

Local Champion: Communication Characteristics in Community Empowerment Based on Local Innovation

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Abstract

This research is focusing on the community development and empowerment in underdeveloped villages of Trenggalek regency by focusing on strengthening role of local champions in each village. The result from this study was the villages were villages with IDT (Inpres Desa Tertinggal) and IDB (Inpres Desa Berkembang) status, the consequence of which was often to get assistance from the government. Yet, not all of the villages were successful in optimizing government assistances. Tasikmadu, Winong, and Tegaren were the examples of successful villages in stepping up from underdevelop to developing villages. This qualitative study used focus group discussion and in-depth interview in order to get genuine data from local people. The data was not taken for granted, but verified by check-crossing from one local spot to another local spot. In sum, the application on the empowerment of underdeveloped rural communities is strongly supported by strengthening role of local champions from each village. Local champions act as driving forces to support the community in increasing their ability to get out of poverty

Keywords: community development, empowerment, local champion, poverty

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to BPS data (2019), the number of poor people in March 2019 was 25.14 million people, or 9.41% of the total population of Indonesia. The distribution of the poor consists of 6.69% in urban areas and 13.10% in rural areas. In March 2019, on average, poor households in Indonesia had 4.68 household members. Thus, the amount of loss in the Poverty Line per poor household is Rp. 1,990,170, - / poor household per month on average.

Community empowerment is one of the solutions in poverty alleviation. However, the facts on the ground show that these efforts encountered many obstacles. The efforts made are not friendly to the elements of the existing community locality, and do not pay attention to the role of the community as the subject of development so that the percentage of success is very small (Najih et al., 2006

Meanwhile, Trenggalek Regency is an area that has a very diverse topography, from the coast to mountainous areas. According to BPS (2018), the potential of Trenggalek Regency is quite diverse, including: agriculture (rice, corn, beans, sugarcane) and plantations (cloves, tobacco, durian, salak, mangosteen, coffee); tourism (Damas beach, Karanggongso beach, Pancer Cengkong Mangrove forest, Banyon hill, Gemblung mountain, Mount Sepikul peak, Lowo Cave, Kedung Maron River); Food processing (soy sauce, syrup, fish drying); mining (iron ore, limestone, marble, manganese, diorite and coal); and trade and services.

However, the large potential that Trenggalek Regency has, there are several obstacles that cause its people to still live at the lower threshold of welfare. The villages in Trenggalek Regency are categorized as underdeveloped and developing. Winong Village is a village under the administration of Tugu District. This village is underdeveloped status and has an IDM (Building Village Index) score of 0.545. Tegaren Village is still classified as a developing village with an IDM score of 0.618. Even though it has a developing status, it does not show any significant development in its nature from the local community. In fact, apart from the potential of agriculture, Tegaren Village also has economic potential in the form of tourism objects.

Based on the conditions presented above, a response emerged from the researcher to take a deeper look at the empowerment of rural communities in an effort to create and develop local innovation-based home industry businesses. Therefore, the main focus of this research is a community empowerment model and local potential-based innovation development in underdeveloped villages of Trenggalek Regency. In this study, a model of community

empowerment and development of local potential-based innovation in underdeveloped areas of Trenggalek Regency will be developed which will combine elements of strategic planning from the government with participatory planning. This research will also focus on developing the role of local champions as a conceptual embodiment of local innovation.

2. METHODS

According to Silalahi (2009), the classification of the types of a study must still be mapped according to its benefits, objectives, subjects, methods, time, data collection and data analysis. However, researchers must determine the type of research based on these classifications. Therefore, this study uses a descriptive-exploratory research type. Descriptive research type is a type of research that provides a detailed description of situations, configurations of phenomena or socio-political relationships that occur in society. The situation, phenomenon, configuration or socio-political relationship referred to in this case can be in the form of activities, characteristics, changes, similarities or differences between one phenomenon and another (Sukmadinata, 2009).

Descriptive research also does not use given or controlled treatment and without hypothesis testing. Meanwhile, explorative research is research that aims to find things that have not been previously identified or described. Exploratory research is more about discussing everything that is related to the research theme, the formulation of research problems, and still paying attention to the limitations of existing research.

In addition, this study uses a combination approach, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2007) or a mixed method (mix method). This combined approach departs from a qualitative approach, which means that researchers see phenomena in society and describe these phenomena as they are. Because qualitative research allows researchers to describe a phenomenon by taking part, in-depth interviews, and understanding these social interactions. Complex social phenomena can be explained through clear relationship patterns. Researchers will go directly to the object, so that problems can be found clearly. While the second foothold is a quantitative approach, which means that the researcher confirms factual

As for the research phasing, there are 4 (four) main stages in this research, namely: (1) Preliminary stage (exploration study), through library research and field studies to find out the conditions and problems faced by the community and make observations on the potential of the local community. who live in underdeveloped villages in Trenggalek Regency (Reiter, 2017); (2) The second stage is the formulation stage of the empowerment model and development of disadvantaged rural communities based on local innovation, the formulation is

carried out by considering the main factors that have been the social capital of local communities, namely leadership and village governance; (3) The implementation stage of the empowerment and development model is carried out to test the effectiveness of the model; (4) The implementation, evaluation, refinement and validation phase of the model as well as the dissemination of the model so that it can be used as a blueprint for community empowerment models based on local innovation, especially in rural areas both in villages in the East Java region and in other villages. in Indonesia.

3. DISCUSSION

The concept of empowerment in the discourse of community development is always associated with the concept of independence, participation, networking, and justice. Basically, empowerment is placed on the strength of the individual and social levels. Empowerment of village communities is one of the efforts to improve community welfare, through several activities including increasing community initiatives and self-help, improving the environment and housing, developing village economic enterprises, developing Village Financial Institutions, and activities that can increase the community's ability to increase results production (Tempoh, 2013).

Empowerment refers to the abilities of people. Particularly vulnerable and weak groups so that they have the strength or ability to (a) fulfill their basic needs so that they have freedom, in the sense that they are not only free to express their opinions. It is free from hunger, free from ignorance, free from pain; (b) reach productive sources that enable them to increase their income and obtain the goods and services they need; and (c) participate in the development process and the many decisions that affect them (Suharto, 2005)

The role of the government is also urgently needed to improve the quality and quantity of accommodation facilities for tourism objects, particularly the rehabilitation of main facilities and infrastructure that are already damaged and the construction of new facilities to complement the needs of tourists, such as health clinics. Third, the local community is expected to always maintain cleanliness, tidiness, beauty, comfort and environmental safety. Fourth, in terms of promotional activities carried out by managers both through the internet and brochures, so that they are included in more detail, increasing promotional activities such as placing brochures in strategic places such as airports, hotels, shopping centers and restaurants. The main condition for community empowerment is the formation of environmental conditions. conducive society. Meanwhile, the prerequisite for having a conducive condition is the high level of life skills of the community. Life skills are of a special urgency when talking about

community empowerment. Life skills are abilities, abilities, and even skills possessed by a person so that that person's life is lightened by challenges and obstacles. More than that, life skills are needed so that a person is able to face life's problems naturally and without feeling depressed.

Apart from life skills in a conducive environment, in the context of community empowerment, there must be one thing discussed in it, namely productive character. Empowerment must be accompanied by a productive character, because without a productive character, the empowerment that will be carried out will disappear over time because nothing is produced. Then, what is the definition of a productive character? Productive character is a concept of traits that has an orientation to contribute to the environment or other people around us by producing something, it can be in the form of goods or services (Sonja et al., 2016). Productive character is not only honed through generosity, but also through self-actualization.

To empower the community, productive character can be instilled in several things. First, productive character can be instilled in education, both formal and non-formal. Productive character can be taught to students and teachers by providing entrepreneurship lessons, providing space for art performance activities, creating characters that build mental and courage, and so on. Second, the productive character values can also be inserted into the social organizations in the area. Karang Taruna can be the most strategic organizational media, because in addition to being managed by youth, members of the Youth Organization must learn to be independent of the organization. Several other social institutions, such as community arisan, PKK, or community recitation groups, can also be a medium for cultivating productive character (Sonja et al., 2016)

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In simple terms, the local champion concept is a political communication concept used by an individual or a group of local enablers to mobilize the community with the help of a leader

in the community unit. The leader referred to in the concept of local champion is not someone who has a high social position (political-administrative position), but is someone who has a leadership spirit and is able to mobilize many people (Dureau, 2013). Therefore, a local champion cannot be recognized in a short amount of time, but must be recognized through intensive and continuous observation and interaction.

In the context of empowering local communities, a local champion can be a young man who has innovation in his area. So that the young man is able to attract the attention of many people as well as be able to move many people afterwards. A local champion can also be a customary head (or elder) in the social structure of the local community. This elder person is commonly known as an individual who prioritizes wisdom in living. Therefore, individuals like this usually have the ability to be heard by many people. Finally, a local champion can indeed be a leader in a political-administrative order, such as village heads, village secretaries, heads of farmer groups, and others.

A local champion, according to the empowerment method of asset-based community development (ABCD) developed by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann (in Dureau, 2013), has a very important role. In community empowerment which aims to strengthen the resilience of the intellectual knowledge of the local community, the local champion does not only play a role in spreading a positive spirit and encouraging the community, but also as an ideal figure for how empowerment should be carried out so that it is hoped that a local champion can be multiplied in one local community. . Thus, the communication that is established is not only efficient, but can also be very effective because the regeneration of local champions will occur in a community. With the regeneration of local champions, it is hoped that the progress and empowerment of the community will also be regenerated. Therefore, the local champion is one of the innovations in the context of local-based community empowerment.

This study took Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village in Trenggalek Regency as a sampling of underdeveloped and developing villages in Trenggalek Regency where the research was carried out. The three villages have represented villages with conditions that are still underdeveloped, developing, and transformed from being left behind to developing status. Tegaren Village is a village that transformed from an underdeveloped village until nowadays into a developing village. Meanwhile, Winong Village is a village that represents an underdeveloped village in Trenggalek Regency. Tasikmadu Village is a village that has received a lot of support from the local government because of its strategic location as a tourism area. So that the village of Tasikmadu is very suitable to represent a developing village in Trenggalek Regency.

This research produces several indicators that are needed for an underdeveloped village to innovate and advance. These indicators include strong and innovative leadership of regional heads, open and entrepreneurial culture of local communities, and ownership of assets by underdeveloped villages. These three indicators will be further developed in the second year, so that the empowerment of communities in disadvantaged villages will be based on three major aspects, namely 1) leadership, 2) culture, and 3) entrepreneurship

Data collection and analysis carried out from the three villages resulted in a three-point hypothesis which later had to be re-tested and confirmed in the local community. The first point of this research is the tendency of local champions to emerge in local political-administrative structures. Our findings in Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village, all the local champions we found always served as apparatus of the village government. However, the narratives of why they came to this position still vary widely. Several cases in Tegaren and Winong Villages confirm that a local champion is an understanding that is born and formed from the privileges (special privileges) of the local champion's family or relatives. There are many cases that village officials who are still relatively young have blood relations with retired village officials. This has advantages and disadvantages in the context of local community political communication. The advantage of this phenomenon is that local champions do not have to start from that in order to be easily accepted by the community and followed by the community. However, the drawback of this phenomenon is that this kinship socio-political culture often kills the potential for the birth of local champions, and also has the potential to disrupt the multiplication of existing local champions-local champions.

It is recorded that only Tasikmadu Village with this new village head can be present as a strong and promising institution full of innovation. Tasikmadu Village does have a different character from Winong and Tegaren. Tasikmadu, which is located in a coastal area, is helped by the culture of coastal people who are hardworking and never give up. This is in line with Manumono (2008), which states that coastal communities tend to be violent and aggressive. This turned out to be influenced by the condition of the coastal environment which is hot and open, which makes fishing families easy to be provoked.

In contrast to Tasikmadu Village, until now the development and empowerment in Tegaren and Winong Villages have not been able to have a significant impact either on the growth of innovation or on the sustainability of these innovations. The culture of rural people who are simple, accept what they are, uphold "upload-upload", harmonious relationship, but have a closed feeling in terms of criticism, it is suspected that the development of the village

cannot be carried out. The people of Tegaren and Winong Villages tend to accept the current conditions and tend to find it difficult to carry out activities that are new and foreign.

The second point of this research is the problem of urbanization. The trend of urbanization in Trenggalek Regency is still very high. With the desire of youth from the regions and villages to go to school and work in large urban areas, the rate of urbanization is also high. This is what we also found in Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village. Urbanization is a problem when in a village the majority of the population is classified as middle-aged and elderly men / women. This hampers the regeneration of the local champions in the villages.

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The third point of this research is the solution offered by the research team to Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village. The proposed solution in question is village empowerment through local innovation that can increase the capacity and capability of the

village in improving the welfare of its people. Of course the role of the local champion of this solution is vital and concrete. A local community will not be optimally empowered if the role of the local community itself is reduced.

The three villages in this study reached an agreement where it is very important to consider the regeneration of the local champions in the current village. Therefore, these three villages will further foster village participation and emancipation in empowering local communities in local villages, such as Poktan (Farmers Group), Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), and Karang Taruna.

With the status quo condition that places local champions in the position of village government, this can actually be an advantage in political communication between local champions and the local community and community. Therefore, this study succeeded in making local champions in Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village that their role for the progress of the community was very large. Not only for the present but also for the future. Thus, the local champions are expected to be able to communicate massively with the local community so that the empowerment of existing villages and communities can increase rapidly.

4. CONCLUSION

This research, which focuses on Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village, aims to offer a mass communication model based on local community innovation. By adapting the local champion concept to empowering village communities, the research team found that there are several pre-conditions and / or conditions needed to make the local champion concept an effective offer for the village community, especially villages in Trenggalek Regency.

The problem of urbanization can become a pre-condition for a better regeneration of local champions. If the inequality of the generations of the resident population is not that great, then the possibility of mass communication that occurs is also better and more effective. In addition, the existence of strategic planning is important for the village, but according to the research team this has not been done by many villages in Trenggalek Regency, including Tegaren Village, Winong Village, and Tasikmadu Village.

Planning strategies that also include local community participation strategies are an important aspect of community empowerment. Therefore, it is best if every village must have a strategic plan both in written documents and in the form of existing programs. This can also support the use of the Village Fund, which is disbursed annually by the central government.

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