
Empowering the Poor Based on Local Culture through Leather Puppet Making Kepuhsari Village

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the process of community empowerment based on local culture through the manufacture of wayang kulit, the success of empowerment, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of empowerment. This study uses a qualitative approach with 8 research subjects, 1 from the village government, 2 people from Pokdarwis, 1 community leader, and 4 puppet craftsmen. Data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The validity of the data using triangulation. Data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that: 1) Community empowerment was carried out through three stages, namely the awareness stage, the transformation stage, and the enrichment stage. The awareness stage is carried out through socialization activities. The transformation stage is marked by changes in community skills. The enrichment stage is marked by innovations made by the community. 2) The success of empowerment includes economic success, namely the existence of entrepreneurial abilities. Social success is the ability to build relationships with people. The success of culture is the existence of efforts to preserve culture by the community. 3) Factors that affect the implementation of empowerment consist of supporting factors, namely the support, participation, and willingness of the community to meet needs. The inhibiting factors are the delay in the supply of raw materials, the difficulty of changing the mindset of some people, and the lack of the next generation of wayang kulit makers.

Key words: Community Empowerment, Local Culture, Wayang Kulit, Welfare

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is an inability to make ends meet; Shortcomings that a person cannot avoid with the abilities he has (Suwandi & Samri, 2022). Poverty is one of the benchmarks of success of a development (Laode et al., 2020). Development is an activity that must be carried out continuously and requires a long time (Antasari, 2020). National development aims to create a just and prosperous society based on Pancasila, within the forum of the independent Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; in a peaceful, peaceful, and dynamic atmosphere, as well as the social environment of a free world. The goals of national development are also stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution paragraph IV (Setiawan, 2019).

Development began to shift from the original centralization to decentralization from the center to the regions (Damanik & Purba, 2019). This is intended to occur equitable development and minimize the occurrence of development gaps in urban and rural areas. National development is the development of, by, and for the people carried out in all aspects of life (Siscawati et al., 2020). Development is not only in the economic sector, but also human development (Thirtabrata et al., 2022).

According to Samosir (2011) in (Yasin, 2021) Human development is intended to improve people's ability towards a productive and enjoyable life. This can be interpreted that quality human resources have a tendency to minimize poverty. If the quality of human resources is high, productivity will also be high, so that people's welfare will be achieved.

Correspondingly, according to (Simanjutak et al., 2020) states that humans are planners, doers, controllers as well as the goals of development itself. Thus, the development of the quality of human resources is a top priority that must be improved, so that it will have the capabilities needed in the development of all fields (Ramaditya et al., 2022). Humans who have quality will be able to utilize their potential and be able to take future opportunities. The human factor determines the success or failure of the country in global competition because what distinguishes the ability of a country is its human quality (Sergi et al., 2021).

Human resources are the entire potential of humans whose abilities are worthy of development to meet daily needs. Term *Human Capital* Seeing that human resources can be developed to be better than the quality and quantity, human resources are also capital that has high value so it is not just the main capital (Fraser et al., 2021).

In realizing quality human resources, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, has three educational paths, namely formal, non-formal, and informal education. Formal education is structured and tiered education, consisting of basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Non-formal education is education that is outside of formal education. Meanwhile, informal education is obtained in the family environment.

Non-formal education as an enhancer and complement to formal education. On the other hand, non-formal education is also used to help accelerate development programs, because in development requires a skilled and dexterous workforce, which in acquiring knowledge and skills is not served in formal education with a relatively short time (Arulampalam Kunaraj, P.Chelvanathan, Ahmad AA Bakar, 2023). This can be interpreted that education has an important role in the entire development process. Development is not just building the economy, but building all aspects of human life, both economic, social, and cultural. One of the efforts to improve human resources is to empower them. Empowerment is a form of non-formal education in an effort to improve human resources (Lukman, 2021). Empowerment as a process of making people who were originally not yet or even helpless become empowered people with the skills they have. Empowering the community so that its potential can develop through an existing skill improvement program is empowerment (Endah, 2020).

According to (Khiftiyah & Nilamsari, 2022) Empowerment is a process of resource-poor communities, women and neglected groups who receive support to improve welfare independently. Independence is closely related to ability. Independence means also being able to make the right decisions in dealing with various problems that concern other individuals and communities (Gufronul, 2020).

In line with that, Sulistyani (2004) is quoted (Maulana, 2019) explained that community independence makes an important contribution in environmental management, the informal sector, socio-culture, and education, which are part of Indonesia's national development program. The purpose of

empowerment is to increase the potential of the community so that the quality of life becomes better than before through self-help activities (Endah, 2020).

With regard to community empowerment, in improving human resources the government strives in various ways, including empowering the community through courses, internships, joint business groups, economy or creative industries, and education and training. On the other hand, the government also provides several empowerment programs, including BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises), farmer groups, KUBE (Joint Business Group), PNPM Mandiri (National Program for Rural Independent Community Empowerment), and others (National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K), 2011). The many empowerment programs are expected to improve the welfare of the community. However, the program has not yet provided maximum results. Government programs are more oriented in the form of physical facilities and less in an effort to realize community independence. Potential that should be developed, but until now has not been optimal due to the lack of public awareness of the potential possessed, both the potential in himself and his environment.

The potential that exists in the environment is not only about agriculture but also in the field of culture (Istiyanti, 2020). Considering that Indonesia is an archipelago with 16,056 islands and a population of 267 million people (Murdiaty et al., 2020). Based on the census in 2010, there are around 300 ethnic groups and 1,340 ethnic groups where Javanese dominate as much as 40.22% (95.2 million people) of the ethnic group or ethnic population of Indonesia. Therefore, it is not surprising that Indonesia is rich in culture. However, each culture produced has a distinctive pattern that is different from culture in one region to another.

This can be interpreted that almost all human actions are called culture, because there are only a few human actions that do not need to be familiarized with learning (Isla & Fatimah, 2019). 1945 Constitution Article 32 paragraph 1 "The State promotes Indonesian national culture in the midst of world civilization by guaranteeing the freedom of the community in maintaining and developing its cultural values".

People in an area have the opportunity to maintain their culture, this is the opportunity for successful development through empowerment. Especially with the existence of noble values, it is not difficult to adjust in the midst of world civilization to realize prosperity.

Similarly, Kepuhsari Village as a tourism village based on artificial attraction and cultural and handicraft attraction, was confirmed as a wayang village tourism village by the Wonogiri Regency Youth and Sports and Tourism Office with Number 143 of 2017. Administratively, Kepuhsari Village has an area of 15.56 km² with a population of 4,943 people (BPS, 2019). By utilizing the existing potential while maintaining cultural existence, this village seeks to develop knowledge and skills through various activities ranging from wayang kulit inlaid sunnging, batik making, pedalangan training, karawitan, dance, bamboo weaving crafts, natural tourism management, and others. Making shadow puppets is a leading program in this village, considering this village as a center for shadow puppet production.

The current of globalization that has swept the world, including Indonesia, has an impact on social and cultural changes in society. Many young people are interested in western culture, resulting in a lack of appreciation of traditional arts, especially puppets. Various art alternatives available, especially popular art with various styles turned out to make them more interested so as to shift awareness and interest to love and appreciate their own culture. On the other hand, the development of puppets from time to time has undergone many changes. As revealed by (Sholihah, 2021) that ecological changes in cultural elements result in changes in their function and meaning. Wayang making is not only used as props in puppet performances but can also be used as wall decorations or home trinkets in the form of glass paintings.

Seeing that puppet art is receding more and more, the government is trying to maintain the preservation of the culture of the area so that it is not extinct eroded by the times, hoping that the culture can become the pride of the region. A sense of pride in cultural values should be fostered from an early age, this is done to prevent a crisis of identity or identity of the younger generation. However, it does not mean that the younger generation should reject the incoming culture, but rather filter which things need to be adopted and which need to be abandoned. In order for the existence of local culture to remain strong, efforts are needed to preserve local culture by innovating (Anatasya, 2024). As stated by OECD & Eurostat (2005: 46) in the journal (Utomo, 2022) Defining innovation: "... a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations". That is, innovation is a new product that can significantly improve processes, marketing methods, or organizational or workplace methods. To produce products that have been innovated, starting from the manufacturing process even to marketing needs to be considered.

Marketing that was originally only through direct sales, now can be with social media or online shops. With innovation, it can improve the quality of service for the better and improve the community's economy so as to achieve prosperity and the existence of puppets is maintained as an original Indonesian culture.

It is also conveyed (Suganda, 2019) that in the current era there is an opportunity to develop artistic creativity regarding cultural diversity by giving birth to new creations that have never existed before. The development of creativity is an interesting thing, and culture-based empowerment directly touches with real problems experienced by society such as cultural preservation and fading existence, as well as community welfare.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in studying community empowerment with the title "Empowerment of Poor People Based on Local Culture through Wayang Kulit Making in Kepuhsari Village, Manyaran District, Wonogiri Regency, Central Java".

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, in accordance with Moleong (2007: 6) that the qualitative approach is an approach that describes what circumstances or phenomena are experienced by the subjects studied based on facts. The research location is the place where the research is carried out. Site selection makes it easier for researchers to clarify research targets, so that the scope is not widespread. The research was conducted in Kepuhsari Village, Manyaran District, Wonogiri Regency. The reason why researchers chose the research location here is because (1) Kepuhsari Village as a wayang village tourism village in Wonogiri Regency, (2) Kepuhsari Village has cultural potential which is then known as a leather puppet production center, (3) There is a match of criteria in finding research subjects, namely shadow puppet craftsmen.

This study aims to describe the process of community empowerment based on local culture through wayang kulit making, the success of empowerment, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of empowerment. This study used a qualitative approach with 8 research subjects, 1 from the village government, 2 people from pokdarwis, 1 community leader, and 4 puppet craftsmen. Data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validity using triangulation. Data analysis techniques using the Miles and Huberman model, which are as follows (Sugiyono, 2011) data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of Community Empowerment

The implementation of empowerment starts from the awareness stage, which is the stage where the community is formed to become aware. Activities carried out at the awareness stage are providing motivation, mentoring, and involving the community in activities organized by the village. Motivation is given through individual and group approaches. This motivation was carried out during an RT meeting on socialization of puppet making empowerment. After the community is given motivation. Then, try to involve the community in various activities, both training activities organized by the village and the official office. The response of the people of Kepuhsari is very enthusiastic and supportive, although it is undeniable that there are some people who need to change their mindset about empowerment.

This is in line with (Irawan & Tanzil, 2020) that the awareness and behavior formation stage is the first stage in the community empowerment process. At this stage the empowerment party or empowerment actors try to create pre-conditions, the goal is to be able to provide facilities for the community when the empowerment process takes place and runs effectively. With the awareness that it will further open people's desires and awareness about their conditions at that time, this can stimulate public awareness about the need to improve conditions to create a good future. This touch of taste will foster people's awareness and stimulate their enthusiasm in improving themselves and the environment. The hope is that

this spirit can bring people to achieve awareness and willingness to learn. Thus, society is increasingly open and there is a thirst for knowledge and skills to improve its condition.

The second stage is the process of transforming knowledge and skills. At this stage, initially the atmosphere of Kepuhsari Village was still quiet, but after the empowerment in Wayang Village, Kepuhsari Village became crowded and increasingly known to many people. Even tourists from abroad come one after another to learn how to make puppets. In its management, Kepuhsari Village began to develop as expected, but there still needs to be assistance from related agencies to be more optimal in its development. As revealed by Saryani (2013) in the journal Andriyani, Martono, & (Rahmawati, 2021) that the role of government as *Stakeholders* urgently needed. The government plays a role in inviting and encouraging the community in terms of development. Therefore, it requires good cooperation between the government and the community.

The second stage is the stage of transformation of abilities in the form of knowledge and skills. The transformation stage will run effectively if the first stage is well conditioned. People will learn about knowledge and skills according to what they need. This situation will stimulate the openness of knowledge and basic skills needed by the community. In this stage, the community can only provide a role of participation at a low level, which is just an object of development, but has not been able to become a subject of development (Suryana, 2019).

The third stage is the stage of enrichment or improvement of intellectual abilities, so that the community is able to form independence by innovating. The people of Kepuhsari Village are able to innovate the products produced, they are not only making puppets but also able to make souvenirs either with leather media or not. Then, they were also able to make glass paintings with puppet characters and make batik puppet themes that became typical of Kepuhsari. When there are tourist visits, they make a puppet show by displaying some of the arts in Kepuhsari, such as reog performances. This is a place to introduce Indonesian culture to the audience or tourists. The follow-up to this empowerment is the plan to build a pavilion as a place to learn how to make puppets and gapuro puppets as the iconic Puppet Village of Kepuhsari Village. The village government also strongly supports this empowerment. In fact, they facilitate the implementation of empowerment by providing trainings so that community enthusiasm increases, in addition to budgeting funds for the Kepuhsari Village Wayang Village as a real effort to provide support for the Kepuhsari community in relation to empowerment.

This is in accordance with Mulyono (2017: 45) that the third stage in the empowerment process is the stage of intellectual enhancement and innovative abilities. The level of enrichment or improvement of knowledge and skills is needed so that the community is able to achieve independence. This independence is characterized by community initiative in giving birth to new or innovative creations and being able to act as subjects of development. So, in community development the position of the government is only as a facilitator and the community as an actor or subject in development. Correspondingly, according to the OECD in the international journal Bircan & Gencler (2015) in (Lenihan et al., 2019) explain: "*There are several OECD policy documents that emphasize the importance of human resources for innovation because within the framework of importance of human resources, improvement of skills, competencies and qualifications, provide support to innovation skills of human resources.*"

From the statement above, it can be interpreted that in innovation, the emphasis is on human resources. This is because human resources are related to increasing one's knowledge and skills. Innovation exists because of effective human resources.

So, it can be concluded that community empowerment starts from socialization activities where the activity aims to provide understanding and motivation to the community about the awareness of their potential through special empowerment activities of puppet culture. Then, in the second stage, it can be seen from the changes in the skills of the community itself. People who were originally not empowered, followed the empowerment to be empowered. This is evidenced by the ability of the community to make puppets, even open their own job opportunities by establishing puppet studios, besides that they also began to establish cooperation from various outside parties that support activities. Finally, the third stage is the stage where the community is able to innovate. With this innovation, people can continuously pour their ideas or ideas into a work. Innovations made can be by utilizing leftover leather media to make puppets or not using leather media, such as souvenirs, key chains, and glass painting of puppet characters, as well as typical Kepuhsari puppet batik.

Successful Community Empowerment

The economic success of empowering puppet making is the ability to be entrepreneurial. Some people have been able to open their own job opportunities. They try to meet their daily needs by making a puppet studio. This is in accordance with Sulistiyani (2004) in (Hikmawati, 2022) The purpose of empowerment is to create individuals and communities to be self-reliant. This independence includes independence in thinking, acting, and controlling oneself with what is done. With this independence, it is hoped that the community will be able to be empowered in meeting their needs.

Social success is due to cooperation with various parties engaged in empowerment, such as the Education Office, Tourism Office, and students from various universities. Not only that, cooperation between the community and the village government is also important. As *Stakeholders* act as an agent who can provide positive input based on experience, is willing to exchange ideas with the community, and is active in encouraging and growing public awareness (Isaac & Sholehah, 2021).

While cultural success is marked by efforts to preserve wayang and other arts, such as reog, karawitan, and pedalangan. The people of Kepuhsari Village strive to continue in terms of preservation. The hope is that in the future there will still be a younger generation who will be the successors of making wayang in particular, and preserving other arts in Kepuhsari. This is in accordance with the statement (Saihu, 2021) that community empowerment through the development of traditional art creativity is an interesting model to develop, considering that Indonesia is a country rich in traditional arts.

Empowerment efforts in the field of traditional art put the creative process in direct contact with the real problems of society. Therefore, traditional art is not solely entertainment. Community empowerment through the development of traditional arts is also related to the existence of local culture that is fading. In fact, a lot of creativity in the field of traditional art does not last long due to the influence of foreign cultures, not even a few people who leave their traditional art.

Indicators of a person can be said to be prosperous, namely if they are able to meet basic needs and have an adequate job that can support their quality of life (Saifudin, 2019). In order to support their quality of life, the community is being pursued through empowerment based on local culture, where the community is empowered to make shadow puppets. The hope is that the community will be able to have adequate jobs, even open up job opportunities. In its implementation, the community participates in activities. It has been 8 years since this empowerment has been carried out, the community feels the benefits that can be obtained from this empowerment, such as the fulfillment of basic needs such as clothing, food, and shelter as well as additional income. Empowerment is carried out with the aim of improving the welfare of the people of Kepuhsari. The community is slowly starting to strive to achieve this prosperity, and it is hoped that in the future welfare can be improved again by utilizing all the untapped potential in Kepuhsari and maximizing the management of current empowerment.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The implementation of community empowerment through making shadow puppets certainly cannot be separated from supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors in empowering the people of Kepuhsari Village are 1) There is support from the community, the Tourism Office, and the Education Office, 2) Community participation to contribute to empowerment. Community participation that occurs is in line with the concept of community empowerment where participation is one of the keys to creating welfare (Adi, 2012). Community participation in activities organized by the village can stimulate them to make better plans for the future. 3) Willingness to work to increase income and improve lives. Although not all people make puppet craftsmen as their main job, there are also people who make puppet craftsmen as their main job to meet their daily needs. This is in accordance with the statement (Syairozi et al., 2019) that increasing the dignity or quality of one's life is the ultimate goal of community empowerment. The improvement is about the economy, as well as political, physical, mental, security, and socio-cultural problems.

Inhibiting factors in the implementation of community empowerment through shadow puppet making are 1) Delay in delivery of raw materials. Late delivery of raw materials is one of the obstacles for craftsmen. Even though materials are important things that must be present in the process of making puppets. If the

delivery is late, it will also affect the delay in the completion time of manufacture, which should be two weeks completed to one month just completed. 2) It is still difficult to change the mindset of some people because of low human resources. Human resources as the main key that is important in the development of empowerment, humans as the key to successful performance. Man needs to develop his qualities to realize well-being. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the quality of one's potential to achieve success. By using appropriate strategies and policies, it will be right on the desired goals. 3) Lack of the next generation of shadow puppets. The influx of globalization resulted in the fading of local culture and increased the incoming foreign culture, including the younger generation who should be able to succeed in local culture as if they were no longer interested in their own culture. In fact, the existence of local culture must be maintained so that local culture is not eroded by its existence. As stated, (Plaimo et al., 2020) that a good culture must be maintained continuously, so that it can be used as a teacher in filling the life of the state nation by future generations.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of community empowerment in Kepuhsari Village is carried out quite well targeting the poor. Empowerment is carried out through three stages. First, the awareness stage is to provide awareness with socialization activities as well as providing understanding and motivation to all levels of society. Providing motivation can be done during meetings or gatherings ranging from RT to RW levels. Second, the transformation stage is a change in the skills possessed by the community, from those who were originally unable to make puppets to be able to make their own puppets even those who are already proficient in opening their own businesses, even collaborating with various parties, such as the Wonogiri Education and Culture Office. Third, the enrichment stage is an increase in community capabilities characterized by the ability to innovate, such as painting glass puppet characters, making batik with puppet patterns, and souvenirs. The success of community empowerment in Kepuhsari Village is economic success with the development of the community's ability to be entrepreneurial. Social success by increasing cooperation with outsiders. Cultural success is by striving for the preservation of local culture, especially puppets for the community. The inhibiting factor in the implementation of community empowerment in Kepuhsari Village is the lack of the next generation of puppet makers. It is still difficult to change the mindset of some people about the importance of empowering puppet making. In addition, the internal factors of the puppet craftsman himself. The supporting factors are the support and participation of the community and other parties, the availability of tools and materials that are easily available, and the willingness to meet needs.

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