

# Empowering Disabled Women Entrepreneurs in Sariharjo through Product Photography Training

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## Abstract

**Purpose** - This study aims to examine the impact of product photography training on the digital marketing skills of women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities, addressing the gap in digital visual literacy among rural UMKM actors. The research seeks to provide insights into how skill development in product photography can enhance the quality of online business promotion, contributing to inclusive economic empowerment.

**Methodology** - The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative assessments through pre-tests and post-tests with qualitative observations of participants' product photography outcomes. Data were collected from women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities in Sariharjo Village, Ngaglik, Sleman, and analyzed using comparative evaluation of skill improvements and visual quality metrics.

**Findings** - The results indicate that participants' knowledge and skills in lighting, composition, camera angles, and product arrangement significantly improved after the training. The findings also show an increase in participants' confidence in marketing their products digitally, suggesting that targeted training can strengthen UMKM capacity in rural areas.

**Originality** - This study provides a novel perspective on the role of visual-based digital marketing training in empowering women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities. The findings contribute to understanding how practical skill interventions can enhance market competitiveness, offering guidance for future training programs, policy development, and inclusive economic initiatives.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Digital Marketing, Disability Empowerment, Women Entrepreneurs, UMKM, Product Photography.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes to the social and economic conditions of society, particularly affecting actors in Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) (Pessy & Firmansyah, 2023). As a sector that has long functioned as the backbone of the community's economy, UMKM have gradually experienced a substantial decline due to activity restrictions, decreased purchasing power, and limited access to marketing channels.

These impacts were indirectly felt by women-managed UMKM, especially those operated by women in rural areas (Chaerani, 2024). Limited access to technology, capital, and skills training has caused many UMKM, particularly those led by women, to face difficulties in adapting, especially in relation to the shift in marketing patterns from conventional to digital methods during the pandemic.

This situation was also experienced by Kharolin Hilda Amazona, who has managed a family-owned UMKM that has been operating for more than 20 years. During the pandemic, the UMKM suffered a significant decline and even faced the risk of closure due to reduced demand and disrupted product distribution.

In addition to her own business challenges, Kharolin directly observed the conditions faced by women UMKM actors in her surrounding environment, particularly in the rural area of Kalurahan Sariharjo, Kapanewon Ngaglik, Sleman Regency. Many UMKM initiated by women, which previously served as the main source of household income, were forced to cease operations as they were unable to withstand the economic pressures during the pandemic.

Based on these concerns, Kharolin Hilda Amazona initiated a social entrepreneurship initiative called *Gitarja Bhumi*, which was officially established on June 17, 2022. *Gitarja Bhumi* serves as a platform for empowering women UMKM, including UMKM managed by women with disabilities, through an inclusive approach to entrepreneurship education and digital marketing (Mahdaria, 2024).

*Gitarja Bhumi* utilizes the potential of natural resources (SDA) and local wisdom as the foundation for UMKM product development. This approach aims not only to enhance the economic value of UMKM products but also to support the sustainability of the rural economy and strengthen local identity in the face of increasingly competitive and expansive markets (Maheng, 2023). In addition to supporting post-pandemic economic recovery, *Gitarja Bhumi* also seeks to address gender-related issues within the economic sphere. Women, including women with disabilities, often encounter structural barriers in accessing economic opportunities. Therefore, *Gitarja Bhumi* places the principles of inclusion and gender equality at the core of all empowerment programs it implements.



Fig. 1 Ecoprinting activities conducted at *Gitarja Bhumi*.

Despite these empowerment efforts, a significant technical gap remains in the intersection of disability and digital aesthetics. For entrepreneurs with disabilities, product photography presents unique physical and cognitive barriers that go beyond simple technical skill. Physical limitations may restrict the ability to handle heavy camera equipment, maintain steady hand positions for focus, or maneuver around lighting setups in non-accessible workspaces. Furthermore, most standardized photography tutorials do not account for adaptive techniques or assistive tools, leaving disabled entrepreneurs at a disadvantage in a 'visual-first' digital economy. This lack of inclusive technical training creates a 'double barrier': they face the general challenges of rural digitalization while simultaneously struggling with specialized hardware and software that are not designed with their physical needs in mind. Consequently, their products—though high in quality—often fail to compete on visual-centric platforms.

However, in the current digital era, the quality of a product's visual presentation has become a key determinant of marketing success (Banjarnahor & Hariningsih, 2025), particularly on e-commerce platforms and food delivery services such as Shopee Food. Consequently, attractive product photos and videos play a significant role in building consumer trust and stimulating purchase intentions.

Nevertheless, limitations in understanding and skills related to the production of visually appealing food product photos and videos are still evident among women UMKM actors. Products that are actually of high quality often receive less consumer interest due to suboptimal visual presentation that does not meet digital marketing standards.

These limitations indicate a clear need for practical and applicable technical training, particularly in the field of product photography. Such training is essential to enable UMKM actors to produce product images that are visually attractive, informative, and aligned with the data requirements of e-commerce platforms. In response to this need, Universitas Amikom Yogyakarta organized a Product Photography Training program for women UMKM and women UMKM with disabilities in Kalurahan Sariharjo. The program was designed not only to deliver theoretical knowledge but also to emphasize hands-on practice that can be directly applied to daily business activities.

Through this training, participants are expected to enhance their technical skills in product photography, develop creativity in visual product presentation, and improve the competitiveness of UMKM in the digital market. Ultimately, this activity is expected to generate positive impacts on women's empowerment, expanded market access, and sustainable rural economic growth.

## II. METHOD

The implementation of this activity employed a participatory and educative approach, emphasizing the active involvement of participants and the organizing team throughout all stages of the program, while focusing on improving knowledge and skills through a structured learning process (Saidah et al., 2024). The participatory approach is considered effective in community empowerment activities as it fosters a sense of ownership, enhances self-confidence, and strengthens both individual and group capacities. Meanwhile, the educative approach aims to systematically transfer knowledge and skills through a combination of theoretical and practical learning, enabling participants to directly apply the learning outcomes to their business activities (Sa'idah & Fitriarti, 2025).

Based on these approaches, the activity was implemented through several interrelated stages, beginning with the preparation stage, followed by the implementation stage, and concluding with the evaluation stage. These stages were designed in accordance with activity management principles, planning, implementation, and assessment to ensure that the program was carried out effectively and achieved its intended objectives. The stages are described in detail as follows:

First, Preparation Stage. The preparation stage was conducted to ensure the readiness of all resources and participants before implementing the activity. This stage included coordinating with stakeholders and participants to determine schedules, venues, and technical requirements. It also involved preparing human resources by assigning roles and responsibilities within the organizing team. Equipment and logistical needs, such as cameras, lighting, backdrops, audio-visual tools, and training materials, were arranged and tested. Ensuring the availability and functionality of these resources was crucial to minimize potential technical and logistical obstacles during the subsequent stages of the program.

Second, Implementation Stage. The implementation stage formed the core of the activity, during which the planned program was executed to achieve its objectives. The training emphasized a structured and interactive approach combining theory and practice. First, theoretical sessions were delivered on the principles of product photography, including composition, lighting, and visual aesthetics relevant to food products. Second, hands-on practice allowed participants to apply the concepts directly by photographing their products under guided supervision. Third, interactive discussions and 'question and answer' sessions were conducted to encourage active participation and deepen understanding. Fourth, monitoring and technical support were provided throughout to ensure that all equipment functioned properly and participants received assistance as needed.

Third, Evaluation Stage. The evaluation stage aimed to assess both the process and the outcomes of the activity to determine the overall success of the program. First, participant engagement during the training was observed. Second, the quality of the product photographs produced was reviewed to measure skill improvement. Third, feedback was collected from participants regarding the clarity, relevance, and usefulness of the materials and training approach. The evaluation results were used to identify areas for improvement and to inform the development of similar activities in the future.

### **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Product Photography Training for Women UMKM Entrepreneurs and Women with Disabilities in Sariharjo Village, Ngaglik, Sleman, Special Region of Yogyakarta was held on Sunday, December 8, 2024, at Gitarja Bhumi, Wonorejo, Tambakan, Rejodani 2, Sariharjo. This activity was designed as part of efforts to empower women economically through enhancing visual-based digital marketing skills.

The event took place from morning until afternoon, involving the service team, instructors, volunteers, and participants from women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities. The involvement of multiple parties demonstrates the importance of collaboration in implementing community empowerment programs to achieve the activity's objectives optimally (Sa'idah et al., 2023).

The initial stage of the activity began with preparations by the entire service team from 07:00 to 08:00 AM. Preparations included arranging the venue, checking training equipment, and organizing the activity flow. This preparation stage played a strategic role in ensuring smooth execution and minimizing technical issues on-site.

After the preparation stage, participants underwent a registration process as a form of attendance verification and readiness to participate in the training. This administrative process is important to ensure that all participants are properly recorded and facilitates subsequent activity evaluation. The training continued with an opening ceremony hosted by an MC and included a speech from the head of the activity. The opening session served to convey the objectives, background, and benefits of the activity to the participants, creating a shared understanding before entering the core training sessions.

Before the delivery of material, participants took a pre-test to measure their initial knowledge of product photography. The pre-test served as a baseline to determine participants' understanding before

receiving training interventions. The product photography material was then systematically delivered by the instructor, covering the basic concepts of product photography, lighting techniques, composition, camera angles, and the use of mobile phone cameras. The material was presented in simple language to match the characteristics of women UMKM participants.

The material delivery was interactive, involving participants through discussions and Q&A sessions. This interactive method aimed to increase participant engagement and deepen understanding of the topics presented (Ramadhan et al., 2025). After the theory session, the activity continued with hands-on product photography practice guided by the service team. Participants used their own mobile phones, making the skills acquired directly applicable to their daily UMKM business activities. Guidance from the service team during the practice session provided participants the opportunity to receive direct instructions regarding photography techniques and product arrangement. This mentoring was considered crucial in the hands-on learning process. Below are examples of photos before and after the practice:



**Fig 2. Training Results**

The results of participants' practice were then given direct feedback by the instructor. Feedback covered technical and visual aesthetic aspects of the product photos. Immediate feedback helps participants correct mistakes and improve photo quality. In addition to basic training, the activity continued with a professional product photography session facilitated by the service team. Participants were divided into two groups, with each UMKM receiving professional photography services, models, photo editing, and product video shooting. The results are as follows:



**Fig 3. Professional Product Photography Results**

Professional photography facilitation provided significant added value for participants, as the photos and videos produced were not only visually superior but also ready to be used as promotional materials on various digital platforms and e-commerce sites. In this facilitation, participants received documentation of products that had undergone product arrangement, lighting selection, model usage, and visual editing according to digital marketing standards. High-quality visuals play an important role in building product image, increasing consumer appeal, and fostering trust in the products offered (Supriadi, 2025).

After the activities, the service team and staff conducted an evaluation. Based on observations and evaluation results, there was an improvement in the quality of participants' product photos after the training compared to the photos taken before the training. Participants were able to apply lighting,

composition, and product arrangement techniques more effectively. Pre-test and post-test results showed an increase in participants' understanding of product photography materials. This indicates that the training methods used were effective in enhancing participants' knowledge and skills (Haryanto et al., 2026).

The activity also had social impacts, such as increasing the confidence of women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities in marketing their products digitally. Increased confidence is one of the indicators of the success of community empowerment programs. Overall, this Product Photography Training contributed to strengthening the capacity of women-led UMKM in rural areas. By improving the visual quality of their products, UMKM have greater opportunities to compete in the digital market and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Product Photography Training for Women UMKM Entrepreneurs and Women with Disabilities in Sariharjo Village, Ngaglik, Sleman was successfully conducted and achieved the predetermined objectives. This activity served as a strategic effort in empowering women economically by enhancing their capacity in visual-based digital marketing skills, particularly in the context of product photography. Based on the implementation results, this training proved effective in improving participants' knowledge and skills related to product photography. This was demonstrated by improvements in pre-test and post-test scores, as well as enhanced quality of participants' product photos after attending both the material and practical sessions. Participants were able to apply basic photography techniques, such as lighting, composition, camera angles, and product arrangement more optimally to support their business promotion activities.

In addition to technical skill enhancement, the activity also had positive social impacts, particularly in increasing the confidence of women UMKM entrepreneurs and women with disabilities to market their products digitally. The professional product photography facilitation added significant value by producing visual materials that were ready to be used as promotional media, thereby increasing the competitiveness of products in the digital market. Overall, this training contributed to strengthening the capacity of women-led UMKM in rural areas and supported the creation of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The success of this activity demonstrates that collaboration between the service team, instructors, and the local community is a key factor in implementing community empowerment programs with tangible impact.

Reflecting on the success of this program, there is a clear need for institutional support to ensure the sustainability of these skills. It is recommended that local governments in Sleman and Yogyakarta develop specific policies for 'Inclusive Digital Grants.' Such policies should provide targeted funding or subsidies for disabled-owned MSMEs to acquire adaptive digital equipment—such as lightweight tripods, voice-activated shutter triggers, and ergonomic lighting kits. By integrating digital equipment procurement into village-level development budgets (Dana Desa), the government can dismantle the physical barriers to digital marketing, transforming one-time training successes into long-term economic independence for entrepreneurs with disabilities.

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