



Accelerating rural creative economy: Youth digital entrepreneurship empowerment in Timpuseng Village

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Abstract

Timpuseng Village faces youth urbanization challenges due to limited local employment opportunities, despite its significant economic potential. This community service program aims to foster youth entrepreneurship by strengthening digital literacy and optimizing e-commerce platforms. The implementation methods included participatory training, technology integration, intensive two-week monitoring, and the establishment of a youth entrepreneur community. Results indicated a significant 102.22% increase in participants' knowledge scores (from an average of 41.8 to 84.07). Additionally, 100% of participants successfully activated digital business accounts, with 83.3% recording interactions or transactions within the first 14 days. This program demonstrates that digital literacy effectively transforms village youth from job seekers into independent local creative economy drivers.

Keywords: Digital literacy; Entrepreneurial spirit; E-Commerce platforms

Akselerasi ekonomi kreatif perdesaan melalui pemberdayaan kewirausahaan digital pemuda di Desa Timpuseng

Abstrak

Desa Timpuseng menghadapi tantangan urbanisasi pemuda akibat keterbatasan lapangan kerja lokal, meskipun memiliki potensi ekonomi yang besar. Program pengabdian ini bertujuan menumbuhkan jiwa kewirausahaan pemuda melalui penguatan literasi digital dan optimalisasi platform e-commerce. Metode pelaksanaan meliputi pelatihan partisipatif, implementasi teknologi, pemantauan intensif selama dua minggu, serta pembentukan komunitas wirausaha muda. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada pemahaman peserta sebesar 102,22% (dari rata-rata skor 41,8 menjadi 84,07). Selain itu, 100% peserta berhasil mengaktifkan akun bisnis digital, dengan 83,3% di antaranya mencatatkan interaksi atau transaksi dalam 14 hari pertama. Program ini membuktikan bahwa literasi digital efektif mentransformasi peran pemuda desa dari pencari kerja menjadi penggerak ekonomi kreatif lokal yang mandiri.

Kata Kunci: Literasi digital; Semangat kewirausahaan; Platform e-commerce

1. Introduction

Timpuseng Village, located in the Camba District, Maros Regency, South Sulawesi, is a coastal village with abundant local resources, particularly in the form of palm leaf

Contributions to
SDGs

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



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weaving crafts and organic agricultural products, including kepok bananas, purple sweet potatoes, and spices characteristic of the mountains. The attributes of Timpuseng Village, Camba District, Maros include its geographical location in the highlands, with altitudes ranging from 350 to 710 meters above sea level. Most of the area is hilly with expanses of agriculture, plantations, community forests, and protected forests. The majority of the population works as farmers, cultivating primary commodities such as rice, chili, corn, ginger, and peanuts. The name of this village comes from the Bugis language, *timpuseng*, which means “spring that never runs dry.” (Sadapotto et al., 2025).

The people of Timpuseng Village are known to have close social ties with the culture of cooperation that is still maintained. The values of local wisdom are still inherent in daily life, both in religious, social, and customary activities. Traditions and habits passed down from generation to generation give this village a distinctive character, characterized by strong family ties among its residents (Deng et al., 2025).

The agriculture, plantation, and community livestock sectors dominate the economic characteristics of Timpuseng Village. Most of the population works as farmers, primarily producing rice, corn, and other garden products (Zaca et al., 2025). With sufficient natural resources and community cohesiveness, this village has the potential to continue developing, both through more modern agricultural management and the utilization of local potential to enhance the welfare of its residents (Setiawan, 2024).

The economic potential in Timpuseng Village, if properly managed, will generate long-term income for the community, serve as the backbone of the village economy, and create independent employment opportunities (Rahman et al., 2023). However, ironically, this potential has not been able to keep pace with the urbanization of the younger generation. Based on data from the Timpuseng Village Government in 2024, more than 65% of youth of productive age (18-35 years old) choose to migrate to big cities such as Makassar and Parepare to work as day laborers or informal workers, leaving behind local assets that are actually of high value (Samsinar et al., 2024). Therefore, the potential for local income that young people can generate may be hindered by parents who are unsure whether they can revive the economic potential (Nuraeni et al., 2024).

Indonesia’s socio-economic dynamics show an increasing trend of population and labor force growth (Pefbrianti et al., 2024). Data from the Central Statistics Agency recorded that Indonesia’s population reached 284.44 million people, with a labor force of 152.11 million, an increase of 1.38 million in just one year. On the other hand, the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in February 2025 is still at 4.76%, equivalent to 7.28 million people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). This condition reflects the inequality between the availability of jobs and the community’s need for decent work (Alom et al., 2025). In this context, entrepreneurship exists not only as an alternative but as an urgent need to create economic independence and reduce dependence on conventional employment systems (Rachman & Rahman, 2022).

In the digital era 4.0, entrepreneurial opportunities are increasingly abundant, thanks to the widespread adoption of technology (Indahsari et al., 2024). By 2024, 221.56 million people (79.5% of the population) will be connected to the internet, with 353.8 million mobile devices active, demonstrating the dominance of mobile access as the main gateway to the digital world (Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2026). This phenomenon creates opportunities for business models based on digital platforms that are more efficient,

scalable, and cost-effective than conventional businesses (Pitrianti et al., 2023). Contemporary literature suggests that digital entrepreneurship not only lowers the barrier to entry for beginners but also expands market reach to national and even global levels (Karczmarczyk et al., 2026).

In response to these employment challenges and digital opportunities, innovative solutions are being offered to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit, particularly among the people of Timpuseng, through digital literacy (Zulfiqar et al., 2026). This approach integrates the values of independence, creativity, and the use of digital technology in building an adaptive and sustainable business (Utami et al., 2024). Through mentoring, education, and empowerment based on local potential, people are encouraged not only to become digital consumers but also to become producers and active economic actors in the digital space (Salim & Issa, 2024).

The solution given to the village to increase the spirit of entrepreneurship is to socialize young people who have businesses to strengthen their business foundations (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017). The next solution is to create training on digital literacy to strengthen the digital marketing process, which has become a phenomenon in Timpuseng village (Nadir et al., 2026). Finally, conduct monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of activities to assess their effectiveness and impact on business actors in Timpuseng village (Sodri et al., 2026).

The objectives of this activity specifically are: a) Fostering awareness and entrepreneurial spirit among the Timpuseng community in response to the challenges of employment and economic independence; b) Provide a practical understanding of digital business models and the use of technology platforms (social media, marketplaces, etc.) to start a business with limited capital; c) Encourage the application of entrepreneurial values – such as confidence, creativity, rigor, and never giving up – in facing uncertainty and taking advantage of opportunities in the digital era.

2. Method

The method of implementing this service is presented descriptively to provide an overview of the approaches, stages of activities, and evaluation techniques used in empowering youth in Timpuseng Village. The activity employs a participatory-educational approach that emphasizes the active involvement of participants in enhancing their digital literacy and e-commerce-based entrepreneurship skills (Redding et al., 2025). The service was held on September 4, 2025, at the Timpuseng Village Hall, involving 30 productive-age youth who were selected based on entrepreneurial interests and the ability to use digital devices. The materials used include digital entrepreneurship modules, case studies of e-commerce-based MSMEs, and guidelines for using digital platforms, supported by presentation devices and internet connections (Yacob et al., 2023).

The implementation of the activity includes three main stages: 1) socialization of the urgency of digital entrepreneurship and local economic opportunities (Lopes et al., 2025); 2) digital literacy training, which includes creating business accounts, content production, and marketing strategies (Sreesuknam & Kidrakarn, 2025); and 3) monitoring and evaluation through intensive post-training assistance. Evaluation data were collected through observation, pre-training questionnaires, and documentation of

participants' digital activities. The analysis was conducted descriptively to assess the increase in knowledge, the formation of business accounts, and the initial interactions on digital platforms. This method provides a clear basis for implementing community service as a means of disseminating research results and expertise to address the entrepreneurial needs of village youth (Li & Mou, 2025).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Building awareness of the urgency of digital entrepreneurship

The socialization activity was conducted on the first day at the Timpuseng Village Hall, with 30 young people of productive age (18-35 years) in attendance (Figure 1). The socialization was initiated by the village head and continued with a presentation by the service team on national employment conditions, urbanization trends among village youth, and economic opportunities in the digital era. The socialization was conducted by expert in MSME management Ms. Karlina Ghazalah Rahman to deliver material about building awareness of the urgency of digital entrepreneurship. The material delivery utilized a two-way communication method, allowing participants to consult directly regarding their specific product challenges. BPS and APJII data serve as a basis for an argument that economic independence through entrepreneurship is no longer an option, but a necessity.



Figure 1. Socialization to build awareness of the urgency of digital entrepreneurship

The results of the observation revealed a change in the participants' attitude following the question-and-answer session. As many as 87% of participants admitted that they had never considered entrepreneurship before because they felt "without capital" or "afraid of failure". However, after understanding that digital businesses can be started with minimal capital and utilizing local potential (such as woven palm trees and banana *kepok*), their interest increased significantly. This is an important foundation before entering the technical training stage (Harahap et al., 2024).

Figure 2 illustrates the individual increase in each participant's knowledge score. The blue line indicates a pre-test score that is generally in the range of 35–50, while the green line (post-test) shows a significant jump to the range of 78–91 after training. This proves the effectiveness of knowledge transfer in activities.

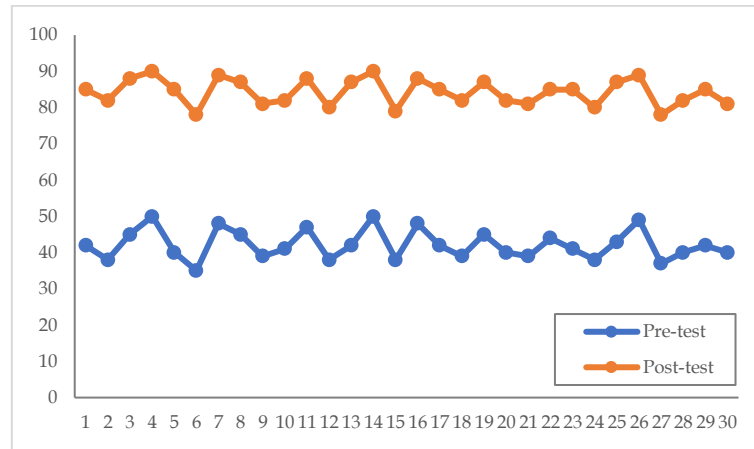


Figure 2. Comparison chart of pre-test and post-test scores per participant

3.2. Digital literacy training: From consumers to digital economy actors

The digital literacy training was conducted over a full day, utilizing a learning-by-doing approach. The training sessions were led by Dr. Ridwan, S.E., M.Si. a specialist in digital marketing strategies (Figure 3). The material delivery utilized a two-way communication method, allowing participants to consult directly regarding their specific product challenges. The qualitative response from participants was highly positive. During the session, one participant, a local banana chip producer, stated, “I previously thought online selling was complicated and required expensive equipment. After this simulation, I realized I could manage a Shopee store just using my current smartphone”. This enthusiasm was further reflected in the dynamic Q&A session, where participants actively asked about packaging techniques suitable for shipping expeditions. Participants were divided into small groups (five people per group), and each group was assigned the task of identifying one superior product from Timpuseng Village to be marketed digitally. The training materials include: a) creating business accounts on Instagram and Shopee; b) product photography techniques using mobile phones; c) writing attractive and SEO-friendly descriptions; d) promotional strategies through reels and stories; and e) order management and customer service.



Figure 3. Digital literacy training by resource persons

The results of the training showed that 100% of participants (30/30) successfully created an active digital business account. A total of 28 participants directly uploaded at least one product, and 22 of them had received interactions (likes, comments, or DMs) in the

first 24 hours. This demonstrates that practice-based training is practical in transforming participants' perceptions from "just social media users" to "digital economy actors."

Figure 4 quantitatively supports the qualitative finding that digital literacy training has successfully enhanced the intellectual capacity and readiness of participants to start a business based on digital platforms. Prior to the training, the average knowledge score of participants was 41.8, reflecting a limited understanding of digital entrepreneurship concepts, online marketing strategies, and e-commerce use, in line with the initial observation that the majority of participants primarily used mobile phones for entertainment or social communication (IS et al., 2024). However, after participating in intensive training based on learning by doing, including creating a business account, taking product photos, preparing attractive descriptions, and ordering simulations, the average score jumped to 84.1. According from Figure 5, this 102.22% increase not only demonstrates the effective absorption of material but also marks a paradigm shift, participants no longer view social media as a means of content consumption, but rather as a means of producing and distributing economic value (Begiristain-Zubillaga et al., 2022).

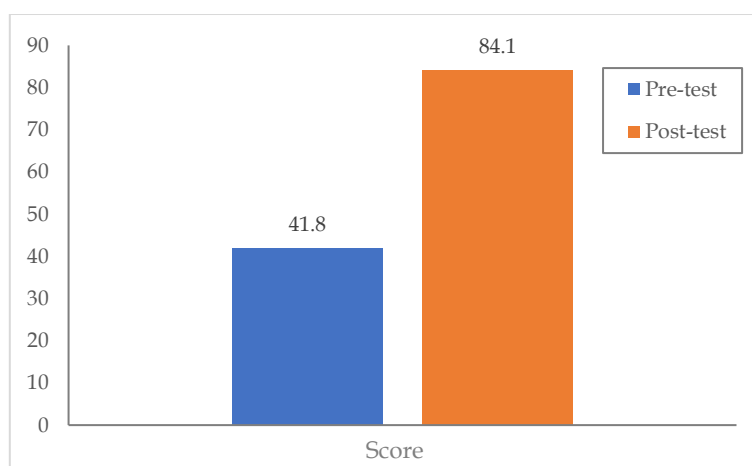


Figure 4. Average pre-test vs post-test score

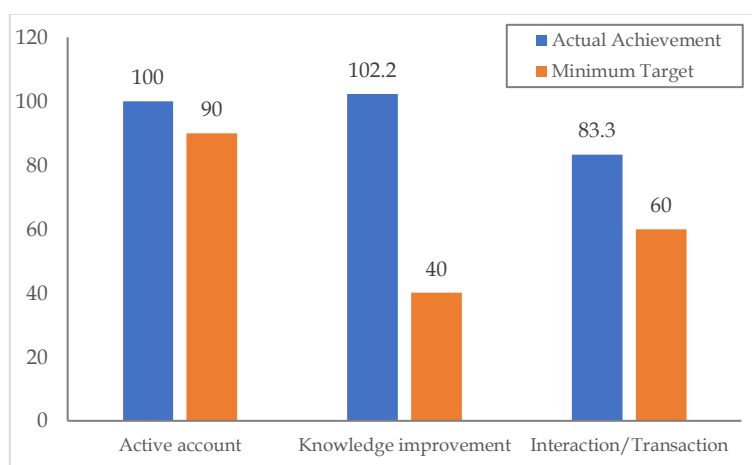


Figure 5. Actual achievement results with target success indicators

These findings align with the existing literature on digital entrepreneurship. Radiansyah (2022), which emphasizes that access to technology alone is not enough without adequate literacy. Training that combines brief theory and hands-on practice has been

proven to bridge the gap between local potentials (such as woven palm trees and banana kepok) and the broader digital market (Sholehuddin et al., 2026). Thus, Figure 4 is not just a representation of numbers, but empirical evidence of the success of educational interventions in transforming village youth from job seekers to job creators (Al Lawati et al., 2026).

3.3. Monitoring and evaluation

The service team monitored the situation for two weeks post-training through WhatsApp groups and conducted weekly field visits. Each participant is asked to report their account activity (number of uploads, interactions, and transactions). Data were collected through digital questionnaires and direct observation. The results of the monitoring show:

- a. 25 participants (83.3%) remained actively managing their accounts until the end of the second week.
- b. 12 participants have received real orders (minimum one transaction), with an average transaction value of IDR 75,000–IDR 250,000.
- c. The increase in participants' knowledge was measured through pre-test and posttest, with the average score increasing from 41.8 to 84.1 (an increase of 102.22%).

The evaluation also uncovered common obstacles, such as a lack of consistency in content creation, limited internet networks in some hamlets, and an initial reluctance to “appear in front of the camera”. However, with intensive mentoring and encouragement from fellow participants, the majority were able to overcome these obstacles. Figure 5 visually presents the achievement of three key success indicators for service activities, all of which were measured and verified during a two-week intensive post-training monitoring process.

First, active account. The achievement of 100% in creating a digital business account reflects the success of the training and technology application stage. However, the greater value lies in the continuation of the account activity monitored through WhatsApp groups and field visits. Of the 30 accounts created, 25 (83.3%) remained active until the end of the second week, demonstrating that participants were not only capable of creating accounts but also had a commitment to maintaining and developing them, which is crucial in the context of digital-based entrepreneurship (Garai-Fodor et al., 2022).

Second, knowledge enhancement. The average increase in knowledge score of 102.2% far exceeded the minimum target of 40%. It confirms that the learning-by-doing training method, complemented by modules and hands-on mentoring, is highly effective in transferring complex knowledge into practical abilities. The evaluation process, conducted through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as observation during monitoring, ensures that this improvement is not merely the result of the exam, but is genuinely reflected in the way participants think and act when managing their digital business (Hendrayati et al., 2025).

Third, interactions/transactions. The achievement of 83.3% of participants who managed to get fundamental interactions or transactions in the first 14 days is the most crucial indicator. This demonstrates that the training is not only theoretical but also directly results in tangible economic benefits. Through mentoring, the service team helps participants overcome barriers such as a lack of content consistency or fear of appearing

in front of the camera. As a result, 12 participants have even received real orders, with an average transaction value ranging from IDR 75,000 to IDR 250,000—proving that digital business models can operate at the village level with proper support (Shahzad et al., 2025).

4. Conclusion

The service activity has successfully achieved all the designed objectives. First, the awareness and interest in entrepreneurship among youth have increased significantly, as evidenced by the shift in attitude from “afraid to start” to “actively managing digital business accounts.” Second, a practical understanding of digital business models was successfully transferred through participatory training, where 100% of participants (30/30) were able to create business accounts on Instagram and Shopee and upload village superior products. Third, entrepreneurial values such as confidence, creativity, precision, and perseverance began to be internalized by participants, as reflected in their commitment to managing accounts for two weeks post-training.

Quantitatively, there was a 102.22% increase in the average knowledge score (from 41.8 to 84.07), and 83.3% of participants had experienced fundamental interactions or transactions within the first 14 days. This achievement exceeded all established success indicators, proving that the digital literacy-based empowerment approach is highly relevant to addressing the challenges of employment and urbanization in villages. To ensure the sustainability of the impact of the activity, the following are recommended:

- a. The Timpuseng Village Government needs to actively support the Timpuseng Young Entrepreneurs Community (WMT) through the provision of promotional facilities, free internet access at the village hall, and the integration of digital products into village programs (e.g., village tour packages).
- b. The service team and partner universities should provide follow-up assistance regularly (at least quarterly) to provide advanced training (MSME financial management, paid advertising strategies, branding) and evaluation of business development.
- c. Participants are encouraged to continue to be consistent in managing accounts, collaborate in the WMT community, and dare to experiment with new content and products based on market feedback.
- d. Research and service institutions (LPPM) in the university environment are advised to develop a digital entrepreneurship standard module based on local potential that can be replicated in other villages in South Sulawesi.

With synergy between the community, village governments, and academics, digital entrepreneurship can become a new pillar of an inclusive, sustainable, and nationally competitive village economy.

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Author Contribution

Activity implementation: AB, AA, AD; Article preparation: AA, AE; Analysis of service impact: AB, AD; Presentation of service results: AA; Article revision: AE.

Conflict of Interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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