



SOCIALIZATION OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND BRANDING OF COCONUT FIBER PRODUCTS IN SOUTHEAST SULAWESI

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<p>Info Article</p> <p>Received : 02 November 2025</p> <p>Revised : 01 Desember 2025</p> <p>Accepted : 28 Desember 2025</p> <p>Publication : 31 Januari 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: <i>This community service activity aimed to enhance business management understanding and raise awareness of coconut coir-based product branding among coastal MSMEs in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. The program was implemented through several stages, including initial observation to identify community needs, socialization activities, educational sessions on basic business management and product branding, and interactive discussions with participants. The results indicate an improvement in participants' understanding of fundamental business management, such as cost management, simple business planning, and basic financial recording. In addition, participants gained greater awareness of the importance of product branding in increasing product value added, market appeal, and competitiveness of coconut coir-based products. This activity contributes positively to local economic development and the strengthening of coastal MSME capacity, particularly by optimizing the utilization of coconut coir as a value-added economic resource in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency.</i></p>
<p>Keywords: Coconut Fiber, Business Management, Product Branding, Coastal MSMEs, Southeast Sulawesi</p> <p>Kata Kunci: Sabut Kelapa, Manajemen Bisnis, Branding Produk, UMKM Pesisir, Sulawesi Tenggara</p>	<p>Abstrak: Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman manajemen usaha serta kesadaran akan pentingnya branding produk berbasis sabut kelapa pada pelaku UMKM pesisir di Desa Lansilowo, Kabupaten Konawe Kepulauan, Sulawesi Tenggara. Program ini dilaksanakan melalui beberapa tahapan, meliputi observasi awal untuk mengidentifikasi kebutuhan mitra, kegiatan sosialisasi, edukasi terkait manajemen usaha dan branding produk, serta diskusi interaktif dengan peserta. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pemahaman peserta mengenai manajemen usaha dasar, seperti pengelolaan biaya, perencanaan usaha sederhana, dan pencatatan keuangan. Selain itu, peserta juga memahami pentingnya branding produk dalam meningkatkan daya tarik, nilai tambah, dan daya saing produk berbasis sabut kelapa. Kegiatan ini memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap pengembangan ekonomi lokal dan penguatan kapasitas UMKM pesisir, khususnya dalam optimalisasi pemanfaatan potensi sabut kelapa sebagai produk bernilai ekonomi di Desa Lansilowo, Kabupaten Konawe Kepulauan.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's coastal areas have significant economic potential through the sustainable utilization of abundant coconut resources. Coconuts are a strategic commodity because almost all parts of the coconut can be processed into products of economic value. However, in practice, coconut utilization in many coastal areas is still dominated by primary products, while other parts, such as coconut fiber, are underutilized and often treated as waste. Yet, scientific studies show that coconut fiber has superior material characteristics, is environmentally friendly, and has the potential to be developed into a variety of value-added products for households, agriculture, and small industries (Salva et al., 2025). A similar situation is also found in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, where the availability of coconut fiber is quite abundant but the community's ability to manage and develop derivative products sustainably is not yet accompanied by the ability of the community to manage and develop derivative products sustainably.

The development of coastal MSMEs based on local potential is determined not only by the availability of raw materials, but also by the capacity of business actors to manage their businesses and create added value for their products. The OECD (2019) emphasizes that increasing the capacity of MSMEs is a key element in local economic development, particularly in areas dependent on natural resources. In the context of coconut fiber, community service results indicate that utilizing coconut fiber waste through appropriate technology, such as processing it into cocopeat, can provide economic benefits if accompanied by adequate business understanding and management (Wiraguna et al., 2025). Without the support of managerial capacity, this technical potential tends not to develop optimally.

Conceptually, strengthening MSMEs can be explained through a business management approach and brand equity theory. Good business management helps MSMEs plan, control costs, and make business decisions more rationally and sustainably. Meanwhile, the brand equity theory proposed by Aaker (1992) and Keller (1993) emphasizes that a product's value is determined not only by its physical function or material quality, but also by consumer perception, image, and trust in the brand. In the context of MSMEs based on locally sourced materials, branding is a crucial strategy for product differentiation, increasing attractiveness, and expanding market opportunities. Recent studies also show that brand strengthening contributes significantly to the sustainability of small and medium enterprises, especially in competitive markets

(Gutiérrez et al., 2024). In addition to brand identity, product packaging and appearance also play a role in shaping consumer perceptions. Ampuero and Vila (2006) explain that packaging design and product visual elements can influence quality perceptions and purchasing decisions, particularly for products produced by small businesses. This is relevant for coconut fiber-based products, which generally lack adequate packaging standards and visual identity. Therefore, strengthening the branding of coconut fiber-based products cannot be separated from a basic understanding of business management and marketing strategies that align with the characteristics of local products.

Various studies and community service activities have shown that socialization and education on business management and product branding have a positive impact on increasing the capacity of MSMEs. Sarasati et al. (2025) showed that modern branding training and mentoring increased MSMEs' understanding and readiness in building product identities. Similar findings were reported by Damayanti et al. (2025) and Harjun et al. (2025), who emphasized that marketing and branding socialization, including in a digital context, contributed to increasing MSME awareness of the importance of business management and more targeted promotional strategies. For coconut-based products, Iswati et al. (2025) also emphasized that branding and creative packaging mentoring can increase product appeal and open up opportunities for broader market access.

A community service study focused on coconut fiber utilization showed that increasing community initial knowledge is a crucial prerequisite before further technical assistance is provided. Socialization plays a strategic initial role in building awareness, motivation, and readiness of business actors to develop businesses based on local potential (Wiraguna et al., 2025). Thus, socialization serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as an initial foundation for the economic empowerment process of coastal communities.

Based on the empirical phenomena, theoretical foundations, and findings of previous research and community service, the socialization of coconut fiber-based business management and product branding in Lansilowo Village is relevant. This activity aims to increase the understanding and awareness of coastal MSMEs regarding business management and the importance of product branding as a basis for developing coconut fiber-based businesses. Through this socialization, it is hoped that coastal MSMEs will view coconut fiber not as waste but as a source of economic value that can be developed sustainably.

METHOD

This community service activity was conducted in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, in the same year. The method used in this activity was outreach and education, with a participatory approach that actively involved coastal MSMEs as the primary target. The activity was carried out over a single day, with a focus on improving understanding of business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products.

The implementation of this community service activity consists of several stages, as follows:

1. Preparation Stage. The preparation stage is carried out to ensure the activity runs effectively and meets the needs of partners. Activities at this stage include: Coordination with the village government and relevant parties, including village officials and representatives of coastal MSMEs in Lansilowo Village. Identification of initial conditions and needs of MSMEs related to business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products. Preparation of outreach materials covering simple business management, cost management, and basic concepts of local product branding. Preparation of supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as meeting rooms, presentation media, and outreach materials.
2. Socialization and Education Implementation Phase. The implementation phase is the core of the community service activities, which is carried out through direct socialization and education activities for coastal MSMEs. Activities at this stage include, Inviting coastal MSMEs that utilize or have the potential to utilize coconut fiber as a raw material for their businesses. Delivering socialization materials, including an introduction to simple business management, the importance of cost recording and business planning, and the role of branding in increasing the value and competitiveness of coconut fiber-based products. Applying lecture methods, interactive discussions, and presenting simple case studies relevant to the participants' business conditions. Providing opportunities for participants to discuss, share their real-world situations, the potential for coconut fiber utilization, and initial challenges in business management and development.
3. Mentoring and Evaluation Stage. The mentoring and evaluation stage is conducted to assess the level of participant understanding and the effectiveness of the socialization activities. Activities at this stage include, Initial mentoring for participants in understanding the application of business management and product branding concepts

according to the characteristics of their respective businesses. Facilitating brief consultations regarding business management and developing coconut fiber-based product identities. Evaluating participant understanding through discussions and questions and answers before and after the socialization activities. Collecting feedback from participants to serve as evaluation and improvement materials for future community service activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A socialization activity on business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, was attended by participants from coastal MSMEs and communities with the potential to develop coconut-based businesses. Participants showed high interest in the material presented, considering that coconut fiber has not been optimally utilized and is still considered waste. This section is an important part because it contains a clear description about results data and analysis of research data, interpretation of the findings in the field, the relevance of research results with relevant concepts, theories, or previous or other research results, or can even find new theories or modify that already exist and implications for scientific developments in their fields.



Figure 1. Group photo of the community service team and participants in the socialization activities

Figure 1 shows the initial documentation of the activity in the form of a group photo between the community service team (lecturers of the Management Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari) and the socialization participants after coordination of the activity implementation was carried out. During the material delivery

session, the resource person explained the importance of simple business management as the initial foundation for MSME development, including an introduction to business planning, cost management, and simple financial recording. In addition, participants were also given an understanding of the basic concept of product branding, specifically how to build a product identity based on local potential such as coconut fiber. This material delivery is in line with the views of Aaker (1992) and Keller (1993) who emphasized that product value is not only determined by physical quality, but also by the perception and image formed in the minds of consumers.



Figure 2. Participants in the socialization activity for business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products

The activity then continued with a discussion and question-and-answer session, which provided space for participants to express their views and clarify any material they did not understand. The discussion focused on the potential utilization of coconut fiber, initial challenges in business management, and the readiness of MSMEs to develop products based on local materials. Several participants expressed limited knowledge regarding business management and the lack of a clear picture of the types of coconut fiber derivative products that could be developed. This discussion session helped participants understand that developing coconut fiber-based businesses needs to begin with strengthening managerial capacity and understanding branding as a first step before entering the production stage. This is in line with the findings of Wiraguna et al. (2025),

which emphasized the importance of increasing initial community knowledge before providing further technical assistance in coconut fiber utilization.



Figure 3. Interactive discussion between speaker and participants

Participants' enthusiasm was evident in their active participation in the discussion, both in asking questions and providing insights into the potential for coastal businesses. Participants began to understand that coconut fiber can be developed into value-added products if supported by better-organized business management and a clear product identity. This finding aligns with the results of previous community service activities, which demonstrated that socialization and education on business management and product branding can increase awareness and readiness of MSMEs in developing businesses based on local potential (Sarasati et al., 2025; Damayanti et al., 2025). Overall, this outreach activity successfully increased the understanding and initial awareness of coastal MSMEs regarding the importance of business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products. Participants began to view coconut fiber not merely as waste, but as a source of business opportunities with economic value. These results reinforce the view that outreach plays a strategic initial stage in the process of economic empowerment of coastal communities, before continuing with more applicable and sustainable mentoring activities. With this increased understanding, this activity is expected to form the basis for the development of coconut fiber-based MSMEs in Lansilowo Village in the next phase of community service.

CONCLUSION

A socialization activity on business management and branding of coconut fiber-based products in Lansilowo Village, Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, had a positive impact on increasing the understanding and initial awareness of coastal MSMEs regarding business management and the potential for developing products based on local resources. Through a participatory socialization and education approach, participants gained a better understanding of the importance of simple, planned business management and the role of branding in creating added value for products. The results of the activity showed a change in the participants' perspective, who began to see coconut fiber no longer as waste, but as a source of business opportunities with economic potential. This understanding is expected to provide initial capital for coastal MSMEs to develop coconut fiber-based businesses in a more targeted manner and serve as a foundation for the implementation of more applicable follow-up mentoring to increase the competitiveness of coastal MSMEs in the future.

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