

Community Empowerment Through the Utilization of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, Ketapanrame, Trawas, Mojokerto

Segi Harimbias Nikta¹, Hendra Sukmana²
^{1,2}Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze community empowerment through the utilization of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Ketapanrame Trawas Mojokerto Tourism Villages based on Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory indicators. The main focus of the study is to identify the role of capital, infrastructure development, mentoring, institutional strengthening, and strengthening business partnerships in improving economic welfare and village tourism attractiveness. **Method:** The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Research informants include BUMDes managers, MSME actors, community leaders, and village officials. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. **Results:** The results of the study indicate that the five indicators of community empowerment have been implemented well and are mutually supportive. Access to capital is obtained through a combination of village funds, savings and loans, and banking partnerships. The development of tourism and MSME supporting facilities and infrastructure is carried out in stages and according to needs. The mentoring program is carried out through business management and digital marketing training. Institutional strengthening is evident in the effective internal coordination of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), while business partnerships develop through collaboration with the government, the private sector, and local communities. **Novelty:** This research provides a new contribution by comprehensively integrating Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment indicators in the context of MSME-based tourism villages. This approach demonstrates that the success of tourism village development relies not only on natural potential but also on structured, participatory, and sustainable empowerment strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the Indonesian economy. MSMEs are not only the driving force of regional economies but also a means of community empowerment, improving welfare and independence [1]. Since the 1990s, the concept of empowerment has become widely recognized and increasingly emphasized following the 1995 Beijing Conference, where the Indonesian government adopted a community empowerment strategy, including through MSMEs. In the context of tourism, MSMEs are an integral part of the tourism village ecosystem, as they are able to optimize potential into products and services with economic value. Proper management will make MSMEs a vital instrument in sustainable economic development at the village level [2].

The existence of MSMEs in Indonesia has proven to be the most resilient in facing the global economic crisis. During the 1997–1998 monetary crisis, the MSME sector was a savior, able to continue absorbing labor when many large companies went bankrupt

[3]. This was further proven during the Covid-19 pandemic, where MSMEs remained the backbone of the regional economy, employing various adaptations such as marketing digitalization, product diversification, and collaboration with village-owned enterprises (BUMDes). This resilience demonstrates the high flexibility and strong social base of MSMEs, making them worthy of being a primary focus in national and regional economic development strategies, particularly in supporting tourism villages like Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong [4].

The legal basis that strengthens the position of MSMEs in Indonesia is stipulated in "Law Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises." This regulation explains the limitations, criteria, and role of MSMEs in national economic development. The law defines microenterprises as productive businesses run by individuals or business entities with small assets and turnover. Small businesses are independent business units that are not part of or branches of medium- or large-scale companies. Meanwhile, medium-sized businesses are defined as businesses with assets and turnover greater than small businesses, but still operate independently. In addition to defining business categories, this law also emphasizes the need for protection, empowerment, development, and provision of access to financing and mentoring for MSMEs. With this regulation, MSMEs gain legal certainty to thrive in a healthy, competitive, and fair business environment [5].

In addition to the MSME Law, the development of tourist villages is also strengthened by "Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism." This law mandates that tourism development must be oriented towards sustainability, community empowerment, and the preservation of local culture. In practice, tourist villages such as Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong have made MSMEs part of their tourist attractions, whether in the form of culinary specialties, local crafts, or culture-based services. With this legal umbrella, tourist villages are expected to become not only recreational destinations but also instruments for economic and social development in the community [6].

Another legal umbrella that supports the empowerment of MSMEs in tourist villages is "Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages." This law emphasizes that villages have the authority to manage assets and potential, and establish Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) that function as drivers of the village economy [7]. BUMDes capital comes from separated village assets, and the proceeds are used to finance village development and improve community welfare. With this law, village governments have the legitimacy to involve MSMEs in the BUMDes ecosystem so that tourism management can be more professional and focused [8].

In the context of tourist villages, BUMDes plays a strategic role in directly managing tourism activities and partnering with local businesses. A tourist village is defined as a rural area with unique socio-cultural characteristics, customs, and natural resources that can become tourist attractions. BUMDes functions to ensure that tourist villages provide direct economic benefits to the village community, including through job creation and empowerment of local MSMEs. In Ketapanrame Village, Trawas District, BUMDes plays

an active role in managing Ghanjaran Park and Sumber Gempong, thus creating a nature- and culture-based tourist destination and also encouraging community economic growth through the involvement of MSMEs [9].

Table 1. Data on the Number of MSMEs in Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages for 2022-2025.

Year	Taman Ghanjaran	Sumber Gempong	Total MSMEs
2022	60	15	75
2023	80	18	98
2024	90	19	109
2025	96	20	116

Source: Village-Owned Enterprises of Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages 2025

Based on the table above, the number of MSMEs operating in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong areas has increased annually. In 2022, there were 75 MSMEs, then increased to 98 MSMEs in 2023, and then rose again to 109 MSMEs in 2024. By 2025, the number of MSMEs reached 116, consisting of 96 vendors in Taman Ghanjaran and 20 vendors in Sumber Gempong. This increasing trend demonstrates the success of the empowerment program, which is carried out continuously through training, capital assistance, business digitization, and institutional support from the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes).

The research conducted by Ridhani and Sukmana (2023) on "Community Empowerment through the Seaweed Village Program in Kupang Village, Jabon District, Sidoarjo Regency" provides an interesting overview of local potential-based economic recovery efforts. Using a qualitative descriptive approach through interviews, observation, and documentation, this study analyzes the roles of the government, community, and managers in optimizing the empowerment program. The results show that community welfare has begun to improve through the fulfillment of basic needs from seaweed cultivation, although there are still obstacles in terms of access to information and product innovation. Community participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program has been running well, and resource control is also carried out appropriately. This study emphasizes the importance of seaweed as a superior commodity that can boost the local economy thus the program was inaugurated as the Seaweed Village Foreign Exchange Village. These findings indicate that the success of community empowerment is largely determined by synergy between actors and the optimization of local natural resource potential [10].

Based on field observations, there are three main issues in community empowerment through the use of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Ketapanrame Trawas Tourism Villages that require attention. First, MSME product promotion management is still less than optimal, particularly in the use of digital media. Many business owners have not maximized platforms like Instagram, Facebook,

and online marketplaces to expand their marketing reach, so their products tend to be known only to local tourists. Second, supporting facilities for MSME product sales in tourist areas are still limited. Some sales stalls are cramped, poorly arranged, and lack attractive information boards, thus reducing the attractiveness of visitors to purchase. Furthermore, the availability of facilities such as seating areas or dining areas for enjoying local culinary products is still inadequate. Third, the level of community participation in maintaining product and service quality still varies. Some MSME owners have not consistently maintained cleanliness, packaging, and taste standards, which can affect visitor satisfaction. The lack of ongoing training and intensive mentoring is one of the main causes, so a more targeted strategy is needed to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs in this tourist village.

Based on the research issues that have been described, the author is interested in identifying the results of the study entitled "Community Empowerment Through the Utilization of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, Ketapanrame, Trawas, Mojokerto" using the community empowerment theory proposed by Mardi Yatmo Hutomo. This theory emphasizes that the success of community empowerment in the context of managing and utilizing MSMEs is greatly influenced by the fulfillment of five main indicators. First, capital, which includes financial support and basic skills so that MSME actors can develop their businesses optimally. Second, the development of facilities and infrastructure, namely the provision of adequate facilities such as sales kiosks, promotional areas, and supporting infrastructure that can increase productivity and facilitate empowerment activities. Third, mentoring, which acts as a learning facilitator and mediator in strengthening partnerships between MSMEs and large businesses. Fourth, institutional strengthening, which focuses on the formation and strengthening of organizations or groups of MSME actors to be more solid and effective in running their businesses. Fifth, strengthening business partnerships, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration between MSMEs and related parties, both government, private, and communities, to increase competitiveness and expand markets. This theory is relevant because it is able to integrate economic, social, and institutional aspects in encouraging the sustainability of MSMEs as the driving force of the village tourism economy.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the author used a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, which aims to collect, describe, and analyze in depth various information and issues related to community empowerment through the utilization of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Ketapanrame Trawas Mojokerto Tourism Villages. The research was conducted directly in the tourist area with the involvement of BUMDes managers, MSME actors, community leaders, and village officials as key informants [11].

Sugiyono (2016) explains that qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic methods because they are conducted in natural settings. In this study, the

author employed purposive sampling, selecting samples based on specific considerations consistent with the research focus. This method yielded more in-depth data from various relevant sources. The informants included village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) managers, MSMEs in the culinary and craft sectors, and local community leaders [12].

Data collection techniques in this study included field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data collected consisted of primary data, including interviews with informants, direct on-site observations, and documentation of MSME activities. Furthermore, this study also utilized secondary data sourced from literature, academic articles, village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) reports, and regulations related to MSMEs and tourism village management [13].

In analyzing the data, the author used the Miles and Huberman (1994) analysis model which includes the process of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The focus of this research is directed at the application of five indicators of Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory, namely capital, development of facilities and infrastructure, mentoring, institutional strengthening, and strengthening business partnerships, to assess the extent to which the MSME empowerment strategy in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages is able to improve community welfare and strengthen the village's tourist appeal [14].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of research conducted through observation, interviews, and data analysis, community empowerment through the use of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Ketapanrame Trawas Mojokerto Tourism Villages has brought significant changes in increasing local economic capacity [15]. This empowerment program not only focuses on strengthening the potential of micro and small businesses, but also on creating an inclusive tourism ecosystem through synergy between the village government, BUMDes, and the MSME community [16]. Program implementation includes aspects of capital, infrastructure development, business mentoring, institutional strengthening, and strategic partnerships [17]. Through this approach, empowerment is not only a theoretical concept, but has been realized in real practice which has an impact on increasing community welfare and the attractiveness of tourist villages [18].

This study uses the analytical framework of community empowerment theory from Mardi Yatmo Hutomo, which emphasizes five indicators [19]. The five indicators are capital, infrastructure development, mentoring, institutional strengthening, and strengthening business partnerships. Through these five indicators, this study assesses the extent to which the MSME empowerment strategy in Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong is able to provide real value in the form of increasing community welfare [20].

Discussion

1. Capital

According to Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory, capital indicators are fundamental aspects encompassing all forms of capital support, both financial and basic skills, needed to drive the success of community businesses. Capital is not solely understood as funds provided by village institutions, but encompasses various sources, such as the entrepreneur's personal funds, access to loans through banks, savings and loan cooperatives, village funds, and support from government programs and private CSR programs. Without adequate capital, MSMEs will struggle to increase production capacity, expand their marketing networks, or develop new product innovations. Therefore, capital serves as the initial foundation in the community empowerment process so that the businesses they run can grow independently and sustainably.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of BUMDes Mutiara Welirang, it was explained that:

"We help local MSMEs by facilitating access to capital loans from village funds and collaborating with savings and loan cooperatives. The amounts vary, from IDR 2 million to IDR 10 million, depending on the scale of the business. In addition to capital, we also provide basic skills training, such as financial management and product packaging, to ensure optimal use of the capital assistance provided." (Interview, February 3, 2025).

This statement illustrates that village and cooperative funds are indeed alternative sources of capital. However, in practice, many MSMEs also use personal funds and bank loans to meet their business needs. This support is usually combined with skills training, such as financial management and product packaging, so that the capital obtained – from whatever source – can be used productively. This demonstrates that capital in the context of community empowerment is not only about providing funds, but also about strengthening capacity so that business actors become more independent in managing that capital.

Mrs. Siti Rahma, one of the MSME actors, revealed the real benefits of the capital received:

"The capital from the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) has been very helpful in purchasing more modern production equipment. Previously, our production capacity was only 10 kg per day, but now we can produce 25 kg. As a result, our income has nearly doubled, and we've been able to employ two additional local workers." (Interview, February 4, 2025).

These testimonials demonstrate how additional capital – whether from village institutions, banks, or personal funds – can significantly impact community businesses. Increased production capacity not only increases the income of MSMEs but also creates new jobs for local residents. This means that the available capital not only strengthens the position of individual businesses but also contributes to the collective economic well-being of the village community.

Based on the above phenomenon, it can be concluded that capital for MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages comes from several

sources, including personal funds, savings and loan cooperatives, banks, and village funds managed by the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). This support is not only in the form of financial capital, but also accompanied by strengthening basic skills, such as financial management and product packaging techniques. This is in accordance with Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory on capital indicators, where effective capital must be able to boost productivity, expand employment opportunities, and increase the competitiveness of local MSMEs. However, when juxtaposed with this theory, the empowerment strategy in this tourism village only partially fulfills the capital and mentoring aspects, while other indicators, such as institutional strengthening and business partnerships, still need to be improved. Thus, although capital support has had a positive impact on business growth and community welfare, its sustainability will be stronger if it is integrated with other empowerment indicators so that MSMEs can grow sustainably. When compared with previous research entitled "Empowerment of MSMEs Based on Natural Potential in Supporting the Development of Taro Tourism Village Towards Sustainable Tourism", similar results were found, namely that access to capital and strengthening the capacity of business actors are important factors in supporting the sustainability of MSMEs in tourism villages, although in practice there are still shortcomings in the institutional aspects and business partnerships that need to be strengthened so that empowerment runs optimally [1].

2. Development of Facilities and Infrastructure

According to Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory, infrastructure development indicators are crucial factors supporting the smooth operation of MSMEs while simultaneously enhancing the attractiveness of tourist villages. Adequate infrastructure not only facilitates smooth business operations but also provides comfort for visitors and expands market opportunities. In the context of community empowerment in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, infrastructure development relies not only on the village or its Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), but also on sponsors and the government. While supporting facilities such as permanent stalls, road access, and business utilities are built by the village, sponsors also contribute to the provision of menu boards, tables, and chairs, as well as support from banks such as BRI, which assists in providing promotional facilities and operational needs for MSMEs. This synergy demonstrates that infrastructure development is the result of collaboration between many parties to support the sustainability of community businesses.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of BUMDes Mutiara Welirang, it was stated that:

"We built permanent stalls for MSMEs at the entrance to Ghanjaran Park and Sumber Gempong. There are 15 stalls equipped with electricity, clean water, and business signs. We also provided a shared raw material storage warehouse to ease MSMEs' inventory management. We also improved road access to the tourist area to facilitate distribution of goods." (Interview, February 3, 2025).

This statement demonstrates the village's concrete support in providing stalls, basic utilities, and road access. However, on the ground, additional facilities such as menu boards, tables, chairs, and promotional equipment are largely provided by sponsors and the private sector, including support from Bank BRI, which contributed to the Sumber Gempong area. This collaboration allows MSMEs to operate more comfortably, their products to be more attractively displayed, and visitors to feel more at home.



Figure 1. Facilities and Infrastructure in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages.

Mrs. Rini Astuti, one of the MSME actors, also emphasized the real impact of infrastructure development:

“Before we had a permanent stall, we sold in a makeshift tent that often leaked when it rained. Now, with the new facility, our products are better protected and our customers feel more comfortable. Sales have increased 30% since we moved into this stall. Improved road access has also made the supply of raw materials more efficient.” (Interview, February 4, 2025).

This experience demonstrates that adequate infrastructure can increase the productivity and sales of MSMEs. While previously sellers faced limited facilities, now with the support of stalls, road access, and additional equipment from sponsors, their businesses have become more stable and professional.

Based on the above phenomenon, it can be concluded that the development of facilities and infrastructure in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages is not only the result of village and BUMDes initiatives, but also involves

contributions from sponsors and the government, including Bank BRI. This is in accordance with Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory on infrastructure indicators, where the existence of adequate physical infrastructure can be a foundation for business sustainability and improving community welfare. However, when compared to this theory, the implemented strategy only emphasizes infrastructure, while other indicators such as institutional strengthening and business partnerships still need to be improved. Thus, infrastructure support sourced from various parties has had a real impact on the growth of MSMEs, but its effectiveness will be more optimal if synergized with other empowerment indicators. When compared with previous research entitled "Optimizing the Empowerment of Leather Bag MSMEs in Tanggulangin Based on Digital Marketing", similar findings were found that the success of MSME empowerment does not only depend on physical infrastructure support, but also needs to be strengthened through mentoring strategies and the use of digital technology to achieve more sustainable results [2].

3. Mentoring

The mentoring indicator in Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory is a crucial aspect that facilitates the learning process, provides space for reflection, and strengthens the capacity of MSMEs through technical and managerial support, as well as marketing access. Mentoring extends beyond knowledge transfer and also encompasses the involvement of external parties to ensure businesses are able to adapt to evolving market needs. In the context of MSME empowerment in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, mentoring is more comprehensive, involving various parties, including government, private sector, and academics. In Sumber Gempong, MSME mentoring is actively provided by BRI through its capital and financial literacy programs; Astra, which focuses on entrepreneurship training and marketing strategies; and UBAYA (University of Surabaya), which regularly holds community service programs in the form of business management, product design, and digital marketing training. This multi-stakeholder collaboration demonstrates that mentoring is not solely carried out by the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), but involves a broader network to strengthen the capacity of local MSMEs.

This was also confirmed by the Head of BUMDes Mutiara Welirang in an interview:

"We regularly provide monthly mentoring to MSMEs, ranging from simple financial management training to product packaging techniques and digital marketing strategies. This mentoring involves speakers from the Cooperatives Office and local academics. We also facilitate meetings between MSMEs and tourism operators to foster collaboration, such as creating tour packages that incorporate MSME products as part of the attraction." (Interview, February 4, 2025).

This statement aligns with practice in the field, where routine mentoring comes not only from the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) but is also reinforced by external support. BRI helps improve the financial literacy of MSMEs and provides easier access to capital, Astra provides training on branding and product marketing strategies to align with modern consumer trends, while UBAYA plays a role through workshops on

product development, packaging design, and digital-based marketing. This synergy makes mentoring more applicable because each party brings different, complementary expertise.

Mrs. Siti, one of the MSME actors, also emphasized the real impact of the mentoring:

"I used to only sell simple crafts at village markets with limited income. After receiving mentoring from the Community Service Program (KKN) team, universities, and private companies, I began learning to create more attractive designs, market through social media, and understand how to manage business finances. As a result, my products are now available in souvenir shops in tourist areas, and I even receive orders from outside the city through online sales. I feel my small business is now more appreciated and has the opportunity to grow even further." (Interview, February 3, 2025).

This statement illustrates the tangible impact of multi-stakeholder mentoring on the transformation of MSMEs in Tourism Villages. Prior to the intervention, craft businesses were still traditional and limited to the local market. However, through training programs in design, digital marketing, and financial literacy initiated by universities, private companies, and financial institutions, these craft products are now able to penetrate a broader market. This case demonstrates that cross-sector collaboration can accelerate the competitiveness of MSMEs by providing new knowledge, opening market access, and expanding business networks.

Table 2. Mentoring Programs/ Activities for 2022-2023.

Year	Programs/Activities
2022	Establishment of the Tourism MSME Forum
2023	Business and Financial Management Training
	Branding & Digital Marketing Workshop

Source: Village-Owned Enterprises of Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, 2025

Based on the table above, MSME empowerment activities in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages demonstrate a structured capacity building process for business actors. In 2022, the focus will be on establishing a Tourism MSME Forum as a forum for coordination and communication between business actors, the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), and the village government. Furthermore, in 2023, human resource capacity development will be carried out through business and financial management training, as well as branding and digital marketing workshops. Both programs aim to improve business management skills while strengthening the promotional capabilities of MSME products to increase their competitiveness in both local and digital markets.

Based on the above phenomenon, it can be concluded that MSME mentoring in Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages is not only carried out through BUMDes, but is also strengthened by the involvement of external parties such as BRI, Astra, and UBAYA. This is in accordance with Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's

community empowerment theory on mentoring indicators, where the success of MSMEs is largely determined by the existence of continuous support from various parties. However, in practice, there are still weaknesses in the institutional aspects and business partnerships that are not fully integrated. Therefore, although mentoring has had a real impact in the form of increased skills, product innovation, and market expansion, its sustainability will be stronger if accompanied by institutional strengthening and strategic partnership networks so that MSME empowerment runs more optimally and sustainably. When compared with previous research entitled "Empowerment of MSMEs at the Center for Tourism and Creative Economy (Pusparekraf) Bandar Lampung in filling out Annual Tax Returns", it was found that the success of MSME mentoring is not only determined by one party, but through multi-party synergy, including government, academics, and local communities, so that the empowerment process can run more comprehensively and sustainably [3].

4. Institutional Strengthening

The institutional strengthening indicator in Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory emphasizes the importance of strengthening organizations, groups, or communities for the empowerment process to be effective and sustainable. Institutional strengthening includes establishing a clear organizational structure, increasing the capacity of administrators, structured task allocation, and establishing a solid coordination and communication system among stakeholders. In the context of managing MSMEs in tourist villages, strong institutions will facilitate program management, decision-making, and cross-sector collaboration.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of BUMDes Mutiara Welirang, it was explained that:

"From the outset, we established a dedicated unit to empower MSMEs under the auspices of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). This unit has a clear organizational structure, spanning field coordinators, training, and marketing. We also establish internal regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure each program runs smoothly. Furthermore, we regularly hold coordination meetings with MSME representatives to discuss progress and challenges in the field." (Interview, February 3, 2025).

From the outset, BUMDes has had a well-developed institutional strategy for empowering MSMEs by establishing a dedicated unit with a clear organizational structure. This unit is divided into several functions, including a field coordinator who ensures program implementation, a training department focused on enhancing business capacity, and a marketing department that helps expand product distribution networks. Furthermore, BUMDes also develops internal regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide each activity, ensuring greater focus, transparency, and measurability. To maintain continuity, regular coordination meetings are held with MSME representatives to evaluate progress, identify obstacles, and develop joint solutions. This demonstrates that MSME empowerment is carried out systematically and participatory, resulting in optimal results for both business owners and the village community.

Meanwhile, according to Mrs. Ratna Dewi, the administrator of the culinary MSME group in Ketapanrame Village:

"Having an MSME group facilitated by the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) makes it easier for us to access information and assistance. We have a group leader, treasurer, and marketing section that work in a structured manner. Before this institution, each MSME operated independently. Now, we can create joint agendas, such as participating in bazaars or producing village souvenir packages." (Interview, February 4, 2025).

The formation of MSME groups facilitated by Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) has significantly strengthened coordination among business actors. With a clear management structure, including a group leader, treasurer, and marketing department, MSME activities are now more focused and organized. Prior to this institution, each MSME operated independently without synergy, resulting in limited access to information, assistance, and market opportunities. Now, through the group, MSMEs can develop joint agendas, such as participating in bazaars or developing collaborative products like village souvenir packages. This institution not only increases efficiency and access to opportunities but also strengthens the competitiveness of MSMEs because they operate within a mutually supportive system.

Based on the above phenomenon, it can be concluded that institutional strengthening in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages not only clarifies the direction of work but also fosters a sense of togetherness and stronger coordination among MSMEs. This aligns with Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's theory of community empowerment on the institutional strengthening indicator, where the existence of a clear organizational structure and SOPs can make empowerment programs run more effectively, directed, and sustainably. However, its implementation still requires stronger integration with other indicators, particularly mentoring and business partnerships, to achieve optimal results. Compared with this theory, the strategy implemented in these tourism villages has successfully met the institutional indicators, but its sustainability will be more assured if supported by synergy with other aspects. This aligns with previous research examining community-based community empowerment through MSMEs in Batu Belubang Village, where institutional strengthening of business groups has been proven to increase program effectiveness and the independence of business actors, although it still requires support from mentoring and partnership aspects for greater sustainability [4].

5. Strengthening Business Partnerships

The indicators for strengthening business partnerships in Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory emphasize the importance of building collaboration between communities and various external parties, including the government, the private sector, financial institutions, and other tourism managers. Strong partnerships are key to expanding marketing networks, improving access to capital, and enhancing the competitiveness of local MSMEs. In the context of the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, partnership strengthening is carried out not only by the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), but also through the communities within both

tourist destinations. In Sumber Gempong, partnerships are facilitated by the Rakasiwi Community Empowerment Group (POKDARWIS), while in Taman Ghanjaran, they are implemented through the Joint Business Group (KUB). These two communities play a crucial role in liaising between local MSMEs and external partners, both for training, marketing, and capital.

Based on an interview with the Head of BUMDes Mutiara Welirang, it was explained that:

"We partner with various parties to support MSMEs in tourist villages. For example, we collaborate with the Regency Tourism Office for business management training and digital promotion, and we partner with regional banks to provide access to capital at low interest rates. We also collaborate with other tourist destination managers to create integrated tour packages that include visits to Ghanjaran Park and Sumber Gempong." (Interview, February 4, 2025).

This information aligns with the partnership patterns established in the field. The Rakasiwi Community Empowerment Group (PKDARWIS) in Sumber Gempong actively collaborates with the Regency Tourism Office to improve the skills of MSMEs in business management and digital promotion. Meanwhile, the Taman Ghanjaran Community Empowerment Group (KUB) primarily manages relationships with private parties, such as hotels and cafes around Trawas, which now accept MSME products as official souvenirs. Both communities also play a role in establishing partnerships with financial institutions, including regional banks, to provide access to low-interest capital so that businesses are not overly burdened by loan costs. This is further reinforced by the direct experience of MSMEs who have experienced the benefits of partnerships, both in the form of increased sales volume and market expansion.

As conveyed by Mrs. Ratna Dewi, administrator of the culinary UMKM group in Ketapanrame Village:

"Through the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), we can participate in exhibitions and bazaars held by the district government and private companies. In fact, several hotels and cafes around Trawas have begun purchasing our products as official souvenirs. This collaborative relationship has significantly helped expand sales and make our products more widely known." (Interview, February 4, 2025).

This information demonstrates that the existence of KUB and POKDARWIS can open significant opportunities for local MSMEs to expand their marketing networks. Through community facilitation, MSMEs can participate in exhibitions and bazaars organized by both the government and the private sector, while also establishing distribution contracts with local hotels and cafes. These partnerships significantly increase sales volume and strengthen the image of local products as part of a tourist attraction. Furthermore, the existence of communities also provides MSMEs with the confidence to compete in a broader market with strong institutional support.

Table 3. Business Partnership Strengthening Programs/ Activities 2022-2024.

Year	Programs/Activities
2022	Identification & Data Collection of MSMEs

Year	Programs/Activities
2023	Mapping Potential & Challenges
	Micro Capital Assistance Program (Village-Owned Enterprises/CSR)
	Physical Arrangement of MSME Stands
2024	Digitalization of MSME Services & Products
	Utilization of Visitor Data
	Strategic Partnerships (Hotels, Travel, e-commerce)
	Evaluation & Monitoring of MSME Performance

Source: Village-Owned Enterprises of Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages, 2025

Based on the table, the MSME empowerment program in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages in 2022–2024 demonstrates a structured and sustainable implementation pattern. In 2022, the focus of activities was aimed at identifying and collecting data on MSMEs and mapping the potential and challenges faced by business actors, so that a comprehensive picture of the initial conditions of MSMEs in tourism villages could be obtained. Entering 2023, the program was directed at strengthening business support aspects through micro-capital assistance sourced from BUMDes and CSR, as well as the physical arrangement of MSME stands to be more organized, representative, and attractive to tourists. In 2024, empowerment focused on digital-based development by implementing the digitization of MSME services and products, utilizing visitor data for more targeted marketing strategies, and expanding marketing networks through strategic partnerships with hotels, travel agents, and e-commerce platforms. The final stage was also marked by evaluation and monitoring of MSME performance to maintain program continuity. Overall, the series of activities demonstrates the development flow starting from initial mapping to digital innovation and a broader partnership network, so that it is hoped that it will be able to strengthen the competitiveness of local MSMEs in the tourist village area.

From this phenomenon, it can be concluded that business partnerships in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Tourism Villages have been implemented strategically through the roles of POKDARWIS Rakasiwi and the Joint Business Group (KUB). The existence of these two organizations strengthens collaboration between MSMEs and external partners, so that the empowerment process does not stand alone but is supported by a broader network. This aligns with the concept of community empowerment according to Mardi Yatmo Hutomo, where business partnership indicators serve as key instruments for expanding market access, increasing competitiveness, and ensuring business sustainability. However, field practice shows that partnerships still need to be expanded to more modern sectors, such as national e-commerce platforms and cross-regional tourism networks, to have a more significant impact. This finding also aligns with previous research on the role of MSMEs in maintaining East Java's economic resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic, where

collaboration and partnership networks have proven to be key factors driving the economy, although strengthening digital innovation and market expansion remain challenges [5].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The results of the discussion above can be drawn several conclusions regarding community empowerment through the utilization of MSMEs in the Taman Ghanjaran and Sumber Gempong Ketapanrame Trawas Mojokerto Tourism Villages, which can be concluded by reviewing the five indicators of success according to Mardi Yatmo Hutomo's community empowerment theory, namely that in the Capital indicator, support is quite visible with access to village funds, cooperatives, and banks along with training in financial management and packaging techniques, in the Facilities and Infrastructure indicator, permanent stalls, road access, electricity, and clean water clearly facilitate MSME activities, in the Mentoring indicator, MSMEs have received guidance in business management, digital marketing, and financial literacy, in the Institutional indicator, the formation of MSME groups and the role of BUMDes demonstrate institutional strengthening, and in the Business Partnership indicator, MSMEs have collaborated with the government, private sector, and local communities through bazaars, exhibitions, and digital platforms. **Implication :** These findings imply that the empowerment of MSMEs in tourist villages not only strengthens local economic resilience but also creates opportunities for innovation and sustainable development when supported by adequate capital, infrastructure, continuous mentoring, institutional strengthening, and broader partnerships. **Limitation :** However, several limitations remain such as actors hampered by limited personal capital, the need for storage warehouses and wider marketing areas, the challenge that not all actors can directly apply mentoring materials, the lack of integrated coordination among MSMEs, and partnerships that are still limited to the local scope. **Future Research :** Therefore, future programs and studies should explore strategies to expand business networks at regional and national levels, strengthen coordination between MSMEs, provide more inclusive mentoring approaches, and integrate infrastructure support that enables sustainable MSME growth in tourism villages.

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Segi Harimbias Nika

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Email: harimbiasegi27@gmail.com

***Hendra Sukmana (Corresponding Author)**

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Email: hendra.sukmana@umsida.ac.id
