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Between Entrepreneurship and Community Empowerment: The Management Model of Empowering Small Business' Borneo Queen Community

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ABSTRACT

The management approach of Borneo Queen Community emphasizes the pivotal role of managerial efforts in sustaining small businesses while concurrently fostering community empowerment. This study endeavors to explore the proprietor's influence in ensuring the continuity of Borneo Queen Community and its positive impact on community advancement. Employing a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological lens, the research unveils the proprietor's strategies in empowering the business through a distinctive worker recruitment mechanism. This approach prioritizes the betterment of the local community's welfare, particularly targeting youth with limited educational and economic prospects. By granting them autonomy in managing and honing their skills, the business not only fosters employee development but also maintains a strong economic focus. Furthermore, the business demonstrates astute market foresight by leveraging various digital platforms for expansive marketing outreach. Through this integrated approach, Borneo Queen Community emerges as a small business entity adept at harmonizing commercial success with community empowerment.

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Introduction

The exploration of the correlation between business and empowerment, historically centered around larger enterprises (O'Farrell & Hitchens, 1988), while often neglecting smaller businesses (Chisnall, 1987), found its gap in the management activities at Borneo Queen Community. This community-based small-scale enterprise situated in Palangka Raya, Kalimantan, operates by engaging individuals from the local community with limited education and fragile economic circumstances. The recruitment process in which employees are an indicator of the sustainability of empowerment in business management at Borneo Queen Community. Eko Supeno (2016) highlights that small businesses

oriented towards self-fulfillment and community betterment embody an empowering business model. The operational dynamics of utilizing the local environment for empowerment purposes are discernible within the business management procedures at Borneo Queen Community.

There exist two research paradigms focusing on small business management. Firstly, there's the model emphasizing the amplification of microenterprises through external support. Numerous studies underscore the governmental role in enhancing the contribution of small businesses towards empowerment (Affandi et al., 2020; Mutmainnah & Ramadani, 2023) and sustainability (Hernita et al., 2021). In the realm of capacity building, governmental intervention is deemed indispensable for implementing strategies and policies aimed at ensuring the stable enhancement of small business quality (Chollisni et al., 2022). Surya et al. (2020) and Maksum et al. (2020) have identified the necessity for diverse strategies to cater to the multifaceted improvement of small businesses. Secondly, there's the leadership model. Colovic (2022) has observed the impact of leadership pattern alterations as a catalyst for fostering innovation within small businesses. Notably, researchers have yet to pinpoint a distinct trend of small businesses independently advancing based on empowerment, thereby influencing management changes within small and medium enterprises.

The primary objective of this study is to uncover the internal dynamics propelling changes within the management model of Borneo Queen Community towards establishing an empowerment-centric business framework, a subject overlooked by previous researchers. The investigation into the mechanisms within Borneo Queen Community's business management process is accomplished by delineating three inquiry models. Firstly, scrutiny is directed towards the form of business management adopted by Borneo Queen Community, discerned through the business owner's approach to the production process. Secondly, attention is paid to the transition of business management from profit-oriented to empowerment-focused, aiming to delineate the mechanisms facilitating this shift. Lastly, the study examines the ramifications of procedural modifications. These three inquiry models collectively serve to unveil the internal mechanisms employed by business owners to bolster the role of Borneo Queen Community as an empowerment-oriented small business entity.

This research diverges from the notion that fostering an empowerment-oriented approach in small businesses necessitates business owners' receptiveness and innovation to align profit goals with enhancing employee quality. According to Peter Wyer and Jane Mason (1999), small business management models emphasizing workforce empowerment typically adopt a mechanistic approach, facilitated naturally through management practices. The focus on enhancing labor skills is pivotal in gauging the empowerment potential exercised by Borneo Queen Community in advancing the economic well-being of the local community. Honold (1997) underscores the significance of enhancing relevant knowledge to guide employees in supporting business growth, marking it as a hallmark of "empowering" management implementation. The status of skill enhancement serves as a

fundamental criterion in substantiating the empowerment orientation within Borneo Queen Community's business management approach.

Literature review

Development and Empowerment: A Overview

The concept of empowerment, often criticized for its lack of conceptual precision (Lashley & McGoldrick, 1994), is understood as a model of delegation that enables decision-making to be decentralized to the operational unit and customers (Lassoued et al., 2020). Mitchel Stewart (1994) underscores that empowerment encompasses not only task delegation but also decision-making authority and assuming full responsibility. Granting responsibility illustrates empowerment as a transition from rigid, contract-based employment arrangements to a culture of autonomy that fosters increased initiative among employees (Bani-Melhem et al., 2020). Diverse interpretations of empowerment stem from its inherent conceptual ambiguities. Honold (1997) offers a comprehensive perspective, The concept of empowerment, often criticized for its lack of conceptual precision (Lashley & McGoldrick, 1994), is understood as a model of delegation that enables decision-making to be decentralized to the operational unit and customers (Lassoued et al., 2020). Mitchel Stewart (1994) underscores that empowerment encompasses not only task delegation but also decision-making authority and assuming full responsibility. Granting responsibility illustrates empowerment as a transition from rigid, contract-based employment arrangements to a culture of autonomy that fosters increased initiative among employees (Bani-Melhem et al., 2020). Diverse interpretations of empowerment stem from its inherent conceptual ambiguities. Honold (1997) offers a comprehensive perspective, identifying five fundamental elements of empowerment: leadership role, empowered individual's status, collaborative work, structural adaptation, and utilization of multi-dimensional concepts.

The evolution of the empowerment concept significantly influences shifts in human perceptions, consequently shaping managerial paradigms. Increased emphasis on interest, challenge, and responsibility forms the cornerstone of delegated work processes (Jain & Nair, 2019). Concurrently, changes in management concepts occur through collaborative work models aimed at enhancing abilities and skills for mutual benefit (Godfrey, 1990). The focus on mutual benefit serves as a conceptual framework for understanding empowerment as a managerial process that facilitates power-sharing for the organization's collective advantage. This paradigmatic model offers a comprehensive perspective, illustrating empowerment as a dynamic and flexible amalgamation of diverse groups and individuals working towards mutual development.

The Small Business recognise: A Distinctive perspective

Introducing the small business model offers a distinctive perspective on managerial processes compared to large enterprises. The necessity for a discerning model aims to

provide a precise definition, avoiding the classification of small businesses merely as miniature versions of large corporations (Bowman & Wyer, 2022). A comprehensive exploration of small businesses is crucial to grasp the qualitative and quantitative distinctions that underpin the differential treatment between small and large enterprises. According to Wyer et al. (2022), small firms encounter potentially unique challenges arising from owner-manager dynamics and size-related attributes, which may pose conflicts with the high adaptability and swift responsiveness often regarded as key elements of small firms' competitive edge.

Researchers primarily focus on the management dynamics involving owners and managers of small businesses to uncover the challenges encountered by these enterprises. This dynamic has implications for business development motivation, as it restricts the recruitment of skilled employees due to concerns regarding the independence and autonomy of business management (Lee et al., 2020). The recruitment of specialists in small businesses significantly influences business growth by leveraging their expertise in identifying market opportunities and swiftly addressing production and distribution challenges (Olson et al., 2019). The proprietorial management style prevalent in small businesses contributes to the stagnation of business evolution. Additionally, an issue commonly observed in small businesses, where managerial processes rely heavily on the owner, is the reluctance to delegate authority and grant employees more autonomy, leading to a lack of employee engagement in business advancement initiatives (Signoretti, 2020).

Entrepreneur-based empowerment

The community development model, facilitated by entrepreneurial activities, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the economic prosperity of communities in a sustainable manner. Hanuun et al. (2023) assert that empowerment through entrepreneurial endeavors offers individuals opportunities to cultivate skills and innovations that foster sustainable economic growth. Ensuring sustainability within the entrepreneurial empowerment framework necessitates effective policies addressing financing accessibility, technical knowledge dissemination, and financial literacy (Andriamahery & Qamruzzaman, 2022). These components serve as crucial support mechanisms, including networks and employment avenues, enabling individuals to express creativity and skills, thereby establishing and nurturing their contribution to enterprise development (Vukovic et al., 2023). The stability of roles achieved through skill utilization significantly contributes to sustainable economic advancement.

Achieving sustainable economic progress necessitates collaborative efforts to enhance skills and bolster job opportunities. Omeje et al. (2020) uncovered a significant correlation between the Nigerian Government's initiatives to train and empower youth in entrepreneurial ventures and the country's economic well-being and advancement. Noor et al. (2021) emphasized the pivotal role of skills in empowering entrepreneurs, enabling them to make informed decisions that positively impact both their businesses and the

welfare of the local community. The capacity for decision-making in entrepreneurial endeavors serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development, facilitating job creation and poverty alleviation in low-income nations (Adenutsi, 2023). Nonetheless, empowerment through entrepreneurship mechanisms stands as a viable avenue for sustainable welfare improvement, albeit in a gradual and straightforward manner (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020).

Research Methods

In this study, qualitative research methods are employed to delve into the phenomenon of business management within the Borneo Queen Community, a small business implementing empowerment mechanisms. Nelson et al. (1992) suggest that qualitative research offers flexibility, accommodating various methods and approaches to yield significant insights and knowledge about a given phenomenon. The chosen approach for this research is phenomenology, which aims to elucidate the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 1998). The primary objective is to comprehend the meaning of participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Phenomenological research endeavors to capture the essence of individuals' experiences pertaining to a specific phenomenon.

The data for this study were sourced from selected research subjects based on the profiles of key informants: *purun* plant collectors, weavers, and *purun* plant product developers within the Borneo Queen Community, totaling 13 individuals. The research spanned from March to November 2022 in Palangka Raya. To ensure the validity of the obtained data aligns with the research objectives, triangulation techniques were employed. As defined by Moleong (1989), data triangulation involves validating data using alternative sources or methods for comparison. For data analysis, researchers adhered to the interactive techniques outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984). This involves iterative and continuous qualitative data analysis activities until data saturation is achieved. These activities include data reduction, data display, and drawing/verifying conclusions.

Results

Borneo Queen Community as a Sustainable Enterprise

Since 2006, Borneo Queen has transitioned its business development focus towards community empowerment-based entrepreneurship, a shift that intensified in 2019. The success of transforming micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) into entities that foster community empowerment hinges on two pivotal factors within the managerial implementation process. Firstly, the orientation of business development is crucial. This orientation positions Borneo Queen as a producer of innovative and creative wicker-based products. From table sets exported to Dubai (UAE) to Batik Boxes, boho tote bags, knitted decorations, tissue boxes, clutch bags, sofa cushions, and various other accessories

catering to the hospitality industry, the diverse product range exemplifies the breadth and depth of offerings.



Picture 1. BQC Workers are Making Creative Products from Purun Woven. *Source:* Own work authors.

These products are crafted from the Purun plant, abundantly found in the peatlands of Palangka Raya, Kalimantan, positioning Borneo Queen as a trailblazer in transforming natural resources into economic commodities.

Secondly, there’s the empowerment orientation. Despite offering a variety of export-quality products, Borneo Queen remains vigilant against complacency. Instead, it enhances its managerial creativity by adopting an empowerment-centric approach. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 prompted a shift in business strategy, leading to collaboration with the local community in management endeavors. This transformation resulted in the renaming of Borneo Queen as Borneo Queen Community, with eleven workers integrated into its community under a recruitment model catering to individuals unable to pursue higher education.

Education Levels		Ages Group	
Levels	Percentage	Levels	Percentage
SD	0%	15-20	0%
SMP	16%	21-25	80%
SMA	66%	26-30	0%
D3	0%	31-35	0%
S1	18%	35-40	20%
S2	0%		

Table 1. Borneo Queen Community Workers. *Source:* Own work authors.

The expansion of this orientation by Borneo Queen Community solidifies its position as a sustainable business entity. This sustainable business model drives increased production of goods, consequently opening up new market opportunities through heightened innovation and creativity.

Borneo Queen Community extends its support to home-based businesses operating under traditional methods, with the aim of enhancing the well-being of the local community. Training sessions are organized for traditional *Purun* weavers, empowering them towards greater self-reliance. By fostering skill development and motivation, the community aims to boost the confidence of its members, enabling them to establish similar enterprises. The dedication of one of the employees underscores Borneo Queen Community's commitment to building a sustainable business model.

“Working here (Borneo Queen Community) gives us new skills, previously I didn't know about creative products from *Purun*, now I can make processed creative products from *Purun*, starting from making *Purun* boxes, *Purun* table sets and purses from *Purun*, apart from that here I also learn about discipline and the difficulties of trading (become entrepreneur)” (R1).

Anchored in the principles of sustainable human development, the management approach adopted by Borneo Queen Community directly contributes to the economic upliftment of the surrounding community.

Borneo Queen Community Empowerment Model: from venture to Empowerment

Borneo Queen Community's management, centered on community development, is characterized by a business model that prioritizes employee initiative and empowerment. Data reveals three distinct business management approaches within Borneo Queen Community, all indicative of its empowerment-oriented ethos. Firstly, the criteria for selecting workers are paramount. Employees are chosen based on specific criteria aimed at enhancing their living standards to the fullest extent possible. Predominantly, young individuals aged 21 to 25 with a high school education are selected, often assuming the responsibility of supporting their families economically. This underscores Borneo Queen Community's commitment to elevating the economic status of the local community (see table 2.).

	The Only One has a Job in Family	Supporting the Family Economy	Helping the Family Economy	Own Needs
Average	2.33	2.33	3.17	3.00
Median	2	2	3	3
Mode	2	2	3	3

Table 2. Borneo Queen Community Workers Status in Family Economic. *Source:* Own work authors.

Testimonials from workers expressing their aim to provide for their families further highlight the community's positive impact on improving the economic well-being of its surroundings. Secondly, enhancing employee capabilities by fostering greater initiative. This involves cultivating creative product manufacturing skills and nurturing a heightened entrepreneurial mindset among workers. Insights gleaned from interviews with Borneo Queen Community employees indicate a focus on training to enhance knitting proficiency and fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship.

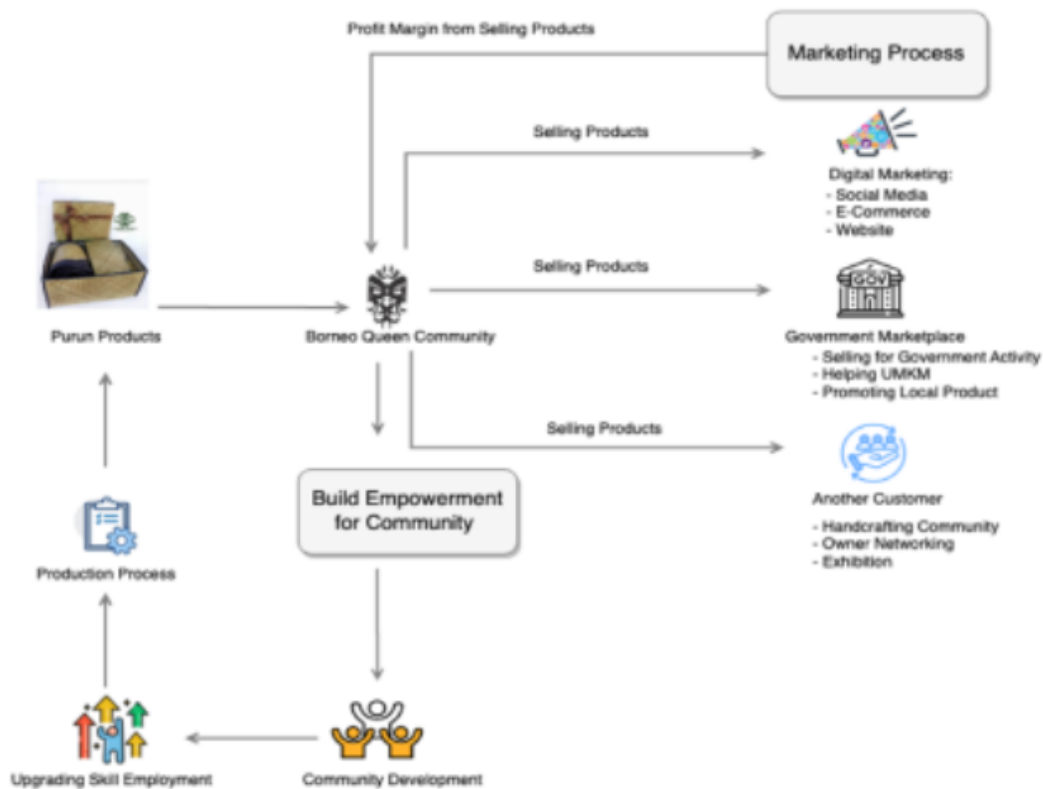
	Entrepreneurship Training	Crafting Skill Development	Using Skill for Another Job	Hope to be an Entrepreneurship
Average	3.33	2.50	3.33	2.83
Median	3.00	2.50	3.50	2.50
Mode	3	2	4	2

Tabel. 3 Developing Capability of Workers. *Source:* Authors' elaboration.

Thirdly, emphasizing social responsibility. Borneo Queen Community's business managers prioritize enhancing the quality of life in the local community by actively engaging in the distribution of products crafted by traditional businesses. The proprietor of Borneo Queen Community purchases these community products for either reprocessing or direct sale in their store. Notably, the woven mats made from *Purun* plants exemplify the positive impact of Borneo Queen Community's involvement, manifesting in enhanced skills for selecting raw materials, cutting techniques, and *Purun* drying methods. These acquired skills serve as valuable assets for the economically disadvantaged women within the surrounding community, enabling them to produce high-quality goods.

Entrepreneurship-cum-Empowerment: Business Procedural transformation

The adaptation of the business model to underscore the mutually beneficial connection between profit and empowerment entails reinforcing operational mechanisms through structured business management. This structuring process faces certain constraints in terms of demographics, primarily due to the remote location of the production site. Nevertheless, the management structuring facilitates alignment between business operations and the empowerment paradigm (refer to Figure 2).



Picture 2. Borneo Queens Community Business Flow.

Balancing the production process with empowerment underscores the Borneo Queen Community business owner's commitment to both profitability and community welfare. This equilibrium between empowerment and entrepreneurial ethos significantly influences the stability of the business.

The resilience of the business operated by the Borneo Queen Community, which remains rooted in empowerment principles, is propelled by the effective execution of marketing strategies. The business owner plays a pivotal role in disseminating product marketing, employing a blend of traditional and contemporary methods. Traditional marketing avenues include showcasing craft products in galleries and shop outlets, as well as participating in sales at local markets. Concurrently, modern marketing techniques harness the digital landscape, encompassing social media, e-commerce platforms, and dedicated websites. The decision to embrace digital marketing is acknowledged by proprietors as an innovative approach necessitating adept marketing concepts.

“Marketing on social media “TikTok” must understand how to market products through live sales and understand the function of coins in TikTok. Likewise, if selling through e-commerce, he must understand [also] customers in each e-commerce such as Tokopedia, Shopee and Facebook marketplace” (R2).

The ingenuity displayed across diverse marketing platforms underscores a concerted effort to fortify the business while upholding the empowerment ethos within the local community.

To meet profit demands beyond market mechanisms, the manager of Borneo Queen Community strategically utilizes social networks. Leveraging its social capital, the community expands its marketing reach through participation in various events organized by associations such as the Association of Indonesian Handicraft Exporters and Producers (ASEPI), as well as community initiatives like the Central Kalimantan UMKM / ICM Community. Participation in prominent exhibitions like INACRAFT and Kriyanusa further amplifies the visibility of Borneo Queen Community products, thereby creating new market opportunities. This active engagement within national and regional events has solidified Borneo Queen Community's reputation in Palangka Raya City and beyond. Their products, notably crafted from woven materials like *purun*, serve as distinguished representatives of Central Kalimantan's local heritage. This recognition adds value to Borneo Queen Community, positioning them as integral contributors to the promotion of Central Kalimantan's cultural identity. Furthermore, this involvement in local government activities presents additional market avenues for Borneo Queen Community. Local government institutions frequently procure their products for various purposes, including souvenirs for national or international guests, seminar kits for workshops, and interior decoration for government offices. This symbiotic relationship not only enhances the community's market presence but also reinforces its role as a catalyst for regional promotion and economic development.

Discussion

The transformation of business entities from primarily commercial- focused to empowerment-driven ones is pursued through enhancements in the institution's management model, coupled with adjustments to the marketing strategy. The institution's empowerment-oriented management is evidenced by its engagement with the local community to uplift living standards through targeted recruitment methods. This includes recruiting low-income residents and providing support to those engaged in handicraft production through social responsibility initiatives. This empowerment approach is further reinforced by an upgraded marketing strategy that optimizes all available avenues, including traditional and digital markets, as well as leveraging the social capital of Borneo Green Community owners. The improvement in the marketing structure not only enhances profit stability but also fosters a balanced business model that integrates both entrepreneurship and empowerment objectives.

The Borneo Queen Community business owners' commitment to innovation and the development of businesses leveraging local natural resources serves as the cornerstone for transforming small enterprises into empowering ventures. Instead of relying solely on coaching, which often shapes the mindset of small business operators, the Borneo Queen Community owner has spearheaded a managerial model aimed at enhancing workers'

skills. This managerial approach diverges from the typical defensive (Wyer et al., 2022) and insular tendencies (Lee et al., 2020) observed in many small businesses. The initiative to provide opportunities for workers to explore and enhance their skills is geared towards bolstering their ability to tackle production challenges effectively. This emphasis on sensitivity to production issues and agility in addressing them aligns with characteristics identified by Olson et al. (2019) as indicative of expertise. The implementation of this training mechanism underscores the business owner's commitment to cultivating a skilled workforce rather than solely relying on recruiting individuals with pre-existing expertise.

Enhancing skills does not detract from the business objective of profitability. The choice of innovative marketing mechanisms by the business owner significantly influences the stability of financial management, an integral component of the business's management policy (Andriamahery & Qamruzzaman, 2022). This balance between skill development and financial stability enables Borneo Queen Community to establish itself as an empowerment-driven enterprise. This assertion finds support in the research of Vukovic et al. (2023), which suggests that financial backing and heightened worker creativity serve as hallmarks of empowerment-centric businesses. The empowerment model implemented by Borneo Queen Community aligns with Honold's (1997) perspective, which underscores that empowerment is inherently multifaceted, driven by the ingenuity and innovation of business owners. Consequently, empowerment initiatives can be undertaken irrespective of the business's status or type.

The empowerment mechanism within various types of businesses is shaped by the ambition and drive of business owners to foster a creative mindset and remain attuned to their surroundings. This managerial approach forms the cornerstone of the symbiotic relationship between business operations and empowerment initiatives. The traditional differentiation between small and large businesses regarding their impact on community development (Bowman & Wyer, 2022; Colovic, 2022) is rendered obsolete by the proactive measures adopted by Borneo Queen Community business owners. Empowerment endeavors can thrive within any business entity that prioritizes adaptability and invests in the development of both business strategies and employee skills. This paradigm shift in business management underscores the importance of facilitating continuous skill enhancement to sustain profitability and promote worker autonomy (Wyer & Mason, 1999). Ultimately, unlocking the creativity and innovation of small business owners serves as the catalyst for transitioning from a profit-centric to an empowerment-oriented business model.

The emergence of small businesses prioritizing empowerment, driven by the initiative and ingenuity of business owners, introduces a distinct concept divergent from the conventional perception of small businesses solely focused on internal growth. Management shifts towards empowerment-oriented approaches are often attributed by researchers to external interventions. For instance, Chollisni et al. (2022) highlight the influence of government policies aimed at fostering active community engagement among small businesses. This finding is corroborated by research from Affandi et al. (2020) and

Mutmainnah and Ramadani (2023), which underscore the government's role in cultivating responsive small businesses. Surya et al. (2020) and Maksum et al. (2020) further emphasize the importance of implementing relevant strategies to encourage specific approaches conducive to empowerment. However, the creativity and adaptability of business owners often go unrecognized, leading to an identification of small business managerial models that predominantly focus on the limitations of less innovative entrepreneurs.

The Borneo Queen Community's efforts in entrepreneurship and product innovation have yielded positive outcomes for employment, thereby exemplifying effective business practices that contribute to poverty alleviation. Central to this success is the pivotal role played by the owner of Borneo Queen Community in spearheading business development grounded in empowerment principles. The application of entrepreneurship concepts by the owner not only fosters business growth but also creates opportunities for empowering the community. Successful business operations facilitate the implementation of empowerment initiatives more seamlessly. The Borneo Queen Community serves as a tangible illustration of how integrating various marketing strategies within business processes enables the owner to extend empowerment opportunities to the surrounding community.

Conclusion

The identity of small businesses that are considered to have characteristics to focus on managing businesses in internal aspects with limited capital and employee development creativity is found to be different in this study. The research highlights the case of Borneo Queen Community, categorized as a small-scale business, which implements an empowerment-oriented management approach. This assertion is substantiated by the community's recruitment strategy, centered on enhancing and uplifting the local population to bolster economic advancement. The recruitment framework prioritizes maximizing the involvement of local residents while concurrently enhancing their weaving skills to elevate production quality. This emphasis on employee development is further reinforced by a dynamic marketing strategy tailored to evolving market trends. The harmonization between augmenting employee capabilities and expanding the seller base positions Borneo Queen Community as a transformative force within the realm of empowering small businesses.

The recognition of an empowerment-centric business management model within the Borneo Queen Community is accomplished through a phenomenological examination of actions. This methodology yields insights into the business management process from the perspective of the participants. However, the study's scope is confined to the managerial process, overlooking an exploration of the motivations behind empowerment and business development. Delving into these motives could aid in identifying constraints and inform necessary adjustments in management practices. Insights gleaned from this aspect would

be valuable in shaping a comprehensive understanding of empowerment management for businesses, irrespective of their scale or magnitude.

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Author's declaration

We are Saputra Adiwijaya (Author 1/A1), Sustiyah (Author 2/A2), Chaidir Adam (Author 3/A3), and Muhamad Arief Rafsanjani (Author 4/A4), hereby declare that manuscript has been prepared, written and approved to submit to this journal by us.

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Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

Additional information

Write additional information related to this research, if any.

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