

DESIGNING KEMBARANFEST AS A COMMUNITY-BASED EVENT TO PROMOTE MSMEs IN KEMBARAN VILLAGE THROUGH DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in Indonesia's economy, yet rural MSMEs continue to face persistent challenges in promotion, digital literacy, and market access. This paper presents *KembaranFest*, a collaborative event designed to address these issues in Kembaran Village, Magelang Regency, Central Java. The festival integrated an MSME bazaar, digital marketing workshops, cultural performances, and community services as strategies to enhance local branding and competitiveness. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation with 23 MSME participants from culinary, handicraft, and service sectors. The results showed that *KembaranFest* increased MSME visibility, improved sales by 25–30%, and encouraged the adoption of digital promotion, with 15 MSMEs creating or reactivating social media accounts. The event also fostered collaborative networks among MSMEs, local youth, and village authorities. Discussion highlights how event marketing and integrated communication strategies contribute to MSME empowerment and sustainable community development. The study concludes that *KembaranFest* provides a replicable model for other rural contexts, combining cultural identity, participatory development, and digital innovation in alignment with the ICCD 2025 theme.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Digital Promotion, Event Marketing, MSMEs, Local Branding

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are widely recognized as the backbone of Indonesia's economy. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (KemenKopUKM, 2023), MSMEs contribute more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb over 97% of the workforce. Their strategic role is not only in driving economic growth but also in reducing poverty, expanding employment, and strengthening social resilience. In rural contexts, MSMEs often serve as the main livelihood sources, supporting household income and preserving local cultural identity.

Despite this significant contribution, MSMEs continue to face persistent challenges, particularly in marketing and digital adoption. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023) reveals that internet penetration in Indonesia has reached 78%, yet the level of digital utilization among rural MSMEs remains relatively low. Many businesses still rely on traditional promotion, such as word-of-mouth and offline exhibitions, which limits their market access and competitiveness. Studies by Dewi & Purnomo (2022) and Widodo & Prasetyo (2023) also emphasize that rural MSMEs often encounter barriers in adopting digital marketing tools due to limited knowledge, resources, and technical support.

Kembaran Village in Magelang Regency illustrates this condition. The village has 23 MSMEs engaged in culinary, handicraft, and service sectors. However, based on preliminary observations, most of these enterprises lack consistent branding, do not utilize social media effectively, and have weak collaboration networks. Promotional strategies are still dominated by conventional approaches such as local fairs or community gatherings. As a result, product visibility remains low, and MSMEs struggle to compete with similar products from more digitally advanced regions. This situation aligns with findings by Gloria (2024) and Syifa (2024), who observed that rural MSME festivals often lack structured digital integration, resulting in limited impact on long-term branding and customer engagement.

To address these issues, *KembaranFest* was conceptualized as a collaborative and innovative event designed to empower local MSMEs. The festival combined an MSME bazaar with digital marketing workshops, cultural performances, and community services. The integration of offline and online strategies reflects an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach (Kotler & Keller, 2016), where multiple promotional channels are used to maximize impact. Additionally, by involving the community, *KembaranFest* embodies participatory development principles (Chambers, 1994), ensuring that local actors are actively engaged in shaping their own empowerment process.

The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution. On a practical level, it provides MSMEs with direct opportunities for product promotion, digital training, and collaboration. On a theoretical level, it offers insights into how event marketing can be integrated with digital empowerment to support sustainable community development.

Therefore, the objectives of this paper are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the design and implementation of KembaranFest as a promotional and educational event for MSMEs.
- 2) To evaluate the effectiveness of integrating event marketing with digital empowerment strategies.
- 3) To discuss the potential of KembaranFest as a replicable model for rural MSME development in Indonesia.

2. METHOD

This study employed a **qualitative descriptive method** to analyze the design, implementation, and outcomes of *KembaranFest*. Data collection techniques included **observation, interviews, and documentation**. Observation was conducted during the event preparation and implementation phases to capture the dynamics of MSME participation. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 23 MSME owners representing culinary, handicraft, and service sectors to identify their challenges, expectations, and experiences. Documentation involved collecting photographs, promotional materials, social media content, and sales records to support analysis.

The methodological framework was divided into three main stages:

PREPARATION STAGE

- 1) Conducted initial field surveys to map the condition of MSMEs in Kembaran Village.
- 2) Identified promotional and digital literacy gaps through interviews with MSME owners.
- 3) Formed an organizing committee consisting of university students, local leaders, and community representatives.
- 4) Designed the event concept, including MSME bazaar, cultural performances, workshops, and health services.
- 5) Developed offline and online promotional media such as posters, banners, and Instagram/TikTok content.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

- 1) The festival was held for two consecutive days (21–22 December 2024) at the Kembaran Village community hall.
- 2) Activities included:
 - a. **MSME Bazaar:** 23 MSMEs showcased culinary products, handicrafts, and services.
 - b. **Digital Marketing Workshop:** MSME participants received training on creating and managing social media content (Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business).
 - c. **Cultural Performances:** traditional Jathilan dance was presented to attract visitors and highlight local culture.
 - d. **Community Services:** free health check booths were provided to encourage community attendance.
- 3) Event promotion combined offline approaches (flyers, posters, banners) with online strategies (social media campaigns, hashtag use, short videos).

EVALUATION STAGE

- 1) Collected feedback through questionnaires and focus group discussions with MSME participants and visitors.
- 2) Monitored digital engagement metrics (number of new MSME social media accounts, increase in followers, interaction rates).
- 3) Analysed sales data reported by MSMEs during the two-day bazaar.
- 4) Conducted post-event committee meetings to review strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

This structured method ensured that *KembaranFest* was not only a promotional event but also an educational and participatory initiative. By dividing the process into clear stages, the program outcomes could be systematically evaluated and linked to the objectives of sustainable community development.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The implementation of *KembaranFest* produced several measurable outcomes:

MSME Participation

- 1) A total of **23 MSMEs** took part in the bazaar, consisting of 13 culinary businesses (traditional snacks, food stalls, beverage products), 6 handicraft producers (woven bamboo, batik, embroidery), and 4 service-based enterprises (tailoring, catering, decoration services).
- 2) Each MSME was provided with a booth and encouraged to present their branding materials, some of which were newly created during the preparation phase.

Visitor Attendance

- 1) Over the two-day event, the festival attracted approximately **500 visitors**, consisting of local residents, neighboring village communities, and university representatives.
- 2) Cultural performances, particularly the traditional Jathilan dance, became a highlight that increased foot traffic to the MSME booths.

Sales and Economic Impact

- 1) MSME participants reported an average **sales increase of 25–30%** during the event compared to regular daily sales.
- 2) Several MSMEs also reported receiving bulk orders from new customers who were introduced to their products at the festival.

Digital Adoption

- 1) Out of 23 MSMEs, **15 created or reactivated social media accounts** (Instagram, TikTok, or WhatsApp Business) as a result of the digital marketing workshop.
- 2) Social media engagement increased, with posts related to *KembaranFest* receiving higher-than-average interactions (likes, shares, comments).

Community Collaboration

- 1) Networks were established among MSMEs, youth organizations, and village authorities.
- 2) Plans emerged for a follow-up program, including collaborative online promotion and mentoring for digital content creation.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that *KembaranFest* effectively functioned as both a **promotional platform** and an **educational medium** for MSMEs in Kembaran Village.

From the perspective of **Event Marketing**, Kotler & Keller (2016) argue that events create experiential value that strengthens consumer engagement. The MSME bazaar not only increased visibility but also allowed direct interaction between producers and consumers. The integration of cultural performances with product showcases enhanced the attractiveness of the event, aligning with previous studies that highlight the role of cultural elements in community-based events (Gloria, 2024).

The adoption of **Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)** was evident through the combination of offline (posters, banners, word-of-mouth) and online (social media campaigns, hashtags, short videos) promotion. According to Umayani & Hamali (2024), mixing promotional tools amplifies reach and strengthens customer satisfaction. In this case, MSMEs that utilized both channels experienced greater improvements in visibility and engagement compared to those relying solely on offline promotion.

The outcomes also reflect the principles of **Participatory Development** (Chambers, 1994), where community members are actively involved in decision-making and implementation. MSME owners did not only receive training but also co-designed promotional content, leading to a greater sense of ownership. This aligns with studies by Widodo & Prasetyo (2023), which found that digital literacy programs are more sustainable when communities are directly engaged in the learning process.

In terms of **community empowerment**, *KembaranFest* created opportunities for MSMEs to strengthen their identity and networks. The sales increase of 25–30% demonstrated immediate economic benefits, while the creation of new digital accounts indicated a shift toward long-term competitiveness. However, challenges remain, particularly in sustaining consistency of digital promotion. Previous research (Dewi & Purnomo, 2022) emphasized that without continuous mentoring, rural MSMEs often revert to traditional methods, which limits the sustainability of digital adoption.

Overall, the discussion suggests that *KembaranFest* can be seen as a **hybrid model** that combines economic, cultural, and educational elements. Its replicability in other rural contexts depends on three critical factors:

- 1) Availability of strong community participation.
- 2) Integration of cultural identity to attract audiences.
- 3) Continuous mentoring to ensure digital adoption and sustainability.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of *KembaranFest* in Kembaran Village demonstrates that community-based events can serve as an effective strategy for empowering MSMEs. The festival not only provided immediate economic benefits—such as increased visibility and higher sales—but also initiated long-term changes, particularly in digital adoption and collaborative networking. The integration of offline event marketing with digital promotion platforms aligns with Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) principles and highlights the importance of hybrid approaches in rural development.

From a community empowerment perspective, the event fostered active participation, cultural pride, and ownership among MSME actors. The involvement of local stakeholders ensured that the outcomes were not only practical but also socially and culturally embedded. This indicates that rural communities have the potential to leverage digital technologies and innovative products when supported by participatory frameworks.

However, several challenges remain. The sustainability of digital practices requires continuous mentoring and structured follow-up programs. Without long-term guidance, MSMEs may return to traditional promotion methods, reducing the effectiveness of digital empowerment efforts. Therefore, future initiatives should prioritize capacity building in areas such as e-commerce, social media management, and visual branding to strengthen competitiveness.

In conclusion, *KembaranFest* can be positioned as a replicable model for rural MSME empowerment. By combining cultural identity, participatory development, and digital innovation, the model contributes to sustainable community development and aligns directly with the ICCD 2025 theme of leveraging digital technologies and innovative products for community resilience.

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