



## Community empowerment in Ngabab village through the DeWe@n program: analysis of the ACTORS framework

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the community economic empowerment strategy through the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village program in Ngabab Village, Pujon District, Malang Regency, with a focus on the application of the ACTORS framework (Authority, Confidence, Trust, Opportunities, Responsibilities, and Support). This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, involving 16 key informants consisting of village officials, MSMEs, and local communities. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results show that the ACTORS framework plays a significant role in strengthening community empowerment strategies. The authority dimension is realized through granting authority to the community to manage tourism activities independently. This confidence is evident in the increasing confidence of MSMEs and youth in innovating and interacting with tourists. Trust grows through a relationship of mutual trust between the village government and residents that forms social solidarity. Opportunities are seen in the emergence of various new economic opportunities based on local products, while responsibilities reflect a sense of ownership towards the community who travel, although a formal tourism management institutional structure has not been permanently established. Meanwhile, support comes through collaboration between village governments, educational institutions, and private partners. Contextually, this research confirms that the ACTORS implementation model is effective in encouraging participation, building social trust, and strengthening village economic independence based on local potential in a sustainable manner.

### Keywords:

Community Empowerment; Local Economy; ACTORS; Educational Tourism Village; Participatory Collaboration.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Community empowerment is a key effort in building economic independence and sustainability at the domestic level. and partner with the government for community empowerment and educational tourism management. It all starts with and then proceeds to community engagement followed by planning, where the community is involved in all aspects of the process from the very beginning. The community is the driving force behind development and is empowered through the establishment of the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village concept.

Community empowerment is one of the most important goals for the governments of developing countries, and it is essential to building a sustainable and stable economic structure in villages (Komarudin, 2025). He argued that among the potential and capabilities of local village independence, this is the right path to wellness. Government policies also in favor of this view are reflected in the 2014 Village Law which lays out as the very basis of the law that

through empowering community strengths and resources the village will ultimately be more independent (Ristiana and Amin Yusuf, 2020). This makes the communities central to the whole process as the main planners and doers of the village development while the traditional view is that the communities are only the recipients of the development.

Hidayat (2025) pointed out that community participation usually starts to lose momentum, not during planning, but rather in the execution phase, where the main problems are: lack of trust between stakeholders, uncoordinated activities, and hierarchy of institutions. This still calls for the creation of a very ingenious and open-minded analytical paradigm that will be able to expound the dynamics of participatory, collaborative, and sustainable development, community development and community empowerment.

As a realization of the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village concept, an actuation of the principles of the ACTORS paradigm is seen in Ngabab Village, Malang Regency, Pujon District. This is the very scenario where educational tourism is offered in a whole and integrated manner through the synergy of livestock, agriculture, and local MSMEs incorporated into a participatory educational tourism ecosystem. The community plays the role of a planner, a manager, an economic agent, and a partner with the government for community empowerment and educational tourism management. It starts with community involvement and then it goes through the planning stage where community participation is at its fullest. The community is the main actor of the development and the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village concept serves as the catalyst for their empowerment.



**Figure 1.** DeWe@n Tourism Symbol, Ngabab Village (documentation results)

The DeWe@n empowerment strategy is based on the ACTORS paradigm (Adams & Hess, 2001), which emphasizes the interaction of the community, external partners, and the village government. Community empowerment through this partnership leads to better community self-assurance, more business opportunities, and more people feeling they are part of the process and being proud.

In the case of integrated tourism villages, community empowerment has been highlighted as a very important issue, however, most research is still mainly directed toward the outcomes of program design and their economic implications, while the core factors of sustainability, active community participation, and decision-making processes remain largely ignored. To date, the empowerment process and integration of the ACTORS paradigm remain under-researched, particularly in analyzing the correlation between authority, trust, and responsibility, as well as the integration of support at the institutional level. There is still a paucity of literature that comprehensively and systematically discusses empowerment strategies in the context of educational tourism to influence local economic structures while engaging the community.

Therefore, this research focuses on the community economic empowerment strategy in the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village, Ngabab Village, Pujon District, as a pilot project.

## **B. METHODS**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study model to examine the community economic empowerment strategy through the DeWe@n Educational Tourism Village concept in Ngabab Village, Pujon District, Malang Regency. The purpose of this research was to obtain a comprehensive view of the mechanisms, patterns, and successful strategies for village economic independence through collaboration and participation of the stakeholders.

The methods used to collect data include participant observation, semi-systematic interviews, and documentation studies. The observations were mainly on economic and educational tourism activities, including MSMEs, in the DeWe@n tourist area. Interviews were held with sixteen key informants, whose identities were hidden. They consisted of DeWe@n managers, MSME owners, local community leaders, and the village government. The interviews were structured according to the ACTORS paradigm (Authority, Trust, Opportunity, Responsibility, and Support). Simultaneously, documentation studies were conducted through reviewing village planning files, activity reports, institutional documents, and other supportive documentation.

The interactive data analysis followed the design of Miles and Huberman (1994), which is composed of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. To evaluate the empowerment forms that were used in the DeWe@n concept, I divided the data according to the ACTORS indicators. I increased the reliability of the data through technique and source triangulation that eventually led to member checking, which confirmed the research findings' credibility, consistency, and complexity.

## **C. RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Field research that involved participant observation, supplementary documentation, and extensive interviews with 16 key informants including local inhabitants, tour guides, MSME actors, Karang Taruna members, and village authorities resulted in a comprehensive representation of the Ngabab Village integrated DeWe@n educational tourism community economic empowerment strategy. Results were organized sequentially and reviewed under the framework of the ACTORS paradigm (Authority, Confidence, Trust, Opportunities, Responsibilities, and Support), which captures patterns of community empowerment and spans collaborative work.

### **1. Authority**

Ngabab Village's government attitude remains open. For instance, the community is entrusted with the responsibility of managing educational tourism activities. In this context, the local government takes on a facilitator and mentoring position, while the community implements and carries out the activities.

One of the village officials stated:

"Whatever educational tourism activities are performed in the village, we do not feel as if we control it. We are facilitators and companions to residents. We believe that residents managing their own tourism creatively sparks exploration. Unfortunately, there is no permanent formal structural institution with DeWe@n, and that is why there is no entrance ticket."

A dairy processing MSME also shared similar thoughts:

"Being in Ngabab Village, local government extends to us the freedom to promote and sell our products to tourists in whichever approach we want. Everything else, including advances in business development, is our responsibility. We promote our business, and local government provides business permits and infrastructure."

Encouragement to promote their own business is a positive step. However, the absence of a formal institution, such as the Tourism Awareness Group (pokdarwis), is a clear indicator of the effective model of authority sharing with community involvement.

## 2. Confidence

Improvement of community self-confidence is noted after the DeWe@n concept is implemented. Some youths of the Berasi Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) take the initiative to engage with tourists and provide explanations of the livestock and agriculture activities.

Based on the DeWe@n tourism concept, the village government's finance department states:

"Some of the residents, primarily the youths from Karang Taruna, are beginning to explain the DeWe@n tourism concept. Yet, some still encounter language challenges, and thus, not all can confidently and fully convey the DeWe@n tourism concept to the visitors."

On the other hand, an Ngabab Village batik micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) owner expressed:

"DeWe@n tourism was a turning point for us. Previously, we only created batik for local needs. Now, we can showcase our batik and explain the motifs while worded our presentation to the tourists. Initially, we were anxious, but over time, tourists have come to appreciate our presentation and the work we created."

The increase in community self-confidence illustrates the positive result of the implemented social empowerment program. However, the community still needs language and communication training.

## 3. Trust

Dimension of trust is illustrated in DeWe@n tourism management and in the mutual trust between the village government and the community. This is certainly one of the biggest strengths in the success of DeWe@n tourism. The village government does not interfere with the community's management of tourism activities, and the community appreciates this trust by actively engaging.

A village official stated:

"The village government places full trust in the local community. Our role is only as a facilitator and supporter, not to dominate activities. We believe that if the community is given space, they can be more creative and active. "

A batik artisan stated:

"We feel truly trusted to develop this batik business. This is evident in the fact that we were entrusted to design the distinctive batik of Ngabab Village for the uniforms of village officials, schools, and students. We were never pressured in the slightest; instead, we were given the space to create. We are confident that DeWe@n tourism will continue to thrive if the community remains united."



**Figure 2.** Symbol of the DeWe@n Batik Tourism Village (documentation results)



**Figure 3.** DeWe@n Batik Products (documentation results)



**Figure 4.** Typical batik from Ngabab Village (documentation results)

While trust can generate feelings of collective ownership and foster solidarity, it must be bolstered by institutional policies to ensure that it does not depend solely on interpersonal relationships.

#### **4. Opportunities**

The DeWe@n Tourism concept has opened many new economic avenues for the local community. This is evident in the new community income sources like dairy processing, batik, and the Ngabab Village culinary specialties.

The Head of Finance Ngabab Village, said:

"We have seen many new initiatives and ideas since the establishment of DeWe@n tourism. People can sell local products to visiting tourists, such as fried onions, dairy products, and Ngabab Village batik. However, some still find it difficult to expand their market reach because of the absence of digital promotion."

Field findings support the Head of Finance Ngabab Village. Out of the 13 MSME interviews, many reported increases in income as a result of the DeWe@n tourism initiative. One said,

"We used to only sell around the village, but now tourists come and buy directly. We also create more attractive packaging. Although we are still learning, we feel that new business opportunities are opening up. We haven't been able to promote digitally because we don't fully understand the mechanisms of digital promotion."

All this demonstrates that the village is entering a phase of economic growth, albeit digital illiteracy remains a barrier.

#### **5. Responsibilities**

A sense of responsibility helps the community understand the need for support



communal stewardship for the sustainability of DeWe@n tourism. The community practices environmental stewardship, self manages the tourist site, and even self organizes into groups to coordinate the scheduling of activities.

One of the tour guides explained,

"It's our own tourism site, so we also take pride in keeping it clean and serving the guests. If the tourists leave happy, it's something to be proud of."

This pride shows the community's sustainability tourism. Nonetheless, there remains a gap in informal structures that manage and supervise DeWe@n tourism. This was also confirmed by the Finance Head of Ngabab Village when he said:

"For now, DeWe@n tourism lacks a formal institutional framework. It operates solely on the mutual understanding of the community and support from the village."

This absence of formal social structures to manage the various elements of DeWe@n tourism means that the community's social efforts lack coordination. Therefore, to ensure that DeWe@n tourism can i...

## 6. Support

Various stakeholders, such as the local government, BUMDes, and even private companies, have supported the empowerment of the community through DeWe@n tourism, among them, Nestlé. Support of this sort is paramount to the progress of the local population and the increase of their local market opportunities. A village officer was one of the first to say: "The DeWe@n tourism idea has got local government, community leaders, and outsiders such as Nestlé and SOEs all giving their backing with positive responses.

Support is being given in various ways—through business legality, equipment, and training for several years. Digital, however, the community is only targeting lower segments and thus, will not be able to fully utilize the market.' The above statement shows that the collaboration of different sectors has been fruitful, however, the issue of digital literacy within the community still lingers. This cross-sectional challenge led the researchers to partner up with local government to conduct Digital Marketing Mentoring and thus design an initiative. Out of the 13 MSMEs that registered, 12 attended the program. This initiative has yielded positive results, especially in terms of basic knowledge regarding the use of social media. l media and other digital channels for promoting their products.



**Figure 5.** Digital Marketing Assistance to MSMEs in Ngabab Village (documentation results)

Support, albeit in some form, can be deemed adequate for a community to start the journey towards economic independence, but it should not be the only intervention. The whole thing should be accomplished through prolonged mentoring, regular evaluation of the mentoring, and continuous interaction among educational institutions, companies, and local governments to ensure that the community's skills are not only improved technologically but also organizationally, for the economic governance of the community on a sustainable basis.

The Discussion is the through the DeWe@n tourism model, the Ngabab Village economic empowerment project is firmly a manifestation of the combination of building up of community capacities, a participatory way of doing things, and an economic gain based on local potentials. Not only does the new strategy set the stage for another round of economic growth, it also

facilitates social transformation through active participation of the community in the management of the village's resources.

### **1. Authority-Based Empowerment (Authority Sharing)**

Empirical evidence presents a distinct separation of power between the local community and the village administration. The local authority takes on the role of a facilitator and provider of policies, whereas the community plays the leading part in the tourist activities of DeWe@n, which is a strategy in DeWe@n tourist development. This interaction characterizes the sharing of power among the stakeholders as shown in the ACTORS model (Adam & Hess, 2001): "Empowerment is productive if the community is allowed to take part in the management and decision-making processes."

It is observed that, on one hand, such a wide authority distribution can create a sense of pride and ownership among the community related to the empowerment strategy, thus giving rise to a collective responsibility in Dewe@n tourism management. On the other hand, the study has pointed out that there is no permanent institution for the management of Dewei@n tourism, for instance, there is no awareness group (Pokdarwis) or a special unit within a village enterprise (BUMdes). This is in line with Ristiana and Amin Yusuf's (2020) research, which underlines that the village institution is a major middleman for the continuation of the empowerment concept. It was also stated by Bichler and Losch (2019) that institutional structures are crucial for the sustainability of coordination patterns and the legitimating of decisions among the actors. Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2024) indicated that flexible institutional governance could improve the cooperation of the actors and the economic stability of the community. Therefore, the establishment of a permanent management institution is a strategic step to ensure the continuity of auth.

### **2. Strengthening Self-Confidence and Communication Competence (Confidence)**

The actors involved in the ACTORS paradigm have the confidence of the Ngabab Village community which is a positive change particularly for the youth in the groups of Karang Taruna and MSMEs. Their loyalty in managing tourism activities and marketing local products is indicative of a shift in mindset from being passively to being actively involved. This research confirms the studies of Purnomo and Wulandari (2025) and Setiawan (2022), which state that active participation and continuous training serve strategically to build community self-confidence and socio-economic independence.

Unsurprisingly, a lack of communication and language skills still hinders the optimization of DeWe@n's tourism potential. This confirms the field research of Yami et al. (2023) and Saarinen and Rogerson (2021) which state that communication and social adaptability are vital to the success of community-based tourism. Thus, in the ACTORS paradigm, the development of Communication Competence in educational tourism is essential to contexts that demand active participation and sustained social interconnectedness.

### **3. Building Social Trust**

Trust is referring to the last dimension of the ACTOR paradigm and is the last dimension because of the importance of integration sustainable community empowerment and social cohesion in Ngabab Village. For example, the relationship between the village government and the village community fosters participatory relationships, and the transparency in communication is social glue that cohesion all the development actors. This substantial adjacency is evidence that successful relationship reliance is on dynamic components with the fixed elements being the structural components.

This is consistent with Wulandari (2023) assertions on the importance of social trust as the primary factor to successful relationship collaborations and integration on the village potential. Moreover, Arifin and Supriyadi (2022) also recognized the aspect of community trust in the village governance as a determinant factor in the application of the empowerment concept. Wulandari (2023) also recognized the social trust as a determinant to successful

relationship collaborations on the integration of the village potential. In the international context, Pretty and Ward (2001) recognized the trust and cohesiveness of social groups as the primary elements to sustainable social development, while, in the community context of Nunkoo and Smith (2013), trust in local government is a key factor to the participation of community members in community based tourism.

#### **4. Economic Opportunities and Market Adaptation (Opportunities)**

As noted in the Opportunities dimension in the ACTORS paradigm, collaboration of the actors can be key for the Ngabab Village community's expansion of economic opportunities, and collaboration for the community helps unlock economic opportunities for them. Since the community DeWe@n has been formed, the community has reached the implementation stage of economic diversification as evidenced by the local products developed and the pride the community now has in its batik, dairy products, and culinary specialties which are now part of the creative economy. This is a testament to the community's ability to utilize their local assets to produce economic value.

This is also consistent with Hidayat (2023) as noted above, which points to the importance of local actors integration in the economic chain of the village. Sari and Mulyono (2022) indicate the collaboration and innovation as local potential micro firms grow. Addressing the local potential, Scheyvens and Binddolph (2018) noted the economic viability of tourism in a community relies on inter-actor collaboration as well as market access. Relating to this, Richards (2021) talked of the community creative economy as significantly growing with active social innovation and enduring institutional framework. In terms of marketing network, the community has not achieved full potential in digitization. Thus the need for a focus on entrepreneurship, cross sector collaboration, and more integrated systems hops digital literacy.

#### **5. Responsibilities and Institutional Support**

The members of Ngabab Village community are starting to understand and take initiatives on some public responsibilities concerning tourism activities, environmental sanitation, and upkeep of public infrastructures. Nonetheless, this public conscientiousness lacks organization and is probably only at the level of moral obligation. Hence, the need for and the development of SOPs and evaluation systems to gauge social responsibility is justified.

Hence, the role of educational institutions, the village government, and outside parties like, state-owned enterprises and Nestlé become crucial for village competitive capability. As Rahab et. Al. (2024) advises, outside support should not only focus on providing infrastructure, but also on enhancing community skills and self-reliance. Goodwin and Santilli (2009) also emphasizes the importance of collaborative and cohesive relations in community based tourism development between the government, private sector and local community. Such cross sector collaboration is foundational to community economic empowerment as it directly fosters and sustains the concept of community self reliance.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study finds the empowerment strategy via the DeWe@n tourism concept in Ngabab Village developed active community engagement, established mutual social trust, and stimulated economic self-reliance, anchored on the community's potential. Through the use of the ACTORS paradigm, the balance of social relations between the actors in empowerment works regardless of resource potential. Operating on an advanced theoretical dimension, this gives us an insight into the economic impact that the social relations of local actors might have on a rural area, and in a more practical way, it begins to outline a change in the strategic planning focus for participatory empowerment that is designed in collaboration with other villages. It is recommended that subsequent investigations pursue the empowering dimensions of trust and responsibility focusing on communication/language training and the design of formal bodies to balance the social relations of the actors. This study should address the social



responsible practice of managing an empowerment-based tourism village with other practices, evaluation methods, and SOPs, integrating principles of empowerment to ensure sustainability.

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