

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE SHRIMP PASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN BONTANG KUALA VILLAGE, BONTANG CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze community empowerment through the shrimp paste management program in Bontang Kuala Village, Bontang City. The focus of the study includes the role of the government, the community empowerment process, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies, with key informants being the neighborhood association (RT) chairman, the owner of the "Mak Duyung" shrimp paste business, and local residents. The results of the study show that community empowerment is carried out through skills training, technical assistance, and equipment assistance from the Bontang City Government. This program has succeeded in increasing community capacity and income, creating new jobs, and making shrimp paste a leading product that is marketed overseas. The main supporting factors are high community motivation and government support, while the inhibiting factors include budget constraints, lack of infrastructure (such as uneven distribution of production equipment), and dependence on the shrimp fishing season. This study concludes that synergistic collaboration between the government and the community is the key to successful empowerment, which is recommended to be supported by sustainable policies to ensure long-term economic independence.

Keywords: Community empowerment, Shrimp Paste Management Program

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui program pengelolaan terasi udang di Kelurahan Bontang Kuala, Kota Bontang. Fokus penelitian meliputi peran pemerintah, proses pemberdayaan masyarakat, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambatnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi, dengan informan kunci yaitu Ketua RT, pemilik usaha terasi "Mak Duyung", dan warga setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemberdayaan masyarakat berjalan melalui pelatihan keterampilan, pendampingan teknis, dan bantuan peralatan dari Pemerintah Kota Bontang. Program ini berhasil meningkatkan kapasitas dan pendapatan masyarakat, menciptakan lapangan kerja baru, serta menjadikan terasi udang sebagai produk unggulan yang dipasarkan hingga ke luar negeri. Faktor pendukung utama adalah motivasi masyarakat yang tinggi dan dukungan pemerintah, sedangkan faktor penghambatnya meliputi keterbatasan anggaran, minimnya sarana prasarana (seperti alat produksi yang belum merata), dan ketergantungan pada musim tangkapan udang. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kolaborasi yang sinergis antara pemerintah dan masyarakat merupakan kunci keberhasilan pemberdayaan, yang direkomendasikan untuk didukung dengan kebijakan yang berkelanjutan guna memastikan kemandirian ekonomi jangka panjang.

Kata kunci: Pemberdayaan masyarakat, Program Pengelolaan Terasi Udang

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is blessed with abundant natural resources, both in the mining, forestry, agriculture, and marine and fisheries sectors. Although Indonesia's economic growth in recent years has shown stability in the range of 5%-10% per year, this growth has not been fully inclusive. The contribution of the MSME sector, which accounts for 61% of GDP and employs 97% of the national workforce, makes it the backbone of the national economy. However, the utilization of natural resources is still dominated by large corporations with a low level of local industrialization, thus requiring community empowerment strategies based on local potential to achieve economic equality (Hasdiansyah, 2023).

The marine and fisheries sector plays a strategic role in driving regional economic growth, especially in coastal areas. The city of Bontang, East Kalimantan, known as an industrial city, has great maritime potential, with abundant marine products such as shrimp in the Bontang Kuala sub-district. The local community has long processed shrimp into shrimp paste as a leading product with economic value. However, the management of shrimp paste still faces various challenges, such as limited capital, infrastructure, and management and marketing capabilities. On the other hand, the demand for halal certification for food products is also an important concern, given that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim (Hadiwitoyo, 2018).

This study aims to analyze community empowerment through the shrimp paste management program in Bontang Kuala Village. The focus of the research includes: (1) the role of the Bontang City Government in supporting empowerment programs, (2) the process of community empowerment in shrimp paste management, and (3) supporting and inhibiting factors in program implementation. By examining these aspects, this study is expected to contribute to the development of sustainable community empowerment policies based on local potential and serve as a reference for the development of similar MSMEs in other regions.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine community empowerment in shrimp paste (terasi) management in Bontang Kuala Village, Bontang City. This approach was selected to capture participants' perspectives and contextual dynamics in natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, field observations of production activities, and documentation review. Informants were selected purposively, including neighborhood association (RT) leaders, shrimp paste business actors, and community members involved in production and marketing. This sampling strategy ensured the inclusion of participants with relevant experiential knowledge (Patton, 2015).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), involving iterative processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was strengthened through source triangulation and time triangulation, consistent with established qualitative rigor (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This methodological framework enabled a comprehensive and credible understanding of community empowerment practices within the local socio-economic context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Stages of Community Empowerment in Shrimp Paste Management

The results of the study identified three stages of community empowerment in the shrimp paste management program in Bontang Kuala Village

a. Awareness Stage

This stage was marked by increased community awareness of the economic potential of processing shrimp into shrimp paste. Initially, shrimp paste was only produced for household consumption and as gifts for family members. Through socialization by the government and initiatives by pioneering entrepreneurs such as “Mak Duyung,” the community realized that their local products had commercial value and could be a source of income. This awareness became the foundation for the community's motivation to become more seriously involved.

b. Capacity Building Stage

At this stage, the community received various training programs to improve their capacity. The support from the Bontang City Government in the form of technical guidance on production, packaging training, and marketing strategies was key. Mrs. Milantja, owner of the “Mak Duyung” business, said that the training from the Health Office was very helpful in improving product quality and standards. This training not only equipped them with technical skills, but also business management and group leadership skills.

c. Empowerment Stage

The community has reached a stage of independence where they are able to manage their business sustainably. They now have access to a wider market, not only locally but also nationally and even internationally (Saudi Arabia). The community has also begun to innovate in packaging and product diversification. The success of “Mak Duyung” is clear evidence of the empowerment stage, which then triggered an imitation effect and motivated other residents to develop similar businesses.

2. The Role of the Bontang City Government as a Catalyst

Analysis shows that the role of the Bontang City Government is multifaceted and acts as a catalyst in the empowerment process

- **Facilitator:** The government plays a role in facilitating the training and technical assistance needed by MSME actors. Mr. Aripin (Head of RT 12) emphasized that technical guidance from the government is very meaningful for the community.
- **Accelerator:** Assistance with production equipment, such as vacuum machines, helps accelerate increases in production capacity and product quality. However, the limited number of machines compared to the number of business actors is an obstacle that needs to be addressed.
- **Connector:** The government plays a role in connecting MSME products with wider markets through participation in exhibitions and bazaars. This strategy has proven effective in introducing Bontang Kuala's signature shrimp paste to the export market.

These findings are in line with Edi Suharto's (2018) theory of empowerment regarding the 5Ps, where the role of the government is to facilitate the empowerment process.

3. Factors Supporting and Hindering Success

The success of this empowerment program cannot be separated from several key factors. Supporting Factors:

- **Community Motivation and Enthusiasm:** The community's response to the program has been very positive. Mrs. Santi, one of the residents, said she has directly felt the positive impact of this empowerment on her family's welfare.
- **Government Policy and Infrastructure Support:** Tangible support in the form of training, equipment assistance, and marketing facilitation has been a major catalyst. Availability of Local Raw Materials: The abundant potential of shrimp in the waters of Bontang Kuala is a comparative advantage that has enabled this business to flourish.

Constraints:

- **Budget and Infrastructure Limitations:** Uneven distribution of equipment assistance, such as one vacuum machine per group, hinders production efficiency.
- **Seasonal Dependency:** Shrimp paste production is highly dependent on the shrimp fishing season, causing instability in the supply of raw materials.
- **Limited Management and Marketing Capabilities:** Some business actors still experience difficulties in managing finances and reaching digital markets.

Discussion

The synergy between the three stages of empowerment and the comprehensive role of the government has created an ecosystem conducive to the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) producing shrimp paste. These three stages—which generally include awareness raising, capacity building, and mentoring towards independence—complement each other in creating an empowerment process that is not only technical but also transformative. In the awareness stage, business actors are encouraged to understand their local potential, whether in terms of natural resources, traditional skills, or market opportunities. This process strengthens the collective awareness that shrimp paste is not merely a local consumer product, but also has economic value that can be developed through innovation, quality improvement, and product identity strengthening. The capacity building stage then plays a role in improving the competence of MSME actors, both in terms of production, packaging, business management, and meeting quality and food safety standards. At this stage, government support through training, licensing facilitation, and access to resources are key factors that accelerate the improvement of business quality and product competitiveness. Furthermore, the mentoring stage towards independence focuses on strengthening the ability of business actors to manage their businesses sustainably, build networks, and make strategic decisions more independently. The synergy of these three stages, reinforced by government policies and programs, forms a relatively stable empowerment ecosystem that is adaptive to market dynamics (Pratiwi & Mulyono, 2023).

The finding that participatory empowerment based on local potential can improve the community's economy is in line with Muffiih Mubarak's (2022) research, which confirms that active community involvement in all stages of the empowerment program contributes to an increased sense of ownership, collective responsibility, and the sustainability of program results. In the context of shrimp paste MSMEs, the participatory approach enables business

actors to not only be beneficiaries, but also the main subjects in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of business development activities. This has an impact on increasing the relevance of programs to the real needs of the community, while strengthening the social legitimacy of each intervention carried out. Thus, empowerment is not understood as a top-down process, but rather as a collaborative process that integrates local knowledge, the experience of business actors, and institutional support from the government and other stakeholders (Ardiwinata & Mulyono, 2018).

However, the sustainability of the shrimp paste MSME development program in the future depends heavily on the ability to overcome various structural and contextual obstacles. One of the main challenges is strengthening the institutional capacity of business groups, which are often still weak in terms of governance, leadership, and decision-making mechanisms (Rivaldo & Mulyono, 2025). Without solid institutions, empowerment achievements have the potential to be unsustainable due to high dependence on external assistants or government programs. In addition, diversification of marketing strategies is an urgent need to reduce dependence on seasons and limited local markets. Dependence on conventional marketing patterns and seasonal fluctuations can increase the vulnerability of businesses to declining demand and income instability. Therefore, developing alternative marketing channels, utilizing digital technology, and expanding partnership networks are important strategies for improving business resilience (Mulyono, et.al., 2022). Overall, the success and sustainability of shrimp paste MSME development is not only determined by the effectiveness of empowerment stages and the role of the government, but also by the institutional capacity and adaptability of business actors in responding to dynamic market challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that community empowerment through shrimp paste management in Bontang Kuala Village has succeeded in improving the economic welfare of the community through three main stages: awareness raising, capacity building, and empowerment. The success of the program was supported by the active role of the government as a facilitator and the high motivation of the community, despite facing constraints in terms of infrastructure and dependence on the fishing season. For sustainability, it is necessary to strengthen the institutional capacity of business groups and diversify marketing strategies.

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