

Optimizing Communication and Marketing Management of MelonMu Edukreatif Jama'ah Tani Gondosuli, Muntilan

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Abstract

Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah (JATAM) Gondosuli, a farmer located in the foothills of Mount Merapi, Indonesia, faces challenges in expanding market reach and professionalizing agricultural marketing. Despite fertile conditions and melons as a primary commodity, traditional marketing methods, limited organizational documentation, and low digital literacy constrain growth. This study aims to optimize JATAM's communication and marketing strategies by integrating principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), enhancing English language proficiency, and leveraging digital platforms. A mixed-method approach was employed, including training interventions, pre- and post-assessments of marketing and management competencies, as well as monitoring of digital engagement metrics. 30 participants from JATAM members involved in MelonMu Edukreatif activities, with data collected through structured assessments, interviews, and digital analytics. Results indicate significant improvements: post-training assessments showed increased knowledge and skills in marketing communication and institutional management, while digital engagement metrics demonstrated wider audience reach and higher brand visibility. Integrating IMC principles enabled consistent messaging across traditional and digital channels, enhancing consumer trust and professional identity. English-language content facilitated access to broader national and international markets, supporting strategic partnerships and export opportunities. This study concludes that combining traditional and digital strategies, supported by capacity building and systematic monitoring, effectively strengthens local agricultural marketing. Recommendations include continued English and digital literacy training, expansion of digital marketing initiatives, and ongoing evaluation of Return on Investment (ROI) to ensure sustainable growth and economic resilience for farmer groups. These findings highlight the critical role of structured communication, language proficiency, and digital integration in enhancing community-based agricultural programs.

Optimalisasi Komunikasi dan Manajemen Pemasaran Edukreatif MelonMu Jama'ah Tani Gondosuli, Muntilan

Kata kunci: Optimalisasi Komunikasi, Manajemen Pemasaran Digital, Edukreatif

Abstrak

Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah (JATAM) Gondosuli, sebuah komunitas petani yang terletak di lereng Gunung Merapi, Indonesia, menghadapi tantangan dalam memperluas jangkauan pasar dan memprofesionalisasi pemasaran pertanian. Meskipun kondisi tanah subur dan melon menjadi komoditas utama, metode pemasaran yang masih tradisional, dokumentasi

kelembagaan yang terbatas, serta rendahnya literasi digital terus menghambat perkembangan kelompok. Pengabdian ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat strategi komunikasi dan pemasaran JATAM melalui penerapan prinsip Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), peningkatan kompetensi bahasa Inggris, dan pemanfaatan platform digital. Pendekatan campuran digunakan melalui intervensi pelatihan, pre- dan post-test kemampuan komunikasi pemasaran dan manajemen kelembagaan, wawancara, serta pemantauan perkembangan keterlibatan digital. Tiga puluh peserta dari program MelonMu Edukreatif mengikuti pelatihan dan hasil penilaian menunjukkan peningkatan yang terukur: kompetensi komunikasi pemasaran meningkat dari skor rata-rata pre-test 74,7 menjadi 78,0 pada post-test (kenaikan 3,3%), sedangkan kompetensi manajemen kelembagaan meningkat dari 78,4 menjadi 86,2 (kenaikan 7,8%). Perkembangan digital juga menunjukkan keberhasilan program, ditandai dengan terbentuknya akun Instagram dan situs web resmi JATAM—yang sebelumnya belum tersedia—disertai peningkatan interaksi dan pertanyaan pembelian melalui kedua platform. Penerapan strategi IMC memungkinkan keseragaman pesan di seluruh saluran komunikasi tradisional dan digital, sehingga memperkuat kepercayaan konsumen dan identitas pasar yang lebih profesional. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kapasitas yang didukung pemantauan sistematis, dikombinasikan dengan strategi pemasaran tradisional dan digital, terbukti efektif memperkuat pemasaran pertanian lokal, tercermin dari peningkatan kompetensi peserta dan visibilitas pasar digital. Untuk keberlanjutan program, direkomendasikan pelatihan bahasa Inggris dan literasi digital secara berkelanjutan, perluasan inisiatif pemasaran digital, serta evaluasi rutin indikator kinerja pemasaran guna mendukung pertumbuhan jangka panjang dan ketahanan ekonomi kelompok tani.

1. INTRODUCTION

Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah (JATAM) Gondosuli is a farmer group consisting of 30 members established in 2010 in the foothills of Mount Merapi, Muntilan, Magelang. With its fertile geographical conditions, the area is recognized as a productive agricultural zone where melon serves as the main commodity. However, farmers still face several challenges that hinder their ability to strengthen their position within the marketing chain. These issues include inconsistent product quality, limited capacity to communicate effectively with consumers and partners, and insufficient understanding of modern marketing practices, particularly the use of digital media. As a result, marketing activities remain reliant on local networks, promotional efforts are still traditional, and market reach has not extended to regional or national levels. Through the MelonMu Edukreatif initiative, JATAM aims to address these barriers by improving communication practices, enhancing marketing capabilities, and encouraging farmers to adopt integrated communication strategies relevant to current market developments. These efforts are essential for enabling farmers to increase product competitiveness, expand market access, and strengthen household and community economic resilience (Setiawan, Arifin, & Kusnadi, 2024; Rahman et al., 2023).

In community-based agriculture, communication and marketing are crucial or connecting producers with consumers and other stakeholders. Integrated, audience-centered communication strategies that combine consistent messaging and appropriate channel selection. It can enhance brand image, foster consumer trust, and increase market access at both regional and national levels. The IMC perspective emphasizes how coordinated messaging across channels enhances persuasive impact and enables small producers leverage limited resources for greater visibility (Batra & Keller, 2016). At the same time, empirical studies emphasize that online channels require careful evaluation: measuring effectiveness in online environments is essential to ensure that digital investments translate into tangible outcomes for producers (Križanová et al., 2019).

Digital platforms and social media present concrete opportunities for community farmers to expand market reach, increase engagement, and professionalize product presentation. Indonesian and regional studies show rising acceptance and benefits of social media among rural producers (e.g., improved information access, marketing, and community empowerment), while also noting constraints related to digital literacy, connectivity, and human resources that can limit impact if unaddressed (Gandasari et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2023). Case studies from Indonesia demonstrate that with targeted training and support (content creation, platform management, and monitoring), Facebook and Instagram interventions can lead to meaningful gains in visibility

and market interaction for farmer groups. Thus, digital tools are promising but must be integrated with capacity building and monitoring to be effective.

Despite these opportunities, JATAM Gondosuli still faces practical barriers that constrain scaling: current marketing relies heavily on word-of-mouth, organizational management remains largely family-based with limited formal documentation, and promotional innovation is still emerging all of which reduce the group's ability to form strategic partnerships and capture non-local markets. To move from local resilience to broader competitiveness, a combined strategy is necessary: (1) adopt IMC principles for consistent messaging across offline and online channels, (2) implement targeted digital literacy and content training for members, and (3) set up monitoring frameworks (including economic indicators) that demonstrate return on digital and offline marketing investments. Such an approach aligns with empirical evidence indicating that internet adoption improves farmer well-being and that structured digital adoption paired with training yields better market outcomes.

2. METHOD

This Community Service Program (PKM) activity requires several implementation stages involving partners and students over an 8 months period from April to November. The program involves 30 members of JATAM Gondusuli, predominantly farmers, who participate in various capacity-building activities. Overall, this activity encompasses eight visits, ranging from outreach to mentoring for program sustainability.

The program targets 30 members of JATAM Gondusuli who are primarily engaged in agricultural activities, specifically melon farming. These participants were selected based on their involvement in the community's agricultural cooperative and their commitment to improving the marketing and management of MelonMu products.

To measure the effectiveness of the program, pretest and posttest assessments are conducted by distributing questionnaires before and after each training session. This evaluation approach allows the team to assess participants' knowledge improvement, skill development, and the overall impact of the training interventions. These stages are as follows:

First Stage is Designing the activity and conducting outreach based on the identified needs and problems faced by partners, and engaging stakeholders to develop a plan developed by the proposal team. This activity stage involves two visits.

Second Stage is Preparing for community service, which includes preparing resources, recruiting a volunteer team, determining the activity's implementation schedule, and obtaining permits and approvals for the activity. This stage involves the team conducting one visit.

Third Stage is Implementing community service activities according to the established plan. This stage requires coordination between the activity team, partners, students, and volunteers to ensure effective and efficient implementation. The name of the training is the role of the English Language in Communication and Marketing Optimization. The community service activities include training in marketing communication strategies, combining English as a Bridge to wider markets marketing mix and Enhancing Digital Marketing through English Language content. This activity aims to assist participants in creating engaging social media content related to MelonMu products and effectively reaching a wider audience. The trainings is conducted using a presentation method followed by a question-and-answer session. During the implementation, the program ran smoothly and according to schedule, with enthusiastic participation from attendees throughout the session. Participants actively engaged in discussions and responded to questions, creating an interactive learning environment. The delivery of materials proceeded clearly and systematically, allowing participants to grasp the concepts effectively and apply them to their brand promotion efforts.

Fourth Stage is Participants are provided with training on strengthening MelonMu product marketing management, including organizational management, calculating sales prices, and marketing through the website. Finally, to complete the process, training in service excellence, based on edu-creation, is needed to prepare guests visiting JATAM Gondusuli to pick and purchase MelonMu products. This stage prepares JATAM Gondusuli comprehensively to increase sales. This activity was conducted over three visits by the team.

Fifth Stage is Compiling reports and publishing activities, which include documenting activities, preparing reports, making presentations, and publishing them through mass media and academic publications. All of these activities aim to ensure that the activities carried out have a positive impact on the lives of the local community, through program sustainability checks conducted by partners. The team has assisted in this regard through two visits.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Current Communication and Marketing Practices

At present, JATAM Gondosuli primary relies on traditional communication channels, including word-of-mouth promotion, direct interactions with customers, and local social networks. While these methods are effective in fostering trust and social closeness within the local community, they are insufficient for expanding into regional and national markets. Recently, the group has also begun to adopt online platforms such as Instagram and a website, which have the potential to extend outreach. However, their use remains limited due to constraints in human resources and members' digital literacy, as most members are high-school graduates (SMA) and lack digital marketing training, which becomes a crucial methodological consideration in designing applicable communication solutions (Fharaz et al., 2022; Sugihono et al., 2024). (Fharaz et al., 2022; Sugihono et al., 2024).

The current marketing strategies remain conventional, relying heavily on personal relationships and local networks. Although this approach helps maintain social cohesion, it does not significantly increase sales. As highlighted by Križanová et al. (2019), the effectiveness of marketing communication should not only be assessed by the size of the audience reached but also by the degree to which it influences consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Therefore, more innovative strategies are required, combining traditional and digital approaches while ensuring message consistency across communication channels.

Measuring communication outcomes is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of marketing strategies. One of the most relevant indicators is Return on Investment (ROI), which demonstrates the extent to which communication generates tangible economic benefits. Križanová et al. (2019) stated that assessing communication effectiveness in online environments is particularly important to ensure alignment with organizational goals. Similarly, Duru and Enajero (2025) argue that strategically managed digital communication can enhance the efficiency of marketing campaigns and maximize ROI. JATAM Gondosuli adopting ROI evaluation would allow them to measure the impact of social media, websites, and direct promotional activities more accurately, ensuring more efficient resource allocation. Thus, communication measurement not only serves as an evaluation tool but also as a foundation for refining and improving future strategies. Additionally, Rahman et al. (2023) found that internet use among farmers significantly increases life satisfaction and subjective well-being. Similarly, Wardhana et al. (2023) demonstrated that internet access expands farmers' opportunities to reach wider markets and obtain real-time agricultural information, which directly strengthens economic outcomes and financial resilience.

The Role of The English Language in Communication and Marketing Optimization

English as a Bridge to Wider Markets

The mastery of English plays a vital role in expanding communication reach, particularly for community-based agricultural groups such as JATAM Gondosuli. English serves as a bridge that connects local products with both national and international markets, opening greater opportunities for partnerships, tourism, export, and market expansion. In agricultural marketing, the use of English enhances product credibility before global consumers and facilitates interaction with stakeholders like international buyers and distributors. For instance, Setiawan (2023) highlighted that English proficiency is crucial for entrepreneurs in the Jepara furniture industry to build successful international trade relations, showing how language mastery can directly strengthen competitiveness in global markets. Similarly, Zia and Alzahrani (2022) emphasized that communication clarity and quality content which include English foster sustainable consumer behavior in agricultural e-marketing.

Enhancing Digital Marketing Through English-Language Content

The utilization of digital platforms such as social media and websites has become a key strategy in building visibility and brand awareness. English-language content enables broader audience engagement, increases interaction with global consumers, and strengthens product identity as part of international supply chains. As Križanová et al. (2019) highlight, the effectiveness of online marketing communication depends on clarity, consistency, and the ability of messages to reach cross-border audiences. Similarly, Heri, Hayati, and Susanto (2025) emphasize the importance of digital marketing strategies that integrate local values with global approaches, including the use of English in social media and online platforms. In line with this, Paendong et al. (2023) demonstrated that regionally featured products in Indonesia significantly benefit from robust digital marketing ecosystems, which enhance competitiveness and facilitate wider market access. For JATAM Gondosuli, optimizing English-language digital content is not merely about gaining exposure but also about establishing a brand identity that is adaptive, inclusive, and competitive in the global marketplace.

Strategic Recommendations for Melonmu Edukreatif Jatam Gondosuli

Integrating IMC principles into program activities

To optimize communication and marketing outcomes, it is crucial for JATAM Gondosuli to fully adopt the principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). This includes creating consistent messaging across all communication channels such as traditional, digital, and interpersonal. By coordinating offline methods such as word-of-mouth promotions with online strategies like social media and websites, the group can ensure a unified narrative that strengthens brand recognition and trust. Such integration will allow MelonMu Edukreatif to maximize its limited resources while amplifying its impact on both local and broader markets. As Batra and Keller (2016) argue, IMC helps organizations achieve greater effectiveness when all communication tools are harmonized to deliver a consistent message. Moreover, research on palm oil farmers in Indonesia demonstrates that digital marketing integration supports local producers in reaching wider markets and improving resilience, further underscoring the importance of IMC adoption at the community level (Judijanto et al., 2024).



Figure 1. Socialization by community services team

The first activity carried out was social media development training on Saturday, July 19, 2025. The selection of these two materials was based on a needs analysis that showed the importance of the community's ability to carry out marketing communication processes through the use of social media.

Training and Capacity Building in English

English language proficiency should be developed as a strategic capacity for team members. Training programs should not only focus on basic communication skills but also on specialized language for marketing, negotiation, and digital content creation. This will enable members to interact effectively with national and international stakeholders, enhance their ability to present products to tourists and potential investors, and strengthen the professionalism of the brand. By embedding English into both face-to-face and digital communication, JATAM can position itself as a competitive player in the broader agricultural marketplace. Research also highlights that English proficiency provides farmers and MSMEs with greater access to global markets and improves their ability to leverage digital platforms effectively (Setiawan, 2023; Paendong et al., 2023). At the same time, strengthening digital literacy and communication competence is essential, as these skills are proven to drive farmer performance and support the effectiveness of agricultural extension programs in Indonesia (Savitri & Rafani, 2024; Sasmita et al., 2024).

This activity was held twice. The first, on July 19, 2025, provided insight into the tourism potential of the Gondosuli region and focused on basic conversation skills needed in the context of tourism and trade. The material covered greetings and introductions, describing local products, giving directions, and handling basic transactions. The learning method used was communicative and interactive, allowing participants to directly practice the skills learned.

The second session of the training, held on Thursday, August 7, 2025, included a hands-on practice session with foreigners. This activity was designed to provide real-world conversation experience that cannot be achieved through classroom simulations. The team invited guests from Naruto University, Japan, to interact directly with program participants.

This practice not only tested participants' English skills but also built their confidence in communicating with foreigners. Participants had the opportunity to promote local products, explain local culture, and provide tourist information in English. Direct feedback from native speakers provided invaluable learning experiences for participants.



Figure 2. Practicing English Language with Naruto University



Figure 3. Visiting the MelonMu farm

Leveraging digital platforms as Institutional Management

Digital platforms such as Instagram and a dedicated e-commerce website should be strategically managed to expand reach and build strong brand awareness. English-language content ranging from product descriptions and storytelling posts to promotional videos will help JATAM connect with global audiences. As highlighted by Križanová et al. (2019), the effectiveness of online communication depends on clarity, consistency, and audience-centered strategies. Similarly, Paendong et al. (2023) demonstrated that regional featured products in Indonesia gain significant advantages from robust digital marketing ecosystems that improve competitiveness and market access. In addition, Zia and Alzahrani (2022) stressed that e-marketing factors such as message clarity, cultural alignment, and content quality play a key role in shaping sustainable consumer behavior for agricultural products. From the perspective of language, Setiawan (2023) argued that English proficiency is an essential tool for entrepreneurs to build international trade relationships and enhance product credibility in global markets. Therefore, digital marketing activities must be planned with a balance between appealing visuals, compelling narratives, and cross-cultural accessibility, ensuring that JATAM's brand is both professional and globally competitive.

Coordination with partners for follow-up activities was held on August 31, 2025, where the team evaluated the results of previous activities and planned the next steps. On September 3, 2025, an initial coordination meeting was held with the website and application development team, discussing the required technical specifications, user requirements, and user-friendly interface design. The development team conducted an in-depth analysis of the needs of the Gondosuli community to create a targeted digital solution. A follow-up coordination meeting on September 10, 2025, reviewed development progress and refinements to the features to be implemented, including integration with previously developed social media platforms, a content management system, and e-commerce functionality to support local product marketing. After the website was launched, usage monitoring showed that the platform was accessed twice during the first month of implementation. Although the figure remains limited, it reflects the early stage of adoption, in which promotion and user onboarding activities have not yet been fully carried out.



Figure 4. Developing JATAM Website

The second assessment measured **institutional management capacity**, as shown in Figure 2. Similar to the first assessment, the post-test scores were consistently higher than the pre-test, indicating strengthened organizational governance and managerial competence among participants.

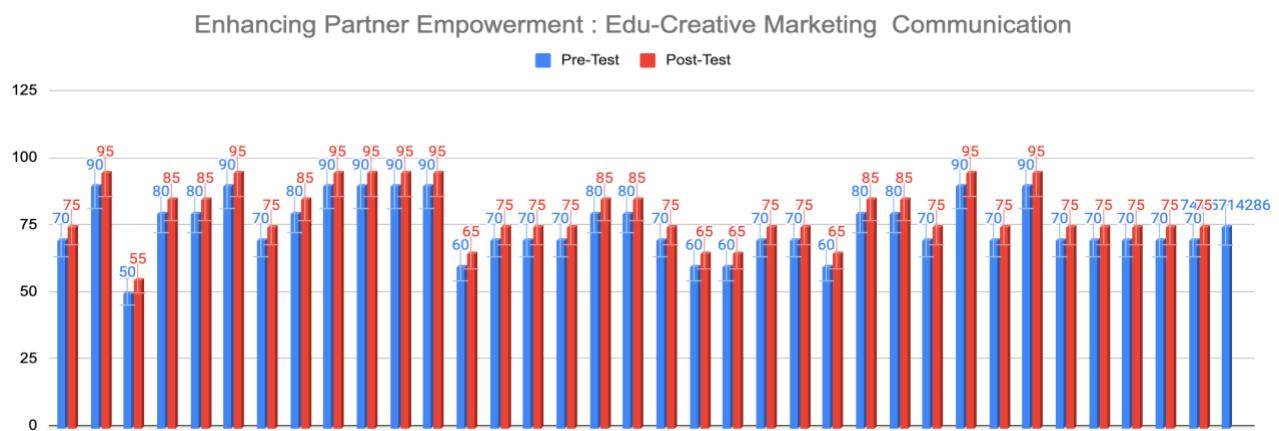
Meanwhile, website development training provides participants with the skills to manage the digital platforms they have developed. Participants are trained in content management, basic troubleshooting, and website maintenance. This is crucial to ensure the website remains active and updated after the program ends.

The final activity in this program series is institutional management and website development training on September 13, 2025. This training is designed to ensure the sustainability of the implemented program. The institutional management material covers organizational development, leadership skills, financial management, and strategic planning.

Monitoring and evaluating communication effectiveness

Systematic monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure that communication and marketing strategies are not only implemented but also effective. One of the most relevant metrics is Return on Investment (ROI), which measures the tangible economic benefits derived from communication efforts. Duru and Enajero (2025) emphasize that strategic digital marketing campaigns aligned with financial efficiency can maximize ROI. For JATAM Gondosuli, incorporating ROI evaluations alongside other metrics such as engagement rates, customer feedback, and sales growth will provide a comprehensive picture of effectiveness.

To complement these financial and behavioral indicators, the program also conducted pre-test and post-test assessments of participants' capacity. The first assessment focused on **educreatif marketing communication**, and the results, presented in Figure 1, demonstrate a clear improvement in knowledge and skills after the training. The pre-test assessment indicated an average score of 74.7 for participants' basic knowledge. After the training, the average knowledge score increased to 78 points. Based on these results, there was an improvement of 3.3%. This indicates that participants already possessed a reasonably good level of competency, which was further strengthened following the training intervention.



Enhancing Partner Empowerment : Management Institutional

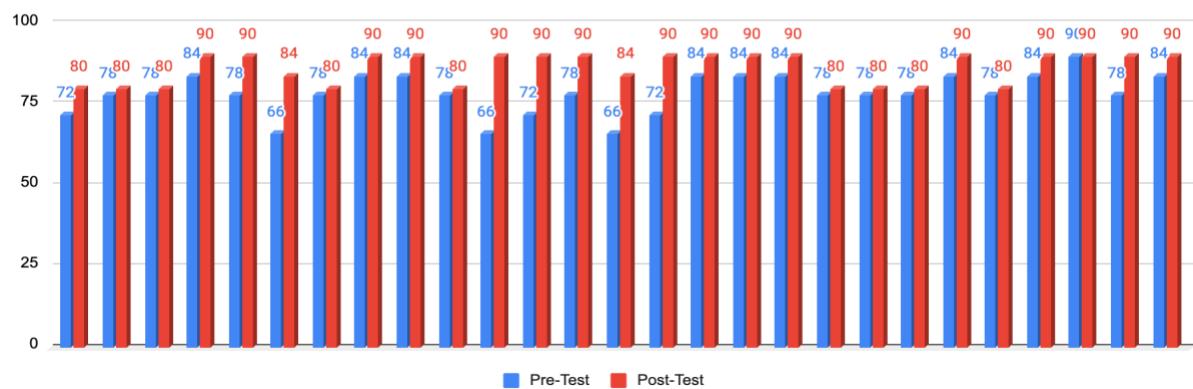


Figure 6. Pre-Test and Post-Test of Management Institutional on September 13, 2025

4. CONCLUSION

The MelonMu Edukreatif JATAM Gondosuli program successfully generated tangible improvements in participants' marketing communication and institutional management capacities. The edu-creative marketing communication training increased participants' competencies by 3.3%, indicating that they already possessed a relatively strong initial understanding (high pre-test scores), and therefore the intervention served to reinforce and refine the competencies they previously had. In addition, the development of integrated marketing communication strategies and the use of English-based digital content improved participants' awareness of the importance of message consistency, persuasive product storytelling, and wider market reach. The adoption of ROI as an evaluation indicator further strengthened participants' understanding of the need to measure communication performance to ensure that each marketing activity delivers measurable economic outcomes.

The institutional management training showed a significantly higher improvement of 7.8%, which can be explained by the fact that the participants' initial pre-test scores in management institutional were relatively low, enabling a more substantial increase following the intervention. Training in leadership, strategic planning, organizational governance, and website administration provided participants with skills that were previously undeveloped. This demonstrates that the program's success extended beyond improving marketing communication competencies by simultaneously building a stronger institutional foundation that supports autonomy and long-term sustainability. Overall, the pre-test and post-test results confirm that the interventions not only produced short-term benefits but also strengthened institutional capacity a fundamental requirement for ensuring the continuity and competitiveness of JATAM Gondosuli in the future

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Implementation of activities:** NH, RDW, IR, IRD, VDP, RT, KDMFP, RA, AZK, RG, FJMU, JAM, AMH
- Preparation of the article:** NH, RDW, IRD.
- Impact analysis of the service:** AMH, JAM, AZK, RG.

- D. **Presentation of service outcomes:** RT, KDMFP, AMH.
- E. **Revision of the article:** NH, RDW, IRD.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article

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