groups that have joint businesses or small cooperatives, which have the potential to adopt digital-based marketing strategies and form collective brands for their products.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Community service activities in Wara Village, Pisugi District, Jayawijaya Regency, were implemented according to plan and demonstrated positive results. The program began with program outreach, which successfully increased the partner community's understanding of the importance of local product marketing strategies. A systematic process of identifying the initial needs and capabilities of business actors was also conducted to support the development of targeted training materials.

The modern marketing strategy training provided covered the marketing mix, branding, market segmentation, and pricing, and was delivered contextually using case studies of local rice products. Evaluation results indicated that participants experienced increased understanding and confidence in marketing their products in a more structured and competitive manner.

Overall, this activity successfully increased the partners' capacity in modern marketing aspects and made an initial contribution to strengthening product identity and expanding market access based on local potential.

The success of this activity was largely due to the active involvement of partner communities, including both local businesses and farmers. They enthusiastically participated in all stages of the activity, from outreach to training. Success was also influenced by the training materials tailored to their needs. The materials were developed based on previous data collection, ensuring the topics were relevant and easily understood by the participants.

Furthermore, the practical and real-world approach to the training, such as using local rice as an example, made it easier for participants to understand and put the material into practice. Open and smooth communication between the implementation team and participants also helped create a comfortable and supportive training atmosphere.

## CONCLUSION

Community service activities in Wara Village, Pisugi District, Jayawijaya Regency, have successfully increased the capacity of business actors in marketing local products, particularly rice, through training in marketing strategies that were designed in an applicable and contextual manner. Participants demonstrated increased knowledge and skills in developing more targeted marketing strategies and were able to utilize digital media as an effective promotional tool. The success of this activity continues with regular mentoring so that the knowledge and skills provided can continue to be implemented by the partner community. In addition, support from local governments and related institutions is essential, especially in developing supporting infrastructure such as internet access, advanced training, and facilitating product promotion to a wider market. This activity model also has the potential to be replicated in other areas with similar conditions as an effort to empower the village economy based on modern marketing and strengthen local potential.

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