

EMPOWERMENT OF SEKAR JEPUN VCO KWT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS CAPACITY IN PENGLIPURAN VILLAGE, BANGLI REGENCY

L.G.P Sri Eka Jayanti¹, I Ketut Selamet², A. A. Sri Purnami³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Warmadewa, Indonesia

Corresponding author: L.G.P Sri Eka Jayanti

Email: sripurnami533@gmail.com

Article Info:

Received: 2026-01-20

Revised: 2026-02-08

Accepted: 2026-02-25

Volume: 5

Numbers: 1

Pages: 278 - 282

Keywords:

VCO, Digital
Marketing, Business
Management,
Community
Empowerment, KWT

Abstract:

Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) is a processed coconut product with high economic value and is widely used in the health, beauty, and food sectors. One VCO business group in Bangli Regency is the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group (KWT) located in Penglipuran Village. This KWT has significant potential in developing local product-based businesses, but still faces various obstacles such as limited business management, rudimentary financial records, limited access to capital, and minimal use of digital marketing. To address these issues, community service activities were designed through participatory-based training and mentoring programs. These activities aimed to improve the knowledge and skills of group members in business management and digital marketing. The implementation method was carried out through socialization, training, practice, and direct mentoring related to creating simple bookkeeping, preparing credit application proposals, and utilizing social media as a digital marketing tool. The results of the activities showed an increase in participants' understanding of business management and digital marketing. The average score for understanding business management increased to 3.06 and digital marketing increased to 3.13 after mentoring. This program has a positive impact on improving the group members' abilities in managing their businesses professionally and expanding the marketing of VCO products through digital media.

INTRODUCTION

Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) is pure coconut oil produced without high heating, thus maintaining its nutritional content. VCO products offer significant health and beauty benefits, leading to increasing market demand. Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency, is one of the villages with the potential for developing community-based VCO businesses, particularly through the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group (KWT). The Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group is a women's business group engaged in processing coconuts into VCO products. The resulting product is of fairly good quality and has the potential to be developed as a superior village product. However, in its implementation, the group still faces various obstacles, such as suboptimal business management, rudimentary financial records, limitations in preparing credit application proposals, and minimal use of digital technology for product marketing. Another problem faced is the low ability of group members to utilize social media as a means of product promotion. Digital marketing plays a crucial role in expanding market reach and increasing the competitiveness of MSME products. Therefore, training and mentoring activities are needed to improve the skills of group members in business management and digital marketing. This community service activity aims to improve the ability of KWT VCO Sekar Jepun members to manage their businesses professionally through training in simple financial recording, preparing business credit proposals, and optimizing social media-based digital marketing.



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METHODS

The community service activities are implemented through a participatory approach, actively involving members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) in every stage of the program. The program is implemented through several stages: outreach, training, practice, and direct mentoring, as follows:

1. For business management, the training will focus on simple bookkeeping and credit application proposal preparation. Participants will be taught how to maintain simple financial records, such as bookkeeping, and how to prepare credit application proposals. It will enable VCO entrepreneurs to manage their businesses more professionally and access various sources of capital, including banks, microfinance institutions, and government assistance programs.
2. For digital marketing, the training will cover effective marketing strategies using social media and e-commerce platforms. Participants will be provided with knowledge and skills in creating engaging marketing content using social media and digital platforms. This training aims to enhance participants' understanding of the importance of digital marketing and provide them with the tools necessary to access a broader and more profitable market.

The analysis used to determine the level of partner understanding of business management and digital marketing is as follows:

$$X = \frac{\text{The average score of each indicator}}{\text{Number of Indicators}}$$

Assessment Criteria:

1. Do not Understand (1)
2. Somewhat Understand (2)
3. Understand (3)
4. Understand Very Well (4)

This method is expected to have a positive impact in improving the skills and knowledge of the members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group, so they can run their business with effective business management and market their products effectively through digital platforms. Thus, this empowerment activity aims not only to increase the economic independence of the group members, but also to create sustainability in the VCO business, especially the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the Community Service Program (PKM) program for the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency, demonstrated the enthusiasm and support of the group's administrators and members. The program aims to improve the group members' knowledge and skills in managing a VCO business and marketing the product digitally.

Increased Knowledge of Digital Marketing. Participants' knowledge and understanding of digital marketing improved, particularly in utilizing social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp to market their sokasi products. It was evident from the average score calculated from respondents' answers to the distributed questionnaire, which showed that the average understanding score for participants before the training was 1.0585, indicating that



members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) did not understand digital marketing strategies. After mentoring by the community service team, the average score increased to 3.01, indicating that members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) had improved their understanding of utilizing social media to market their products. It included understanding product development innovation, the use of digital platforms like Google Maps and WhatsApp Business, and creating product catalogs. (Widyaningrum, 2024) explored the drivers of commercialization of woven bamboo crafts like sokasi through digital marketing platforms, emphasizing the importance of knowledge for scaling up digital platform usage. Training in digital marketing provides the understanding needed to expand market reach, strengthen branding, increase sales, and support sustainable business growth.

Improved Understanding of Business Management. Participants' knowledge and understanding of business management improved, particularly in simple bookkeeping and preparing business loan proposals. It was evident from the average score calculated from respondents' answers to the distributed questionnaire. The average understanding score for participants before the training was 1.0625, indicating that members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) did not understand simple bookkeeping and preparing business loan proposals. After mentoring by the community service team, the average score increased to 3.00, indicating that members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) had improved their understanding of simple bookkeeping and preparing business loan proposals. By providing business management training, artisans are expected to be able to manage their businesses more professionally. It includes aspects of financial record keeping, production planning, inventory management, and long-term business development strategies.

Table 1. Assessment of partners' level of understanding of digital marketing and business management after mentoring by the community service team (PKM)

No	Respondent Name	X1 Score (Digital Marketing)	X2 Score (Business Management)
1	Respondents 1	3,4	3,4
2	Respondents 2	3,3	3,3
3	Respondents 3	3,1	3
4	Respondents 4	3	3,2
5	Respondents 5	3	3
6	Respondents 6	3	3
7	Respondents 7	3	3,3
8	Respondents 8	3,2	3
9	Respondents 9	3	3
10	Respondents 10	3	3,4
11	Respondents 11	3	3
12	Respondents 12	3	3
13	Respondents 13	3,2	3,2
14	Respondents 14	3	3
15	Respondents 15	3	3
Average Score		3,06	3,13

Average Score for Variable X1 (Digital Marketing). The average score for variable X1 was 3.06, indicating that after receiving mentoring from the community service team, the Sekar Jepun VCO KWT (Vegetarian Cooperative) group understood digital marketing and used social media to market their products. It confirms that the digital marketing training and mentoring successfully improved participants' ability to utilize digital technology to increase sales.

Average Score for Variable X2 (Business Management). The average score for variable X2 was 3.13, indicating that after receiving mentoring from the community service team, the Sekar Jepun VCO KWT now understands how to manage a business professionally, including financial record-keeping, inventory management, production planning, and preparing credit proposals to financial institutions as a long-term business development strategy. It allows artisans to increase efficiency and productivity, ultimately impacting the competitiveness of their products in the market.

The results of the Community Service Program (PKM) activities indicate that the training and mentoring provided by the community service team effectively improved the technical business management and digital marketing skills of the Sokasi artisan group members. It increased understanding and skills directly impacted efficiency and productivity, as well as the ability to market products digitally. Increased knowledge of business management, including aspects of financial record keeping, inventory management, production planning, and credit proposal preparation, significantly impacted professional business management. It aligns with findings (Farhaeni, 2023; Widyaningrum, 2024), which emphasize the importance of practical knowledge transfer in improving business management skills. Furthermore, increased understanding of digital marketing enabled the Sekar Jepun VCO KWT to effectively utilize social media, supporting increased sales and strengthening their product branding. It aligns with findings (Meliala et al., 2019; Sopanah, 2023), which highlight the importance of digital marketing in reaching a wider market.

Overall, this activity demonstrates that ongoing training and mentoring can empower the VCO Women Farmers Group, improve their technical and marketing skills, and support economic sustainability through professional business management and effective digital marketing. Thus, this PKM activity not only has a positive impact on the level of understanding and technical skills of the artisan group members, but also opens up new opportunities for improving the local economy and the sustainability of the VCO business, especially the Sekar Jepun VCO Women Farmers Group in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency. This success underscores the importance of ongoing training and mentoring programs in supporting economic independence and capacity building of artisan communities.

CONCLUSION

The Sekar Jepun VCO KWT mentoring program in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency, aims to improve the skills and knowledge of group members in managing VCO businesses and digital marketing. This program includes training in simple bookkeeping (financial recording) and preparing credit application proposals, as well as digital marketing strategies through social media. The results of the implementation of the activities showed a significant increase in the knowledge and skills of VCO KWT members in simple bookkeeping and preparing credit application proposals and marketing products digitally. This increase has a positive impact on productivity and professional business management, as well as increasing the income and economic independence of group members. This success emphasizes the importance of ongoing training and mentoring programs to support economic independence and capacity building of artisan communities, thereby creating sustainability in the VCO business in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency.



Recommendations. It is recommended to continue providing ongoing training and mentoring in business management and marketing, with an emphasis on innovative and environmentally friendly techniques to increase productivity and market share. Furthermore, VCO business groups should receive additional training in product diversification to create a wider variety of value-added products and increase their competitiveness in the market. The use of digital marketing needs to be deepened so that sokasi artisan groups can maximize the use of digital platforms to expand market reach and increase sales. Building partnerships with relevant agencies, such as local governments, universities, and technology companies, can provide additional support in the form of resources, knowledge, and access to a wider market. Furthermore, regular monitoring and evaluation of this empowerment program is essential to measure effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to ensure optimal program performance and achieve desired goals.

Acknowledgment. The management and members of the Sekar Jepun VCO Women's Group (KWT VCO) in Penglipuran Village, Bangli Regency, expressed several wishes and hopes that the ongoing collaboration with Warmadewa University, both in the form of community service, research, and mentoring, will continue, as several issues and programs still require assistance and support.

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