

Model for Enhancing the Competitiveness of the Food Industry and Urban Farming Business Community: A Case Study of the Kedaireka IRT-UM Grant

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Abstract Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) continue to face significant competitive pressures in an increasingly dynamic market environment, requiring sustainable and niche-based strategies to strengthen their competitiveness. This condition is experienced by CheekMe Mie Sehat, Kuliner Warteg Kalkul Bahari, and the Mustika Farmer Group (fostered partners of YARSI University) which have encountered business stagnation and difficulties in scaling up, particularly in product innovation, marketing, business governance, and compliance with quality standards. In response, a competitiveness enhancement model was developed and implemented through a combination of training and non-training interventions. The activities were conducted from November to December 2024 and included workshops, talk show sessions, certification assistance, laboratory testing, and the provision of digital and production infrastructure. The effectiveness of the program was evaluated using pre-test and post-test measurements, participant engagement, and observed improvements in business practices. The results indicate a measurable increase in participants' knowledge, skills, and institutional capacity, demonstrating that an integrated and multidimensional approach can effectively enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs in the food industry and urban farming sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The micro-scale food industry continues to face intense competitive pressures, making strategies to strengthen competitiveness and technical guidance essential for these business actors (Chandra et al., 2021; Jufriyanto, 2020). This situation also applies to several communities fostered by YARSI University – namely CheekMe Mie Sehat in Koja, Kuliner Warteg Kalkul Bahari in Cempaka Putih, and the Mustika Farmer Group in Kramat Jati – who are experiencing business stagnation and difficulties in scaling up, particularly with respect to product innovation,

marketing, and business governance.

Moreover, in a social media–driven market that offers broad product choices and low switching costs, consumers can easily select products based on price, quality, and accessibility. Such competitive dynamics require MSMEs to develop strategies that strengthen product quality, sales performance, financial management, product safety, and digital marketing (Putri et al., 2022). An important need that requires further action is assistance in managing legal permits and product certifications to enhance consumer

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trust in the communities' products (Darajat et al., 2023; Kartika et al., 2021; Rizkaprilisa et al., 2022).

Although the three fostered partners of YARSI University have distinct business profiles and strengths, they face similar constraints, including weak institutional governance, limited quality and production capacity relative to industry standards, and underdeveloped product concepts and marketing strategies.

Based on interviews and discussions with the three partners, the specific problems related to governance and institutionalization comprise:

1. Limited knowledge and practice in bookkeeping and preparing basic financial reports
2. Limited understanding of SME financial management
3. Minimal digitalization of payment systems and inventory processes

Regarding quality and production capacity improvement, the specific problems comprise:

1. Limited knowledge of CHSE (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) and halal product requirements
2. The need for product certification related to quality and safety

In the area of business development and marketing, the identified problems are

1. The absence of a clear brand identity and marketing strategy to expand market reach
2. A lack of human resources capable of producing content aligned with marketing goals

Given the problems described above, the fostered partners require enhanced knowledge and skills not only to sustain their operations but also to grow across different phases of the business cycle, both during peak

and downturn periods (Chandra et al., 2021; Jufriyanto, 2020). Therefore, the program activities aim to strengthen governance and institutional quality, increase production capacity, and promote business development and marketing. This article describes the implementation of the competitiveness enhancement model and presents the resulting outcomes.

This community service initiative is supported by the 2024 Micro-Business Home Industry Development Program (IRT-UM) under the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The 2024 IRT-UM development program is designed to stimulate community-based economic growth, particularly among home industries and micro-enterprises. The program focuses on strengthening governance and institutional capacities, improving product quality and production capabilities, and advancing business and marketing strategies for IRT-UM participants.

2. METHOD

The methods used in this activity consisted of training and non-training interventions. Most of the training components were conducted through workshops and a talk show-style event. Prior studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of these methods in the learning process. According to Ceneciro (2025); Cho et al. (2024); Nasmith & Steinert (2001), workshops are effective because they emphasize experiential, hands-on, and interactive learning. They enable dialogue among participants during and after activities, and they facilitate reflective group work through portfolios and project-based tasks that promote a collaborative, team-oriented approach. The implementation emphasized a stepwise integration of active teaching and learning strategies to encourage deep learning. Table 1 summarizes the problems and specific issues identified, along with the intervention programs developed to address the challenges faced by the partners.

Table 1 . Training solution programs

Problem	Specific Problem	Solution Programs
Governance and institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge and practice in recording the financial report • Lack of knowledge regarding financial management for SMEs • The payment system and inventory are not integrated and not yet digitized 	Financial Reporting and Financial Management Workshop
Quality and production capacity improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge regarding CHSE (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) and halal product • The need for product certification regarding quality and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk show on Increasing Culinary Production Capacity & Competence • CHSE Workshop • Product Quality, Service & Production Capacity Workshop
Business development and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of brand identity and marketing strategy that was clear to improve market share • Lack of workforce that can produce content according to marketing value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Skills Improvement Workshop • Franchise System and Company Profile Workshop

Table 2 . Non-training solution programs

Problem	Solution Program	Fostered Partner
Governance and Institutional	Purchase Point-of-Sale (POS) accounting software & hardware	CheekMe Mie Sehat, Warteg Kalkul Bahari, Mustika Farmers Group Community
Quality and Production Capacity Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIR-T Certificate • Nutrition Facts Lab Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warteg Kalkul Bahari • CheekMe Mie Sehat, Kelompok Tani Mustika
Business Development and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of Production Equipment • Brand Certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CheekMe Mie Sehat, Warteg Kalkul Bahari, Mustika Farmers Group Community • Mustika Farmers Group Community

Table 3 . Implementation of training activities

No.	Workshop	Date	Participants
1	Financial Reporting and Financial Management Workshop	5 November 2024	54
2	Talk show on Increasing Culinary Production Capacity & Competence	8 November 2024	67
3	Franchise System and Company Profile Workshop	12 November 2024	67
4	Marketing Skills Improvement Workshop	19 November 2024	67
5	Workshop CHSE (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability)	26 November 2024	57
6	Product Quality, Service & Production Capacity Workshop	5 December 2024	37

Different problems naturally require different solution approaches (Ali et al., 2022; Kchaou-Boujelben, 2021; Robertson II, 2018). Furthermore, as noted by Ditta et al. (2020); López-Carrión et al. (2024), the talk show format served as an initial source of inspiration for this study. Talk shows also function as a contemporary public forum that enables diverse perspectives to be voiced (Tolson, 2021). Because the partners in this activity face a variety of challenges, the approaches used were tailored to their specific needs. Accordingly, this competitiveness development model incorporated multiple workshop themes, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the non-workshop methods involved providing software and hardware facilities, supporting certification, and assisting with licensing and product testing. Software and hardware infrastructure constitute essential components of business operations. Suboptimal facilities can lead to production losses stemming from disruptions in the production process, as well as declines in product quality (Ali et al., 2022; Kchaou-Boujelben, 2021). According to Dominici et al. (2025); Dressler & Paunovic (2021); Jaung et al. (2019), certification is necessary to elevate the brand equity of a certified product above that of its competitors.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This activity is part of the 2024 Home Industry and Micro Business Development Program (IRT-UM), a grant initiative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. The program comprised a series of training and non-training activities involving three fostered partners: CheekMe Mie Sehat, Warteg Kalkul Bahari, and the Mustika Farmer Group. The training component included five workshops and one talk show event, conducted at YARSI University and at the Mustika Farmer Group's

production facility. The training series was held from November 5, 2024, to December 5, 2024, with participant attendance ranging from approximately 54 to 67 individuals per session.

During each workshop, activities began with a pre-test to assess participants' baseline understanding prior to intervention and concluded with a post-test. The post-test served to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and to measure the extent to which participants' knowledge improved following the intervention (Gülçiçek & Erden, 2024).

The training activities began with a workshop on financial reporting and financial management, followed by the implementation of a Point-of-Sale (POS) system. As shown in Table 3, the workshop was held on November 5, 2024, in the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate and was attended by 54 participants. The session was delivered by experts in bookkeeping and finance—Nida Nadya Hasan, S.E., M.Sak., and Randhy Nugroho, S.E., M.Sc.—both lecturers in the Accounting Department at YARSI University. Based on the pre-test results, participants' average score was 78.00%. After the workshop, the average score increased to 87.00%, indicating a 9.00% improvement in participants' understanding of financial reporting and financial management (Ceneciro, 2025).

The second activity in the series was a talk show on enhancing culinary production capacity and competence. This event was held on November 8, 2024, in the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate and was attended by 67 participants. The talk show served as a platform for practitioners to share their experiences related to improving the competence and production capacity of culinary businesses. The session featured an external practitioner, Mrs. Leni Muslimah, owner of Pawon Bu Leni.

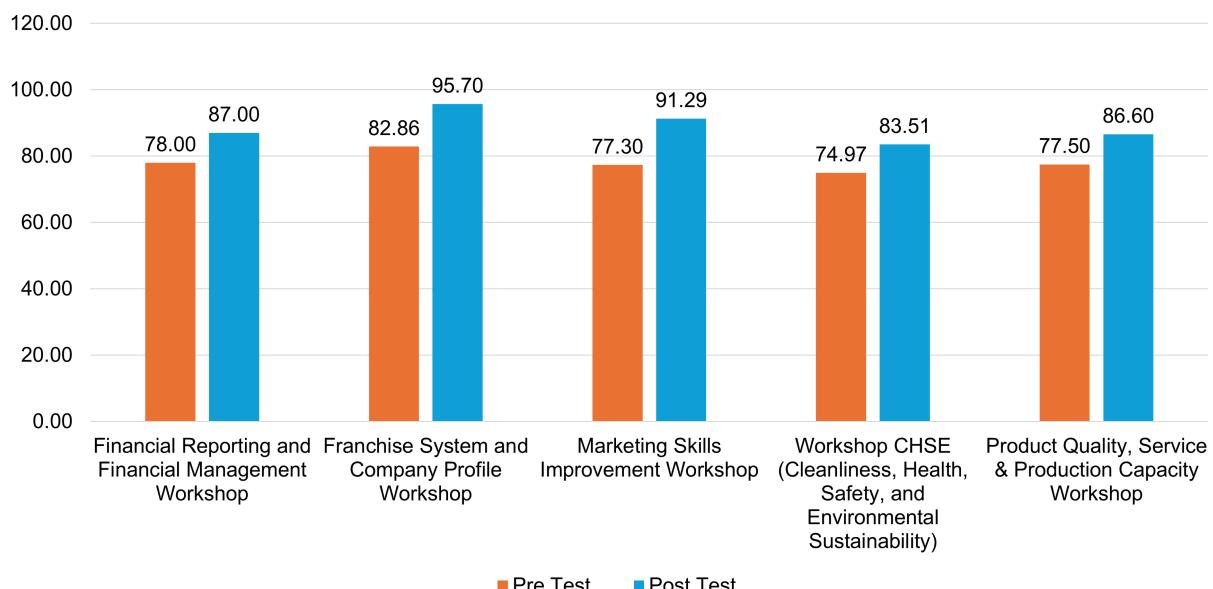


Figure 1 . Pre-test and post-test result



Figure 2 . Training documentation

The franchise system and company profile workshop was held on November 12, 2024, at the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate and was attended by 67 participants. This event emphasized the importance of professionalism in documenting business processes and aimed to help partners develop replicable business patterns. The main speakers in this workshop were Ariel Nian Gani, M.Phil., M.Sc., and Muhammad Rof'i'i, S.E.I., M.Sc., practitioners and academics from the management department of YARSI University. Figure 2 shows the activity of the workshop. Figure 1 shows that after the workshop, the average understanding of participants regarding the franchise system and company profile improved to 95.70% from only 82.86% before the training. It means that participant understanding enhanced by 12.84% (Rizkaprilisa et al., 2022).

The next activity held was a marketing skills improvement workshop. This workshop was held on November 19, 2024, in the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate and was attended by 67 participants. This event was held to help participants become more proficient in marketing their products (Jufriyanto, 2020). The main resource person in this workshop was Edy Fajar Prasetyo, S.P., a sociopreneur practitioner. Based on the pre-

test results, the average score of participant understanding was 77.30%. After the activity took place, the average knowledge of participants increased to 91.29%, so that participant understanding increased by 13.99%.

CHSE The franchise system and company profile workshop was held on November 12, 2024, in the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate and was attended by 67 participants. This event emphasized the importance of professionalism in documenting business processes and aimed to help partners develop business models that could be replicated (Chandra et al., 2021). The primary speakers for this workshop were Ariel Nian Gani, M.Phil., M.Sc., and Muhammad Rof'i'i, S.E.I., M.Sc., both practitioners and academics from the Management Department at YARSI University. Figure 1 shows that following the workshop, participants' average understanding of the franchise system and company profile increased to 95.70%, up from 82.86% before the training—an improvement of 12.84

The next activity was a marketing skills improvement workshop held on November 19, 2024, in the Seminar Room of the YARSI University Rectorate, with 67 participants in attendance. The purpose of this workshop was to strengthen participants' ability to market their products more effectively (Putri et al., 2022). The main speaker was Edy Fajar Prasetyo, S.P., a sociopreneur practitioner. Based on the pre-test results, participants' average score was 77.30%. After the workshop, the average score rose to 91.29%, representing a 13.99% increase in participants' understanding.

Moreover, the non-training activities included the procurement of equipment and business support materials, as well as assistance for partners in obtaining legal permits, laboratory testing, and implementing a point-of-sale system. These activities began with a survey and comparative price analysis for the procurement of equipment grants. Table 4 shows the list of production facility equipment grants. The implementation took place from November 2024 to

Table 4 . Production facility equipment grant

Production Facilities	Equipment Grant
• Electric cooking equipment	• Oven, 2 burner gas stove, stainless steel cooking pan, electric microwave
• Non-stove cooking equipment	• Refrigerator, mixer, steamer, cake paper, food mold, refrigerator showcase
• Cleaning, health, safety and work environment equipment	• Kanebo, napkin, waste bin for business, clean water filter, waste filter
• Human resources hygiene and health equipment	• Hat, apron, chef's coat, harnet, gloves, display curtain
• Plastic vacuum machine equipment	• Vacuum machine, sealer xinbaolong qh-16

December 2024. The provision of production facility equipment was intended to enhance the competitiveness of the fostered partners by improving both product quality and production processes.

The committee team also assisted partners in obtaining P-IRT certificates, Nutrition Facts laboratory tests, and brand certification. The management of various permits, legal documents, and certifications is essential for increasing consumer trust and enhancing the competitiveness of products produced by the fostered partners. Legal compliance and business certification provide several advantages for MSMEs, including broader marketing opportunities—such as access to retail chains and participation in government or private trade missions—because certified products are viewed as more credible. In addition, certified businesses are better positioned to access various government programs related to procurement, development, and support services.

4. CONCLUSION

The competitiveness enhancement initiative designed for YARSI University's fostered micro-food enterprises—CheekMe Mie Sehat, Warteg Kalkul Bahari, and the Mustika Farmer Group—proved to be both transformative and measurable in its impact. The program's integrated approach, which combined structured training (workshops and talk shows) with targeted non-training interventions (certification assistance, nutrition lab testing, digital accounting systems, and modern production equipment), effectively addressed the partners' most pressing challenges in governance, financial management, product safety, and market expansion. Evidence from the pre-test and post-test evaluations demonstrated consistent and meaningful increases in participants' competencies, ranging from financial literacy to marketing skills and compliance with food safety standards.

Beyond strengthening individual capacities, the interventions also contributed to structural improvements, including the acquisition of P-IRT certification and the adoption of digital POS systems—both of which enhanced institutional credibility and consumer trust. These developments position the enterprises not only to remain competitive but also to scale sustainably and access broader distribution channels, including formal retail networks and government procurement opportunities. Overall, the findings indicate that competitiveness in micro and home-based food industries is best supported through a holistic,

multidimensional model that integrates capacity building with infrastructural and regulatory support. This approach offers a replicable framework for policymakers and development practitioners seeking to strengthen MSMEs and improve their resilience in an increasingly dynamic market environment.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study. The program was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and BAMUIS BNI solely to promote business development and economic growth among micro-businesses supported by YARSI University.

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