

## **BRAND AS AN UMKM ASSET: A BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN SIMPLE BEACH VILLAGE, MUARA GEMBONG SUB-DISTRICT, BEKASI DISTRICT, WEST JAVA**

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### **Abstract**

Brand identity development is crucial for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in the tourism industry, especially in Sederhana Beach Village, Muara Gembong District, Bekasi Regency, West Java. This beach village has great potential in tourism due to its natural beauty and charming local culture. However, MSMEs in the village are often faced with challenges in building a strong and attractive brand, hindering their business growth. The research method used in this study was sourced from the literature. The results show that a strong and attractive brand can attract more tourists, create a distinctive identity associated with natural beauty and local culture, and facilitate collaboration and promotion of the village as a complete tourist destination. Suggested business development strategies include coordinated brand management among local MSMEs, investment in training and guidelines on brand development, and support from local governments and relevant agencies in the form of technical assistance, funds, and coaching programmes. By implementing solid brand-based business development strategies, MSMEs in Pantai Sederhana Village can increase revenue, achieve sustainable business growth, and provide economic benefits to the local community. This research makes a significant contribution to the development of MSMEs in the tourism sector, particularly in maximising the potential of beach villages through effective brand management.

**Keywords:** Brand, MSMEs, Business Development Strategy, Simple Beach Village.

### **Introduction**

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the Indonesian economy, defined as productive businesses owned by individuals or business entities that fulfil certain criteria according to Law No. 20/2008. Micro enterprises have maximum assets of IDR 50 million and maximum annual turnover of IDR 300 million (Pillay, 2024b). Small enterprises have assets between IDR50 million and IDR500 million and an annual turnover between IDR300 million and IDR2.5 billion. Meanwhile, medium-sized enterprises have assets between IDR 500 million and Rp10 billion and an annual turnover between IDR2.5 billion and IDR50 billion. MSMEs play an important role in absorbing labour, driving economic growth, and increasing people's income (Yahaya, 2020).

One of the important roles of MSMEs for the people of Indonesia is as a significant economic driver, especially at the local level. This sector is able to absorb large amounts of labour, even in areas that are difficult to reach by large companies.

Thus, MSMEs contribute to reducing unemployment and increasing people's income (Pillay, 2024c). MSMEs also play a role in equitable economic development as these enterprises are spread across various regions and not only concentrated in big cities. MSMEs also play an important role in preserving and developing local culture. Many MSMEs are engaged in handicrafts, traditional culinary, or regional speciality products, thus helping to preserve Indonesia's cultural heritage (Pillay, 2024a). On the other hand, MSMEs are often more flexible and adaptive to market changes, allowing them to survive in various economic conditions. This makes MSMEs a resilient backbone of the economy, especially in times of crisis. By supporting the growth of MSMEs, people indirectly participate in building national economic resilience and improving social welfare (Fazlollahtabar, 2023).

Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, in 2020 the contribution of MSMEs reached around 60% of Indonesia's total Gross Domestic Product and absorbed more than 97% of the workforce in the country. Nevertheless, in the midst of this significant role, MSMEs are still faced with various challenges in developing their business, especially in rural and coastal areas (Indrasari et al., 2024).

Pantai Sederhana Village in Muara Gembong Sub-district, Bekasi Regency, West Java, is an example of a coastal area where the potential of MSMEs has not been optimally utilised. With its rich natural resources and distinctive local culture, the village has a wide range of MSME products such as seafood, handicrafts, and culinary specialities. However, many MSME players in this area face difficulties in developing their businesses, especially in terms of marketing and product competitiveness (Suryadi et al., 2021).

One key factor that is often overlooked in the development of MSMEs is the role of brands as business assets. A brand is not merely a name or logo, but a form of value, quality, and product identity that can increase the competitiveness and economic value of MSMEs. However, the awareness and understanding of MSME actors regarding the importance of brands is still relatively low, especially in rural areas such as Pantai Sederhana Village (Yu et al., 2023).

For Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), having a strong brand is an important aspect of business development. A brand is not just a name or logo, but an identity that distinguishes MSME products or services from competitors. By having a strong brand, MSMEs can build consumer trust, increase customer loyalty, and create added value for their products or services. A good brand also helps MSMEs position themselves in the market, making it easier for consumers to recognise and remember their products, while giving the impression of being professional and trusted (Teoh et al., 2023).

In addition, a strong brand can be a valuable asset for MSMEs in the long run. Brands that are recognised and trusted by consumers can make it easier for MSMEs to expand their business, either by adding new product lines or entering new markets.

Brands can also provide legal protection for MSMEs through trademark registration, which prevents other parties from using similar names or logos (Dreßler & Paunovic, 2022). In the digital age and increasingly fierce global competition, having a strong brand can be a significant competitive advantage for MSMEs, helping them compete not only with fellow MSMEs but also large corporations.

In the midst of the digital era and increasingly fierce global competition, brand development is becoming increasingly crucial for the survival and growth of MSMEs (Dressler & Paunovic, 2021). However, many MSME players in Pantai Sederhana Village still do not understand and utilise the potential of brands as strategic assets in their business development. This is due to various factors, such as limited knowledge, resources, and access to information and technology.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the role of brands as an asset for MSMEs and develop a brand-based business development strategy in Pantai Sederhana Village. By understanding the importance of brands and implementing effective branding strategies, it is hoped that MSMEs in this village can improve competitiveness, expand markets, and ultimately contribute to improving the welfare of local communities.

This research will not only provide valuable insights for MSME players in Pantai Sederhana Village, but can also serve as a model for brand-based MSME development that can be applied in other rural and coastal areas in Indonesia. As such, this research is expected to contribute to the broader development of MSMEs and support the government's efforts in strengthening the MSME sector as a driver of the national economy.

## **Research Methods**

The study in this research uses a field research method, meaning a research approach that involves collecting data directly at the location or environment that is the object of research. This method is very important in various fields of science, especially social science, anthropology, and environmental studies (Fadli, 2021); (Setiowati, 2016).

Field research methods allow researchers to gain an in-depth and contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study. However, this method also requires good interpersonal skills, flexibility, and adaptability from the researcher to be successful in collecting quality data. (Syahran, 2020); (Helaluddin, 2019).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Socioeconomic Conditions of the People of Pantai Sederhana Village**

The socioeconomic condition of a community is a complex representation that reflects the level of well-being and quality of life of a population. It encompasses indicators such as levels of education, health, employment, income and access to basic services (Bing et al., 2023). In this context, people can be structured by their

socioeconomic status into groups, which directly affects the opportunities and challenges they face in their daily lives. Factors such as government policies, technological developments and global market dynamics also play a role in shaping the socioeconomic conditions of a society (Mudanganyi et al., 2020).

Good socioeconomic conditions are generally characterised by high levels of education, easy access to quality health services, adequate employment opportunities, and relatively equal income distribution. On the other hand, communities with poor socioeconomic conditions often face challenges such as poverty, unemployment, limited access to education and health, and significant social inequality (Mauligita & Windasari, 2021). Improving the socioeconomic conditions of communities has become a major focus of national development in many countries, with the aim of creating a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable society. These efforts involve various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and civil society organisations, in implementing programmes aimed at improving the overall quality of life (Indrasari et al., 2024).

The socioeconomic conditions of the Pantai Sederhana Village community reflect the typical characteristics of life in coastal areas that depend on marine resources. The majority of the villagers earn a living as traditional fishers, with a small proportion working in the local tourism sector and small-scale agriculture. The average education level of the population is still relatively low, with most only completing primary education. This has implications for limited skills and employment opportunities outside the fishing sector, which in turn affects income levels and overall community welfare (Chern & Ahmad, 2024).

Infrastructure and access to basic services in Pantai Sederhana Village still require significant improvement. Although there is already a health facility in the form of an auxiliary health centre, the quality and availability of health services is still limited. Access to clean water and proper sanitation is also a challenge for most households. The condition of the village roads, which have not been fully paved, makes it difficult for residents' mobility, especially during the rainy season (Hanaysha, 2022). These infrastructure limitations not only affect daily quality of life but also hamper the village's economic development potential, especially in the tourism sector, which actually has good prospects given the natural beauty of the coast (Güven, 2022).

Despite these challenges, the community of Pantai Sederhana Village has strong social capital, reflected in the strong bonds of kinship and gotong royong between residents. Several local initiatives have begun to develop to improve economic conditions, such as the formation of fishing groups for more sustainable management of fishery resources, as well as efforts to diversify the economy through the development of seafood-based home industries (Mitreğa, 2023). Local governments have also started to pay attention to the development of these villages, especially through coastal community empowerment programmes and basic infrastructure

improvements. However, a more comprehensive and sustainable approach is needed to truly improve the socio-economic conditions of the Pantai Sederhana Village community, including improved access to education, skills development, and the opening of new economic opportunities in line with local potential (Mandizwidza-Moyo, 2020).

### **The Potential of MSMEs in Pantai Sederhana Village**

Pesisir Sederhana Village has promising MSME potential, particularly in relation to marine resources and tourism. The fisheries sector is the backbone of the village economy, with various opportunities for MSME development in the field of seafood processing. Products such as salted fish, shrimp paste, fish crackers, and other seafood dishes have great potential to be developed into home-based businesses that can increase the added value of fishermen's catches. In addition, handicrafts made from clam shells and other marine materials can also be unique and attractive MSME commodities for tourists (Suryadi et al., 2021).

The tourism sector also offers a variety of potential MSME opportunities. With its beautiful beaches and natural charm, Simple Coastal Village has the potential to develop small businesses in the accommodation sector, such as family inns or simple inns managed by the local community. Sea-based culinary businesses can also be an attraction, with small food stalls serving fresh seafood typical of coastal areas. In addition, tourism services such as boat rentals for fishing or sunset, as well as local tour guides, also have good prospects along with the increasing interest of tourists in pristine beach destinations (Sahara et al., 2023).

The potential of MSMEs in small-scale agriculture and plantations cannot be ignored either. Although not the main sector, some areas in Desa Pesisir Sederhana are suitable for the cultivation of coastal crops such as coconut and banana. Processing coconut fruit into various products such as virgin coconut oil, coconut sugar, or handicrafts from coconut shells can be a promising business alternative. In addition, cultivating coastal ornamental plants or making organic fertiliser from fish waste can also be innovative and environmentally friendly MSME opportunities (Rohman et al., 2018).

### **Analysis of MSME Conditions in Pantai Sederhana Village**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a wide variety that can be classified by business scale, sector, or type of products and services offered (Nurhasan & B, 2023). Based on the scale of business, MSMEs can be divided into three main categories. First, Micro Enterprises, which include productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities with assets of at most IDR 50 million and annual turnover of at most IDR 300 million. Second, Small Enterprises, which are productive economic businesses that stand alone with assets of more than IDR 50

million to IDR 500 million and an annual turnover of more than IDR 300 million to IDR 2.5 billion. Third, Medium Enterprises, which have assets of more than IDR 500 million to IDR 10 billion and an annual turnover of more than IDR 2.5 billion to IDR 50 billion (Maulani et al., 2021).

In terms of business sector, MSMEs can be divided into several main types. The trade sector includes retail businesses such as grocery stores, food stalls, and market traders. The service sector includes a variety of services such as workshops, beauty salons, small-scale construction services, and party equipment rental. The manufacturing or processing industry sector includes businesses making processed food and beverages, handicrafts, small-scale furniture, and home textile industries. The agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fisheries sectors are also an important part of MSMEs, especially in rural areas (Yananda et al., 2023).

In addition, technological developments have given rise to new types of digital-based MSMEs or e-commerce. These include online shops, freelance graphic design services, small-scale app and website development, and various forms of businesses that utilise social media platforms and online marketplaces (Asmaul et al., 2023). Creative MSMEs are also growing, including businesses in art, design, fashion, creative culinary, and other creative industries. This diversity of MSME types reflects the flexibility and familiarity of this sector in meeting various market needs and capitalising on economic opportunities in society (Kuswanto et al., 2024).

MSMEs in Indonesia face various challenges that hinder their growth and business sustainability. One of the main challenges is limited access to financing or capital. Many MSMEs have difficulty obtaining loans from formal financial institutions due to lack of collateral, inadequate financial records, or inability to meet strict credit requirements (Febriyana, 2021). This limits their ability to invest in business development, technology, or market expansion. Other challenges include a lack of management skills and business knowledge, especially in terms of financial planning, marketing, and long-term business development strategies. Many MSME players also face difficulties in adopting digital technology to improve operational efficiency and expand their market reach (Rachmaniyah et al., 2022).

In addition, MSMEs often face stiff competition, both from fellow MSMEs and from larger companies with more resources. They also struggle with bureaucracy and complex regulations, which can make it difficult to set up a business, obtain a licence or comply with certain standards (Widagdo & Khasanah, 2023). Infrastructure challenges, such as limited access to efficient distribution networks or poor internet connectivity in some areas, can also hinder MSME growth. In the era of globalisation, many MSMEs also face difficulties in meeting international quality standards or penetrating export markets. Finally, economic uncertainty and rapid changes in consumer preferences require MSMEs to constantly adapt and innovate, which is often a major challenge for businesses with limited resources (Andika et al., 2023).

### **The Role of Brands in the Development of MSMEs in Simple Beach Village**

Brands play an important role in the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). A strong brand can help MSMEs to differentiate themselves and attract consumer attention. With a popular and preferred brand, MSMEs can build customer loyalty, increase sales, and expand market share (Erlialistiani et al., 2023). In addition, a good brand is also able to increase public trust in the products or services offered by MSMEs.

MSMEs often face limited resources and budgets to carry out effective promotion and marketing in building a strong brand. Therefore, creative and cost-effective branding strategies are needed, such as utilising social media, creating engaging content, and participating in community events. With these strategies, MSMEs can increase brand awareness, strengthen their image, and grow their business sustainably (Budianto & Parlina, 2021).

Pantai Sederhana Village is famous for its natural beauty and has many MSMEs engaged in various business fields such as crafts, food, and tourism. However, most MSME players in this village still have low awareness of the importance of brands. They tend to focus on production and sales without paying attention to branding aspects that can increase competitiveness and product selling points.

This low awareness is caused by several factors such as a lack of knowledge about the benefits of brands, limited resources, and the view that branding is only important for large companies. Some MSME players even consider that branding will only add unnecessary costs. As a result, MSME products in Pantai Sederhana Village are often less attractive and difficult to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

To overcome this problem, the village government and related institutions need to make efforts to increase MSME players' awareness and understanding of the importance of brands. For example, by holding training, workshops, or mentoring programmes that discuss effective and affordable branding strategies. Thus, MSME players can learn how to build a strong, unique, and memorable brand so that their products are more attractive and competitive in the market. High awareness of the importance of brands will help MSMEs in Pantai Sederhana Village to grow and increase their income sustainably.

### **Brand Development Strategy as an MSME Asset in Simple Beach Village**

Brand is an important factor for small and medium enterprises that can increase the value and appeal of their products or services. However, building a strong and sustainable brand requires the right strategy. One important first step is to establish a unique and consistent brand identity (sahlan, 2021). This includes choosing a memorable brand name, a striking logo, and the application of colours and other visual elements

that match the image to be formed. A solid brand identity will help small and medium enterprises to differentiate themselves from competitors while creating a good impression in the minds of consumers (Ritonga & Pratiwi, 2022).

Once the brand identity is established, small and medium enterprises need to make consistent efforts to promote and build brand awareness. This can be done by making effective use of digital marketing, such as optimising social media, participating in local exhibitions or events, and strengthening relationships with customers through satisfactory service. In addition, they can also utilise partnerships or collaborations with other well-known brands to increase credibility and marketing reach (Ramadhani et al., 2022).

Another important aspect of a brand development strategy is maintaining the consistency and quality of the products or services offered. Small and medium enterprises must ensure that every product or service they offer matches the promise conveyed through their brand (Samsiyah et al., 2021). This will build customer trust and loyalty, which in turn will increase the brand equity and long-term value of small and medium enterprises. With a solid brand development strategy, small and medium enterprises can turn their brands into valuable assets that provide competitiveness and drive sustainable business growth (Antony & Natalia, 2023).

For small and medium enterprises in simple coastal villages, brands can be a valuable asset that differentiates their products from competitors and attracts consumer interest. However, building a strong brand requires a strategy that is tailored to the conditions and potential of the beach village. The first step is to identify the uniqueness of the village, such as traditions, handicrafts, or local raw materials that can be utilised as brand characteristics. An original brand identity that tells local values will create a strong impression and be easily remembered by consumers (Agustina, 2022).

Once the brand identity is established, small and medium enterprises in simple beach villages can utilise social media and digital platforms to promote their brands effectively. By uploading interesting content that depicts the atmosphere of the beach village, small and medium enterprises can build brand awareness and attract tourists or consumers from other regions (Nurhayati, 2021). In addition, they can also collaborate with local communities, such as fishermen or craftsmen groups, to organise events or exhibitions that showcase their products and brands.

The key to brand development strategies for small and medium enterprises in coastal villages is simply to maintain the quality and consistency of the products or services offered. By utilising fresh local ingredients and applying traditional methods, small and medium enterprises can guarantee authenticity and distinctive flavours that match their brand promise. In addition, they should also pay attention to sustainability aspects such as implementing environmentally friendly practices and supporting the local economy. By maintaining a balance between product quality, authentic brand image, and sustainability, small and medium enterprises in simple coastal villages can

develop their brands as valuable assets that drive business growth and improve the welfare of local communities.

### **The Impact of Brand Development on MSME Businesses in Simple Beach Village**

Effective brand development can have a significant impact on micro, small and medium enterprises. One of the main impacts is increased visibility and brand awareness in the eyes of customers (Syahrul & Apriyansyah, 2024). If micro, small and medium enterprises already have a strong and recognisable brand, they will be more easily identified by potential buyers, and the products or services they offer will attract more attention. This can increase sales opportunities and expand market share, thereby driving business growth (Dewi, 2020).

In addition, solid brand development can also form customer loyalty. When customers have had a positive experience with a product or service from a micro, small and medium enterprise associated with a strong brand, they are more likely to repurchase and recommend it to others. This customer loyalty can create a stable revenue stream and increase profits for micro, small and medium enterprises in the long term (Irmayani et al., 2023).

Another impact of successful brand development is an increase in the competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises in the market. A strong and recognised brand can help micro, small and medium enterprises differentiate themselves from competitors and offer unique value to customers. This can enable micro, small and medium enterprises to charge premium prices and increase their profit margins (Kofi et al., 2023). In addition, a strong brand can also enable micro, small and medium enterprises to expand their product or service range and enter new markets more effectively. Thus, strategic brand development can be the key to business growth and long-term success for micro, small and medium enterprises (Husni et al., 2024).

In a single beach village, many micro, small and medium enterprises are engaged in the tourism sector, such as homestays, restaurants, and tourist activity providers. The right brand development can have a significant impact on these micro, small and medium enterprises. A strong and attractive brand can attract more tourists to visit the beach village and utilise the products or services offered by local micro, small and medium enterprises. This increases their revenue and fuels their business growth.

One of the key advantages of brand development for MSME players in coastal villages is the ability to create a distinctive identity linked to the natural charm and local cultural heritage. With a solid brand, MSME players can promote the uniqueness of their beach villages and offer authentic experiences that cannot be sought elsewhere. This can attract tourists who are looking for a different and meaningful holiday.

In addition, brand development can also help MSME players in beach villages to collaborate and promote their village as a complete tourist destination. With a strong and coordinated brand, MSME players can offer attractive tour packages and promote

their beach villages effectively through various marketing channels. This can increase the overall visibility and appeal of the beach village, which will ultimately benefit all MSME players involved.

However, it is important to remember that successful brand development requires consistent effort and resources. MSME players in coastal villages may need support from the local government or relevant agencies in terms of training, guidelines, and even funding to develop a strong and effective brand. However, investment in brand development can pay off handsomely for MSME players in coastal villages, opening the door to sustainable business growth and economic benefits for local communities.

Thus, the formulation of a distinctive identity is a strategic step for small and medium enterprises in coastal village communities. A solid and attractive identity can attract more tourists, create distinctive features associated with both natural charm and local culture, and facilitate collaboration and promotion of the village as a complete tourist destination. Thanks to a solid identity, small and medium enterprises can increase their income and boost their business growth. While formulating an identity requires consistent effort and resources, investing in this area can pay off handsomely for small and medium enterprises in coastal villages, opening the door to sustainable business growth and economic benefits for the local community. Support from local government and relevant institutions is crucial in facilitating the process of formulating an effective identity for small and medium enterprises in coastal village communities.

## **Conclusion**

In the business context of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Sederhana Beach Village, Muara Gembong District, Bekasi Regency, West Java, brand identity is a supporting factor that has a major influence on business growth. A consistent and strong brand identity can provide a clear picture of what is offered, increase attractiveness, and promote the natural beauty and local culture of the beach village. With a strong brand identity, the MSMEs in the beach village are able to create an authentic and enjoyable experience for tourists, thereby driving further growth of their business.

The business development strategy of MSMEs in Sederhana Beach Village needs to pay special attention to effective brand identity management. This can be done through close cooperation among local MSME players, building a harmonised and unified brand identity to promote the beach village as a comprehensive tourist destination. In addition, investment in training and mentoring related to brand identity development is also important to ensure MSMEs have the capabilities needed to build and maintain a strong brand identity.

Support from the local government and related agencies is needed in order to develop brand identity for MSMEs in Sederhana Beach Village. Technical assistance,

funding, and coaching programmes can help MSMEs overcome challenges in building and maintaining a solid brand identity. With a solid brand identity as the main asset, MSMEs in the beach village can optimally utilise tourism potential, increase income, and achieve sustainable business growth to provide economic benefits for the local community.

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