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Smartphone-Based Product Photography Training for Older Adults to Support Garden Produce Sales

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Abstract

This community service activity introduced smartphone-based product photography as an age-friendly first step toward supporting garden-produce promotion among older adults. It was conducted on 12 July 2026 at the Elderly Service Post in Karangklesem and involved 13 older adults who owned smartphones but had no previous experience in digital selling. A qualitative descriptive bounded single-case design was used. Evidence from the attendance sheet, direct observation, training materials, activity records, and product photographs was analysed through data condensation, display, and verification. The training combined explanation, demonstration, guided practice, discussion, and individual assistance. The material addressed product preparation, lighting, background, composition, camera angle, image sharpness, and common errors. Two before-and-after product-image pairs involving sawi and bird's-eye chili illustrated the intended changes in background, lighting, arrangement, and visual clarity. The records confirmed that the session was completed, the planned material was delivered, and opportunities for supported practice were provided. These findings indicate an initial learning and practice opportunity, not verified improvement in individual photography competence. No sales posts, buyer enquiries, orders, or transactions were assessed. Further mentoring and participant-level assessment are needed to evaluate independent digital promotion and market outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is experiencing rapid population ageing. In 2025, 33.94 million people, or 11.93% of the total population, were aged 60 years or older [1]. This demographic shift strengthens the need for community programs that view older adults not only as care recipients but also as capable participants in meaningful social and economic activities. The World Health Organization defines healthy ageing in terms of maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being, including the ability to learn, make decisions, contribute to society, and sustain relationships [2]. In this context, accessible digital activities linked to everyday routines can serve as a practical form of age-friendly empowerment.

Smartphones provide a relevant entry point because they combine communication, photography, and access to digital promotion in one device. However, device ownership alone does not establish confident or purposeful use. Research has shown that older adults differ in their digital know-how and online skills even after obtaining access to technology [11], [12], while social support, repeated guidance, and confidence-building can facilitate continued use [3], [4], [13]. Potential barriers described in the literature include unfamiliar interfaces, limited digital literacy, physical or cognitive changes, and fear of making mistakes; these factors were not individually assessed among the participants in the present activity. Training for older adults should therefore use simple language, demonstrations, repeated practice, and direct assistance rather than rely on abstract explanation.

This need was observed among the older women's community at the Elderly Service Post (Pos Lansia) on Jalan Gunung Tugel, RT 06/RW 07, Karangklesem Urban Village, South Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency. The attendance record documented 13 community participants at the activity held on 12 July 2026. The activity materials identified household-scale gardening as a relevant daily context and noted that smartphones were commonly used for communication and everyday documentation. However, the available devices had not yet been optimally introduced as tools for presenting garden produce in a clear and attractive manner. The immediate partner problem was therefore not the absence of technology, but limited practical exposure to using smartphone cameras for product-oriented visual communication.

Product photographs can serve as an initial component of digital promotion because prospective buyers encounter the visual presentation before they can directly assess freshness, size, colour, or overall quality. Previous community-service reports have used product photography as an accessible entry point for micro and small businesses and community producers [5], [6]. In the present activity, that literature-based rationale was translated into practical instruction on cleaning the product and smartphone lens, using available light, selecting a clean background, arranging the object, choosing a suitable angle, and checking image sharpness. These techniques were presented as the content of the training, not as outcomes that had already been achieved by every participant.

Although previous initiatives have largely targeted micro, small, and medium enterprise actors, artisans, or students, fewer community programs specifically frame product photography as an age-friendly digital activity for older adults who manage small quantities of household garden produce. The Karangklesem activity addressed this gap through a modest, context-based intervention. The problem was formulated as how to introduce older participants to simple smartphone photography techniques that could produce more informative and appealing images of garden products without requiring additional equipment or complex applications. The service activity aimed to provide participants with initial knowledge and hands-on experience in natural lighting, background selection, composition, shooting angle, object arrangement, and focus or sharpness.

The proposed solution was participatory training that combined brief explanations, instructor demonstrations, guided practice, discussion, and individual assistance. The focus was limited to product-image preparation as an early step toward digital marketing; the activity did not measure transactions or claim an increase in sales. Accordingly, this article describes the implementation of smartphone-based product photography training for older adults, the material delivered, participant involvement during the session, and the relevance of the activity to supporting future promotion of household garden produce. This descriptive scope provides a realistic basis for identifying follow-up needs, particularly continued mentoring in writing product descriptions, displaying prices, publishing sales posts, and handling customer enquiries.

2. METHOD

This article employed a qualitative descriptive design within a bounded single-case study. Qualitative description is appropriate when the aim is to provide a straightforward, low-inference account that remains close to the available evidence [7], [14], [15], while a case-study approach enables a contemporary activity to be examined within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence [8]. The case unit was one smartphone-based product-photography training session. Its boundaries were the activity held on 12 July 2026, the Elderly Service Post (Pos Lansia) on Jalan Gunung Tugel RT 06/RW 07, Karangklesem Urban Village, South Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency, the 13 older women who attended, and the planned material on basic product photography. Members of the community-service team were excluded from the participant count. As summarised in Table 1, the participants were aged at least 60 years and owned smartphones, while none had previous experience selling products digitally. The design was therefore used to describe implementation and supported practice, not to estimate individual skill change or economic impact.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Participant characteristic	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Older adults (60 years or older)	13	100%
Smartphone owners	13	100%
Previous experience in digital selling	0	0%
No previous experience in digital selling	13	100%

Before the training, the team conducted an initial orientation through general observation of the community setting, review of available Pos Lansia information, discussion with local elderly-service cadres, and attention to participants' everyday concerns. This stage was used to align the activity with a familiar context: using smartphones to present household garden produce. The team then prepared concise visual material containing practical examples that could be followed during a community session. The intervention was deliberately limited to preparing product photographs as an initial component of digital promotion; it did not cover the operation of an online shop or attempt to measure business performance.

The intervention used participatory training and mentoring delivered in four connected stages: brief explanation, instructor demonstration, guided hands-on practice with individual assistance, and discussion. This sequence was consistent with experiential learning, in which knowledge is developed through concrete experience, reflection, conceptual understanding, and application [9], as well as with the value of social and assisted learning for older smartphone users [3]. The explanation introduced the role of clear photographs in presenting the freshness, colour, shape, and condition of garden produce. The demonstration covered cleaning the produce and smartphone lens, selecting fresh objects, arranging products on a clean base, using natural light, choosing an uncluttered background, positioning the main object, selecting an appropriate camera angle, and maintaining focus and image clarity. Common errors, including blurred images, insufficient lighting, excessive digital zoom, and distracting backgrounds, were discussed. Participants were invited to reproduce the demonstrated steps using their own smartphones and to request direct assistance during practice and the question-and-answer session.

Data were drawn from four sources produced or used during the activity: the attendance sheet, direct observation during training, presentation materials, and photographic documentation. The photographic documentation included two before-and-after product-image pairs featuring sawi and bird's-eye chili. Observation focused on participant presence and involvement, responses to the demonstration, opportunities to practise or ask questions, and the facilitated sequence. Detailed information on the participants' age range, prior smartphone-photography or social-media experience, and individual roles in managing or selling garden produce was not recorded and is not inferred in this article. The unit of analysis was the implementation process of the training session, rather than each participant's change in skill. Evaluation was therefore process-oriented. The image pairs were not linked to a participant-level rubric or individual performance record; they are used as illustrative examples of the practice task.

Ethical considerations. The activity was conducted in coordination with the local Pos Lansia partner, and attendance data are reported only in aggregate. Specific publication consent for identifiable participant photographs was not available; consequently, no participant faces, names, or other personal identifiers are reproduced. Figure 1 contains product images only and is not linked to individual participant performance.

The evidence was analysed manually through three iterative procedures adapted from qualitative data analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification [10]. First, information relevant to the article objective was selected and grouped into four categories: preparation, delivery of material, participant involvement, and immediate activity outputs. Second, an evidence matrix was used to compare observation notes with the attendance record, training material,

activity records, and the two product-image pairs. The image pairs were examined descriptively for visible changes in background, lighting, arrangement, and product visibility. Third, a narrative was prepared and checked against those sources so that each statement remained within the limits of the documented activity. The implementation benchmarks were completion of the planned session, attendance of the recorded community participants, delivery of the core photography content, and provision of opportunities for guided practice and discussion. No inferential statistical analysis or participant-level competence assessment was performed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Participant Context and Program Relevance

The participant profile presented in Table 1 provides the immediate context for interpreting the activity. All 13 participants were older adults aged 60 years or above, all owned smartphones, and none had previously used digital media to sell products. This combination distinguishes access to a device from demonstrated productive use. The training could therefore use a familiar device while starting with a limited and manageable activity rather than a complex e-commerce process. This interpretation is consistent with research showing variation in older adults' digital skills and the continuing importance of social support and guided learning [3], [4], [11]-[13].

Product photography was therefore selected as an introductory digital activity connected to familiar household produce. The practical examples involved sawi and bird's-eye chili. For sawi, a clear image can make leaf colour, freshness, moisture, and stalk condition easier to inspect; for chili, colour, shape, surface appearance, and arrangement are visually important. The intervention did not assume that device ownership meant that participants were already able to make promotional content. Instead, it introduced a limited sequence that could be followed directly: preparing the product, cleaning the lens, arranging the object, using suitable light, choosing a simple background, determining the camera angle, and checking image sharpness.

3.2 Training Implementation and Immediate Outputs

The face-to-face activity was completed on 12 July 2026 at the Pos Lansia in Karangklesem. The attendance sheet recorded 13 community participants after members of the service team were excluded. The activity record shows that the planned explanation and demonstration were followed by guided practice, discussion, and individual assistance. The photographic examples in Figure 1 make the practice task visible: the sawi pair shifts from an ordinary, visually busy surface to a cleaner white background with more controlled light, while the bird's-eye chili pair shows a more deliberate arrangement and clearer presentation of colour and shape. These examples illustrate the techniques introduced during the session without being treated as a participant-level test result.

Taken together, the available records show that participants were exposed to the target techniques and were given a supported opportunity to practise them. The evidence supports an initial learning experience at the programme level, while it does not establish that every participant independently produced a comparable photograph. Table 2 summarises the process achievements supported by the available records and separates them from outcomes that were not assessed.

Table 2. Implementation Benchmarks and Available Evidence

Implementation benchmark	Documented evidence	Assessment
Participation in the scheduled session	Attendance record listed 13 community participants.	Achieved
Delivery of core photography material	Materials covered preparation, lighting, background, composition, angle, and sharpness.	Achieved

Implementation benchmark	Documented evidence	Assessment
Opportunity for participatory learning	Explanation, demonstration, guided practice, discussion, and assistance were included.	Achieved
Illustrative product-image output	Two before-and-after pairs featuring sawi and bird's-eye chili illustrate background, lighting, arrangement, and visual clarity.	Documented example
Participant-level photography competence	No standardised rubric or individual performance record was available.	Not assessed
Digital promotion or sales outcome	No sales posts, enquiries, orders, or transaction records were available.	Not assessed

As shown in Table 2, the attendance record, training materials, activity report, and photographic examples support the completion of the session, delivery of the intended content, and provision of participatory learning opportunities. Figure 1 adds concrete visual examples of the product-presentation task. The paired images are illustrative outputs and are not a participant-level pre-test/post-test dataset. Because no standardised rubric, participant-level photo metadata, or individual performance record was available, the quality of photographs produced by each participant could not be compared. The available evidence also did not include digital promotional posts, enquiries from prospective buyers, orders, or sales transactions. The activity can consequently be described as implemented at the process level, while individual competence and economic outcomes remain unmeasured.



Figure 1. Before-and-after product-image examples used in the practice



Figure 2. Before-and-after product-image examples used in the practice

3.3 Discussion of the Age-Friendly Training Approach

An important design feature of the activity was its use of devices already owned by the participants, natural light, household objects, and familiar garden produce. These were practical design choices that supported implementation in the community setting; accessibility and feasibility were not formally evaluated as outcomes. Previous community-service programmes have positioned smartphone product photography as a practical component of digital promotion for micro-enterprises and community producers [5], [6]. In the Karangklesem activity, age-friendliness was expressed through a limited number of new steps, concrete demonstrations, direct practice, and assistance when needed. The available records support the description of this design, but not a claim that it produced measured learning gains.

The combination of demonstration and guided practice corresponds with experiential learning, in which participants encounter a concrete task and apply the concept through action [9]. For older smartphone users, facilitators and peers may also provide social support during technology learning [3], [11], [13]. In the present activity, these principles were visible in the delivery design and in the opportunity to work with the sawi and bird's-eye chili examples, although the available records do not allow the effectiveness of each learning stage to be quantified. The value of the approach is therefore reported as a contextually suitable first intervention, not as evidence of statistically measured learning gains.

A further limitation is that product photography represents only one stage of digital selling. An attractive image can support visual presentation, but a usable sales post also requires a product name, price, quantity or weight, ordering instructions, contact information, and a communication channel such as WhatsApp Status. The activity materials concentrated on preparing the image and did not document whether participants independently created a complete sales post. For this reason, the phrase "to support garden produce sales" should be understood as the intended contribution of better product presentation, not as evidence that sales increased after the session.

3.4 Limitations and Implications for Follow-up

The findings are limited by the descriptive single-case design, the small group of 13 older women from one community, and the absence of pre-training and post-training measurements. The two before-and-after image pairs provide concrete examples of the intended practice, but they are not linked to participant identities, a standardised photography rubric, or individual observation records. Detailed information about prior photography and social-media experience was also not collected. The analysis therefore remained close to the documented evidence, as required in qualitative descriptive reporting [7], [14], [15], case-study analysis [8], and data-verification procedures [10]. These limitations prevent causal claims and restrict transfer of the findings to other older-adult groups with different levels of digital experience.

A follow-up programme could retain the same accessible training format while adding simple outcome measures. Each participant could produce one photograph assessed using five criteria: lighting, sharpness, composition, background cleanliness, and product visibility. Participants could then prepare a complete WhatsApp sales post containing the photograph, product name, price, quantity, and ordering contact. A brief follow-up after 7-14 days could record how many participants posted a product, received an enquiry, or completed a transaction. Such data would allow a later article to evaluate changes in competence and early marketing outcomes. Based on the current evidence, the present activity achieved its modest objective of introducing age-friendly smartphone product photography and providing an initial supported practice experience.

4. CONCLUSION

The smartphone-based product photography training was implemented as an introductory digital activity for 13 older adults in Karangklesem who owned smartphones but had never sold products digitally. The session combined explanation, demonstration, guided practice, discussion, and individual assistance, giving participants an opportunity to encounter and practise basic techniques for preparing garden produce, using lighting and simple backgrounds, arranging composition and camera angles, and checking image sharpness. The before-and-after examples of sawi and bird's-eye chili illustrate the intended changes in product presentation, but they do not establish individual competence or improvement across all participants. The available evidence confirms participation, delivery of material, and supported practice; it does not establish digital-sales or transaction outcomes. Further mentoring and participant-level assessment are needed to examine independent digital promotion and early marketing outcomes.

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