

Empowerment Strategy for Gurah Tea MSMEs in Wukirsari Village, Bantul Through Packaging Design Innovation and Product Branding Strengthening

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Abstract.

This community service activity aims to improve the competitiveness of Teh Gurah products produced by MSMEs in Wukirsari Village, Bantul, through packaging design innovation and strengthening brand identity based on local potential. The main problems faced by businesses are a lack of innovation in packaging design and weak brand awareness among consumers, which has an impact on low market appeal and affordability. The method used is a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, actively involving SMEs in the process of problem identification, strategy development, technical training, and evaluation of the implemented design and branding outcomes. The results of the activity showed that the new packaging with a more attractive, informative, and market-appropriate design successfully increased consumer interest and expanded product distribution to tourist locations and souvenir shops. Strengthening the brand identity through logos, product narratives, and digital promotion strategies also reinforced the product's image as part of the local identity of Wukirsari Village.

Keywords: SMEs; Gurah Tea; Branding; Local Potential; Innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia is one of the strategic approaches to improving the standard of living of the community and reducing poverty levels, particularly in rural areas that have abundant local potential but are often hindered by limited access to markets, financing, and product development (Aliyah, 2022).

In this context, strengthening the economy based on local potential integrated with social and cultural values is the key to success. The village of Wukirsari in Bantul, Special Region of Yogyakarta, is a concrete example of how local economic development can work synergistically with the strengthening of the culture of mutual cooperation and entrepreneurial innovation through integrated programmes such as Global Gotong Royong (G2R) Tetrapreneur (Handoko, T. A., & PL, 2023).

Wukirsari Village is located in Imogiri Subdistrict, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, approximately 17 km from the centre of Yogyakarta City. The village covers an area of approximately 15 km² and is divided into 16 hamlets. Its topography ranges from lowlands to hilly

areas, most of which are utilised as agricultural land and natural tourist destinations. The population of Wukirsari Village is estimated to be around 18,300 people, with a population density exceeding 1,500 people per square kilometre (BPS Kab. Bantul, 2024).

Wukirsari Village has grown into one of the leading tourist villages globally, with around 50% of its residents involved in the MSME and tourism sectors (Maryani, 2021). This achievement is the result of a collaborative approach involving synergy between the government, academics, and the community in building a creative economy ecosystem based on local potential, such as batik, bamboo crafts, and traditional herbal products such as Teh Gurah (Fajri & Fatticia, 2025). However, behind these achievements, Teh Gurah MSMEs in Wukirsari Village face challenges in developing products that can attract modern consumers, both in terms of packaging aesthetics and brand identity. Innovation in packaging design is crucial, considering that packaging not only functions as protection but also as an effective promotional tool to increase product appeal and competitiveness amid increasingly fierce market competition (Yuniarti, 2023). Brand strengthening is also an important element in ensuring that Teh Gurah has a strong image and is easily recognisable by consumers, thereby expanding market share and increasing the income of MSME players (Amallynda, I., Lukman, M., & Garside, 2025). Various training, mentoring, and consulting programmes have been organised to equip business operators with the knowledge and skills to design attractive, informative packaging that suits consumer tastes, as well as to develop appropriate branding strategies.

Efforts to develop packaging and strengthen the Teh Gurah brand image are in line with the development direction of Wukirsari Village, which focuses on optimising local potential, improving product quality, and strengthening the community's economy through the MSME and tourism sectors (Harto et al., 2024). Thus, this empowerment strategy not only aims to increase the added value of products and the welfare of business actors, but also to strengthen the cultural identity and tourism appeal of Wukirsari Village, both nationally and globally.

II. METHODS

This community service activity was carried out using qualitative methods through in-depth interviews focused on exploring the experiences, needs, and perceptions of Teh Gurah business actors in Wukirsari Village (Tallane, 2020). The interview process was conducted in a participatory manner, in which MSME actors were actively involved in identifying problems, exploring business potential, and formulating solutions based on local wisdom values (Setiawan et al., 2023). This activity consists of three main stages designed based on community needs and a collaborative approach.

1. The first stage is the identification of problems and needs of MSME players, particularly those related to low packaging design innovation and weak brand identity. This process is carried out through field observations, in-depth interviews with business players, and discussions with village officials and local stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of business conditions, marketing challenges, and the potential for developing Teh Gurah products.
2. The second stage involves developing packaging innovation strategies and strengthening product branding, aiming to create attractive, informative packaging designs that align with modern consumer preferences, as well as building a strong and recognisable brand image. In this stage, SME operators are provided with technical training and guidance to enable them to independently develop packaging and branding strategies.

- The final stage is the implementation and participatory evaluation of the packaging and branding designs that have been developed. The evaluation is carried out by involving MSME actors, local consumers, and community partners to assess the effectiveness of the changes made and their impact on product appeal and marketing. The results of this evaluation form the basis for the preparation of recommendations for the sustainability of the programme and the potential for replication in other MSME products in Wukirsari Village.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Community service activities focused on packaging development and strengthening the branding of Teh Gurah products in Wukirsari Village provide a comprehensive overview of the conditions of MSME actors and the impact of interventions carried out during the training and mentoring process.

1. Identification of Problems and Needs of MSME Actors

Based on observations and in-depth interviews, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) producing Teh Gurah in Wukirsari Village still face difficulties in developing their product packaging. Most still use simple designs that are visually unappealing and lack relevant information for consumers. In addition, brand identity development has not been a priority, resulting in products that lack differentiation and are not widely recognised in the market. The lack of understanding regarding the importance of brand image in supporting marketing strategies also acts as a barrier. This situation indicates the need for a strategic approach that can enhance product competitiveness through the strengthening of visual and brand communication aspects in an integrated manner. Documentation of the activity results is shown in the following image:



Figure 1. Group discussion with Teh Gurah business operators in Wukirsari Village

2. Formulation of Packaging Design Strategy and Branding Strengthening

Training and mentoring were conducted intensively to strengthen MSME actors' understanding of the importance of packaging and branding in supporting business success. In the workshop sessions, business actors were involved in the process of designing more attractive, environmentally friendly packaging that reflects local characteristics. Additionally, the development of brand identity elements, such as logos, taglines, and product narratives, is aligned with the character and uniqueness of Wukirsari Village as a cultural tourism village. Several new packaging designs have been successfully created with more modern and informative visuals, giving a more professional and easily recognisable impression to consumers.

Documentation of the activity results is shown in the following image:



Figure 2. Branding Training Process, Brand Identity Development, Importance of Brand Image and Message, Promotion Strategy through Social Media

3. Implementation and Evaluation of Design and Branding

After the design stage was completed, the new packaging and brand identity were implemented on a limited basis for market testing purposes. Teh Gurah products with the new design began to be introduced in the local community and several tourist locations around the village. The effectiveness of the design and branding was assessed through feedback from consumers, tourism operators, and community partners. Based on the responses received, the majority of consumers felt that the new packaging was more attractive and reflected better quality than before. The product was also easier to recognise due to the clear logo and product information. Some business operators reported that they had begun to receive opportunities to market the product in souvenir shops and tourist attractions that had not previously opened up partnerships.

Documentation of the activity results is shown in the following image:



Figure 3. Introduction of Gurah Tea with New Packaging at the Local Market

Discussion

The implementation of the packaging design innovation programme and brand identity strengthening for Teh Gurah products has had a positive impact on improving the competitiveness of MSMEs in Wukirsari Village. Packaging that is more visually appealing, informative, and in line with market preferences has successfully increased consumer interest, particularly among tourists, who are one of the main markets in this tourist village. Packaging not only serves as product protection but also as an effective promotional tool in shaping quality perceptions and strengthening product imagery. The mentoring process was conducted participatively, where SME actors actively engaged in designing solutions to their own challenges, thereby fostering a sense of ownership, independence, and confidence to continue innovating.

Beyond improving product appearance, this effort aligns with the development vision of Wukirsari Village, which emphasises community economic empowerment based on local potential and culture. Herbal products like Teh Gurah, when packaged and marketed strategically, have the potential not only as consumer commodities but also as part of the village's tourism identity. This strategy opens opportunities for market expansion, both through direct sales at tourist locations and through digital channels and other retail networks. Overall, this collaborative approach based on real needs strengthens the position of SMEs in the competitive market while maintaining business sustainability and preserving the local values that are the unique strengths of Wukirsari Village.

IV. CONCLUSION

The community service activities carried out in Wukirsari Village demonstrate that innovative packaging design strategies and brand identity strengthening can enhance the competitiveness of SMEs based on local potential, particularly for Teh Gurah products. The participatory approach, which actively involves business actors in identifying issues and evaluating solutions, has successfully driven a transformation in how SMEs perceive the importance of product visuals and brand image. More attractive and informative packaging, coupled with brand strengthening rooted in local wisdom, not only enhances product appeal but also opens new marketing opportunities, both within the local tourism environment and broader networks. This success underscores that SME product development focused on visual quality and cultural value plays a strategic role in achieving sustainable village economic development.

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