

## The Utilization of Social Media as a Digital Marketing Tool for Strengthening the Local Economy in Kesugihan Village, Ponorogo

Fitra Rizal<sup>1</sup>, Syafira Khairina Izzati<sup>2</sup>, Naufal Hisyam Mashadi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo; [fitrarizal@uinponorogo.ac.id](mailto:fitrarizal@uinponorogo.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo; [syakhairina19@gmail.com](mailto:syakhairina19@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo; [nhisyam828@gmail.com](mailto:nhisyam828@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the utilization of social media as a tool for digitizing the profile and promoting Kesugihan Village, Pulung District, Ponorogo Regency. The background of this research is the suboptimal use of social media at the village level, despite its significant potential to expand audience reach at a low cost. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, observations, documentation, and secondary sources. The findings indicate that Kesugihan Village possesses competitive advantages in the agricultural sector, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and tourism, particularly through activities at Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis. The main challenges include low digital literacy and the absence of structured marketing strategies. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, have proven effective in presenting village profiles, promoting local products, and attracting tourists, mainly when supported by training, mentoring, and the establishment of a digital promotion team. In conclusion, a consistent and well-directed social media strategy can expand market reach, enhance the competitiveness of local products, and foster sustainable economic development in the village.

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### Related Authors:

**Fitra Rizal**

UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo; [fitrarizal@uinponorogo.ac.id](mailto:fitrarizal@uinponorogo.ac.id)

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including the way people access and disseminate information. Social media is no longer merely a communication tool; it has become a strategic instrument for building image, promoting regional potential, and digitizing critical information (Nasrullah, 2017). The utilization of social media for

promotional purposes has become a trend across various sectors, including village governance, where digital platforms are increasingly employed to enhance transparency and public participation (Kurniawan, 2020).

At the village level, this opportunity is particularly significant, as social media can reach a broad audience at relatively low costs (Pradana & Rachman, 2021). Unfortunately, many villages have not yet optimized the use of social media for profile digitization and the promotion of local potential. In fact, social media can serve as an effective medium to introduce a village's economic, social, and tourism potential to a broader public (Sari & Fitriani, 2022).

Within the context of village governance, social media can be utilized to digitize village profiles, including history, demographic data, resource potential, governmental structures, public facilities, and various community activities (Kemendesa PDTT, 2023). A digitized village profile serves as an easily accessible source of information and as a primary promotional tool to attract tourists, investors, and potential collaborators.

According to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, a village is a legal community unit with defined territorial boundaries that has the authority to regulate and manage governmental affairs and local community interests based on community initiatives, ancestral rights, and/or traditional rights recognized and respected within the unitary state governance system of the Republic of Indonesia.

Kesugihan Village is located in Pulung District, Ponorogo Regency, East Java, approximately 25 km from the city center of Ponorogo and 8 km from the Pulung District office. The majority of its population engages in agriculture, animal husbandry, and trade. In addition, Kesugihan Village possesses tourism potential that is currently being developed through the "Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis," which is expected to become a new tourist attraction, thereby increasing the village's revenue. By leveraging social media, the profile and potential of Kesugihan Village can be digitally packaged to reach a wider audience and strengthen the local economy.

Nevertheless, the utilization of social media in villages still faces several challenges, such as limited human resources with digital marketing expertise, low digital literacy, and the absence of structured content planning (Wibowo & Santoso, 2022). Therefore, a well-designed strategy is necessary to ensure that social media serves as an effective tool for digitizing village profiles and promoting them, ultimately contributing to sustainable local economic empowerment.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the utilization of social media as a digital marketing tool for strengthening the local economy in Kesugihan Village, Pulung District, Ponorogo Regency (Moleong, 2019). This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining the experiences and social processes of village communities in using social media as a means of promotion and profile digitization. The study is classified as field research, with the location selected purposively, considering that Kesugihan Village is actively developing its tourism potential, has a high number of MSMEs, and has begun utilizing social media for promotional purposes.

The research data consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with village officials, MSME actors, managers of Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis, and residents, while secondary data were collected from village documentation, official reports, and literature related to social media, digital economy, and community empowerment (Creswell, 2018; Bungin, 2020). Data collection was conducted through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, allowing the findings to be presented systematically and providing a comprehensive understanding of social media utilization in Kesugihan Village.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Historical Background and Identity of Kesugihan Village

Kesugihan Village is situated in Pulung District, Ponorogo Regency, and comprises four hamlets: Krajan, Kebonagung, Sisir, and Plahosan. Based on *interviews* with the Village Head, Mr. Sugeng Riyanto, comprehensive information was gathered regarding the village's conditions, potential, and challenges. Historically, the village's name originates from the story of a figure named Sugiyo, who came from Bayat, Central Java. He had a noble intention to transform what was then a wilderness into an organized and prosperous area. This aspiration was embodied in the name "Kesugihan," which is unrelated to myths or the practice of "pesugihan," but rather reflects a hope for prosperity (Riyanto, 2025).

The name "Kesugihan" represents the ideals of wealth and well-being for the village community. This historical value has become an integral part of the village's social and cultural identity and can be effectively leveraged in digital branding strategies. Local identity plays a crucial role in place branding, as historical and cultural values serve as strong differentiators in region-based digital marketing. This is particularly relevant for Kesugihan Village, which is actively seeking to build a positive image through the digitization of its village profile (Haryanto, 2021).

#### Resources and Diversity of Kesugihan Village

The village's potential is evident in the agricultural sector, which serves as the backbone of the local economy. Major agricultural products include coconuts, avocados, durians, bananas, cocoa, tobacco, coffee, rice, shallots, and corn. Coconuts are a highly sought-after commodity, particularly for young coconut water, whereas rice can be cultivated year-round with the aid of an adequate irrigation system. Additionally, the horticultural sector has experienced significant growth in certain areas (Riyanto, 2025).

The village economy is also supported by the presence of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including tofu and tempeh factories, herbal medicine businesses, producers of banana chips and cassava chips, and handicrafts made from fabric and leather, as well as other local snack businesses. Marketing is conducted through village markets and local store networks. The tourism potential is also being developed, as seen in the Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis area, which is planned to serve as a supporting destination to alleviate congestion at Telaga Ngebel. Village infrastructure is adequate to support community activities. Mosques are present in each hamlet, serving as centers for religious and social activities. Road infrastructure allows two-wheeled vehicles to access all hamlets, although car access remains limited in some areas (Riyanto, 2025).

Challenges faced by the village include limited reach for marketing local products and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which temporarily reduced the production and sales of some businesses, such as local grilled chicken vendors. The Village Head hopes that in the future, marketing can be expanded through the use of social media and the digitization of the village profile, enabling local products to gain recognition beyond the Ponorogo region (Riyanto, 2025).

From an analytical perspective, this diverse potential indicates significant opportunities for strengthening the local economy through digital marketing strategies. According to literature, diversification of agricultural products and MSMEs constitutes an essential asset for enhancing the village's competitiveness, especially when combined with effective digital promotion (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kapoor et al., 2022). The presence of tourism potential, such as Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis, can also serve as a value proposition to attract tourists, while simultaneously creating opportunities for cross-promoting local products on social media. However, market reach limitations and low digital literacy remain major obstacles. As highlighted by Nasution (2023), the success of digital economic initiatives in villages heavily depends on the community's ability to manage digital content and strategically utilize online platforms. Therefore, integrating the development of local resources, MSMEs, and tourism potential with social media as a promotional channel can enhance village visibility, expand market networks, and drive sustainable economic growth.

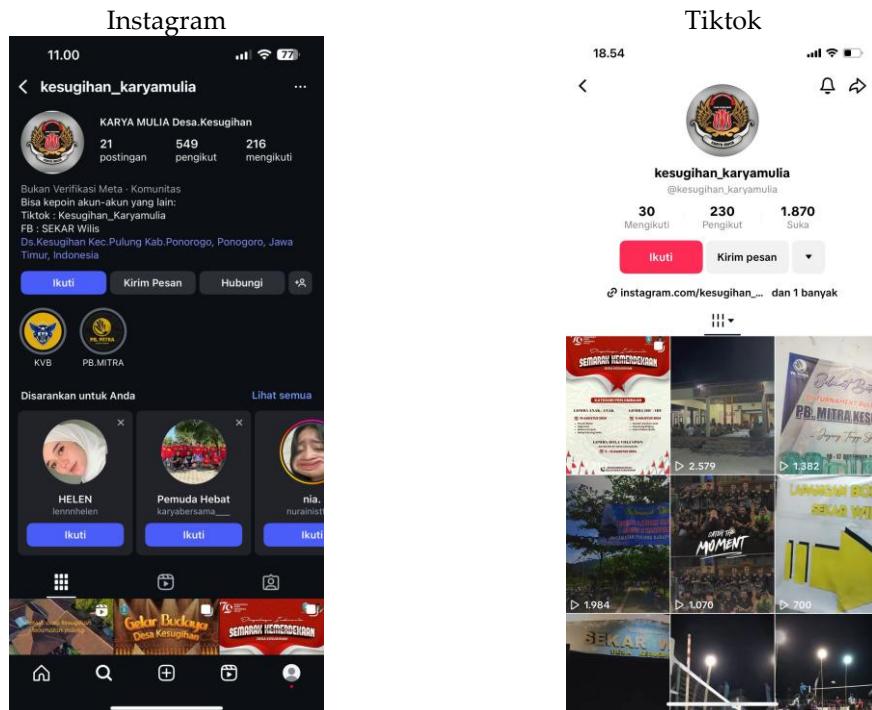
## Utilization of Social Media as a Digital Marketing Tool for Strengthening the Local Economy in Kesugihan Village

Based on field findings, Kesugihan Village possesses significant potential to develop as an agriculture-, MSME-, and tourism-based village. The diverse agricultural sector emphasizes the utilization of existing community assets. Key commodities such as coconuts, rice, and other horticultural products can be processed into higher-value derivative products, including virgin coconut oil, organic rice, and dried fruit products.

The presence of MSMEs producing tofu, tempeh, chips, and handicrafts demonstrates the existence of a creative economy that can be further developed through branding and digital marketing. However, limited access to external markets remains a significant constraint. In this context, social media emerges as a highly relevant strategy. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok can be leveraged to showcase the village profile, promote local products, and attract tourists or buyers from outside the region.

The development of tourism destinations, such as Sanggar Loka Sekar Wilis, aligns with the village's efforts to create new employment opportunities, increase community income, and strengthen local identity. This potential can be optimized through digital content packaging, promotional video production, and collaboration with local communities or influencers. By integrating social media promotion with the development of local resources and MSMEs, the village can enhance its digital visibility, expand market reach, and strengthen economic competitiveness (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kapoor et al., 2022; Nasution, 2023).

These findings underscore the importance of community capacity building in digital literacy. Without the ability to manage and create engaging content, the effectiveness of social media as a promotional tool will be limited. Therefore, training, mentoring, and establishing a village promotion team are essential to ensure sustainable digital marketing practices that support local economic growth and tourism development.



These findings suggest that strengthening community capacity in digital literacy is a crucial step in ensuring the effectiveness of social media-based promotional strategies. Without the skills to

manage and create content, the potential of social media cannot be fully realized. Therefore, mentoring, training, and establishing a village promotion team are essential.

Consequently, the utilization of social media as a tool for digitizing the profile and promoting Kesugihan Village can act as a catalyst for accelerating village development. When implemented consistently, these strategies allow agricultural, MSME, and tourism potentials to reach broader markets, enhance competitiveness, and support sustainable village development (Sutrisno & Syukur Widiyanto, 2023).

Analysis of the findings further demonstrates that the effectiveness of social media as a digital marketing tool heavily depends on the community's ability to manage content and implement structured promotional strategies. Without adequate digital literacy, social media remains a passive platform that has minimal impact on local economic improvement. Conversely, with proper digital skills, villagers can significantly increase the visibility of agricultural products, MSMEs, and tourism potentials, access previously unreachable markets, and sustainably enhance village income (Nasution, 2023; Kapoor et al., 2022). Therefore, capacity building through training, mentoring, and the formation of a village promotion team becomes a strategic and essential step to ensure that digital marketing strategies serve as a true catalyst for local economic development in Kesugihan Village.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Social media serves as a strategic and effective tool for supporting digital marketing at the village level, particularly in digitizing the village profile, promoting MSME flagship products, and showcasing local tourism potential to a broader audience. Utilizing platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok can enhance the visibility of Kesugihan Village and efficiently expand its market reach. However, the success of this strategy largely depends on improving the digital literacy of the community, implementing systematic content planning, and establishing a professional and sustainable village promotion team. By applying a consistent, targeted, and collaborative digital marketing strategy, social media can act as a catalyst for strengthening the local economy, fostering community self-reliance, and accelerating the realization of competitive and sustainable village development.

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