

The Patterns of Participatory Communication in Empowering the MSMEs Sector

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in enhancing community economies, especially in the digital era. This article examines MSME actors in batik handicrafts in the Giriloyo area of Yogyakarta and weaving craftsmen in the Baduy area of Banten. The Indonesian government's development programs aim to empower MSMEs in tourist villages, fostering independence and community participation while preserving cultural heritage. Despite being in rural areas, these artisans have successfully promoted their products globally through communication technology. The research highlights the socio-cultural backgrounds of these communities, enriching findings on communication patterns and MSME sector empowerment. Employing a qualitative approach, data was gathered through observation, interviews, documentation, and focus group discussions. The analysis reveals that MSME actors primarily develop participatory communication networks to enhance marketing strategies for batik and woven products. Key findings include increased community engagement, expanded partnerships, fostered dialogical interactions, direct sales growth, and enhanced social media promotion. The research contributes to the theory of participatory communication in the digital era, marketing communication models, and MSME empowerment strategies. Practical implications suggest effective communication network development and business communication enhancement for MSMEs.

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Introduction

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in Indonesia has developed since the 1998 economic crisis until now. During the recovery period from the economic crisis, the MSME sector was able to maintain its existence and support the community's economy. The number of MSMEs reached 66 million in 2023.

The number of MSMEs reached 99% of all business units in Indonesia. The increase in MSMEs provides an increase in Gross Domestic Product and employment absorption. (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2024)

Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2008 regulates the definition, form and scope of MSMEs in Indonesia. MSMEs play a role in opening up employment opportunities, employment absorption, equalizing welfare and empowering society in the economic sector. In Indonesia, the increasing number of MSMEs is engaged in the culinary, beauty, agribusiness, automotive and fashion sectors.

In line with advances in information and communication technology, digital platforms are applied in trade promotions and transactions. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, there are 65 million MSMEs in Indonesia and 64 million of them are micro businesses. Most of the micro MSME actors are women entrepreneurs (Ministry of PP and PA, 2023)

In the Press Conference of the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information, it was explained that in 2024 the government of the Republic of Indonesia is targeting 30 million MSMEs adopting digital technology. (Kemenkominfo, 2024). The Indonesian Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises is implementing a program to accelerate the application of digital technology for Indonesian MSMEs, which is expected to support the use of the digital technology ecosystem. The use of communication and information technology by MSMEs indicates communication interactions in the digital era. Conventional MSME business communication activities can be collaborated with technology platforms.

The MSME sector in rural areas can develop participatory communication patterns with the Agribusiness Development Program in rural areas. Participatory communication can be realized through interactions between program assistants and agribusiness actors. The credibility of farmer partner assistants is needed to support communication interactions. (Zainal, Lubis, Rangkuti, 2014). The participatory communication approach can be applied in empowering business actors in the livestock sector. The livestock entrepreneur communication forum can utilize access to communication media to empower farmers. (Hadiyanto, 2009).

Participatory communication is related to the development communication paradigm. The communication process with active community interaction is part of community empowerment. (Cangara, 2020). The meaning of participatory development communication refers to the dialogic communication process in the development process. In practice, the roles of communicators and audiences are in an equal position. Quebral (2012) explains that communicators in development normatively have an understanding of the environment, communication skills, internalization of values, understanding the audience and having commitment.

Participatory communication model is related to several concepts: community learning commitment, willingness to move and empowerment. Participatory communication is a dialogue-based approach process to share information, perceptions and opinions. The dialogue process for empowerment takes place among stakeholders.

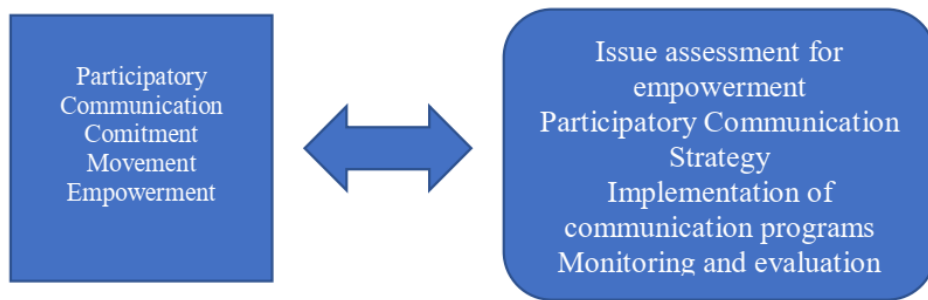


Figure 1. Participatory communication and community empowerment

The Baduy community is a Sundanese ethnic group living in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The Baduy community settlement is located in the Kendeng Mountains which are divided into the Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy regions.

In the Academic Manuscript of the Banten Provincial Government, the Community and Village Empowerment Service 2017 stipulates the implementation of governance in traditional villages. This regulation is reinforced by

Lebak Regency Regional Regulation No. 32 of 2001 concerning the protection of the Customary Rights of the Baduy Community (JDIH Banten, 2024). In 2022, the Baduy community received the latest policy on the implementation of governance as stated in Banten Provincial Regulation Number 2 of 2022 concerning Institutional Structure, Filling of Positions, and Term of Office of Village Heads.

The government system in Baduy has a formal government of the Republic of Indonesia and an informal government. According to state regulations, Kanekes Village is formally led by Jaro Pamarentah. Informal leaders are determined by the Kapuunan traditional institution.

The Baduy people adhere to the Sunda Wiwitan belief which has local wisdom and several prohibitions related to modernity. The Baduy people are not allowed to use technology, utilize electrical energy, attend formal education, apply medical treatment, use chemicals and damage the environment. In terms of dress, the Baduy people have traditional clothes produced by Baduy craftsmen. The Baduy people who live in the Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy areas make a living from farming, processing agricultural products, making woven crafts, weaving typical Baduy cloth and trading. The uniqueness of Baduy culture and the natural beauty of Baduy are an attraction as a tourist village.

In the digital era, the Outer Baduy indigenous people use communication technology, the internet and social media in their daily lives. (Triko, Hapsari, Matindas, 2022). Opinion leaders in Baduy play a role in the process of receiving messages related to health, education and the use of communication media (Yuliasari, Elizabeth, Wilantara, 2024). The Baduy traditional area has become a cultural tourism village for local and international visitors.

Giriloyo Hamlet is located in the Wukirsari Village, Imogiri Subdistrict, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. Wukirsari Tourism Village received the 2023 Indonesian Tourism Village Award as Champion I in the Advanced Tourism Village Category out of 4573 Tourism Villages in Indonesia. (<https://wukirsari.bantulkab.go.id/first/kategori/66>).

Wukirsari Village has natural resources in the form of agricultural land divided into highlands and lowlands. The population of Wukirsari Village is 18,265 people. From the total population of Wukirsari, data obtained 4361 people did not receive formal education.

The hamlet in Wukirsari has unique natural resources and cultural tourism potential. (<https://wukirsari.bantulkab.go.id/first/artikel/1647>)

The population of Giriloyo Village or Hamlet is 630 people and 191 families. The composition of Giriloyo residents is 313 women and 317 men. The majority of women in Giriloyo have skills as batik craftsmen. <https://wukirsari.bantulkab.go.id/first/wilayah>

Giriloyo is known as a center for batik tourism with typical Yogyakarta palace motifs. The majority of Giriloyo residents are hand-drawn batik craftsmen. Batik craftsmen in Giriloyo have acquired their batik skills from generation to generation. (<https://batikgiriloyo.co.id>). The residents of Giriloyo village have several batik groups that interact continuously. The form of batik craftsman groups is supported by independent savings and loan institutions and mentoring activities by batik partners. The batik craftsman group has developed as an association that has developed together with the Community Empowerment Institution Activity Group (LPMD), Youth Organizations, and Toddler Health Posyandu.

Wukirsari Village residents participate in the development and construction of the village in the cultural and tourism sectors. Batik tulis cultural tourism was pioneered by the village government based on the active participation of village residents (Meilani, Rahmi, 2019). Information about tourism potential in Wukirsari Village can be accessed on several websites and social media. The use of information and communication technology is an indicator that residents of the hamlet in Wukirsari have skills in operating new media.

Based on the development of MSMEs in the Baduy and Giriloyo Tourism Villages, this study focuses on the communication participation of village residents related to the empowerment of MSMEs. Normatively, the contribution of villagers to the empowerment of MSMEs is related to the regulations of the Village and Regency Governments. The use of new media in MSME business interactions is related to regulations on Electronic Information and Transactions, Public Information Disclosure, ethics on social media and socio-cultural norms. The reality of communication that occurs is different for each tourist village. Differences in local wisdom values, regions, socio-economic conditions, educational status and human resources provide unique patterns of village citizen participation in the public information sector. Based on the reality of communication, the following issues can be raised: how is the communication phenomenon in tourist villages and how is the pattern of participatory communication in empowering MSMEs in Giriloyo and Kaduketuk Baduy Villages.

The empowerment of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is crucial for Indonesia's economic resilience, particularly in rural and culturally rich areas like Giriloyo and Baduy. Despite their significant contributions to local economies and cultural preservation, many MSMEs still face challenges in adapting to digital platforms and maximizing participatory communication strategies. This is particularly urgent as the Indonesian government targets 30 million MSMEs to adopt digital technology by 2024. Failing to bridge this digital gap could hinder economic growth and cultural sustainability, leaving traditional artisans at risk of being marginalized in the evolving market landscape.

Previous studies have explored participatory communication as a tool for community empowerment. Zainal, Lubis, and Rangkuti (2014) examined participatory communication in agribusiness development programs in Bogor, highlighting how community engagement fosters economic resilience and knowledge sharing. Similarly, Hadiyanto (2009) analyzed participatory communication models in livestock entrepreneurship, emphasizing the importance of active community involvement and

media access for effective empowerment strategies. These studies demonstrated that participatory communication strengthens local economies by promoting dialogue, collaboration, and community-driven development.

In the context of MSMEs, Triko, Hapsari, and Matindas (2022) focused on the Outer Baduy community's digital literacy and the challenges they face in adopting information technology. Their findings revealed that cultural constraints and limited digital literacy hindered the community's ability to fully leverage digital platforms for business growth. Meanwhile, Meilani and Rahmi (2019) studied the role of participatory communication in the Giriloyo batik tourism village, illustrating how community engagement and cultural heritage preservation can drive economic development. Both studies emphasize the need for tailored communication strategies that align with local socio-cultural dynamics.

While existing research has examined participatory communication in various rural development contexts, there is a lack of comparative studies focusing on how different cultural backgrounds shape communication patterns in MSME empowerment. Specifically, there is limited research analyzing the distinct participatory communication approaches between culturally conservative communities like the Baduy and more digitally adaptive communities like Giriloyo. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring how socio-cultural dynamics influence communication strategies and MSME development outcomes in these two contrasting settings.

This study offers a novel comparative analysis of participatory communication patterns in empowering MSMEs within culturally distinct communities. By examining the Baduy and Giriloyo tourism villages, the research highlights how cultural values, digital literacy levels, and local governance structures influence communication networks and MSME success. Unlike previous studies that focus on single communities, this research provides insights into how participatory communication can be tailored to diverse cultural contexts, offering a more comprehensive understanding of effective MSME empowerment strategies.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the participatory communication patterns used in empowering MSMEs in Giriloyo and Baduy tourism villages, focusing on how socio-cultural factors influence communication strategies. The study aims to identify best practices in fostering community engagement, promoting digital literacy, and strengthening MSME networks. The findings are expected to benefit policymakers, community leaders, and MSME actors by providing actionable insights into developing culturally sensitive empowerment programs that enhance economic sustainability while preserving local traditions.

Research Methods

This study uses a constructivist paradigm. Communication behavior in empowering the MSME sector in Baduy and Giriloyo is interpreted according to the construction of the role of communication actors. The qualitative approach emphasizes the process of exploration and meaning in a number of individuals or groups of people. Social problems in people's lives can be topics in research. The object in qualitative research is a natural object or natural setting (Craswell, 2016). The object of this research is related to communication actions and communication participation of villagers in the MSME sector. The constructivist paradigm is used in this study to emphasize the world of experience experienced and felt by social actors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The case study method is used to increase understanding of the communication phenomenon

during the development of MSMEs in Kaduketuk Baduy and Giriloyo. Data collection was carried out using observation techniques, interviews, Focus Group Discussions and documentation. Triangulation was carried out to support the validity of the research data. Observations were conducted in the Giriloyo Village area of Wukirsari Village in May 2024. Observations in Kaduketuk Village, Baduy Luar, Kanekes Village were conducted in February 2024. Interviews were conducted with residents of tourist villages, opinion leaders, MSME assistants, village governments and MSME partners. Qualitative data analysis was carried out in several stages (Miles & Huberman, 2014), namely: data reduction, data presentation, describing research conclusions and verification.

Results and Discussions

Kaduketuk Baduy Tourism Village

From the results of observations in Kaduketuk Baduy Luar Village in May 2024, several findings were obtained such as education status, livelihood, use of information and communication technology, access to digital platforms and marketing activities of Baduy residents' products on social media. Researchers conducted interviews with MSME actors in Kaduketuk Baduy Village. The number of respondents of MSME actors in Kaduketuk was 38 people, 75 percent of whom were millennials.

The livelihoods of the residents of Kaduketuk Baduy Luar Village are gardening, farming, making wooden craft products, making woven fabrics and trading. The millennial generation who are the drivers of MSMEs already use cellphones and internet media. MSME actors are dominated by weavers, agricultural product processors, wood craftsmen and weavers. Kaduketuk residents use cellphones to communicate, access information, be active on social media, make buying and selling transactions and entertainment.



Figure 2. Participatory Communication pattern of Kaduketuk Community

The Kaduketuk people do not have formal education. Reading, writing and arithmetic skills are obtained from self-taught learning processes. In the Baduy customary area there are community leaders, namely Puun (informal leader) and the Village Government (formal leader). Pikukuh karuhun is a guideline and philosophy of life for the Kaduketuk people, namely:

Gunung ulah dilebur (highlands are not leveled)

Lebak ulah diruksak (don't destroy the lowlands)

Larangan ulah direumpak (prohibition is not violated)

Buyut ulah dirobah (sanctity is not changed)

Lojor teu beunang dipotong (The length is not allowed to be cut)

Pondok teu beunang disambung (Shorts are not allowed to be connected)

Gede teu beunang dicokot (Big is not allowed to be taken)

Leutik teu beunang ditambah (Small cannot be added)

Kaduketuk residents in Outer Baduy have begun to utilize communication technology and internet access since the Baduy leader established the rules of Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy. Most Outer Baduy residents use mobile phones to access various information from the internet and social media.

The millennial generation in Kaduketuk village has a partnership network to develop MSME businesses. This network is supported by government institutions at the local level, government institutions at the national level, national private institutions, international private institutions and educational institutions.

In developing businesses in Kaduketuk, MSME actors implement strategies to reach trade networks in the outside world.

This strategy is related to communication actions on the internet network, local product promotion, product transactions, adopting new knowledge, product innovation and participating in MSME exhibitions.

The social media platforms used by MSME actors are diverse and are dominated by Whatsapp (67%), Facebook (54%), Instagram (64%), Youtube (24%) and TikTok (21%). Some MSMEs in Kaduketuk do not use social media but also support the development of MSMEs. Promotion of woven products, agricultural products and Baduy handicrafts is carried out during direct sales, publications on social media and product exhibitions. Transactions in trading MSME products are carried out using conventional payment methods and online payments.

The millennial generation in Kaduketuk aged 24-39 years is a technology-literate generation, but their mastery of digital literacy is not yet optimal. From the results of interviews and Focus Group Discussions, it was found that MSMEs experienced an increase in business productivity but still experienced obstacles in understanding regulations, patterns and ethics of communication on social media. The abundance of information in the virtual world is prone to violations and misuse of communication media.

The use of social media has a positive impact on innovation and creation of Baduy products. According to the results of the interview with Had (May, 2024)

"Our Baduy woven and craft products have increased in number since participating in the training. Sometimes they are also brought to exhibitions "

The role of Event Organizers at the local, national and international levels supports the promotion of Baduy products directly to consumers. Integration of several activities in empowering MSMEs requires a flow of information. Information transformation has an impact on awareness, understanding, interest and changes in the behavior of MSME actors



Figure 3. Product promotion on Facebook



Figure 4. Product promotion on Instagram

Ras (May, 2024) explained the use of social media by Kaduketuk craftsmen:

"If there is no Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok... we can't sell. We get to know a lot of orders...not bad for extras...."

The communication pattern takes place in a linear, circular and linear-circular combination direction. This can be seen in the mapping of communication participation of Kaduketuk residents. The role of Baduy opinion leaders is to provide knowledge and considerations about the suitability of MSME empowerment information with the Baduy socio-cultural system. Upholding Baduy cultural norms is a reference for MSME actors in actively participating in communication in the digital era

Giriloyo Wukirsari Village Tourism

Giriloyo Village has a batik artisan association managed together with villagers and partners. The batik artisan association in Wukirsari consists of several groups, Bimasakti, Sungsang, Berkah Lestari, Sido Mukti, Sekar Arum, Sungging Tumpuk, Sukamaju, Sido Mulyo, Giri Indah, Sekar Kedhaton and Giri Canting. The batik skills of Giriloyo

residents are obtained from generation to generation. The uniqueness of Yogyakarta batik motifs is maintained according to Javanese life philosophy. The development of batik UMKM in Giriloyo in 2006 experienced obstacles due to the impact of the earthquake in Bantul Regency. After the earthquake, Giriloyo residents formed a batik artisan group and received assistance from the Bantul regional government. Partnerships were established with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), educational institutions and private institutions. In the data collection process, researchers conducted observations in Giriloyo village, conducted interviews with 29 batik craftsmen, managers of Giriloyo Batik Tourism Village, village officials and partners of the craftsmen's association.

According to the young generation who are the managers of the Giriloyo Tourism Village:

"Assistance for batik MSMEs includes the preparation process, production process, packaging process and marketing process" (Bah, 2024)

The Giriloyo Batik Association applies a marketing mix that has 7 elements, namely product, price, place, physical facilities, people, process and promotion (Goma, Salim, Marta, 2022)

Several batik association coordinators are millennials who actively interact in the virtual world. The majority of villagers in Giriloyo Wukirsari are Muslim and have completed formal education. Giriloyo residents have worked as farmers since the 1970s. Socio-economic changes over the decades have had an impact on changes in the professions of Giriloyo residents. After the 2006 earthquake, Giriloyo residents revived the village economy by increasing the production of Yogyakarta's typical batik.

Javanese philosophy of life is a guideline for the people of Yogyakarta and the residents of Wukirsari Village in particular.

"Memayu Hayuning Bawana" means making the world more beautiful. The understanding of Javanese philosophy is related to the community's efforts to align the socio-cultural system, education, economy, environmental conservation and maintenance of cultural heritage.

The informants in the study were female batik makers who are members of the artisan association. The driving force behind the association is community organizations, the millennial generation and community leaders (opinion leaders).

The form of communication interaction between batik artisans in the association is generally direct and rarely uses communication forums on the internet. Batik artisans actively participate in mentoring activities and face-to-face training.

In an interview with a 45-year-old batik artisan, Yam (2024), the following information was obtained:

"On average, we are only elementary and junior high school graduates, the important thing is to know the announcement of events and deposits to be sold. We only use cellphones for news... So we don't understand the internet. The young people like to play the internet..."

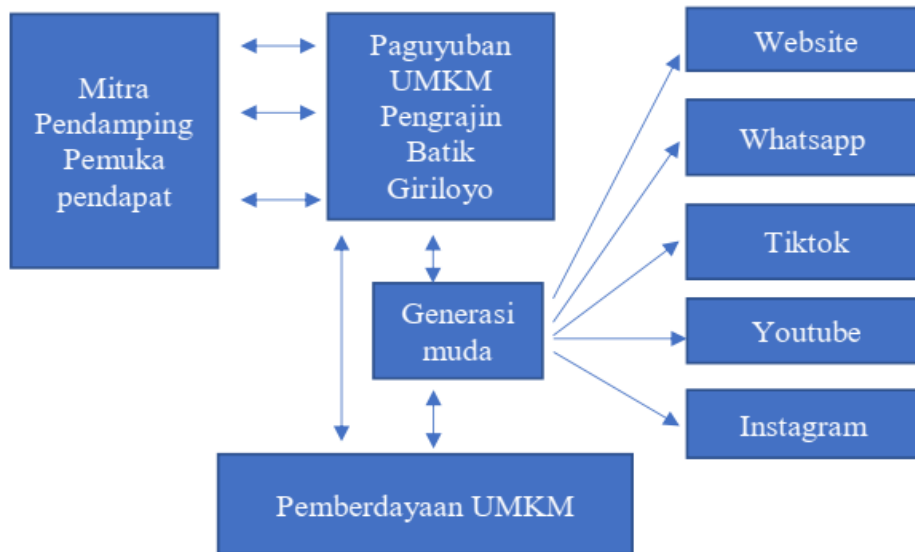


Figure 5. Participatory communication patterns of Giriloyo batik craftsmen

The flow of information in empowering the batik artisan association is unidirectional, circular and a combination of circular-linear. The communication participation of Wukirsari Village residents is supported by the socio-cultural system, formal education and the activeness of the younger generation. Partners at the local, national and international levels play a role in raising the motivation and innovation of MSMEs.



Figure 6. Giriloyo batik craftsmen



Figure 7. Website of Giriloyo Batik Tourism

The empowerment strategy for batik artisan UMKM is the formation of an artisan network, activation of virtual communication, UMKM training, product promotion in exhibition forums, increasing publications on social media and expanding partnership networks. The communication technology platforms used are websites, Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. The mastery of digital literacy of the younger generation is utilized in empowering batik artisan associations in the information, innovation and product promotion sectors.

Conclusion

Participation of craftsmen in communication activities for empowering MSMEs in Kaduketuk Baduy village and Giriloyo village can be reviewed from several aspects: communication strategy for participation in empowerment, commitment of tourism village residents to empower MSMEs and utilization of communication technology. MSME actors build communication networks by increasing communication participation, expanding partnerships, strengthening interactive dialogue, expanding direct sales and product promotion on social media. Participatory communication patterns are formed with the direction of information flow in a linear, circular and linear-circular collaboration. The communication technology platform supports the effectiveness of communication in forming networks, partnerships, product promotions and sales transactions. The success of MSME empowerment is related to differences in socio-cultural systems, openness of artisan information and the potential of local products.

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