Social Media as a Product Promotion Tool for The Parish of Santo Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME Community

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Abstract

The aim of this community service was to activate the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) community, which was already exist at that time, but it was not fully developed. The purpose of this community service was to share knowledge about the use of social media as a promotional tool for the mentioned MSME community. The MSME product images on their website were too simple. A product depends not only on the quality of the product itself, but also on how the photo of the product is presented on both websites and social media. Poor photo techniques will have an impact on the product's appeal, resulting in an impact on the sale of the product. The method for each activity in the community service program includes literacy, practice applying copywriting to social media uploads, practice on photography. Outcome of this community service was the application of social media as a promotional medium with application of copywriting to its upload and photography training utilizing mobile phones to support the promotional effort. The community service team was also helped the MSME actors in the mentioned community who were not yet actively involved, by means of interviewing them, writing articles about their businesses, and then publishing the articles on the parish MSME community website. The impact of this community service was an increase in the ability of the MSME actors to promote their products by uploading attractive product photos and applying copywriting concepts through social media, thus encouraging consumers to purchase, expanding the market, and increasing their income.

Keywords: copywriting, MSME, photography, promotion, social media

Introduction

The community service program was conducted in the midst of the 2022-2023 academic year at the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono. This program was initiated following onsite observations and discussions with Father Yohanes Wicaksono, Pr., the parish pastor, and Mr. Jarot, the system administrator of www.lapaksatora.com, a website for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), associated with the parish. Discussions and observations were carried out by the community service team with partners through more than 3 visits. From the results of these observations and discussions, the focus of this community service program was then mapped, namely to activate the parish MSME community which already existed, but its development had not been optimal.

Several activities that were expected by partners and could be implemented as priority activities within one month after submitting a proposal to LPPM of Soegijapranata Catholic University include: 1) Providing literacy in the use of social media as a promotional medium, 2) Providing photography training using smartphones, and 3) Covering, writing articles on MSME actors in the parish who were not yet actively involved in the parish MSME community to be uploaded on the parish MSME community website.

The congregation size of the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono was 1,590 people. The congregation tried to improve the family economy by developing MSME products such as honey, coffee, snacks, mushrooms, souvenirs, and church-related goodies. However, not all MSME actors were actively developing their businesses. The people were living far apart, in a natural hilly region. This condition resulted in obstacles in marketing MSME products. The parish administrators were aware of this, so they were starting to create an MSME community. One of the efforts made was to create a parish-administered MSME website.

The problem found was that the display on the website page related to uploading photos of MSME products on the website still did not meet the aesthetics according to the concept of photography which should be able to attract and persuade potential consumers to buy goods. Uploaded photos should be a promotional tool for MSME actors, in this case in line with the principle of persuasive communication which is defined as communication behavior that has the aim of changing the beliefs, attitudes, or behavior of other individuals or groups through the transmission of several messages (Mulyana, 2005).

Currently, multi-media has developed with websites and social media. This website and social media rely heavily on the quality of product images photographed by business actors. This was an obstacle in this case because the majority of MSMEs were lower to middle-class people supported with simple equipment, and limited skills in photographing products. These resulted in inadequate packaging and photography aspect. The problem to be addressed was improving the product quality through better photography for MSME actors.

The solution that was being pursued together as a priority in this community service program was to invite MSME actors to be more actively involved in the MSME community that had been formed by the parish, as well as plans to provide literacy in the use of social media as a promotional medium, and photography training using smartphones. Meanwhile, for MSMEs which were not yet active, the community service team would visit, conduct interviews, and write articles to be uploaded on the MSME community website belonging to the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono.

Methods

The implementation method for each activity in the community service program includes:

1. Literacy in the use of social media as a promotional tool, and the implementation of the activities was divided into several stages as follows:

   a. Delivery of learning material

   Participants were given material on using social media for product promotion and using copywriting concepts in their uploads.

   b. Practice applying copywriting to web uploads

   Participants tried to do by theirselves, the results of the training in practice regarding the use of copywriting concepts.

   The instructional session consisted of a 45-minute presentation by the speaker, followed by a question and answer segment. Subsequently, participants engaged in a 45-minute practical session to apply advertising copywriting techniques to their social media posts. The partners generously provided the venues for the activities and the necessary LCD equipment. The parish meeting room served as the venue for the session, with the community service team from Soegijapranata Catholic University facilitating the event as presenters and practice assistants.

2. MSME product photography

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a. Delivery of learning material

Participants were given material on product photography by utilizing smartphones.

b. Practice on photography

Participants practiced product photography directly in the field by bringing their own products that would be used as examples of photo shooting.

The practical sessions were preceded by a 45-minute presentation by the speaker, followed by a question and answer session. During the subsequent 45-minute practical session, participants honed their skills in photographing MSME products, in alignment with the concepts elucidated during the presentation. Locations for activities and LCD equipment were provided by partners. The parish meeting room was used as the venue for the implementation. The community service team from Soegijapranata Catholic University acted as presenters, as practice assistants, and also providing lamp tents.
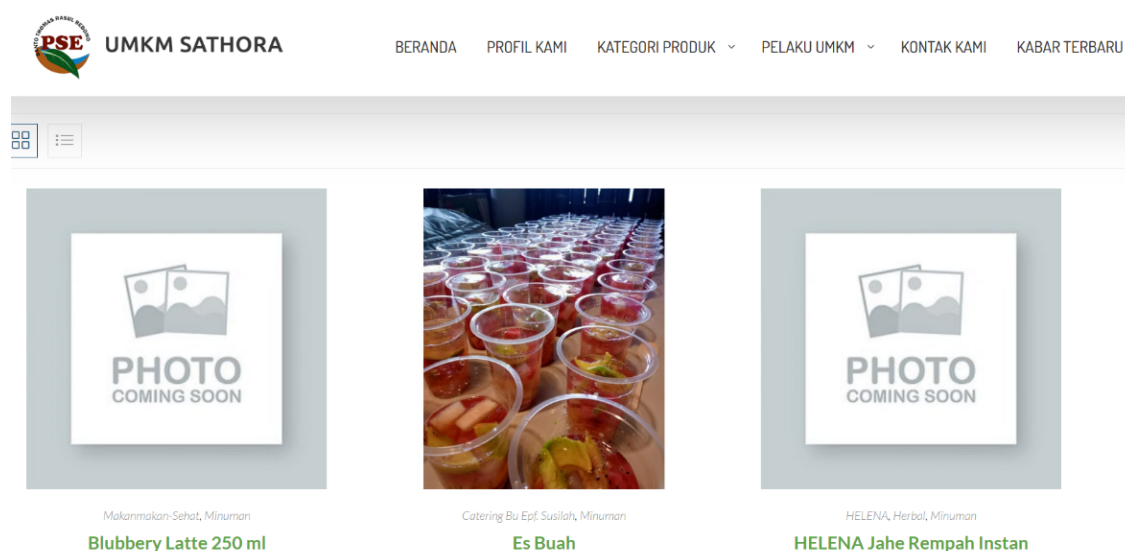

Fig. 1. Photos of products on the MSME community website of the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono, as observed by the community service team

Figure 1 is the appreance of the MSME community website in the beginning. Photos of MSME products were still simple, from this apperance, it was necessary to provide training on product photography so that the products uploaded on the website are more attractive to consumers.

3. Making news articles of MSME actors (who were not yet joined of the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME Community).

a. Data collection of MSME actors

Data obtained from the parish on MSME actors who were not active and had not yet joined the MSME community were mapped based on: neighborhood, type of MSME product.

b. Interviewing the MSME actors

Visiting MSME actors, conducting interviews, and making coverage for the basis of writing articles. The scheduling of interview visits was as follows: St. Yusuf Gemawang neighborhood, St. Margaretha Losari neighborhood, St. Petrus Losari neighborhood, St. Ignatius Losari neighborhood, and Nawangsari area. The team conducted interviews with MSME partners in three days.

c. Writing articles

Writing the interviews results and coverage in articles based on journalistic principles to be uploaded on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website. The list of MSME actors who would be visited for interviews was to be prepared by the partner, along with some church members who would accompany the community service team during the visit and help upload articles written by the team on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website. The place for conducting interviews were at each MSME actor's house. The community service team from Unika Soegijapranata worked as interviewers and article writers.

The implementation method aforementioned above was divided into several stages according to the objectives of the community service activities that had been determined beforehand, namely 1) Providing literacy in the use of social media as a promotional medium, 2) Providing photography training using smartphones and 3) In-depth interviewing and writing articles on MSME actors from within the parish who were not yet actively involved in the parish MSME community.

As shown in Figure 2, the community service team discussed to the parish priest and the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website team about the training implementation plan and about writing articles for the MSME website.

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Fig. 2. Photo documentation during observation visit to community service partner

Results and Discussions

a. Literacy in Using Social Media as Promotional Media

Advertising is a form of marketing communication for companies to promote their products. Currently, forms of advertising have evolved to adapt to the digital era. There are various forms of advertisements, ranging from writing, pictures, movies, video teasers or a combination of these three elements, the writing contained in the advertisement is then commonly referred to as copywriting (Agustrijanto, 2006). Copywriting is a necessity in the digital marketing era. Copywriting needs to be utilized on social media for promotional uploads. Copywriting on social media is an important factor that cannot be separated from changes in the digital era. To create creative posts, various types of copywriting are applied by utilizing appropriate and varied elements. By considering copywriting in the process of planning for advertising on social media, it is expected that uploads will be able to attract attention, generate interest and desire, create conviction, and action from its readers or consumers. This is how content on social media is created to attract more readers and consumers (Setyowati, 2022).

A good copywriting, of course, can attract potential consumers. So, there are several elements that need to be considered so that copywriting is said to be good in achieving its goals (Bisoyi, Dandewar., Barua, Utpal; Guha, 2013). Jesslyn and Glorya Agustiningsih's research concluded that the application of copywriting elements and elements is important in creating creative content in addition to the utilization of visual elements in it. The application of copywriting elements in the form of headlines, slogans, taglines, and calls to action can create engagement

between the target market and marketers so that they can influence the target market both cognitively, affectively, and in action (Jesslyn, & Agustiningsih, 2021).

Literacy on the use of social media as one of the promotional media was given to MSME actors with the consideration that partner already has social media accounts but have not maximized their use. Photos of MSME products are an important part of uploading on social media. This literacy was an introduction to the third MSME community activity, namely photography training using smartphones, to be uploaded on the MSME community website. The activity was held on Sunday, June 4, 2023.

Fig. 3. Documentation of literacy activities using social media as a product promotion tool

Figure 3 literacy by the community team for the usage of social media as a promotional tool and advertising copywriting in social media posts, so that it can more persuasive to potential customers. Participants then practised using copywriting for their product promotion posts on social media. An example of the results of the participants' uploads are shown in Figure 4. Participants in their uploads have used copywriting, for example: copywriting in headlines, sub headlines and body copy. In the past, their uploads were usually only photos uploaded in promotional uploads on their social media.

b. MSME Product Photography Training

Photography is something that is very commonly used by business owners, especially those who utilize online media as a means of selling. Taking pictures is often done by many people, however, are the resulting photos optimal? Does the resulting photo communicate what one wants to convey for the product to be sold (Iskandar, 2023).

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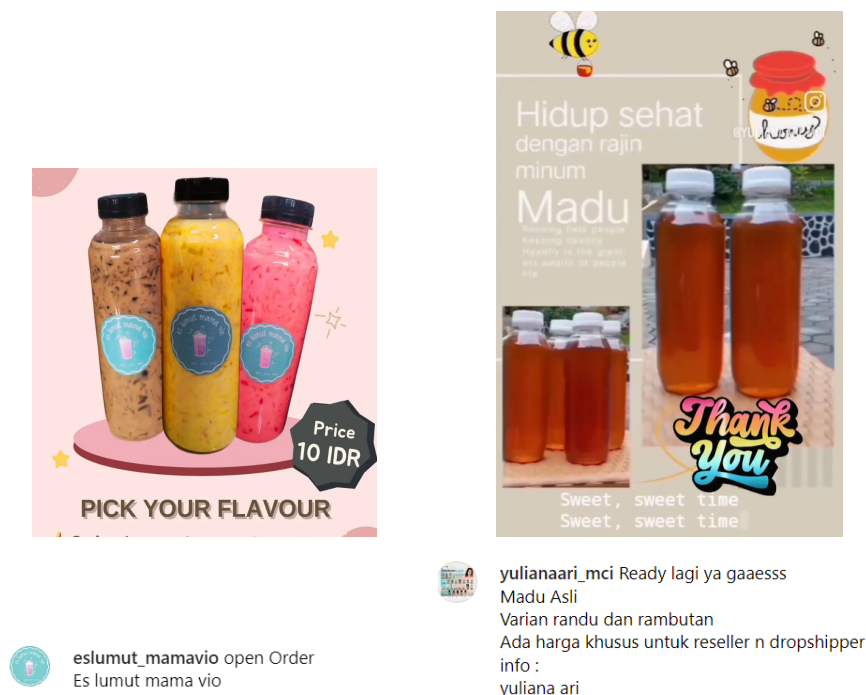
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Fig. 4. Example of participants' work using advertising copywriting

Product photos are visual depictions of goods for the purpose of being displayed to consumers and can also be used as promotional material when offering goods through social media. Digital marketing campaigns that utilize social media can increase profits and save costs (Servanda, I. Ratu., Sari, P.R. Kemala, Ananda, 2019).

In taking pictures, one should know what will be conveyed to the target audience (Excell, 2012). Good photographing, in addition to the presence of quality products, must also pay attention to how to photograph, the angle of view, and the right lighting to photograph the products offered (Iskandar, 2023). For this reason, it is necessary to first know the purpose of a product photo being made.

After receiving literacy about the use of social media as a promotional medium, MSME actors were then given more topics on product photography by utilizing smartphones. The activity continued by practicing the results of the training that had been received. On the day of the activity, MSME actors as participants were ready to bring each of their products to be used as an example object to practice taking pictures.

People were very enthusiastic about trying to photograph the sample products they brought in the lamp tent (mini studio) using their smartphones. There were 4 lamp tents for practice with

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different sizes. From this practice, the photos that met the criteria were uploaded to the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website. The activity was held on Sunday, June 4, 2023.

Fig. 5. Training publication poster

Figure 5 was an activity publication poster distributed to the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community through church announcement and Whatsapp Groups.

In Figure 6 were activities of the community service team engaged two students from the Program of Visual Communication Design; Giovanni Christian A. (17.L1.0072) and Oey Della Delicia W. (18.L1.0015).

Literacy by the community team about MSME product photography, so that it can more persuasive to potential customers. Participants then practised using lamp tents to photograph their MSME products. Examples of photos taken by participants are shown in Figure 7. The figures were example of photos of a trainee's product using a lamp tents. The product looks more attractive than the photo before the training.

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Fig. 6. MSME product photography training activities

Fig. 7. Example of participants' photos using a lamp tent and simple photography techniques

There were four lamp tents that were used for practice then donated by the team to the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community to be further utilized in the process of photographing the next UMKM products. The team also provided education to partner on how to store and maintain the lamp tent when not in use.

c. News articles of MSME actors (who were not yet joined in the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community)

Writing articles on MSME actors in the parish who were not yet actively involved in the community as a form of attention, greeting by the parish by involving a third party, namely Soegijapranata Catholic University to visit, interview, and write articles to be uploaded on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website. News writing is done in a certain way to create complete news, in this case, it must have news elements, which are commonly known as 5W + 1H, namely What (what happened), Where (where it happened), When (when the event occurred), Who (who was involved in the event), Why (why it happened) and How (how it happened) (Juwito, 2008).

At the initial stage, the team obtained data from the parish pastor about MSME actors who have not been actively involved and joined the MSME community, then the team mapped the MSME actors based on neighborhood and type of MSME product. In the next stage, the team met with the parish pastor on-site to get a briefing on the location of the visits. The team conducted interview coverage visits for 3 days starting Friday, May 26 to Sunday, May 28, 2023. Then the team wrote the results of interviews and coverage in articles based on journalistic principles to be uploaded on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community. In actuality, the MSME actors who visited at that time received the team well. They could also cooperate when being interviewed, and there were even MSME actors who were not included in the visit list asking to be interviewed.

The results obtained by this community service team were a collection of articles from the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community actors who had been sent to the parish pastor and the community website management administrator. When writing articles that will be used as online news, writers should have techniques so that readers can easily understand the content conveyed in a news story. According to Romli, there are several writing and presentation techniques for online media, including short paragraphs, left-aligned writing, distance between paragraphs, and highlights in the form of giving special marks such as bold, italicized, and quotations (Romli, 2012).

Fig. 8. Activities of interviewing and writing news articles for MSME actors

Figure 8 shows one of example when the team visited, conducted interviews with MSME actors. There were 16 MSME actors who were visited, interviewed and then written into articles that were uploaded on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community website. In this activity, the community service team engaged four students from the Program

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of Communication Studies; Nadya Ramadhannisa (20.M1.0100), Vinsensius R.A. Figo (20.M1.0101), Raihan Rasyad Ramadhan (20.M1.0103), and Sheva Brilliant M. (20.M1.0113).
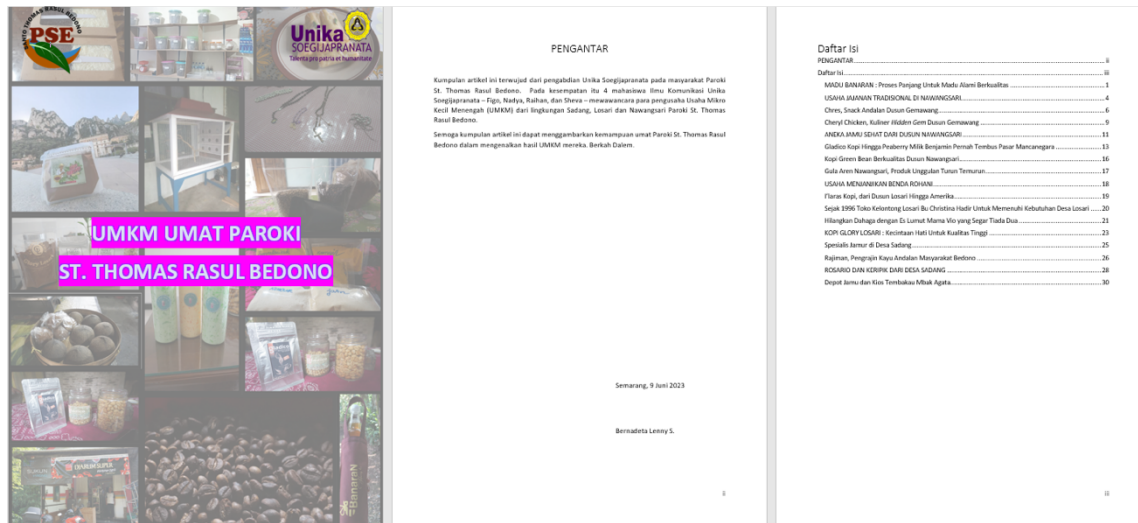

Fig. 9. Front cover, introduction, and table of contents of articles of the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community
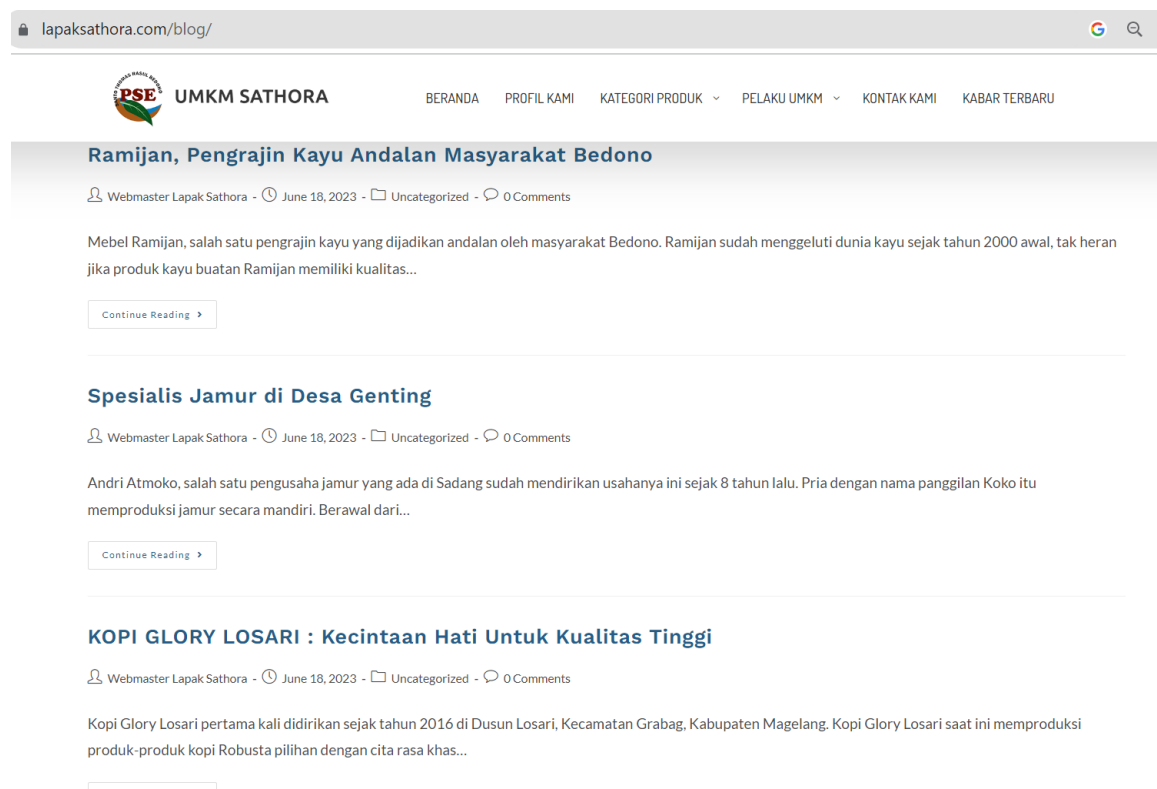

Fig. 10. Screenshot of uploaded articles on the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community, result of community service team interview and writing activities

Figure 9 and Figure 10 show the results of the service team's article writing compiled in one article collection book. Articles per MSME actor are uploaded on the parish of *St. Thomas Rasul Bedono* MSME community website.

Conclusion

The program to activate the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono MSME community which was divided into 3 activities have run smoothly. The activities could be carried out well and had been welcomed by MSME players with a significant number of attendance and participant engagement during literacy activities on the use of social media as a promotional medium and photography training for MSME products. They got the knowledge to make more attractive product photos by using copywriting in uploading photos of their products, it was expected that this provision could make their products more widely marketed and attract more consumer buying interest.

The people also welcomed enthusiastically when they were visited to be interviewed, there were even people in the neighborhood who happened to be MSME actors but were not included in the list from the parish asking to be visited and interviewed by the team. The articles made have been submitted to the website manager of the parish MSME community and have been uploaded on the website.

One of the obstacles faced in the program was that the addresses of MSME actors interviewed in the neighborhood were far apart and the addresses were incomplete. The community service team was quite supported when there were some church members in the parish who assisted with directions to the location. The obstacles faced by the team could be overcome with the help of locals. Some MSME actors who had not been visited to be interviewed and covered asked to be covered, but due to time constraints and the focus on data prepared by the parish administrator, not all requests could be fulfilled in this service.

Suggestions for the future community service program are that it should be considered to make serial literacy so that training and practice can continue its assistance, then for interviews and article writing so that it can reach more people who are MSME actors in the parish of St. Thomas Rasul Bedono not only limited to MSME actors who are not active.

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