



Assistance to Improve the Branding of Edutourism in Kraton Village in Krian District, Sidoarjo Regency through Digital Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Kraton Village, Krian District, Sidoarjo Regency, possesses significant agrotourism potential through its premium melon greenhouse developed as an educational tourism (edutourism) destination. However, the lack of branding strategy and digital marketing utilization has become a major obstacle in enhancing the competitiveness of this destination. This community service activity aims to assist Kraton Village edutourism managers in designing and implementing effective branding and digital marketing strategies. A mixed-method approach was employed, including surveys, focus group discussions (FGD), training sessions, and intensive mentoring over six months. Results indicate improved social media management capacity (Instagram and TikTok), the establishment of a village promotion team, creation of a visual identity including logo and tagline, and enhanced skills in creative content production. This activity contributes to increasing the regional visibility of Kraton Edutourism and strengthening community-based local economic development.

INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism villages based on local potential is one of the community empowerment strategies that is in line with the mandate (Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa, 2014). Kraton Village, Krian District, Sidoarjo Regency, is one of the villages with significant agricultural and micro business potential (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 11 Tahun 2021 Tentang Badan Usaha Milik Desa, 2021). The fertile agricultural land and the creativity of the people give birth to various productive economic initiatives, including the development of a greenhouse for premium melon cultivation which is also developed into a melon picking tourist destination or eduisata.

This edutourism concept not only makes optimal use of agricultural land, but also creates added value through the educational tourism sector, where visitors can learn the cultivation process while enjoying the experience of picking fruit directly (Ng & Mahkeswaran, 2021). In addition to the modern agricultural sector, the people of Kraton Village also have various micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) such as processed food, handicrafts, and village culinary specialties that have the potential to expand local economic opportunities.

Despite having great potential, the development of edutourism in Kraton Village faces a number of crucial challenges. This village does not yet have a distinctive identity or image and is widely known by the community, both at the local and national levels. In addition, the lack of use of digital marketing causes limited promotional reach and opportunities to attract tourists from various segments have not been optimized. Existing promotional content tends to be inconsistent and less professional, while human resources who have expertise in managing promotional media are still very limited.

This problem encourages the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Dr. Soetomo University (FIA UNITOMO) to provide assistance to the manager of Eduwisata Kraton Village. This activity aims to increase the competitiveness of Kraton Village as a community-based tourist destination through designing a targeted marketing strategy, including digital promotion, strengthening the village brand identity, and creating a unique educational tourism experience for visitors.

A number of previous studies have shown that a structured branding and digital marketing strategy is able to increase the visibility and competitiveness of tourism villages (Al-Munawarah et al., 2023a). Community-based mentoring has also proven effective in increasing the capacity of sustainable local resource management (Nanda et al., 2023). This article describes the process, methods, and results of community service activities in improving the branding of Kraton Village edutourism through a mixed method approach.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

Design and Research Approach

This community service activity uses a mixed method approach, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach is used to measure the capacity improvement of managers through surveys before and after activities, while the qualitative approach is used to understand the dynamics of problems and the mentoring process in depth through observation and focus group discussions (FGD).

Location and Activity Partners

The activity was carried out in Kraton Village, Krian District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, by involving village officials, edusitrata managers, and local community groups as target partners. The activity lasted for six months, from the first to the eighth month of 2025, with a total budget of IDR 10,000,000 which was sourced from funds from the Faculty of Administrative Sciences UNITOMO.

Stages of Implementation

The implementation of the activity is divided into four main stages, namely:

1. **Situation Analysis and Problem Identification:** An initial survey was conducted to map local potential, analyze the SWOT of Kraton Village edutourism, and identify potential market segments.
2. **Branding and Visual Identity Design:** The formation of a visual identity includes a logo, tagline, and edutourism flow map that reflects the uniqueness of Kraton Village, by involving local communities and experts.
3. **Digital Marketing Training and Mentoring:** Intensive workshops and training related to social media management (Instagram and TikTok), visual content creation, videography, and optimization of digital promotion strategies.
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Formation of Promotion Teams:** Periodic evaluations are carried out based on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that have been set, and a special promotion team is formed under the coordination of the village government.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through pre-test and post-test questionnaires to measure participants' knowledge and skill improvement, as well as observation sheets and field notes during FGDs and mentoring sessions. In-depth interviews were also conducted with village officials and edutourism managers to explore perceptions and needs qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Eduwisata Kraton Village

Kraton Village Edutourism includes several main educational rides, namely: (1) a greenhouse-based melon garden that introduces the nursery process to the harvest of premium melons; (2) mujair and tilapia fish cultivation ponds as a vehicle for fish farming education; (3) slaughter chicken coops as a means of livestock education; and (4) culinary areas and gazebos as supporting facilities for tourist visits. These facilities are the main attractions that have the potential to attract the segment of family and student tourists.



Figure 1. Melon Garden



Figure 2. Mujair and Tilapia Fish Cultivation Pond



Figure 3. Slaughter Chicken Farm



Figure 4. Culinary Places of the Kraton

Branding Design Results

Through a series of participatory workshops, the community service team succeeded in designing the visual identity of Eduwisata Desa Kraton which includes the village logo, tagline, and edudisata flow map. This visual identity is designed to reflect the uniqueness of the locality while giving a professional impression to tourists. Signage for the road to the eduwisata location has also been successfully installed to facilitate access for tourists.

Digital Marketing Training Results

Digital marketing training activities have resulted in a significant increase in the capacity of edurista managers. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, there was an increase in participants' understanding of social media management strategies by an average of 50%. Edutourism managers are now able to produce more structured and consistent content, especially for the Instagram and TikTok platforms. In addition, participants also mastered the use of simple graphic design applications such as Canva for digital promotional purposes.

Formation of the Village Promotion Team

One of the strategic outcomes of this activity is the formation of a special promotion team for Kraton Village Edutourism consisting of trained village youth. This team is in charge of managing all aspects of digital marketing, from content creation, social media management, to coordination with local media and travel agents. The formation of this team ensures the sustainability of the promotion program after the mentoring period ends.

Table 1. Summary of Externalities and Activities Outcomes

Number	Exterior	Achievement Indicators	Status
1	Visual identity (logo, tagline, flowmap)	Logos and taglines are accepted by the public and used in promotions	Achieved
2	Improved social media management	Increased capacity of IG & TikTok managers (50%)	Achieved
3	Formation of village promotion teams	The team was formed and actively operated under village coordination	Achieved
4	Creative content and videography training	Participants are able to produce self-produced content using Canva	Achieved
5	Installation of road signs	Signage is installed at strategic points leading to the location	Achieved
6	Activity documentation video	Uploaded on @fakultas_ilmu_administrasi Instagram page	Achieved

The results of this service activity show that community-based assistance with a mixed method approach is effective in increasing the capacity of management and promotion of village tourist destinations. These findings are in line with the results of the study (Al-Munawarah et al., 2023b) which states that increasing the promotional capacity based on village youth groups has been proven to be able to drive significant growth in tourist visits.

The formation of a strong visual identity is an important foundation in a tourist destination branding strategy. The logo, tagline, and edutourism flow map produced through the participatory process reflect the local values of Kraton Village while increasing the attractiveness for potential tourists. This participatory approach is important to ensure that the resulting branding truly represents the community's identity and is collectively acceptable (Siregar et al., 2023).

The use of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has proven to be an effective and affordable promotional instrument for tourist villages. With planned and consistent content, Kraton Village edutourism is able to reach a wider segment of tourists, including the young generation who are active in the digital world. The creative content production capabilities of the village promotion team are valuable assets for the sustainability of the marketing program after the mentoring period ends.

The formation of a dedicated promotion team is a key factor in the sustainability of the program. With a trained and structured team, the promotion program will not stop after the mentoring period ends. This is a real implementation of the principle of sustainable community empowerment, as emphasized by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) in the concept of asset-based community development.

Challenges that still need to be overcome in the future include consistency in content production, expanding the reach of promotions to other digital platforms such as Facebook and official websites, and developing more diverse tour packages to increase the attractiveness and length of stay of tourists. Further assistance is also needed to ensure that the village promotion team is able to independently adapt digital marketing strategies according to the development of social media trends.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service activities at Eduwisata Kraton Village, Krian, Sidoarjo, have succeeded in achieving all set output targets. Through a mixed method approach that includes surveys, FGDs, training, and intensive mentoring, this activity results in a distinctive visual identity, increasing the digital marketing capacity of managers, forming an independent village promotion team, and various social media-based promotional outputs.

This program proves that structured and community-oriented academic assistance is able to encourage the transformation of tourism village management from conventional to more professional and digital-based. The sustainability of the program is highly dependent on the commitment of village managers and the support of the village government in maintaining and developing the capacity that has been built.

For research and similar activities in the future, it is suggested that the focus be expanded on the development of a more comprehensive digital ecosystem, including the creation of an official website and integration with online tour booking platforms, in order to maximize the potential of Kraton Village Edutourism as a leading agro-tourism destination in Sidoarjo Regency.

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