

Empowering Farmers' Wives Through Economic Learning and Creative Economy Practices in Mangilu Village

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Abstract: This study investigates how farmers' wives participate in creative economy activities through economic learning in Mangilu Village, Pangkep Regency, Indonesia. The issue is important because agrarian households often depend on seasonal income, while women's productive roles in household-based businesses are frequently under-recognised. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected from farmers' wives who operated local culinary microbusinesses, village officials, empowerment-program facilitators, and community leaders. Purposive sampling was applied to select informants with direct experience in the empowerment process. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document study, and were validated through source triangulation, technique triangulation, member checking, and audit trail. Thematic analysis followed data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. The findings show that farmers' wives participated across the entire business chain, including production, packaging, pricing, digital promotion, customer service, and basic financial management. Empowerment became more effective when technical training was combined with field mentoring, financial literacy, business management, and practical use of social media. The programme strengthened household income, family economic resilience, women's bargaining position, confidence, and the preservation of traditional culinary knowledge. The study proposes a learning-business-culture model for sustaining rural women's creative economy initiatives.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment; Creative Economy; Farmers' Wives; Economic Learning; Rural Entrepreneurship

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INTRODUCTION

Creative economy empowerment in rural areas has become an increasingly important development issue because farming households often face seasonal income, commodity-price volatility, and limited access to non-farm sources of livelihood. In such a context, the creative economy offers a practical pathway for diversifying household income by converting local knowledge, culinary skills, and available agricultural resources into marketable products. Rural women's entrepreneurship is also linked to community resilience because women-led

microbusinesses are commonly embedded in local social networks and household survival strategies (Islam et al., 2022; OECD, 2025; UNDP, 2009).

Farmers' wives hold a strategic position within this agenda. They not only perform domestic responsibilities but also manage household resources, maintain social networks, and possess tacit knowledge of food ingredients, culinary traditions, and community market needs. However, their contribution is frequently treated as informal assistance rather than recognised as productive economic work. This invisibility weakens access to training, finance, digital skills, and institutional support, even though women's empowerment depends on the interaction between resources, agency, and achievements (Kabeer, 1999, 2005)

Mangilu Village in Pangkep Regency provides a relevant empirical setting for examining the relationship between women's empowerment, economic learning, and rural creative economy practices. The village is rooted in agriculture and has local food resources that can be processed into traditional culinary products. Farmers' wives use ingredients such as glutinous rice, palm sugar, bananas, and banana leaves to produce food products that carry both economic and cultural value. Therefore, their household-based activities should not be read merely as small-scale domestic production; they represent a form of local entrepreneurship grounded in cultural knowledge.

Economic learning is central to this empowerment process. Through economic learning, women entrepreneurs do not only acquire technical production skills; they also learn to calculate capital, estimate production costs, set prices, separate business money from household money, record transactions, and use social media to reach customers. Adult learning principles suggest that learning becomes effective when it is connected to participants' lived experience, practical needs, and real problems (Knowles, 2015). In this study, economic learning is understood as a practical process through which women convert everyday experience into more systematic business behaviour.

Recent studies indicate that financial literacy, business management skills, and digital marketing capacity are critical for the sustainability of women's enterprises in Indonesia. Aripin and Zuhriyah (2025) show that financial literacy and business management skills strengthen women entrepreneurs' business sustainability, while (Husna et al., 2025) demonstrate that contextual digital marketing training improves women-led MSMEs' digital marketing literacy. (Nuraisyiah et al., 2025) further argue that financial literacy can become a gender-sensitive capability that supports digital marketing adoption and entrepreneurial sustainability.

Despite these contributions, studies that connect farmers' wives' participation, economic learning, digital promotion, household welfare, and local cultural preservation in a single rural case remain limited (Hasan et al., 2026). This study addresses that gap by analysing how farmers' wives participate in the creative economy, how empowerment programmes are implemented through economic learning, and how these processes affect family welfare and the preservation of local culinary culture in Mangilu Village.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The design was selected because the research aimed to understand the process of creative economy empowerment in the real-life context of Mangilu Village. A case study allows the researcher to examine experience,

meaning, social relations, institutional support, and changes in business behaviour as an integrated phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The research was conducted in Mangilu Village, Bungoro District, Pangkajene and Islands Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, from August to October 2025. The location was selected because it has an agrarian livelihood structure, local food potential, and creative economy activities carried out by farmers' wives. The village context made it possible to observe the interaction between local resources, women's productive roles, and community-based economic learning.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria were direct experience, knowledge, or involvement in the empowerment of farmers' wives through creative economy activities. The informants consisted of farmers' wives who operated culinary microbusinesses, village government officials, empowerment-program facilitators, and community leaders. To protect research ethics, informants are presented by role category rather than personal identity.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document study. Interviews explored motivation, business experience, perceived constraints, changes in skills, and the perceived effects of empowerment. Observation was used to examine production practices, packaging, business interaction, social media use, and family dynamics. Document study was conducted to read supporting materials such as programme notes, village documents, research instruments, and records of business activities.

Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, member checking, and audit trail. Source triangulation compared information from farmers' wives, village officials, programme facilitators, and community leaders. Technique triangulation compared interview, observation, and documentation data. Member checking was conducted by confirming summary findings with informants, while the audit trail documented the process of data collection, coding, and interpretation.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of qualitative analysis, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2020). Interview, observation, and documentation data were condensed into meaning units, organised into thematic nodes, and interpreted through repeated comparison. To clarify the findings, the article presents thematic visualisations in formats commonly used in NVivo, including a project map, hierarchy chart, coding matrix, and word cloud.

Table 1. Data Sources and Their Analytical Contribution

Informant category	Role in the study	Main information	Analytical contribution
Farmers' wives operating businesses	Main subjects of empowerment	Business experience, motivation, constraints, income, marketing practices	Explains participation and capacity change
Village government	Local policy facilitator	Administration, capital access, programme support, product promotion	Explains the local institutional ecosystem
Programme facilitators	Training and mentoring providers	Training materials, learning methods, evaluation of participant change	Explains programme effectiveness

Community leaders	Local social observers	Women's changing roles, social acceptance, local culture	Explains socio-cultural effects
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Source: Field data analysis (2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Thematic Visualization of the NVivo Model

Thematic coding shows that the empowerment of farmers' wives in Mangilu Village is structured around five major clusters: economic participation, economic learning, supporting ecosystem, welfare outcomes, and local cultural preservation. The barriers cluster operates across themes because constraints related to capital, time, managerial capacity, and market access influence almost every aspect of business sustainability.

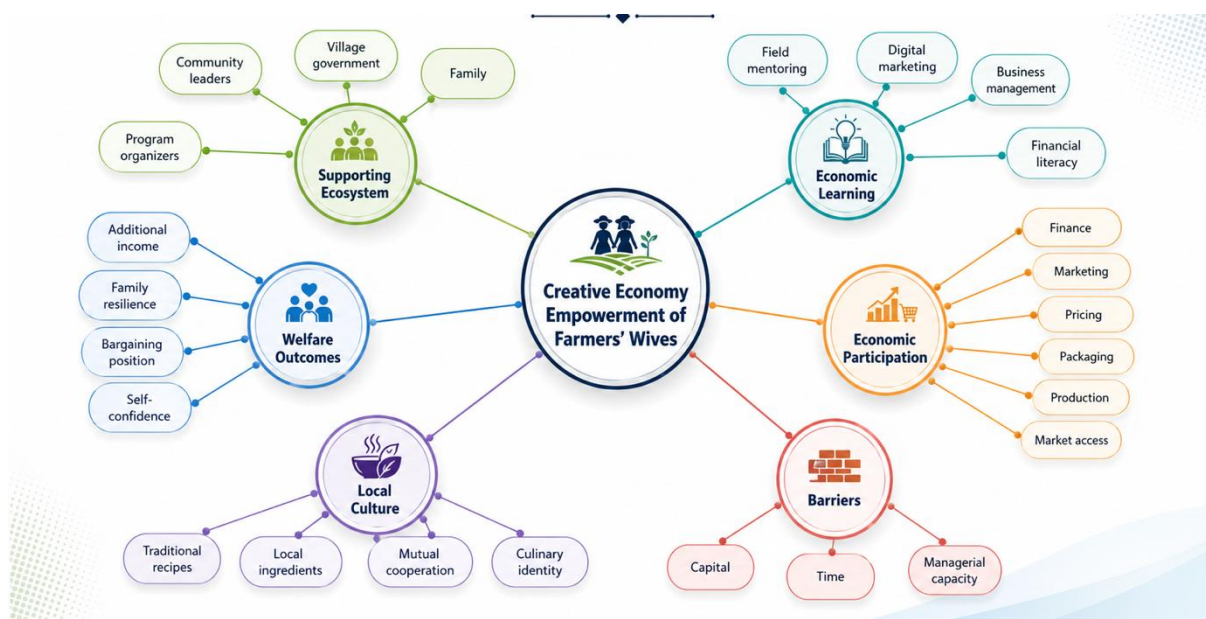


Figure 1. Project map of thematic relationships in the empowerment of farmers' wives.

Source: Field data analysis (2026).

Figure 1 shows that economic learning functions as a bridge between business participation and welfare outcomes. Production training, financial literacy, business management, digital marketing, and field mentoring become transformation mechanisms that move household-based informal work toward more structured microbusiness practices.

Table 2. Thematic Node Structure Derived from Coding

Main node	Subnodes	Empirical indicators	Analytical meaning
Economic participation	Production, packaging, pricing, marketing, finance	Women are involved in the entire traditional culinary business chain	Participation is active, independent, and continuous
Economic learning	Financial literacy, business management, digital marketing	Participants begin distinguishing capital, costs, revenue, and profit and start using social media	Learning transforms knowledge into business behaviour

Supporting ecosystem	Family, village, community leaders, facilitators	Moral support, administration, capital facilitation, promotion, and networking are available	Business continuity is supported by social and institutional resources
Welfare outcomes	Income, resilience, bargaining position, confidence	Additional income is used for education, food, health, electricity, and emergency needs	Empowerment operates economically, socially, and psychologically
Local culture	Traditional recipes, local ingredients, mutual cooperation	Culinary products sustain village identity and inherited knowledge	The creative economy also functions as cultural preservation
Barriers	Capital, time, managerial capacity, market access	Participants still face limited scale, double burden, and weak formal management	Continuous mentoring is needed for sustainability

Source: Field data analysis (2026).

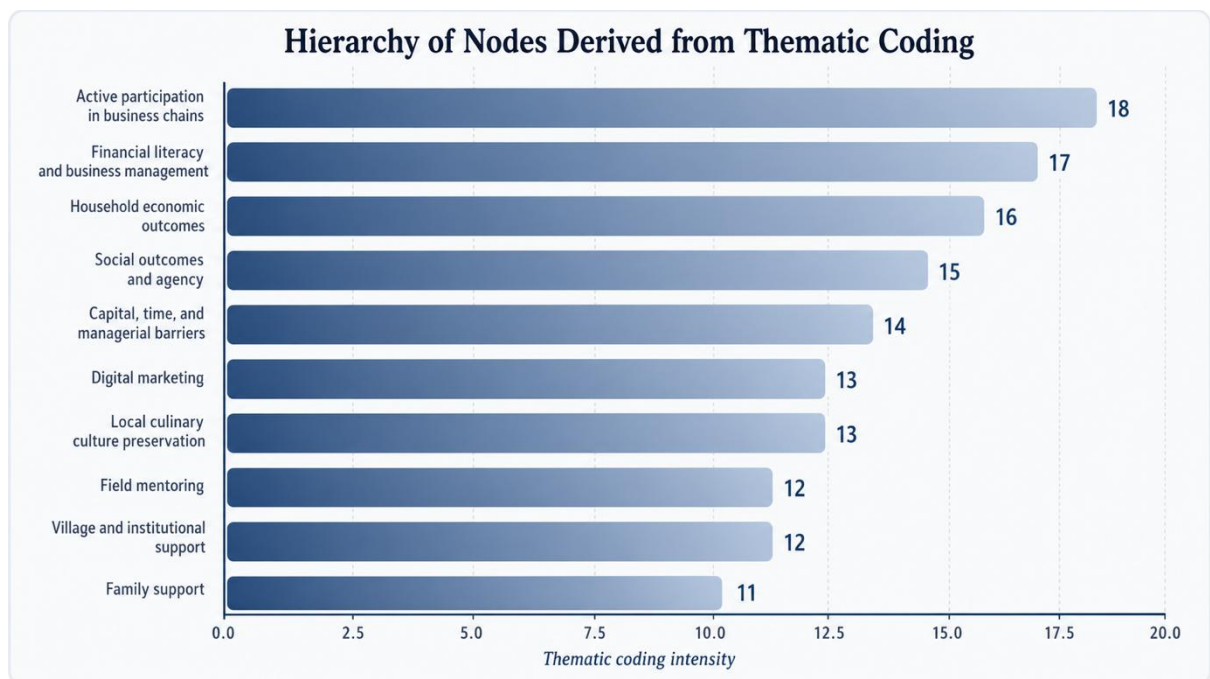


Figure 2. Hierarchy of nodes based on thematic coding intensity.

Source: Field data analysis (2026).

Figure 2 indicates that active participation, financial literacy, economic outcomes, social agency, and business barriers are the most dominant themes. This pattern suggests that empowerment is not perceived merely as business assistance but as a learning process that affects capability, social position, and family economic resilience.

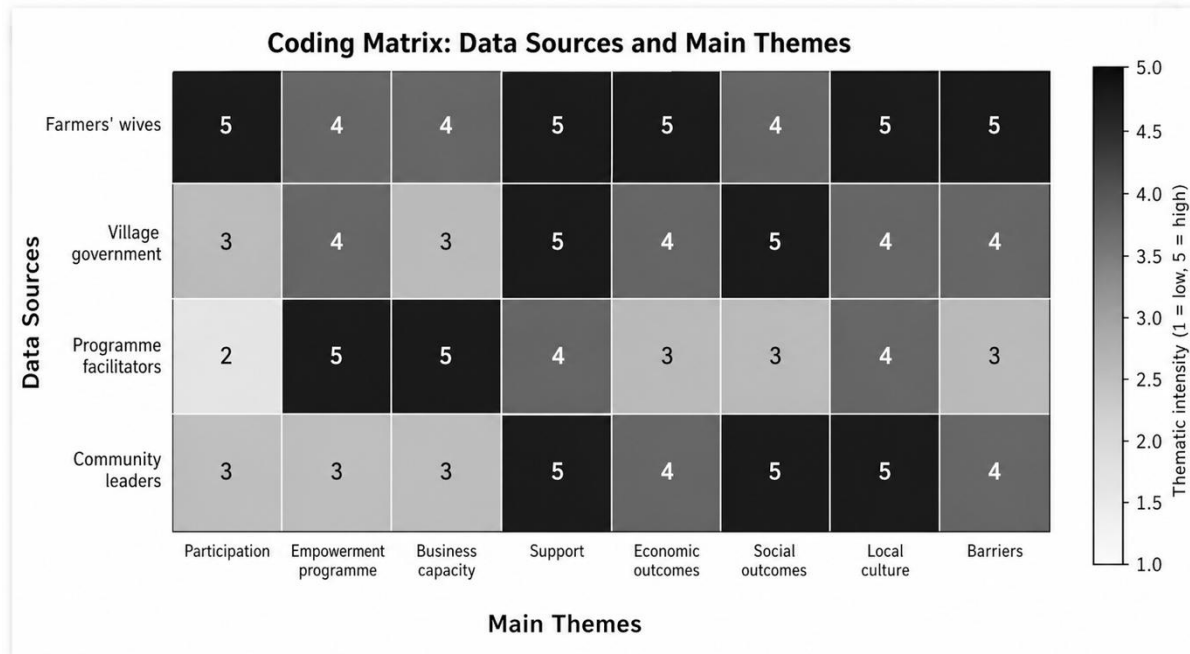


Figure 3. Coding matrix between data sources and main themes.

Source: Field data analysis (2026).

The coding matrix in Figure 3 shows consistency across data sources. Farmers' wives were most prominent in explaining participation, barriers, and economic outcomes. Village officials emphasised programme support and social effects. Programme facilitators contributed strongly to themes of capacity building and implementation, while community leaders strengthened the interpretation of social support, local culture, and acceptance of women's economic roles.



Figure 4. Word cloud based on thematic narratives.

Source: Field data analysis (2026).

The word cloud in Figure 4 highlights terms associated with business, household income, products, marketing, finance, support, culture, and learning. Qualitatively, these terms indicate that women's entrepreneurship in Mangilu Village operates at the intersection of household economy, practical business learning, and local identity.

Farmers' Wives' Participation in the Creative Economy

The findings show that farmers' wives participate actively in the creative economy of Mangilu Village. Their participation is not limited to production tasks but includes the procurement of raw materials, product processing, packaging, pricing, marketing, customer service, and simple financial management. This broad chain of activity indicates that women act as business operators, not merely as assistants in family economic activities.

The most prominent business activity is traditional culinary production based on local ingredients. Products are made from glutinous rice, palm sugar, bananas, banana leaves, and other locally available materials. The use of local ingredients reveals a direct connection between the creative economy and the village's socio-economic structure. Women do not only use local resources as raw materials; they convert them into saleable products with cultural meaning.

Women's motivation to participate is shaped by four main drivers: the desire to earn independent income, the intention to help the family economy, the use of available time, and the wish to contribute to village progress. Economic independence becomes an important motive because women gain confidence when they are able to generate income. At the same time, family-oriented motives remain strong because business income is commonly used for children's education, household consumption, electricity, health, and urgent needs.

Although participation is strong, several recurring constraints were identified. These include limited working capital, time limitations caused by domestic responsibilities, and limited formal managerial skills. These barriers do not stop participation, but they restrict business scale. For this reason, the empowerment required is not a one-off training event but a combination of micro-capital access, managerial mentoring, and more equitable distribution of domestic roles within the family.

Implementation of the Empowerment Programme

The creative economy empowerment programme in Mangilu Village was implemented through two main stages: training and field mentoring. During the training stage, participants received materials on local food processing, hygiene standards, packaging, pricing, digital marketing, and financial literacy. During the mentoring stage, participants were assisted in applying the materials to their everyday business practices.

The most relevant materials identified in the findings were financial literacy and business management. Before the programme, some business operators still mixed working capital, sales revenue, and household money. After the training, they began to understand the distinction between capital, production costs, revenue, and profit. This change is analytically important because cash-flow awareness is the foundation of microbusiness sustainability.

Digital marketing was another prominent aspect of the programme. Farmers' wives began to use WhatsApp and Facebook to promote products, receive orders, and expand consumer reach. This transformation is important because digital promotion allows household businesses to reach

wider markets without high operational costs. In a village context, social media becomes a realistic entry point into the digital economy for women-led microbusinesses.

Support from the village government and community leaders strengthened programme effectiveness. The village government assisted business administration, access to assistance schemes, product promotion during village events, and networking. Community leaders provided social legitimacy for women's involvement in economic activities. This synergy confirms that women's empowerment cannot be separated from the local social and institutional ecosystem.

Effects on Household Welfare and Local Culture

The economic effect is visible in the additional income generated by culinary microbusinesses. The amount varies depending on business scale, production intensity, and customer orders. The income is used for strategic household needs, especially children's education, food, electricity, health expenses, and emergency needs. Creative economy activities therefore function as an alternative income source when agricultural income is seasonal.

The social effect appears in the improved bargaining position of women within the household. Women who generate their own income are more likely to be involved in family economic decisions. They also become more confident when interacting with consumers, setting prices, and developing business ideas. This change shows that economic empowerment produces more than money; it also produces recognition and a sense of capability.

Nevertheless, women's participation in formal social organisations remains limited. This limitation is not caused by a lack of interest but by the need to divide time between production, customer orders, and household responsibilities. The finding indicates that productive roles have increased, but domestic burdens have not been equally redistributed. In other words, empowerment proceeds alongside the challenge of women's double burden.

The cultural effect is reflected in the preservation of traditional culinary knowledge. Products developed by farmers' wives are derived from family recipes, local ingredients, and intergenerational processing techniques. When these products are packaged and marketed in a more modern way, tradition is not abandoned; it receives a new economic space. Women in this context act simultaneously as preservers of cultural knowledge and agents of innovation.

Discussion

The findings suggest that creative economy empowerment in Mangilu Village is multidimensional. Economically, the involvement of farmers' wives in traditional culinary businesses expands household income sources. This aligns with the concept of rural livelihood diversification, which argues that farming households become more resilient when they are able to combine agricultural and non-agricultural income sources (Islam et al., 2022; OECD, 2025). The case of Mangilu Village shows that women's culinary microbusinesses operate as a practical buffer against seasonal and uncertain agricultural income.

From the perspective of women's empowerment, farmers' wives' participation reflects a shift from invisible domestic labour toward recognised economic agency. (Kabeer, 2005) explains empowerment through the relationship between resources, agency, and achievements. In this study, resources are reflected in access to training, family support, village networks, and programme assistance. Agency is reflected in women's ability to set prices, manage money, serve

consumers, and make business decisions. Achievements are reflected in additional income, confidence, and social recognition.

The implementation of the programme also shows the importance of experience-based economic learning. Training is insufficient when participants do not receive opportunities to practise and refine skills in real business situations. Adult learning theory argues that adults learn more effectively when learning materials are linked to practical needs and can be directly applied (Knowles, 2015). The combination of training and field mentoring therefore becomes a key strength of empowerment in Mangilu Village.

The digital marketing finding indicates a realistic adaptation of microbusinesses to changing markets. The use of WhatsApp and Facebook may appear simple, but it is strategic for household-based businesses. Social media helps women display products, receive orders, maintain customer relationships, and build consumer trust. This confirms recent evidence that contextual digital marketing training improves the ability of women-led MSMEs to access markets and increase competitiveness (Husna et al., 2025).

The financial literacy finding is equally important. Separating business money from household money, identifying production costs, and calculating profit are basic practices that strengthen microbusiness sustainability. This finding resonates with recent empirical evidence in Indonesia showing that financial literacy and business management skills enhance women entrepreneurs' business sustainability (Aripin & Zuhriyah, 2025). Thus, economic learning should be designed not as abstract financial education but as practical cash-flow literacy that matches the scale and rhythm of rural microbusinesses.

The cultural dimension indicates that the creative economy should not be reduced to a purely economic sector. Traditional culinary products in Mangilu Village carry family recipes, local ingredients, processing techniques, and values of mutual cooperation. These cultural elements become product differentiation and strengthen village identity. In this sense, the creative economy creates a meeting point between cultural preservation and market innovation.

Conceptually, this article proposes a learning-business-culture model for empowering rural women through the creative economy. The model places economic learning as the practical process, creative business as the application space, and local culture as the source of product differentiation. This model is relevant for agrarian villages that possess local food resources and culinary traditions but face limited capital, market access, digital skills, and business management capacity.

Table 3. Synthesis of the Learning-Business-Culture Model for Empowering Farmers' Wives

Model component	Implementation form	Empirical finding	Development implication
Learning	Training in production, finance, management, and digital marketing	Participants understand capital, profit, pricing, and online promotion	Materials should be based on real business needs
Business	Traditional culinary production based on local ingredients	Women are involved in the whole business chain	Business scale and product legality need strengthening
Culture	Family recipes, local ingredients, mutual cooperation	Products become symbols of local identity	Traditional culinary products can become village icons

Ecosystem	Family, village government, facilitators, and community leaders	Social support strengthens business continuity	Women's business groups and micro-capital access should be developed
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Source: Field data analysis (2026).

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that farmers' wives in Mangilu Village participate actively, independently, and continuously in creative economy activities. Their participation covers the entire business chain, including local ingredient processing, packaging, pricing, marketing, customer service, and financial management. Participation is driven by the desire to earn independent income, support household needs, use available time productively, and contribute to village development.

The empowerment programme becomes effective when technical training is combined with economic learning and field mentoring. Financial literacy helps participants understand capital, production costs, profit, and simple records. Digital marketing helps them expand market access through WhatsApp and Facebook. Field mentoring ensures that knowledge does not remain theoretical but is translated into daily business practice.

The effects of empowerment are economic, social, and cultural. Economically, creative businesses generate additional income and strengthen farming household resilience. Socially, women gain stronger bargaining positions, greater self-confidence, and recognition as economic partners within the family. Culturally, traditional culinary activities preserve family recipes, local ingredients, mutual cooperation, and Mangilu Village's culinary identity.

The study recommends that the village government and relevant stakeholders strengthen micro-capital access, product legality, digital marketing training, simple financial recording, food product certification, and women's business groups. Empowerment should not be designed as a short training activity but as a continuous process that integrates economic learning, mentoring, market access, and local cultural strengthening.

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