

The Development Of Stone Sculpting Craftsmen In Jatisumber Village, Trowulan District, Mojokerto Regency

Perkembangan Pengrajin Patung Batu Di Desa Jatisumber, Kecamatan Trowulan, Kabupaten Mojokerto

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to comprehensively analyze the challenges faced by craftspeople, assess their level of expertise, explore the obstacles they experience in terms of business competitiveness, and provide strategies or models to empower them. The study utilizes the community empowerment paradigm, which focuses on collective endeavors to improve social well-being and strengthen relationships among community groups. Empowerment requires actively involving external entities to achieve goals and making efforts to acquire resources. This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology. Primary data sources consist of unprocessed data acquired directly from interviews and observations. A total of seven individuals were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. In addition, this study utilized supplementary data sources such as statistical data, theses, and government papers. The findings indicate that the empowerment of stone statue makers in Jatisumber Village involves various aspects. The primary areas that necessitate heightened attention in empowerment projects are marketing, promotion, financing, networking, and regeneration. The fundamental obstacles encountered by artisans are directly associated with these elements. Empowerment requires the cooperation of several parties, such as the government, private sector, community, and artisans themselves. The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly identify the difficulties faced by stone statue craftsmen, evaluate their workforce skills, analyze the barriers they encounter in their economic pursuits, and suggest strategies for empowerment that involve multiple stakeholders, all with the aim of improving the livelihoods of these craftsmen.

Keywords: *Stone Statue Makers, Empowerment Projects*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis secara komprehensif tantangan yang dihadapi oleh para pengrajin, menilai tingkat keahlian mereka, mengeksplorasi hambatan yang mereka alami dalam hal daya saing bisnis, dan memberikan strategi atau model untuk memberdayakan mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma pemberdayaan masyarakat, yang berfokus pada upaya kolektif untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan sosial dan memperkuat hubungan di antara kelompok-kelompok masyarakat. Pemberdayaan membutuhkan keterlibatan secara aktif dari pihak luar untuk mencapai tujuan dan melakukan upaya untuk memperoleh sumber daya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif. Sumber data primer terdiri dari data yang belum diolah yang diperoleh langsung dari wawancara dan observasi. Sebanyak tujuh orang diwawancarai dengan menggunakan format wawancara semi-terstruktur. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menggunakan sumber data pelengkap seperti data statistik, tesis, dan dokumen pemerintah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemberdayaan pengrajin patung batu di Desa Jatisumber melibatkan berbagai aspek. Bidang utama yang perlu mendapat perhatian lebih dalam proyek pemberdayaan adalah pemasaran, promosi, pembiayaan, jaringan, dan regenerasi. Kendala mendasar yang dihadapi oleh para pengrajin berkaitan langsung dengan elemen-elemen tersebut. Pemberdayaan membutuhkan kerja sama dari beberapa pihak, seperti pemerintah, sektor swasta, masyarakat, dan pengrajin itu sendiri. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi secara menyeluruh kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh para pengrajin patung batu, mengevaluasi keterampilan tenaga kerja mereka, menganalisis hambatan yang mereka hadapi dalam upaya ekonomi mereka, dan menyarankan strategi pemberdayaan yang melibatkan berbagai

pemangku kepentingan, semua dengan tujuan untuk meningkatkan mata pencaharian para pengrajin ini.

Kata Kunci: Pengrajin Patung Batu, Proyek Pemberdayaan

1. Introduction

The Trowulan sub-district of Mojokerto regency is recognized as the focal point or principal city of the most extensive monarchy in the Nusantara region historically, namely the Majapahit monarchy. Archaeological evidence and analysis of the Nagarakertagama text authored by Mpu Prapanca indicate that the Majapahit Palace is highly likely to be situated in Trowulan (Wurjantoro, 2009). This is supported by the unearthing of numerous historical artifacts, including temples, unconventional brick constructions, statues, reliefs, and other remains, in this region. The talented silpin, temple builders, sculptors, and carvers who resided in the central region of the kingdom, today known as the Trowulan area, were responsible for the creation of these ancient sites and things (Society, 2006).

It is unsurprising that a significant number of Trowulan people continue to rely on their livelihoods derived from the artistic production of statues, crafted from both stone and metal (Arsyad, 2017). The epicenter of the stone statue artisans' community is situated in Jatisumber Village, Trowulan. The sculpture artisans profession is passed down through generations due to its significant historical origins (Aliflyantera & Sulistyarso, 2016). The artisans frequently receive commissions to create sculptures of Buddha.

Additionally, there are requests for sculptures portraying mythological deities from Hinduism, including deities like Shiva, Sri, Ganesha, and others. The statues exhibit a wide range of sizes, spanning from tens of centimeters to several meters. Occasionally, the craftsmen are requested to create statues that bear a resemblance to the idols discovered in the temples of the former Majapahit Kingdom. The statues are subsequently marketed to visitors that visit archeological sites in Trowulan (Biantoro, 2020). The craftspeople receive orders that cater to both local and international markets. Typically, the statues are transported to Bali for the local market. Furthermore, the artisans were also commissioned to create sculptures resembling deities that would be installed at governmental establishments in East Java and other prominent urban centers (Prabowo & Sulbi, 2016). Typically, requests from foreign countries originate from India, Thailand, Australia, America, and are directed towards the European continent.

Regrettably, the global economic crisis in 1997, along with the tragic Bali bombing incident in 2002, led to a significant decrease in the demand for statues (Anggraeni & Subroto, 2016). Furthermore, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect on the national economy, resulting in many craftsmen losing their jobs due to the insufficient demand for statues in both domestic and international markets. Additional issues that occur include craftspeople seeing a lack of assistance from local governments and a lack of recognition from domestic communities. Foreigners have a higher demand for their crafts. Although there is a demand from the local market, it is primarily controlled by Bali's statue aficionados.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research approach was selected due to its capacity to comprehend the challenges encountered by stone sculpture artisans in Jatisumber Village by generating a full and intricate portrayal through descriptive means. This aligns with (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) perspective that qualitative research methodologies have the capacity to present comprehensive perspectives gathered from participants and are carried out within authentic settings. The subject is most suitable for qualitative research methods, as they are the primary focus of research in the social sciences disciplines. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach was selected due to its ability to

explore not only the social phenomena related to stone carving crafts, but also the underlying meanings that drive the activities of craftsmen in promoting these social phenomena. This study focuses on the extraction of social evidence and factual information pertaining to the challenges encountered by stone sculpting makers in Jatisumber. The social evidence and facts were subsequently employed to resolve preexisting issues. Subsequently, the researchers endeavored to scrutinize these diverse issues in order to propose suitable strategies for empowering stone sculpting craftsmen, as well as suggest model designs.

3. Result and Discussion

(Zimmerman, 2000) identifies three essential components of the empowerment process: (1) striving to achieve control, (2) acquiring necessary resources, and (3) developing a critical understanding of one's social surroundings. The following are initiatives aimed at empowering stone sculpting makers in Jatisumber Village, focusing on three key areas:

1. striving to achieve control

The stone carvers' empowerment initiatives entailed modifying promotion and marketing techniques, as well as establishing a competitive pricing structure. The decision to eliminate the marketing chain represents a tangible endeavor to assume authority over the marketing and pricing aspects of statues, which were formerly controlled by middlemen known as tengkulak.

By Modifying promotional and marketing methods

The artisans are now less reliant exclusively on the Balinese sculpture market. They made the decision to investigate possible markets in various places around Indonesia. The craftsmen also expanded their exploration of international markets. They boldly disrupted the marketing chain by discontinuing their reliance on intermediary services. In the absence of intermediaries, artisans have the ability to establish elevated prices for their sculptures and engage in competitive practices. The craftsmen also engage in web marketing promotion and advertising. The selection of online marketing was based on its ability to access a broader demographic. They utilize the advanced features of the internet, such as WhatsApp and Tiktok applications, to receive orders and disseminate photographs or catalogs of the statues they possess. Blogs and social media platforms, such as Facebook, are utilized as channels for promotional and marketing purposes. Another promotional tactic implemented involves transforming the front of their residences into a platform for displaying their imaginative statue creations. This has proven to be a highly effective promotional strategy due to the strategic positioning of their residences along the inter-provincial highway, which enables them to capture the attention of anyone passing by.

2. Acquiring necessary resources

The endeavors undertaken to acquire resources for enabling the stone carvers involved the production of higher goods. High-quality items can enable artisans to establish direct connections with consumers, explore untapped markets, and secure additional financial resources. The craftsmen ensured the acquisition of superior quality stone raw materials in order to fabricate statues of exceptional quality. The preservation of originality was achieved through the exclusive utilization of andesite and sandstone, without any other substances. Their consistent practice involved procuring superior materials, such as uniformly grained stone, to create statues with a pleasing blend of colors. The utilization of high-quality raw materials facilitated the production of durable statues. Years of knowledge and honed talents were utilized to employ effective sculpting techniques. Proficiency in sculpting was not achieved immediately, but rather required perseverance and endurance to achieve mastery. Networks were created with the purpose of fostering confidence in the products.

The sculptures' authenticity and longevity, achieved via the use of high-quality materials, advanced techniques, and extensive knowledge, facilitated access to superior resources like as materials, broader markets, and funding. This facilitated the use of environmentally-friendly manufacturing processes.

3. Developing a critical understanding of one's social surroundings

The attempts to equip individuals to critically comprehend the social environment were implemented through the diversification of products and the enhancement of exceptional service. Product diversification refers to the strategic adjustment made in response to evolving trends and advancements. Consumers currently anticipate avant-garde and inventive sculptures with a touch of contemporaneity or modernity. The pursuit of exceptional service is a deliberate endeavor aimed at establishing closer connections with consumers and exploring untapped areas. The emergence of new consumers and market sectors leads to a rise in income or earnings for craftspeople.

Product Diversification

In the past, the artisans in Jatisumber primarily dedicated their efforts to crafting Buddha statues, deities, and other conventional motifs. Subsequently, the artisans engaged in product diversification to cater to diverse client wants and expand their market reach. The company expanded its product range by demonstrating a willingness to accept orders for stone handcraft objects featuring modern patterns. The craftsmen engaged in the production of stone mortar and pestles, flower pots, stone tables and chairs, garden lamps, fountain decorations, home wall reliefs, as well as animal statues such as turtles, elephants, lions, and so on. Artisans were likewise eager to create sculptures of prominent individuals or other renowned people. Typically, modern statue designs were created using photographs or graphics supplied by customers. The craftsmen's decision to diversify their products reflects their strong will to maintain their income in the face of changing times and fierce competition in the stone handcraft industry.

Improve service quality

Exceptional service is necessary to establish a lasting impact on clients, encouraging them to revisit the artisans and potentially become loyal patrons. Superior service can be exemplified by fulfilling personalized statue orders based on consumer preferences and specifications, together with prompt processing and delivery. The artisans consistently ensure that sculptures are packaged with meticulousness and precision to preserve their integrity during the transportation process. Additionally, they are willing to assume the risk of potential damage during the transportation of the statue. Enhancing the quality of service is a specific aspect of human resource management that can be cultivated as a fundamental expertise. The core competence serves as the basis for the craftsmen's competitive advantage. The service quality enhancements implemented by the artisans are associated with the specific places where human resource assets are situated. At the individual level, service pertains to the application of innovative techniques and abilities, such as effective communication and amicability towards clients. Service, at the social level, encompasses several management approaches, including the dedicated efforts of craftsmen in serving clients. At the relational level, service pertains to the establishment and maintenance of positive relationships among craftsmen, clients, raw material suppliers, contacts, and networks.

The aforementioned measures are still insufficient to fully empower the craftsman. Here are some further recommended strategies to assist the stone carving craftsmen in Jatisumber Village:

1. Offer vocational training programs to enhance technical expertise and acquire additional proficiencies.
2. Create collaborative corporate consortia to collectively promote and acquire resources.

3. Enhance accessibility to operational funds and credit by use of microfinance institutions.
4. Implement dedicated design and innovation laboratories to facilitate the process of developing new products.
5. Facilitate involvement in regional, national, and global art fairs and exhibitions.
6. Create an electronic commerce platform to directly promote and sell artisanal products on the internet.
7. Collaborate with tourism boards to advertise and endorse cultural tours and hands-on educational programs.
8. Execute branding and promotional initiatives on social media platforms.
9. Propose the implementation of certificate programs to officially acknowledge and validate vocational talents in craft-based professions.
10. Promote the growth of supplementary enterprises such as homestays to enhance the local economy.

An all-encompassing strategy that includes training, financial support, market development, certification, and local economic connections can effectively enhance the structural empowerment of the craftsmen community.

4. Conclusion

The stone carving craftsmen of Jatisumber Village were empowered via the implementation of revised promotional and marketing methods. The artisans ceased to rely exclusively on the Balinese statue market. They made the decision to venture into markets in different regions and place a growing emphasis on international markets. They boldly disrupted the marketing chain by discontinuing the utilization of intermediary services. Online promotion and marketing were also carried out due to its efficacy in reaching broader target markets. Additional initiatives for empowerment involved the development of exceptional products.

The sculptures possessed benefits stemming from their originality, utilization of high-quality raw materials, application of professional carving techniques, establishment of extensive product networks, and cultivation of consumer confidence. Another method of empowering was achieved by the variety of products. This was undertaken to cater to diverse consumer preferences while expanding into wider markets. Diversification was achieved by accepting orders for stone handicrafts featuring current designs, such as sculptures of prominent individuals, kitchen utensils like mortars and pestles, flower pots, stone furniture such tables and chairs, garden lights, fountain embellishments, house wall reliefs, and animal sculptures.

The craftsmen's decision to diversify their products highlighted their determination to maintain their business in the face of evolving circumstances and fierce competition within the sector. Additional endeavors encompassed the upkeep and nurturing of clients by enhancing the caliber of service, including the ability to create personalized statues based on consumer preferences, ensuring prompt processing and delivery, and presenting items in an orderly manner. Artisans were willing to assume the hazards of potential harm during the transportation of their goods. The individual exhibited proficient communication abilities and established amicable consumer interactions. Efforts to empower individuals necessitate collaboration among several parties, including government entities, business sector organizations, communities, and the artisans themselves. Collaboration is crucial because empowerment requires the collective efforts of many people on a vast scale.

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