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INFUSED WATER PRODUCT INNOVATION AS AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP MSMES IN SURU SOOKO VILLAGE IN THE FIELD OF HEALTHY DRINKS

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Abstract

The Community Service Program (KKN) conducted by Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo in Suru Village, Sooko District, identified that local agricultural and plantation resources, including fruits and herbs such as mint leaves, had not been optimally utilized into products with added value. Some agricultural products were still sold in fresh form, while public awareness of healthy lifestyles was increasing. This condition encouraged the development of an innovative healthy beverage, infused water, as an effort to utilize local raw materials and develop opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The implementation method included observation and identification of local potential, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), infused water production practice, product packaging and labeling, introduction to digital marketing, and activity evaluation. The results showed that the community gained basic knowledge and skills in selecting and processing ingredients, maintaining hygiene during production, packaging products, preparing labels, and introducing products through social media. The activity also introduced opportunities to increase the added value of local agricultural products through a beverage product that is more ready for marketing. Therefore, infused water innovation can be an alternative for developing MSMEs based on local potential and can still be developed sustainably by the community of Suru Village, Sooko District.

Introduction

A healthy lifestyle is one of the concerns of the community, especially as awareness of the importance of choosing simpler and natural foods and drinks increases. One of the beverage products that can be developed is infused water, which is a drink made by soaking sliced fruit and herbal ingredients such as mint leaves in water to produce a fresh taste. This condition opens up opportunities for the development of beverage products based on local ingredients, especially for rural communities who have access to agricultural and plantation products.

Based on initial observations made in Suru Village, Sooko District, it was found that there is potential for garden products in the form of lemons, strawberries, and mint leaves that have not been utilized optimally as processed products. Crops tend to be marketed in fresh form so that the added value obtained by the community is still limited. On the other hand, the limitations of product innovation, packaging, and understanding of modern marketing are one of the challenges in the development of village MSMEs.

The use of local potential through product development can be one approach to increase the economic value of resources available in the community. The development of MSMEs also not only requires production capabilities, but also needs to be supported by business management, packaging, branding, and marketing in accordance with technological developments. Mentoring MSMEs based on local potential can help people acquire skills that can be applied directly in economic activities (Fitriani, 2021).

Digital marketing can also be a means to introduce products to a wider range of consumers. Social media allows business actors to display product photos, provide composition information, and communicate with potential consumers without relying entirely on direct marketing. Digital marketing strategies are becoming increasingly relevant for beginner MSMEs because they can help expand the reach of promotions with relatively easy-to-use means (Wijayanti et al., 2023).

Based on these conditions, this KKN flagship activity seeks to introduce local infused water innovations while providing knowledge about the process of manufacturing, packaging, labeling, and digital marketing. The activity is expected to provide practical experience to the community so that local materials are not only sold as raw materials, but can be developed into products that have added value and business opportunities.

Method

Service activities are carried out with a participatory approach and community empowerment. The stages of activities are arranged sequentially, starting from potential identification to evaluation, so that the community not only receives information but is also involved in the practice of activities.

- Observation and identification of local potential by looking at the availability of fruits and herbal plants that can be used as a base for infused water.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the community to explore the conditions, needs, and objectives of the activity.
- The practice of making infused water, including material selection, washing, cutting, determining the dosage, soaking process, and applying hygiene during the manufacturing process.
- Product packaging and labeling using appropriate bottles, accompanied by basic information regarding product name, composition, production date, and shelf life according to the results of the activity.
- Introduction of digital marketing strategies through social media and marketplaces, including taking product photos and compiling product descriptions.
- Evaluate activities to find out the participants' understanding and skills after

participating in a series of activities.
The activity involves KKN students as implementers and facilitators, and is expected to be able to provide innovations in the future to become new business fields.

Table 1. Stages of Implementation of Activities

Yes	Method Internships	Main Activities	Purpose	Output
1	Problem Identification	Field surveys, community interviews, observation of village Potential	Know economic conditions, local potential, and key Issues	Data on village needs & potentials
2	Program Planning	Preparation of work programs, determination of partners, preparation of activity schedules	Designing programs that suit the needs of the community	Proposals & activity plans
3	Socialization	Counseling to the community related to the PKM program	Increase community understanding and participation	Citizen support & engagement
4	Skills Training	MSME training (handicrafts, culinary, agriculture, etc.)	Improving people's skills and productivity	The community has new skills
5	Business Assistance	Production guidance, business management, Marketing	Helping the sustainability of Community Businesses	More developed and managed Efforts
6	Application of Appropriate Technology	Introduction of simple tools/technologies for Production	Improve product efficiency and quality	Faster & quality production
7	Monitoring & Evaluation	Periodic evaluation of program activities and results	Know the effectiveness of the program and improvements	Evaluation report
8	Publication & Dissemination	Documentation, publication of the results of activities	Disseminate program results	Articles/reports of publications
9	Program Sustainability	Formation of local business groups/partners	Maintain the sustainability of the program after the completion of the PKM	Independent business groups

Result and Discussion

1. Identify Local Potential and MSME Problems

The initial stage of the activity was carried out through observation to find out the potential of raw materials and the conditions for the development of MSMEs in Suru Village, Sooko District. Observation is an important step because product development activities need to be adjusted to the resources available in the community. The results of the observation show that there are local ingredients in the form of lemons, strawberries, and mint leaves that can be used as basic ingredients for infused water. These three ingredients can provide a variety of taste, aroma, color, and appearance in products so that they are suitable to be introduced as beverage innovations.

The existence of these local ingredients shows that Suru Village has resources

that can be developed into processed products. Some of the garden products so far tend to be marketed in fresh form. This condition makes the use of garden products still limited to the sale of raw materials, so that the opportunity to obtain added value through processing has not been utilized to the maximum. Through infused water innovation, the available materials can be introduced in the form of products that are more ready for consumption and have a clearer product identity.

The potential of these raw materials also shows that the development of MSMEs does not always have to depend on materials from outside the village. The use of resources available around the community can be the first step in creating economic activities based on local potential. This approach also helps the community see that garden products have various possibilities for use, not only for sale directly.

The problems found are not only related to the availability of raw materials, but also limitations in processing fresh ingredients into products that have added value. The public needs to gain knowledge about material selection, manufacturing processes, cleanliness, packaging, labeling, and product introduction to consumers. These skills are interrelated because product quality is not only determined by the ingredients used, but also by how the product is made and prepared for market.

Technological developments also provide new opportunities for MSMEs to introduce products. Products that were previously only known in the surrounding environment can be introduced through social media and marketplaces. Therefore, the development of infused water in this activity is not only directed at the ability to make drinks, but also at the initial understanding of how products can be packaged and introduced to potential consumers.

The findings at the observation stage then become the basis for determining the series of activities. By recognizing raw materials and problems from the beginning, activities can be directed to more tangible needs. The local potential-based approach is also in line with the principle of community empowerment, which is to encourage the community to recognize, utilize, and develop their resources more productively.

2. Practice of Making Infused Water

After the potential of the ingredients and the needs of the activity are known, the next stage is the practice of making infused water. KKN students make directly with materials that are suitable for use, material washing, cutting techniques, dosage determination, and soaking process. Practice directly so that not only to gain theoretical knowledge, but also to be able to try each stage.

The choice of ingredients is an important part because the quality of the ingredients will affect the final result of the drink. Lemon can provide a fresh taste, strawberries give the character of flavor and color, while mint leaves provide a distinctive aroma. These differences in character provide an opportunity to create several combinations of products based on the available ingredients and the tastes of potential consumers.

Cleanliness is an important part of the manufacturing process because infused water is a drink that is consumed immediately. The tools, bottles, and containers used need to be in a clean condition. Ingredients also need to be washed well before being cut and soaked, lemons also need to be washed with salt water to

remove the bitter taste in the lemon peel. Clean handling of ingredients can help maintain product quality and become part of production habits that need to be applied if the product is developed into a business.

In this activity, the process carried out is more accurately understood as the process of soaking or infusion of ingredients into water. This is important to understand because the infused water made in the activity is not directed to produce fermented products. Understanding the right process helps business actors know the character of the product and explain the manufacturing process to potential consumers more accurately.



Figure 1: Infused Water Making Practices

The size of the ingredients, the size of the piece, the cleanliness, and the soaking process need to be considered if the product will be made repeatedly. Consistency is important because consumers need products of relatively the same quality when making repurchases.

The combination of lemon, strawberry, and mint leaves can be the basis for making several flavor or appearance choices. The development still needs to be adjusted to the availability of ingredients, production capabilities, public tastes, and consumer responses.

Overall, the practice of making infused water provides an experience that local ingredients can be processed into beverage products through stages that can be learned by KKN students. This experience can be the first step to recognize business opportunities from the materials available around them.

3. Product Packaging and Labeling

After the manufacturing process is completed, the activity continues with product packaging and labeling. Packaging not only functions as a container, but also becomes part of the product's display before being introduced to consumers. In this activity, transparent bottles are used so that the color and contents of infused water can be clearly seen. This display can help show the character of the product as well as become one of the visual attractions.

Packaging selection is also related to the readiness of the product to be marketed. Products that are neatly packaged will look more organized than products that are only placed in containers without identity. For MSMEs that are just developing, the ability to choose and use appropriate packaging can be a basic skill in building a product appearance.

Labels are introduced as an information medium that helps consumers recognize products. The information used in the activity includes the name of the product, composition, production date, and shelf life according to the results of the activity. This information needs to be compiled clearly and consistently so that consumers can more easily understand the products offered.

Labeling is also part of the formation of product identity. Products that have a clear name and information will be easier to recognize when introduced through social media or direct marketing. With this identity, the product begins to take shape as a product that can be developed as part of a business.

Packaging and labeling are concerned with consumer trust. Beverage products require attention to cleanliness and adequate information as consumers will consider quality before purchasing. Therefore, packaging skills need to go hand in hand with the habit of maintaining cleanliness during the production process.





Figure 2 & 3 : Packaging and Labeling of Infuse Water Products

For start-up MSMEs, the ability to package and label is an important part of increasing marketing readiness. Products based on local ingredients can gain added value if they are supported by neat packaging, clear identity, and easy-to-understand information. Thus, packaging is not only related to appearance, but also part of the process of building product identity and readiness.

4. Digital Marketing and MSME Development Opportunities

The next stage is the introduction of digital marketing through social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp Business as well as marketplaces. This introduction is carried out to provide an overview to the public on how to introduce products by utilizing technology that is relatively easy to use. Participants are introduced to how to take product photos, compile descriptions, and convey product information to potential consumers.

Social media provides an opportunity for infused water products to be displayed more attractively. The color of the fruit and mint leaves visible through the transparent bottle can be used as a visual element in promotions. Clear product photos and easy-to-understand information can help potential consumers get an idea of the product before making a purchase.

Digital marketing also allows business actors to communicate with consumers

without always having to promote directly. Information about composition, packaging, and products can be conveyed through uploads or messages. For beginner MSMEs, the ability to use digital media can be the first step to expand the reach of promotion from the surrounding village environment to a wider range of consumers.

However, digital marketing is not enough just to upload product photos. The promoted product needs to have clear information and a consistent appearance. Product descriptions need to be arranged according to the condition of the product, while photos need to show the product in real terms. This is important so that the information received by consumers is in accordance with the product offered.

The development of MSMEs also requires consistent business management. If infused water is developed as a product that is sold sustainably, the community needs to pay attention to the availability of raw materials, process cleanliness, packaging size, pricing, cost recording, and evaluation of consumer responses. The ability to make products is one part of business development, but it is not the only need.



Figure 3: Success in Attracting Consumer Purchasing Power

Pricing is something that needs to be considered in the next stage of development. Prices need to pay attention to the cost of materials, packaging, and other production needs so that the business can run measurably. Cost recording can help determine capital needs and estimate the value obtained from each product sold.

Evaluating consumer responses is also important to find out whether the taste, appearance, packaging size, and product information are in accordance with market needs. The input can be used to determine the variety of products to be developed. In this way, innovation does not stop at one activity, but can be a development process that is carried out in stages.

Overall, the results of the activity show that we KKN students have gained basic knowledge and skills regarding the use of local ingredients, the process of making infused water, cleanliness, packaging, labeling, and the introduction of digital marketing. The positive response of consumers shows that there is an interest in product innovations that can be made from quality local ingredients available around.

This activity shows that the development of local products requires integration between raw materials, production processes, packaging, product identity, and

marketing. Each part supports each other in increasing the readiness of products to be developed as a business. Therefore, the development of infused water needs to be seen as a series of interrelated activities, not just as a practice of making beverages.

If developed sustainably, infused water innovation has the potential to become an alternative to diversifying the products of Suru Village MSMEs. Processing garden products into ready-to-sell products can help increase added value compared to the sale of materials in fresh conditions. Long-term success still requires further development, especially in maintaining quality, determining costs and prices, developing product variations, expanding markets, and managing business finances.

Thus, this KKN activity can be the first step in introducing the use of local potential into a more valuable product and can be a business opportunity.

Conclusion

Based on the implementation of KKN activities, Suru Village, Sooko District, has the potential for local raw materials such as lemons, strawberries, and mint leaves that can be used as basic materials for the development of infused water products. Activities are carried out through observation of local potential, FGD, manufacturing, packaging and labeling practices, introduction to digital marketing, and evaluation.

The results of the activity show that we have gained basic knowledge and skills in processing local ingredients into more value-added beverage products. We also gained an understanding of the importance of process cleanliness, packaging, product identity, and the use of social media as a means of promotion. Thus, infused water innovation can be an alternative to introduce the development of MSMEs based on local potential in Suru Village.

The sustainability of the program still requires further development, especially in maintaining quality consistency, determining production prices and costs, developing product variations, and expanding marketing, so that it can be developed into products that have future potential by utilizing local ingredients around and are expected to be able to compete with other beverage products.

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