

Economic Empowerment of Banjarwangi Village Community through Various Flavors of Sweet Potato Chips Products

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses about Community Service Program (KKN) in developing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Banjarwangi Village, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. Sweet potato is one of the main commodities in this village. Unfortunately, it is still underutilized. Community service program students provide training to the community in processing sweet potatoes into chips with various flavors. The lack of knowledge to develop and innovate in producing food in the form of snacks has become a problem in developing the community in Banjarwangi Village. The purpose of this study is to develop the community's economy through sweet potato chips with various flavors. The results of this activity create profitable business opportunities and increase the income of the local community. This includes methods of implementing activities, results, and marketing strategies for sweet potato chip products. The results of this community service had a positive impact and showed the potential for developing local products that have increasing selling value. As a result, the community in Banjarwangi Village can develop and innovate MSMEs products to help increase household income. The training method provides new learnings in Banjarwangi Village so that the community can face the problems that challenge farmers in utilizing sweet potato.

Keywords: community service, economic empowerment, MSMEs, sweet potato

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a developing country (Easterling et al., 2023) where people experience a huge increase in entrepreneurship starting from services to products. However, several businessmen always experience difficulties in developing their business (Noor, 2022) due to lack of planning and management that is not clear enough and also unorganized. Therefore, innovation is needed in order to increase the business (Janjić & Rađenović, 2019). Innovation is the development and application of new procedures, goods, services, and delivery strategies that significantly enhance outputs, efficacy, efficiency, or quality (Taylor, 2017). It is important because it helps companies enter new markets more quickly and establish a deeper connection with existing ones, which may open up more

opportunities, especially in developed countries. Original ideas can be generated with the aid of innovation, which gives the inventor a proactive, self-assured mindset toward taking chances and finishing tasks (Dagan, 2021).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are very popular in Indonesia. It has the potential to be extremely important to an area, particularly as one of the forces behind regional economic expansion. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises' (MSMEs) operations are seen as a way to showcase locally produced goods and give area business operators access to new markets. Furthermore, the significance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is acknowledged in boosting per capita income and enhancing a region's economy. As a result, MSMEs must be able to actively participate in the economic development of the nation (Halim, 2020). In addition, MSMEs are a vital component of Indonesia's economy and a key force behind the country's economic development. The small business that contributes significantly and maintains the stability and fluidity of the Indonesian economy is portrayed as the national MSME. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have the capacity to support the lower middle-class economy and even weather economic downturns (Fadhilah & Fitri, 2022).

Banjarwangi Village is located in Pulosari Sub-district, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. The geographical location of the village is between the foot of Mount Asepun and Mount Pulosari. The fertile soil there becomes one of the objects of the community's main income and makes the majority of the population earn a living as farmers. Sweet potato and cassava have become a cultivation in this village, but it still does not increase the high economic needs of the farmers. For example, sweet potatoes are only sold raw at low prices and there is no one who produces sweet potatoes to be a particular product.

Tubers are local foodstuffs that are quite abundant in availability and have the potential to be developed in various kinds of delicious and nutritious foods. One example is sweet potatoes (Apriliyanti, 2010). Based on (Noer et al., 2018), sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas* L) is a type of tuber that has many advantages for people and is the fourth largest source of carbohydrates in Indonesia after rice, corn, and cassava. Then, one way to expand the use of sweet potatoes, especially purple sweet potatoes, is by making food-based sweet potatoes (Nurhafnita et al., 2021).

In addition, the health benefits of dietary carotenoids and polysaccharides, which are found in sweet potatoes, are thought to be excellent. These benefits include cardiovascular protection, anticancer properties, hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activity, as well as improvements in neurological and memory function, metabolic disorders, and intestinal barrier function (Laveriano-Santos et al., 2022).

Moreover, nutrients found in purple sweet potatoes can restore daily energy sources such proteins, lipids, and carbs. High levels of anthocyanins, fiber, vitamins A, B12, and C, as well as minerals Ca, Fe, Mg, K, and Zn, are additional components. Purple sweet potatoes are utilized in both conventional and contemporary culinary processes. Cookies, brownies, sponge cakes, snack bars, fit bars, noodles, waffles, crispy croissants, spaghetti, croquettes, and MP-ASI are a

few of these processed foods. Because the heat process will alter its nutritional content, the benefits of processed purple sweet potato foods in various forms contribute to an appropriate intake of nutrients. A suitable processing technique is also important (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The sweet potato market in Pandeglang Regency, especially in Banjarwangi Village, Pulosari Sub-district, has not played a role in the distribution of harvested products in the market which is still relatively small. The distribution of sweet potatoes is only sold to traditional markets which the community utilizes as a staple food substitute for rice by burning or boiling it. From the analysis of short-term and long-term integration in Pandeglang Regency, the price of sweet potato at the farm level varies and is fairly low. This is because farmers generally sell sweet potatoes in piles of unequal quantities, with prices between IDR 10,000-50,000/pile. Therefore, to increase the income of sweet potato farmers in Banjarwangi Village, innovations are made to process food products into processed foods such as sweet potato chips so that they have a higher price than the sweet potatoes which are only sold in raw (Yusiana, 2018).

Hence, community service program students located in Banjarwangi village held training on processing chips from sweet potatoes to increase the community's ability to process agricultural products into high selling value. The problems that can be identified are that as sweet potato agricultural products increase, there is a need to think about processing them to be more productive and there is a lack of understanding by managers or entrepreneurs of sweet potato chips in developing a more economical process for making chips.

The aim of this community service is to change farmers' behavior patterns in processing sweet potatoes which have never been processed into a regional superior product in Banjarwangi Village. It is hoped that the community in Banjarwangi Village can take advantage of the natural wealth in their village, namely sweet potato products. It is very important because the farmers can independently create something with value-added products. Moreover, hopefully by doing this service, people can see and read about the use of natural resources so that they can be processed into products and create value-added products for people who want to be entrepreneurs.

There are several previous studies that related to this study. Firstly, research entitled *Cassava Chips Marketing Development Strategy in Larangan Badung Village, Palengaan District, Pamekasan Regency*, with the results showing that the cassava chips business in Larangan Badung Village, Palengaan District, Pamekasan Regency is in quadrant III, namely the Weaknesses Opportunity strategy. This strategy indicates that the company is strong and able to continue to grow, with the SWOT matrix in the WO strategy cell, namely increasing the marketing development of cassava chips by increasing the amount of production and increasing promotion via telephone or internet (Khofifah et al., 2022).

In addition, in a study entitled *Analysis of the Feasibility Study of the Cassava Chips Business in Mardani Raya Housing* with the results of the calculation of the investment assessment criteria obtained an NPV value of Rp. 730,802,669, which means that the difference between the future cash value and the investment value is positive. The IRR value is 14%, greater than the discount factor of 13%, and the

payback period is 2 years and 4 months. Therefore, it can be concluded that overall the Cassava Chips NR Jaya business is feasible to run (Gunawati & Sudarwati, 2017).

In fact, this increasing MSMEs is less supported by the government in accordance with the analysis conducted by Nani which resulted in the conclusion that this business is less supported by local government agencies, especially the Cooperative Office and banks, because indeed the capital factor is also very important for future business continuity. Then, the innovation and creativity factor also need to be improved continuously in order to not to be abandoned by consumers. Some of these obstacles need to be given attention because they have an important role in the development of the snack food industry (Nani et al., 2022).

METHODS

The method used in completing the implementation of this community service is community education. Community education is a process that is established with awareness and ongoing participation in the community with the goal of creating new concepts and understandings that will enhance the community's overall quality of life (Saepudin & Mulyono, 2019). Community education, or whatever term is developed in Indonesia, starting with non-formal and outside school education, is a set of educational activities designed to raise people's consciousness so they can recognize their own potential and that of their surroundings and make the most of them for the prosperity of society (Saepudin & Mulyono, 2019). It seeks to facilitate learners by developing their own strengths and the resources needed to solve their problems in society. The principles of community development and education are participation and diversity. The principle leads to education that values people and their experiences (Hilmi, 2022).

The method is used by training a group of mothers to be productive in order to increase creativity and innovation in products that have selling value. Training is a process by which people achieve organizational goals and is a part of education that involves the learning process to acquire and improve skills outside the prevailing education system in a relatively short time with certain methods (Safitri, 2013). In addition, the method used by community service program students is counseling on the process of making products that are innovated in order to increase the selling value of the product.

Besides that, the training activities were carried out in one of the houses as the beginning of sweet potato innovation production located in Banjarwangi Village, Pulosari District, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. The implementation of this activity was carried out on August 21, 2023. The tools used in the implementation of community service as a form of community service are a stove, frying pan, knife, sweet potato slicer, bucket, and plate. The ingredients used were sweet potato, chocolate bar, salt, and cooking oil. Then, the training and mentoring activities for making sweet potato chips of various flavors consist of several stages, namely socialization and licensing, practice of making sweet potato products, and assistance to farmers in making products.

Next, socialization and licensing are the initial stages of the activity. This activity aims to inform villagers and community groups about the plan to

implement community service activities. This activity was carried out using a direct discussion method with several housewives who part of their daily income is obtained from farming. The training activity on making sweet potato chips of various flavors began with selecting sweet potatoes that have good quality and are easy to make chips. The type of sweet potato used purple sweet potato which is commonly used in making processed products such as chips. The product-making training began with demonstrating peeling activities, introducing tools, and slicing sweet potatoes to frying. The next step is introducing the ingredients to make the desired flavors. The flavor variants are chocolate and original flavors. In addition, product packaging practices are also carried out by providing ways to make product labels so that the community can introduce and promote their products easily. Finally, packaging is done using a standing pouch (50 g), while chocolate flavor variant is packaged using a closed thinwall container.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity entitled “Economic Empowerment of Banjarwangi Village Community through Various Flavor of Sweet Potato Chips Products” was carried out on August 22, 2023. The place where this activity took place was at Mrs. Susi’s home who is one of the Banjarwangi residents and was attended by residents of Kubang Village, Banjarwangi. This activity aims to enable the community to process sweet potatoes as one of the cultivation products in Banjarwangi Village into high-value products. In the implementation of the activity, participants were given an explanation of the innovation of making sweet potato chips with various flavors, teaching how to package attractively, well, and correctly with the addition of a logo, as well as marketing techniques with online media through the marketplace.

One of Banjarwangi Village’s leading crops is sweet potato. Sweet potato is a plant that originated from the United States of America (Yuliastuti & Hartari, 2018). This plant is widespread in Indonesia, including in Banjarwangi Village, which can be used as processed food that has selling value. Therefore, community service program students have a new innovation by providing knowledge to the Banjarwangi Village community to make sweet potato-based chips (Kebi). The reason for choosing sweet potato-based food is because sweet potatoes are one of the highest plantation products in Banjarwangi Village, but unfortunately the community does not know how to turn sweet potatoes into a high-value business opportunity. The innovation of sweet potatoes into processed sweet potato chips (Kebi) can be an opportunity to start a new business by utilizing the surrounding natural resources that support the production. *Kebi* has two flavors, namely chocolate and original, which can be an interesting processed food with a crunchy texture and sweet taste that is suitable as a snack. Processing sweet potatoes into sweet potato chips (Kebi) is an innovation to make sweet potatoes have a higher selling value than just being sold raw. *Kebi* is made by peeling the skin of the sweet potato, then washing it with clean water. Next, the sweet potatoes are thinly sliced and fried until the color is brown.

1. Sweet potatoes that have been peeled of their skin are washed and then sliced



Figure 1. Cleanly washed and thinly sliced sweet potatoes

2. The oil is heated for the frying process of the thinly sliced sweet potatoes and is done until the color of the sweet potatoes is brown.



Figure 2. Frying process of sweet potato chips

3. The chocolate is melted in a small saucepan and lightly drizzled with vegetable oil



Figure 3. Chocolate being melted

4. A large container is prepared for the chocolate coating process onto sweet potato chips



Figure 4. Coating process of sweet potato chips with chocolate

5. Sweet potato chips are put into packaging with a logo attached



Figure 5. Packaged sweet potato chips

Participants in this activity involved the Banjarwangi Village community, especially those living in Kubang Village. This activity aims to provide direction to the community that agricultural products, one of which is sweet potatoes in Banjarwangi Village, can be made into MSMEs products. This can certainly help and increase the income of the community in Banjarwangi Village. The background of this activity is to increase MSMEs in Banjarwangi Village and utilize agricultural products so that the results are more profitable.

This activity produces positive value for the community because it can create creativity and innovation in the community, especially housewives in processing sweet potatoes into snacks with various flavors so that it can increase the high selling value. This business is very influential for the community because it provides business opportunities and profits from the sales results obtained. This can certainly help their poor economy.

Once the sweet potato chips are produced, the next step is to market them. There are several ways or strategies for marketing this business, including:

a. Through the Consignment System

This system is carried out by entrusting products to be sold in stalls or in other people's shops, and souvenir centers, where they will promote the sweet potato chips with profit as well (Editor OCBC NISP, 2023). Another definition of

consignment is the delivery of goods to a customer solely through introduction and without transferring ownership of the commodities (Yilmaz et al., 2016)

b. Through Social Media

Today, various business models can be marketed through digital platforms or social media. Through this way, it can reach a wider target audience. We try to utilize various social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Shopee (Rakhmawati, 2023).

c. Through Direct Selling

This next point means selling directly to consumers (Business, 2023). Direct selling is a sales strategy that utilizes salespeople to market products directly to consumers. Direct sales strategy is the most widely implemented strategy in industries that have a high mobile sales force and emphasize interpersonal relationships (Dwi, 2023). Selling chips at certain events, through the Cash on Delivery (COD) system or opening orders through WhatsApp contacts and so on.

Moreover, this *Kebi* business can be done by housewives to add to their daily activities to be more useful. *Kebi* products can be used as a snack business that become favorite food for many people, with a fairly broad target market and able to reach various groups such as school children, students, employees, and so on.

CONCLUSION

Community service activities provide good impact and learning for community in Banjarwangi Village so that they can develop and innovate MSMEs products to help increase household income. Moreover, the training method for making various flavors of sweet potato chips provides new learnings for the community in Banjarwangi Village so that they can face the problems that challenge farmers in utilizing sweet potato harvests to produce value-added products. Community service activities still need and continue to be carried out to increase knowledge for students, the community, and all farmers to continue to improve creations, creativity, and knowledge to create an independent and competitive society. The community in Banjarwangi Village can develop and innovate MSME products to help increase household income. The training method of making various flavors of sweet potato chips provides new learnings in Banjarwangi Village so that the community can face the problems that challenge farmers in utilizing sweet potato harvests so as to produce value-added products. Then, the implications of community service activities in MSME partners are (1) increasing community creativity, especially mothers and sweet potatoes farmers and (2) increasing competitiveness (increasing quality, quantity, and value of resources).

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