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## MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Empowerment of Digital Marketing and Women's Role in Rural Economic Development: A Case Study in Nglinggi Village, Klaten, Central Java

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of digital marketing training on rural economic development and women's empowerment in Nglinggi Village, Klaten, Central Java. Conducted over two years, the research engaged 25 participants from various backgrounds, utilizing interviews and observations. Drawing from Marketing and Women's Empowerment theories, the study explores how digital marketing interventions drive economic participation and reshape power dynamics. Results show improved digital literacy and business capacity, empowering women in economic activities. E-commerce integration expands market access, fostering local economic growth amidst COVID-19 challenges. The program fosters community collaboration and women's leadership, challenging gender norms. This research highlights digital marketing's transformative potential in rural development and gender empowerment.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Rural Economic Development, Women's Empowerment.**JEL Classification Code:** Mo

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced digital world, helping rural areas thrive economically is a big deal, especially in countries like Indonesia. The Indonesian government is all about boosting small businesses and cooperatives to make local economies more vigorous. But there's a catch – many rural folks struggle with accessing digital tools and knowing how to use them. Take Nglinggi Village in Central Java, for example. It's full of potential, but folks there find it hard to reach more significant markets or make the most of digital technology. That's where digital marketing and empowering women come in – they're like secret weapons for helping villages like Nglinggi grow economically. This study dives into how digital marketing and women's roles can supercharge rural economies, focusing on Nglinggi Village. By digging into the latest data and looking at what the Indonesian government is doing to support small businesses, we aim to show how going digital can bridge economic gaps and give women a more significant role in rural development.

Towards the end of his presidency, President Jokowi emphasized the importance of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in Indonesia's economic structure. He noted around 65 million MSMEs in Indonesia, contributing approximately 61 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, the MSME sector serves as the leading provider of employment, absorbing around 97 percent of the workforce in Indonesia. However, despite MSMEs dominating Indonesia's economic structure, there is a significant disparity in the adoption of digital technology among them. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (Kemenkop UKM), only about 0.01 percent of Indonesian MSMEs have successfully transformed into large, digitally integrated businesses. This indicates that while MSMEs have significant potential to drive the national economy, there are still challenges in adopting digital technology, especially in rural areas.



Meanwhile, Indonesia's digital economy has shown significant growth in recent years. According to a report by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company (2021), Indonesia's Gross Market Value (GMV) of the digital economy reached US\$70 billion in 2021, making it the largest in Southeast Asia. The digital economy's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) also reached 20%, with GMV predicted to reach US\$146 billion by 2025. However, there are still challenges to overcome in realizing the full potential of digitalization, especially in rural areas. Internet download speeds in Indonesia remain low, ranking second lowest in Southeast Asia according to Speedtest.net. Internet penetration in rural areas is also uneven, exacerbating the digital divide between urban and rural areas.

One approach the Indonesian government takes to address these challenges is through MSME and cooperative empowerment programs. Through digital transformation strategies and technology utilization, the government seeks to facilitate MSMEs' access to broader digital markets and enhance their competitiveness in the digital economy. In this context, the role of women in rural economic empowerment is also crucial. As an integral part of rural communities, women have significant potential to contribute to local economic development. However, challenges, such as lack of financial literacy, access to credit and investment, and opportunities for involvement in public procurement, need to be addressed. Therefore, this article will delve deeper into how digital marketing empowerment can be a solution to overcome rural economic challenges while strengthening women's roles in local economic development. By analyzing field findings, this article will provide better insights into practical strategies for leveraging digital technology to create positive impacts in rural communities.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In depicting the phenomenon of Digital Marketing Empowerment and the Role of Women in Rural Economic Development in Indonesia, two main relevant theories are Marketing Theory and Women's Empowerment Theory. Both offer vital insights into how digital marketing training programs can enhance women's economic participation in rural areas and alter power dynamics within communities. Marketing Theory highlights the importance of understanding markets and consumers, as well as the effectiveness of marketing strategies in achieving business goals. In the context of rural economic development and women's empowerment through digital marketing, Marketing Theory can provide a deeper understanding of how these programs can be designed and implemented effectively (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kotler et al., 2017; Armstrong & Cunningham, 2019; Kotler et al., 2021).

1. **Market Segmentation:** The concept of market segmentation allows identifying consumer groups with similar needs, desires, and behaviors. In this context, understanding market segmentation at the rural level can help tailor digital marketing training programs better to meet the needs and preferences of local communities. For example, segmentation based on age, types of products sold, or digital skill levels can aid in designing more specific and effective training.
2. **Product and Service Development:** The concept emphasizes understanding consumer needs and desires in designing relevant and appealing products or services. In the context of digital marketing training, product and service development can involve creating curricula suitable for participants' understanding and needs. For instance, providing training modules tailored to beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels in digital platform usage.
3. **Customer Relationship Management:** This concept emphasizes building and maintaining good relationships with customers. In the context of digital marketing training, it translates to maintaining open and continuous communication with participants, both during and after the program. Through effective communication, training facilitators can provide ongoing support and guidance, helping participants apply learned skills to their business practices.
4. **Promotion and Marketing:** The concept highlights the importance of effective communication strategies to increase consumer awareness and interest in products or services. In the context of digital marketing training, this means developing appropriate promotion strategies to introduce training programs to rural communities. For example, using relevant and easily accessible

communication channels for the target audience, such as local social media or community meetings.

By integrating Marketing Theory concepts into this presented theoretical framework, a more comprehensive understanding can be gained of how digital marketing training programs can be designed and implemented effectively to support rural economic development and women's empowerment in Indonesia. This enables a better understanding of local market dynamics, consumer needs, and appropriate marketing strategies, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and impact of these programs.

Empowerment Theory emphasizes individuals, organizations, and communities' control over their lives through increased awareness, skills, and resource access (Zimmerman, 1995; Sen, 1999). In the context of rural economic development, digital marketing empowerment can provide women access to online platforms and necessary training to effectively market their products. As a result, rural women have the opportunity to increase their income and feel more confident in managing their own businesses. Empowerment is closely related to economic self-reliance. With access and skills in digital marketing, rural women can become more economically self-reliant, not solely relying on government assistance or other institutions. This helps reduce economic dependency and enhances women's self-esteem and autonomy in making decisions about family finances and businesses. Furthermore, Women's Empowerment Theory emphasizes the importance of women gaining the ability to make strategic choices in their lives, including in economic contexts (Kabeer, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). In this regard, digital marketing training can be a crucial tool in empowering rural women to actively develop their own economies. With the necessary knowledge and skills, women can become agents of change in their communities, leading local economic initiatives and advocating for their interests. Additionally, women's empowerment through digital marketing training has broad social impacts. By becoming economic drivers in rural areas, women can challenge gender stereotypes and enhance their social status in society. This paves the way for increased gender equality and strengthens women's positions as leaders and decision-makers at the local level. By integrating Marketing Theory and Women's Empowerment Theory, this theoretical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing training can be a powerful instrument in advancing women's roles in rural economic development in Indonesia. Through this approach, positive transformations in rural social and economic structures are expected, benefiting entire communities.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

This research was conducted over the past two years (2021-2023) as part of a collaboration between Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, Universitas Indonesia (UI) in Jakarta, and the Wachid Foundation, which runs the "Peace Villages" program across Indonesia. Data was collected through interviews and observations in Nglinggi Village, Klaten Regency, Central Java, involving the village head and local residents. In this study, a total of 25 informants and participants were interviewed. The characteristics of these informants and participants varied to provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of the Wachid Foundation's program in Nglinggi Village, Klaten, Central Java. Here is a description of their characteristics:

- a. Village Head: As a local leader, the village head provides administrative perspectives and insights into the program's impact on the entire village.
- b. SME Entrepreneurs: There were 15 participants actively involved in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). They consisted of men and women aged 25-50 who underwent skills training provided by the Wachid Foundation. Most of them were small business owners who previously lacked specific skills in production or marketing.
- c. Community Members: Five community members who were not directly involved in MSMEs but participated in community activities and general training programs. They provided insights into social and economic changes in the village.

- d. Women's Group Representatives: There were four women actively involved in the village women's group. They provided insights into the role of women in economic empowerment programs and skills training offered.

The participants' general characteristics included various educational backgrounds, with the majority having primary to secondary education. They were all permanent residents of Nglinggi Village with varying economic levels, but the majority came from low to middle-income families. Participants were selected to encompass a broad representation of the village population to better understand the program's impact. After all data were collected, qualitative and descriptive quantitative data analysis was conducted. Qualitative analysis was performed to understand and explore findings from narrative and contextual perspectives, while descriptive quantitative analysis was used to summarize and describe data in statistical and numerical forms. This helped provide a comprehensive overview of the program's effectiveness and its impact on the Nglinggi Village community in Klaten, Central Java.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Result

The digital marketing training and women empowerment program in Nglinggi Village, Klaten Regency, Central Java, organized by the Wachid Foundation, has brought significant positive impacts on rural economic development. Here is a summary of the main findings and analysis from the field research:

- a. Increased Digital Marketing Skills and Digital Literacy  
Through digital marketing training, particularly for women, there has been an improvement in understanding and skills in using social media and e-commerce platforms to promote their products. This training has also enhanced the digital literacy of Nglinggi Village residents, enabling them to optimize the use of technology in marketing products and services. In-depth interviews revealed that participants directly benefited from this training in terms of increased income and access to wider markets. "I can now sell my products online and reach customers from outside the village," said one participant. Meanwhile, quantitative analysis showed that 80% of participants felt more confident in using digital technology for economic activities. Before the training, only 30% had basic skills in using computers and the internet. This indicates a significant improvement in participants' digital skills.
- b. Use of E-Commerce and Positive Impact on the Local Economy  
The implementation of digital marketing strategies has resulted in significant growth in sales of local products, reaching markets in other provinces. Furthermore, the use of e-commerce platforms has been key in expanding market access for MSMEs in Nglinggi Village, opening up new business expansion opportunities. The training program not only increased MSMEs' income but also contributed to overall local economic development, bringing positive impacts on village economic growth and creating new job opportunities. Participants also reported improvements in operational efficiency and the ability to access new markets. "This training helped me understand how to manage my business better and reach customers through social media," expressed a female entrepreneur. While quantitative analysis found an average increase in MSME income by 50% after participating in the training program. Before the program, the average monthly income of MSMEs was Rp 1,000,000 (USD\$62.5), which increased to Rp 1,500,000 afterward (USD\$94).
- c. Adaptation During the Pandemic  
Digital marketing strategies became crucial for the sustainability of MSMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing them to adapt to changes in consumer behavior and limitations on direct interactions. This program also facilitated online marketing and sales training. Residents were trained to sell their products online, which was particularly beneficial during social restrictions. Some residents successfully sold their products to other provinces, such as herbal drinks, dried

fish, and jerky. Additionally, the program provided support during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as raw material assistance and training to adapt to changing market conditions. The impact of this training was also evident in the increased well-being of the community. Residents who previously did not have stable employment now have a stable source of income through their small businesses. This improved well-being is an important indicator of the effectiveness of empowerment programs. With more stable income, residents can better meet their basic needs and have the opportunity to save and invest in further business development. Reports from the village head and survey data showed a significant decrease in the poverty rate in Nglinggi Village after the program implementation. Residents reported an increase in the ability to purchase basic needs and save for future needs.

d. Halal Certification

Several training participants successfully obtained halal certification for their products. This opens up new opportunities to sell products to a wider consumer base and enhances competitiveness in the market. Regarding the increase in the role of women, this research found that the women empowerment program has increased women's participation in local economic activities, strengthened social networks, and improved family welfare.

e. Empowerment of Women in Business and Economic Development

Active participation of women in the training program not only improved their economic capabilities but also strengthened social networks and relationships within the community. Furthermore, women's participation in this program strengthened their positions as leaders in local businesses, bringing positive influences in decision-making and business management, and contributing to strengthening social ties within the community. During interviews, it was revealed that women's empowerment through digital training and MSME development has had a positive impact on social welfare. "Now I feel more appreciated in my family and community because of my economic contribution," said one participant. While quantitative analysis found that 70% of women participating in this program reported increased involvement in economic activities and decision-making in households. Before the program, only 40% were active in economic activities.

f. Capacity Building and Confidence Building

The provided training also focused on increasing the capacity and self-confidence of residents, especially women, in managing their own businesses. With the new knowledge and skills they acquired, residents felt more capable of taking initiatives in local economic activities and actively participating in various community forums. This increased self-confidence is important because it empowers women to become leaders in their communities. This not only impacts the economy but also social dynamics, where women begin to take a more active role in decision-making and local leadership. Nglinggi Village residents reported increased self-confidence after participating in the training. They feel more capable of managing their businesses and participating in local economic activities. This has also strengthened social relationships among residents and created a more harmonious and cooperative environment. Interviews with program participants showed that many women who were previously not involved in economic activities are now actively managing their small businesses and engaging in important community discussions.

g. Collaboration and Community Engagement

This program also encourages community involvement in various collective activities. Through forums such as FKDM (Village Community Cooperation Forum), residents share experiences and knowledge, as well as collaborate in addressing challenges in the village. This forum serves as a platform where residents can share experiences, knowledge, and collaborate in addressing challenges faced by the village. This strengthens a sense of togetherness and solidarity among residents, creating a more harmonious and cooperative environment. This collaboration is essential for program sustainability. With collaborative forums, residents can support each other and learn from one another, enhancing the effectiveness and impact of the program. Additionally, this forum provides space for residents to voice their needs and aspirations, which is important for the sustainable improvement of the program. Documentation from FKDM



meetings shows high levels of participation and various initiatives resulting from collective discussions. This reflects active community involvement in the village development process.

h. Leadership in MSMEs

Many women in Nglinggi have taken on leadership roles in micro, small, and medium enterprises. They not only manage their own businesses but also serve as examples for other women in the village to actively participate in economic activities.

i. Positive Social Influence

Active participation of women in MSMEs and training activities has brought positive impacts on the village's social structure. They become agents of change that promote economic empowerment and education for their families and communities.

j. Networks and Communities

This training also helps women form strong networks and communities among themselves. They often share knowledge and experiences, as well as support each other in developing their businesses. The active role of women in MSMEs shows that women's empowerment can have a significant impact on the social and economic structure of the community. This aligns with women's empowerment theory, which emphasizes the importance of women's participation in the economy and decision-making. Women's involvement in this program not only increases family income but also strengthens social networks and community solidarity, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment.

## 4.2. Discussion

The integration of Marketing Theory and Women Empowerment Theory in the context of digital marketing training in Nglinggi Village has brought significant positive impacts on rural economic development and women empowerment. Through the analysis of field research findings, these findings can be considered within the context of the theories presented earlier.

Firstly, the finding of increased digital marketing skills and digital literacy aligns with the concept of product and service development in Marketing Theory. Digital marketing training helps participants better understand the market and consumers, enabling them to design more effective marketing strategies. In-depth interviews and quantitative analysis show a significant improvement in participants' digital skills, which directly impacts increased income and market access (Teo & Pian, 2022).

Secondly, the implementation of digital marketing strategies in this program also reflects the concept of market segmentation in Marketing Theory. Through a better understanding of local market needs and preferences, the training program can be tailored to achieve optimal results. Research results show that proper market segmentation has enabled participants to reach a wider market and increase sales of local products (Kotler et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the concept of customer relationship management in Marketing Theory can also be observed in the impact of this program. Through open and ongoing communication between training facilitators and participants, the program can provide the necessary support for the application of learned skills into business practices. This has proven effective in boosting participants' confidence and strengthening the relationship between participants and the program (Kotler et al., 2020).

In the context of Women Empowerment Theory, the finding of increased women's participation in local economy and decision-making within households aligns with the concept of women's empowerment emphasizing the importance of individuals having control over their lives through increased awareness and access to resources (Kabeer, 1999). Digital marketing training provides women in Nglinggi Village the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to actively develop their own economy.

Moreover, the increased involvement of women in training programs also creates broad social impacts, such as increased self-esteem and social status of women in society. This aligns with women empowerment theory highlighting the importance of women gaining the ability to make strategic choices in their lives, including in economic contexts (Nussbaum, 2000). Through digital marketing training, women in Nglinggi Village have been able to increase their involvement in economic

activities and decision-making, which positively impacts the social and economic structure of the community.

Overall, the integration of Marketing Theory and Women Empowerment Theory in the digital marketing training program in Nglinggi Village has significantly positive impacts on rural economic development and women empowerment. This research provides a deeper understanding of how digital marketing training can be an effective tool in advancing women's role in rural economic development in Indonesia.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The digital marketing training and women empowerment program implemented in Nglinggi Village, Klaten District, Central Java, by the Wachid Foundation have brought significant positive impacts on rural economic development and women empowerment. The integration of Marketing Theory and Women Empowerment Theory in the design and implementation of the program has strengthened its effectiveness in enhancing digital skills, economic participation, and social status of women in the village.

The field research results indicate a significant improvement in participants' digital marketing skills and digital literacy, which directly led to increased income and market access. The program also successfully expanded the market reach for local MSMEs through the implementation of digital marketing strategies and provided support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, women's active participation in the training program has strengthened social networks, increased self-confidence, and reinforced women's roles in local economic development.

Based on the findings and analysis above, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of similar programs in the future:

1. Training Content Development: Continuously evaluate the training curriculum to ensure that the content taught aligns with the needs and developments of the digital market. Developing more specific and relevant content will enhance the benefits for participants.
2. Network Strengthening and Collaboration: Encourage the formation of more collaborative forums, such as FKDM, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among participants and expand cooperation networks at the local level.
3. Post-Training Support: Provide sustainable post-training support, such as consultation sessions or guidance, to help participants apply the skills they have learned in their daily business practices.
4. Development of New Initiatives: Encourage participants to develop new initiatives in their businesses, such as product diversification or market expansion, through technical support and available resources.
5. Community Empowerment: Encourage active community participation in supporting women in their businesses by promoting local products and providing moral support.
6. Long-term Impact Measurement: Regularly monitor and evaluate the long-term impact of the program on the rural economy and women's empowerment to ensure its sustainability and relevance.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that digital marketing training and women empowerment programs in rural areas can continue to positively impact local economic development and women empowerment in Indonesia.

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