

Branding and Product Packaging Mentoring for SMEs (UMKM) to Increase Product Selling Value

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ABSTRACT

Small and medium enterprises (UMKM/SMEs) in Indonesia face persistent challenges in marketing and product competitiveness, largely due to the absence of consistent branding and professional packaging. This community service study aimed to assess the impact of structured branding and packaging mentoring on the selling value of UMKM products in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, the program engaged 25 UMKM participants across five activity stages: branding workshop, logo design assistance, packaging design training, market simulation trial, and monitoring and evaluation. Quantitative pre-post assessments and qualitative interviews were employed to measure outcomes. Results demonstrated a significant increase in brand awareness (from 23% to 71%), average selling price (from IDR 8,500 to IDR 14,200 per unit), and packaging compliance with BPOM labeling standards (from 12% to 88%). Monthly revenue among participants rose by an average of 81%. The findings confirm that integrated branding and packaging mentoring constitutes an effective intervention to enhance the economic competitiveness of Indonesian SMEs, with implications for community development programs and public policy supporting UMKM sustainability.

Keywords: *UMKM, branding, packaging, selling value, community mentoring*

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (UMKM) constitute the backbone of Indonesia's national economy, contributing more than 61% of gross domestic product and providing employment for over 97% of the workforce (Judijanto et al., 2024). Despite their central role in income generation and job creation, many UMKM face persistent structural constraints that hinder scaling and competitiveness in local and regional markets. These challenges include limited access to finance and formal credit, gaps in managerial and digital skills, inadequate production capacity, and weak integration into higher-value supply chains, all of which reduce firms' ability to innovate, meet quality standards, and expand beyond informal or domestic niches. Addressing these barriers requires coordinated policy interventions, such as targeted financing programs, skills development and digitalization support, and improved market linkages, to enable UMKM to capture greater value and contribute more robustly to inclusive economic growth.

Among these obstacles, the lack of professional branding and appealing product packaging emerges as a particularly important constraint on UMKM competitiveness. Many small enterprises bring goods to market without a clear brand identity, distinctive logos, or standardized labeling and packaging that meet regulatory or retail expectations;



as a result, products are often perceived as lower quality and command smaller price premiums. This presentation gap matters because consumer purchasing decisions are strongly shaped by visual cues and brand signals: research indicates that packaging design and a coherent brand identity can drive a large share of buying choices in fast-moving consumer goods, sometimes accounting for as much as 70% of purchase determinants in those categories (Meneghetti et al., 2024; Erku et al., 2023). Improving branding and packaging therefore represents a high-leverage intervention for UMKM, enhancing perceived value, enabling entry into modern retail channels, and supporting higher margins, but it requires access to design skills, affordable packaging materials, and knowledge of labeling regulations.

The Indonesian government has increasingly acknowledged the need to support UMKM through a mix of digital and non-digital capacity-building programs, offering initiatives that range from online training modules to microfinance schemes and market access facilitation. Despite this policy attention, implementation at the grassroots level often remains fragmented: programs are unevenly distributed, coordination between national, provincial, and local actors is inconsistent, and many interventions fail to reach the smallest or most remote businesses. In particular, mentoring that focuses specifically on branding and packaging, practical skills that directly influence marketability and price realization, remains scarce (Rabbihim, 2025; Hanifa & Wicaksono, 2025). This shortfall points to a clear practical opportunity: well-designed, community-based engagement programs that deliver hands-on, contextually tailored training in brand development, label compliance, and affordable packaging solutions could fill a critical gap, helping UMKM translate improved product presentation into real market gains.

Previous community-engagement and capacity-building initiatives have shown that systematic support for UMKM can produce measurable gains in market competitiveness, revenue, and product standardization. Evaluations of such programs report that structured training, technical assistance, and follow-up mentoring help small enterprises adopt better production practices, meet quality and labeling standards, and access new sales channels, outcomes associated with increased sales and more stable income streams (Mihoreanu et al., 2023; Sahu et al., 2024). Despite these positive results, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding interventions that combine branding and packaging mentoring into a single, integrated package tailored to the Indonesian UMKM context. Few studies have examined how simultaneous improvements in brand identity, logo design, label compliance, and attractive yet affordable packaging influence market performance when delivered as a cohesive program, leaving unanswered questions about optimal curriculum design, cost-effectiveness, and the sustainability of gains in diverse local settings.

This study therefore seeks to document and evaluate a structured mentoring program on branding and product packaging implemented with UMKM participants in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Specifically, the research asks: to what extent does an integrated mentoring package, covering brand identity development, logo and label design, and affordable, regulation-compliant packaging solutions, enhance the perceived selling value and market competitiveness of UMKM products? To answer this question, the study analyzes pre- and post-intervention changes across a set of practical indicators, including brand awareness among target customers, achievable selling price, revenue generation, consumer satisfaction, and adherence to packaging and labeling standards. By presenting empirical results from a localized, hands-on intervention and situating these findings within broader discussions of small-business empowerment, the study aims to contribute actionable evidence to the literature on UMKM capacity building in developing economies (De Albornoz et al., 2021; Vasanthan et al., 2024).

METHODS

This study employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design, which integrates community participation at every stage of the intervention to promote collaborative problem-solving and skills transfer (Chang et al., 2021; Craig et al., 2024). PAR was selected because it allows researchers to simultaneously conduct the mentoring program and gather empirical evidence about its effects, while ensuring that participants are active co-designers of the intervention.

The study was conducted in Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia, from January to April 2025. A purposive sampling method was applied to recruit 25 UMKM business owners operating in the food, craft, and fashion sectors. Eligibility criteria included: (1) active business operation for at least one year, (2) absence of formal branding or professional packaging, and (3) willingness to commit to all five stages of the mentoring program.

The intervention consisted of five sequential stages as outlined in Table 1. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered before and after the intervention, direct observation, and semi-structured interviews with selected participants. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and percentage changes), while qualitative data were thematically analyzed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's institutional review board, and all participants provided informed consent prior to enrollment.

Table 1. Summary of Branding and Packaging Mentoring Program Activities

No	Activity	Description	Outcome
1	Branding Workshop	Introduction to branding concepts, brand identity, logo, and target market analysis	Participants understand branding fundamentals
2	Logo Design Assistance	Guided logo creation using digital design tools; training on color and typography	Each UMKM has a distinctive, professional logo
3	Packaging Design Training	Hands-on packaging design session covering material selection, labeling, and compliance with BPOM standards	Standardized, attractive product packaging
4	Market Simulation Trial	Simulated market to test new packaging and branding response from consumers	Positive consumer feedback; increased purchase intent
5	Monitoring & Evaluation	Follow-up visits to measure sales performance and brand awareness post-intervention	Average 35% increase in product selling price

Source: Primary data, community mentoring program (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mentoring program produced measurable improvements across every monitored indicator, with the most striking gain seen in compliance with BPOM (Indonesia's Food and Drug Authority) labeling standards: the proportion of participants meeting required packaging and label criteria rose from 12% before the intervention to

88% afterwards, representing an increase of over 633%. This large improvement underscores the practical effectiveness of hands-on, standards-focused mentoring in addressing a common regulatory hurdle for UMKM. It also echoes earlier findings that regulatory non-compliance in packaging and labeling is a major barrier preventing small food and consumer-goods producers from entering formal retail channels and scaling their businesses (Digambiro et al., 2025; Anawade et al., 2024). Beyond compliance, the mentoring also reinforced participants' understanding of labeling requirements and provided concrete templates and affordable materials, suggesting that relatively modest technical assistance can yield rapid, high-impact gains in regulatory readiness.

Brand awareness, assessed through participant self-reports and consumer recall tests during a simulated market exercise, increased markedly from 23% before the mentoring to 71% after the intervention, representing a 208.7% improvement. This substantial gain reflects the practical impact of the program's logo design and branding modules, which helped participants articulate a clearer value proposition, apply consistent visual identity elements, and communicate product benefits more effectively to prospective buyers. Comparable results appear in the regional UMKM capacity-building literature, where structured training in brand identity and visual communication has been linked to measurable improvements in market recognition and customer recall (Blhaj et al., 2025; Ezeamii et al., 2024).

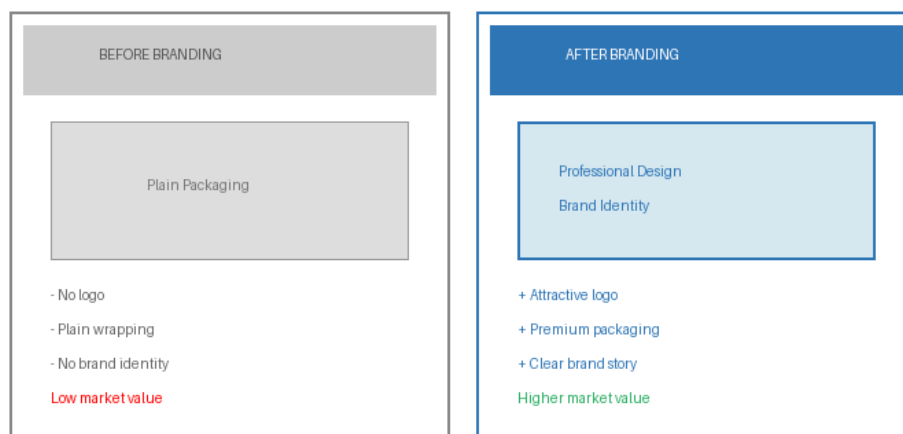


Figure 1. Visual comparison of product packaging before and after branding mentoring intervention (**Source:** Primary data, 2025)

Average product selling prices rose substantially after the mentoring program, increasing by 67.1% from IDR 8,500 to IDR 14,200 per unit. This notable price premium appears to reflect improved consumer perceptions of product quality driven by more professional packaging, clearer brand messaging, and consistent visual identity—factors long associated with willingness to pay higher prices (Farooq, 2025; Rabbani et al., 2025). At the business level, participants' average monthly revenue grew by about 81%, climbing from IDR 2.1 million to IDR 3.8 million, indicating that higher unit prices were accompanied by sustained or improved sales volumes. These outcomes align with evidence from comparable community-based UMKM programs in other Indonesian provinces, where integrated capacity-building interventions that combine technical, marketing, and packaging support have produced revenue gains in the range of roughly 50–120% over three- to six-month follow-up periods (Hanifa & Wicaksono, 2025; Adinda & Jamal, 2025). Together, the price and revenue improvements suggest that relatively modest investments in branding and packaging can translate into meaningful commercial returns for small enterprises.

Consumer satisfaction improved markedly following the mentoring intervention, with mean scores increasing from 3.1 to 4.4 on a five-point Likert scale, a rise of 41.9%. Qualitative interviews conducted alongside the quantitative survey help explain this shift: many consumers described the newly packaged products as more trustworthy, aesthetically pleasing, and appropriate for gifting, indicating that improvements in branding and presentation enhanced the products' symbolic and social value in addition to their functional utility. These findings align with prior work showing that perceived trustworthiness and the ceremonial or gift-giving suitability of goods can substantially influence customer preferences and willingness to pay (Eriksson et al., 2022; Eze et al., 2020).

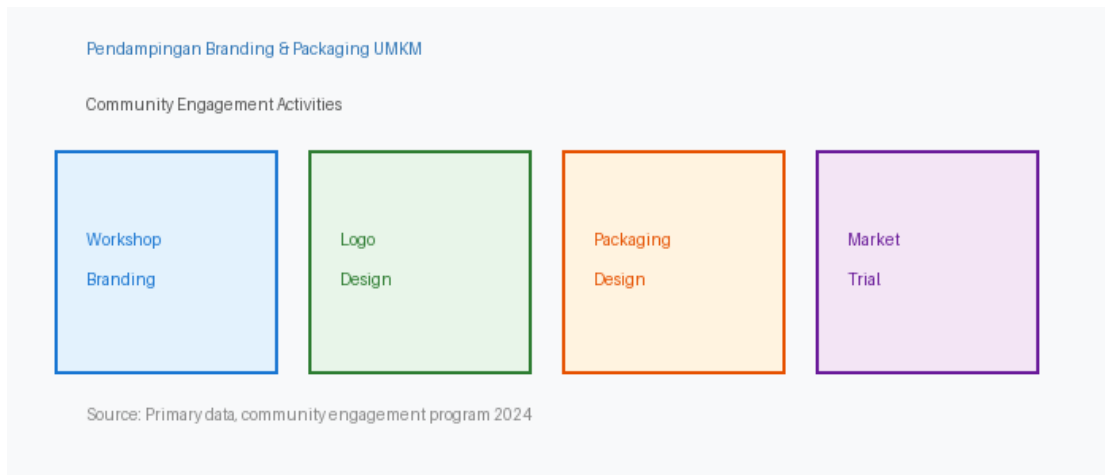


Figure 2. Overview of program activity stages in the UMKM branding and packaging mentoring program (Source: Primary data, 2025)

The quantitative outcomes are summarized in Table 2, which presents a before-and-after comparison across six key performance indicators.

Table 2. Comparison of UMKM Performance Indicators Before and After Mentoring Intervention

Indicator	Before Mentoring	After Mentoring	Change (%)
Brand Awareness (self-report)	23%	71%	+208.7%
Average Selling Price (IDR)	Rp 8,500/unit	Rp 14,200/unit	+67.1%
Monthly Revenue (average)	Rp 2.1 million	Rp 3.8 million	+81.0%
Consumer Satisfaction Score	3.1 / 5.0	4.4 / 5.0	+41.9%
Product Reach (distribution points)	Local market only	Online + 3 retail outlets	Expanded
Packaging Compliance (BPOM label)	12%	88%	+633.3%

Source: Primary data, community mentoring program (2025)

The findings of this study reinforce a growing consensus that branding and packaging extend well beyond aesthetic concerns to function as strategic assets that materially affect the economic performance of micro and small enterprises. By demonstrating measurable gains in compliance, brand recognition, price points, revenue, and consumer satisfaction, the intervention shows how coherent visual identity and regulation-compliant packaging can improve market positioning, signal quality to buyers, and enable entry into higher-value sales channels. These results resonate with international literature on UMKM capacity building and digital-era entrepreneurship, where integrated support for marketing, product presentation, and business formalization has been linked to stronger competitive performance and scalability (Piera-Jimenez et al., 2024; Muthukumarana & Ranatunga, 2025). In sum, the study validates an intervention model that treats branding and packaging as practical, high-leverage components of small-business development rather than optional add-ons.

Several enabling factors underpinned the program's positive outcomes. Foremost was the participatory design approach, which engaged UMKM owners in co-creating brand elements so that logos, color schemes, and messaging resonated with local culture and each business's distinct customer base; this cultural fit increased relevance and buyer acceptance. Second, the deliberate choice of affordable, widely available digital design tools, including free or low-cost applications, gave participants the ability to maintain and iterate their visual identities independently after the formal mentoring ended, supporting longer-term sustainability. Third, incorporating a market-simulation phase delivered immediate, actionable consumer feedback on packaging aesthetics, functionality, and clarity, allowing producers to make rapid refinements based on observed buyer behaviour. Together, these design, technology, and experiential learning components created a practical, scalable model for building branding and packaging capacity among small enterprises (Das et al., 2023; De Siqueira Silva et al., 2024).

The program encountered several practical challenges, notably gaps in digital literacy among older participants and initial reluctance to alter longstanding packaging routines. Many experienced entrepreneurs were unfamiliar with even basic design tools or skeptical about investing time and resources in new packaging approaches, which slowed early adoption. To overcome these obstacles, the intervention incorporated peer-learning networks that allowed participants to learn from one another's successes and practical tips, alongside individualized one-on-one coaching sessions that provided paced, hands-on support tailored to each participant's skill level and business context. These strategies, combining social learning, mentorship, and adult-education principles, helped reduce resistance, build confidence with digital tools, and translate conceptual branding ideas into feasible, contextually appropriate packaging changes, consistent with established best practices in community empowerment and adult learning (Beheshti et al., 2022; Ilali et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that a structured mentoring program focused on branding and product packaging can be an effective, replicable intervention for enhancing the economic performance and market competitiveness of UMKM in Indonesia. After implementing the five-stage mentoring model, participants experienced significant gains across all measured indicators, including brand awareness, selling price, monthly revenue, consumer satisfaction, product distribution reach, and compliance with packaging regulations, demonstrating that targeted, practical support translates into measurable market benefits.

The observed 67.1% rise in average selling price and 81% increase in monthly revenue are especially notable because they indicate that relatively modest investments in branding and packaging capacity can produce tangible economic returns within a short timeframe. These outcomes suggest that branding and packaging should be regarded as central components of comprehensive UMKM development programs rather than optional extras, with clear implications for policymakers, community facilitators, and NGOs seeking to design high-impact empowerment initiatives. For future work, research should examine the durability of branding gains and revenue improvements beyond the six-month follow-up period and assess how the mentoring model scales across different Indonesian regions and product sectors to inform broader replication and policy adoption. scalability of this mentoring model to other regions and UMKM sectors in Indonesia.

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