

Empowerment Models of Telaga Madirda Tourism Management to Increase Visitors during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Yitno Puguh Martomo ^{1, }, Samsi ^{2,* }, Erwinda Sam Anafih ^{3, },
and Liem Gai Sin ^{4, }

¹ Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Surakarta, 57771, Surakarta, Central Java Province, Indonesia

² Department of Administrative Science, Postgraduate Program,
Universitas Surakarta, 57771, Surakarta, Central Java Province, Indonesia

³ Department of Digital Business, Faculty of Communication and Business,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Karanganyar, 57761, Karanganyar, Central Java Province,
Indonesia

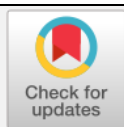
⁴ Department of Innovation Management, Postgraduate Program,
Universitas Ma Chung, 65151, Malang, East Java Province, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: samsi_rosi@unsa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Telaga Madirda, a village tourism destination managed by the Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise in Ngargoyoso Sub-District, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, boasts an exotic natural charm ripe for development. This study investigates the empowerment model of Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise and explores innovative approaches to managing this potential tourism hotspot. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study utilizes an empowerment model approach across three stages: awareness, capacity building, and empowerment. Findings reveal that village leaders' commitment bolsters Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise's empowering process, enabling innovative event models to attract more visitors. The introduction of spiritual tourism and night camping has notably drawn individuals to Telaga Madirda, offering a retreat for relaxation and therapeutic purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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1. Introduction

Enhancing village income and bolstering the economy of rural communities are pivotal challenges central to addressing poverty within Indonesian society. Consequently, a multitude of efforts has been mobilized by diverse stakeholders to tackle these issues. Poverty alleviation initiatives have gained traction across sectors, from governmental endeavors through flagship programs to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) dedicated to enhancing societal welfare and mitigating poverty.

Community empowerment emerges as a cornerstone strategy in this collective endeavor. This approach aligns with Widayanti's assertion that community empowerment is a shared responsibility and a pertinent strategy in combating social issues, particularly poverty, involving diverse stakeholders such as government bodies, businesses, academic institutions, and local community organizations (Widayanti, 2012). The essence of community empowerment lies in fortifying communities to address their challenges and equipping them to navigate life's complexities.

Community empowerment initiatives manifest in various programs, including developing potential tourism destinations within villages. Such initiatives aim to harness local resources and bolster the community's economic prospects. By cultivating tourism destinations within villages, communities stand to benefit from increased tourist traffic, thereby uplifting their standard of living.

This approach follows the government's policy outlined in Regulation No. 29/2015 by the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, emphasizing the promotion of rural-based tourism (tourism villages) to stimulate economic activities in rural areas and deter rural-to-urban migration. Additionally, rural tourism development fosters environmental conservation efforts, preserving natural landscapes, rice fields, rivers, lakes, and ponds, thereby mitigating the impact of global warming.

The tourism village program implemented at Telaga Madirda tourist destination holds promise for fostering community development. The Karanganyar area, renowned as INTANPARI (industry, agriculture, and tourism), boasts abundant natural and cultural tourism potential. However, these resources have not been fully leveraged due to human resources (HR) and tourist infrastructure constraints.

The global tourism industry is experiencing rapid growth with the advancement of civilization and the adoption of increasingly modern lifestyles. As individuals seek avenues for personal and familial fulfillment amidst busy work schedules, tourism activities have emerged to achieve happiness and prosperity. Recognizing the promising prospects of tourism development, nearly all modern nations, including Indonesia, have endeavored to enhance tourism management at national, regional, and village levels.

However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to the tourism sector worldwide. Many tourist destinations across Indonesia were forced to close, and numerous planned activities had to be canceled to contain the spread of the virus. The closure of these destinations inflicted economic hardships on those involved in tourism management. This aligns with the findings of Espinoza-Figueroa et al., who assert that tourism serves as a vital pillar for governments, generating regional revenue and employment

opportunities and playing a role in cultural and identity promotion (Espinoza-Figueroa et al., 2021). Consequently, the tourism industry incurred substantial losses and emerged as one of the hardest-hit sectors during this unforeseen crisis.

Berjo Village established a Village-Owned Enterprise in 2008 to bolster the local economy and improve community welfare. In pursuit of this goal, the institution continuously explores various village-based businesses. Following deliberations within the village, the Berjo Village Government designated Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise to oversee the management of some of its tourism potential.

Since its establishment in 2008, Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise has been entrusted with managing various tourism assets within the village, starting with the Jumog Waterfall tour. Over time, their responsibilities expanded, culminating in the management of Telaga Madirda in early 2020. However, this newfound responsibility coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, posing significant challenges for Indonesia and Berjo Village.

Despite the adversity posed by the pandemic, managing the Telaga Madirda tourist site became a crucial endeavor for Village-Owned Enterprises. It presented a formidable challenge for the human resources of Village-Owned Enterprise members, demanding innovative strategies to ensure the site's competitiveness amidst the pandemic. Leveraging their accrued trust and experience in village tourism management, Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise embarked on a journey of continuous development and innovation.

Recognizing the importance of enhancing visitor experiences, Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise prioritized improving tourist facilities, managing traders, organizing parking facilities, and developing designated tourist zones. This comprehensive approach aimed to cater to the evolving needs of visitors while maintaining the site's appeal. Consequently, existing facilities witnessed continuous enhancement, offering visitors increasingly captivating experiences.

The management of Berjo Village Tourism is acutely aware that sustaining visitor interest necessitates a blend of innovative thinking and creativity. They understand that infusing tourism facilities with intriguing touches of innovation and creativity is imperative to attract and retain visitors, ensuring an engaging and memorable experience for all visitors.

Indonesia reported its first COVID-19 case in early March 2020, marking the beginning of a rapid spread across all regions. The term "COVID-19" is derived from "coronavirus," "virus," and "disease," with the number 19 representing the year of its discovery at the close of 2019. Initially identified by the National Committee for Taxonomy of Viruses (NCTV) as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the World Health Organization (WHO) later designated it as COVID-19, acknowledging it as a novel disease. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, dry cough, and difficulty breathing. The precise nomenclature aids in developing diagnostic tests, vaccines, and treatments, as well as facilitating research on prevention, transmission, severity, and treatment, leading to its classification as an international disease by WHO (Olivia et al., 2020).

As the world navigates its third year of transition from pandemic to endemic status, Indonesia's primary focus in revitalizing the tourism sector is building trust through adaptation, innovation, and collaboration across sectors. The government's commitment to tourism recovery is evident through various regulations aimed at expediting vaccinations, easing travel restrictions, implementing the CHSE (Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) program, and establishing an open-border system without quarantine, all geared toward national tourism rejuvenation. These measures have been positively received by stakeholders in the tourism industry, prompting additional initiatives

such as private tourism programs during the transition period and collaborations with foreign influencers to bolster confidence among international tourists in Indonesian tourism (Amelia & Prasetyo, 2022; Malik, 2022).

In a broad context, experts define visitors or tourists in various ways. Inskeep characterizes tourists as individuals or groups visiting a place, whether a country, province, city, or village, different from their usual residence, with the primary aim of not seeking employment (Inskeep, 1991). Thus, this definition categorizes tourists into temporary tourists and travelers. Temporary tourists stay at the destination for at least 24 hours, while travelers spend less than 24 hours and typically do not stay overnight. According to Norval, in 1936, a tourist entered another country's territory for any purpose other than seeking employment and permanent residency and spent money in the visited country, with the funds not originating from that country (Fidgeon, 2010). In Indonesia, Law No. 10/2009 concerning tourism defines tourists as people who travel. Thus, under this definition, anyone on a trip is considered a tourist or visitor, regardless of the purpose, as long as the trip does not involve staying or earning a living in the destination.

A model represents an object, idea, or system in a simplified form of natural conditions or phenomena. It encompasses information about a phenomenon designed to study the actual system. Models can also mimic a real object, system, or event and contain essential information for analysis (Achmad, 2008). The term "model" originates from the Latin word "*modellus*," which means "mold" or "pattern." There are four general types of models: system, mental, verbal, and mathematical (Cayaray, 2014).

Conceptually, empowerment revolves around granting power, derived from the fundamental concept of "power" itself, signifying authority or capability. The essence of empowerment is intricately linked to the concept of power, often associated with the ability to influence others' actions regardless of their wishes or interests. Empowerment is "a process of fostering the development of diverse human capabilities" (Wrihatnolo & Dwidjowijoto, 2007). It entails building power by fostering, motivating, and raising awareness of individuals' potential, seeking to nurture and fortify their capabilities (Minarni et al., 2017).

Community empowerment is aimed at enhancing the dignity and worth of specific groups of citizens in impoverished and underdeveloped conditions (Sudarmanto et al., 2020). These endeavors aim to bolster community capacity by fostering participation, motivation, awareness, and potential development.

In community empowerment, four guiding principles are commonly applied to ensure the success of empowerment initiatives: equality, participation, self-sufficiency or independence, and sustainability (Najiyati et al., 2005).

- 1) Equality Principle: Central to community empowerment is the principle of equality between the community and the institutions executing empowerment programs or assistance, irrespective of gender. This principle fosters equitable dynamics by establishing mechanisms for sharing knowledge, experience, and expertise, fostering mutual learning.
- 2) Participation: Effective empowerment programs that promote community independence are participatory, planned, implemented, supervised, and evaluated by the community itself. However, attaining this level necessitates time and a mentoring process demanding a deep commitment to community empowerment.
- 3) Self-sufficiency or Independence: This principle emphasizes respecting and prioritizing the community's capabilities over-reliance on external assistance. It refrains from viewing the impoverished as incapable objects but rather as individuals with limited resources. They possess comprehensive knowledge of their business constraints, awareness of their

environment, workforce, determination, and adherence to societal norms. These resources must be harnessed as the foundational capital for the empowerment process. External material assistance should be regarded as supportive, ensuring it does not undermine self-sufficiency.

- 4) Sustainability: Empowerment programs should be designed for sustainability, albeit with initial facilitator dominance gradually diminishing as the community gains autonomy in managing their activities. Eventually, facilitators are withdrawn as the community becomes self-sustaining.

Community empowerment aims to establish individual and community independence, encompassing the ability to think, act, and control one's actions (Kruahong et al., 2023). This independence is achieved through a gradual learning process, during which the community gains the ability or power over time—the empowerment goals across three economic, political, and socio-cultural areas. Empowerment activities should be conducted comprehensively to liberate community groups from power domination in these spheres.

A tourist destination, commonly called a tourist area, serves as a recreational or tourism venue. According to the Decree of the Minister of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications of the Republic of Indonesia Number KM.98/PW.102/MPPT-87, a tourist destination is characterized by its natural and man-made resources, such as natural beauty like mountains, beaches, flora, and fauna, as well as man-made attractions like historic buildings, monuments, temples, and cultural performances (Ananto, 2018). A tourist destination encompasses everything that tourists aspire to visit and is closely tied to the concept of a tourist attraction. For an area to be deemed a tourist attraction, it must possess unique features that attract visitors, including local culture, natural landscapes, flora and fauna, technological innovations, and spiritual elements (Paulino et al., 2021). Therefore, tourist destinations encompass a wide range of places or natural conditions developed to appeal to tourists, including natural attractions like mountains, lakes, rivers, and beaches and man-made attractions like museums, forts, and historical sites.

Karanganyar Regency, nestled within Central Java Province, boasts significant potential for deepening its tourism sector. Situated beneath Mount Lawu, the Karanganyar region offers cool temperatures and picturesque landscapes that captivate tourists. The burgeoning tourism industry in Karanganyar Regency is shaped by its attractions, which draw visitors and contribute to the local economy. Among these attractions, Telaga Madirda, nestled on the slopes of Mount Lawu, stands out. Formerly a serene lake surrounded by lush trees and lacking in tourist facilities and infrastructure, Telaga Madirda has transformed the management of the Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise.

Despite progress, the development of facilities and infrastructure at Telaga Madirda is not yet complete. Accessibility remains a challenge, particularly for tourist buses, due to its mountainous location, accessible primarily by motorbikes and private cars. Thus, there is a continued need for empowerment to enhance the management quality of this tourist destination further.

A lake or pond is an ecosystem occupying a relatively small area compared to marine and terrestrial habitats, taking the form of a basin. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Indonesia Number 28/2009, lakes and ponds are natural water bodies forming ecosystems, including similar water bodies known locally. Telaga Madirda, situated at the foot of Mount Lawu in Tlogo Hamlet, Berjo Village, Ngargoyoso Sub-District, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, is a natural lake boasting a clear spring that flows year-round, forming a mini waterfall. Initially managed by the Berjo Village Government as a

village-owned tourist attraction since early 2018, management was transferred to Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise in early 2020. Telaga Madirda's allure lies in its serene natural environment, flowing springs, recreational features, and camping facilities available by the lake.

In analyzing the outcomes of empowering Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise to manage the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent recovery transition period, this study adopted the empowerment principles proposed by Najiyati et al. (Najiyati et al., 2005). These principles encompass equality, participation, self-sufficiency or independence, and sustainability. Additionally, implementing programs and activities followed the three stages of empowerment: awareness, capacity building, and empowerment (Wrihatnolo & Dwidjowijoto, 2007).

The process, characterized by awareness and participation, unfolds as follows:

- 1) Awareness Stage: This initial phase targets the underprivileged community, emphasizing their right to capability. Motivating them to overcome poverty is paramount. Accelerating this process involves mentorship efforts to evaluate outcomes.
- 2) Capacity-Building Stage: Focused on equipping the less fortunate with skills to manage opportunities, this stage includes training, workshops, and similar activities to enhance the community's life skills.
- 3) Empowerment Stage: Here, the community is provided tailored opportunities based on their abilities, fostering active and sustainable participation. Gradually assigning larger roles commensurate with their capacities and aspirations, guided self-evaluations of choices and their implementation results are facilitated.

Building upon the positive responses from stakeholders in Berjo Village, particularly the Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise management overseeing the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction, an opportunity arises to delve into several key aspects of boosting visitor numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, these include (1) the intricacies of the empowerment processes and stages, (2) the implementation of empowerment models and strategies, and (3) the obstacles encountered in executing the Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise empowerment model and strategy aimed at augmenting visitors to the Telaga Madirda tourist destination.

The cornerstone of the empowerment process hinges on the principle of equality among key stakeholders, including the village government, Village-Owned Enterprise members, the business community at the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction, and the broader Berjo Village community. This principle fosters an environment of equitable relationships, underscored by the exchange of knowledge, experience, and expertise aimed at advancing the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction. Recognizing each other's strengths and weaknesses fosters a mutual learning process.

Ideally, learning and aligning visions should organically emanate from within, with active participation from every member of the Village-Owned Enterprise and the community. However, it's important to acknowledge that achieving this equilibrium can be challenging, particularly in instances of imbalance. In such cases, external assistance or intervention becomes crucial. Entities such as the Berjo Village government, Karanganyar Regency government, NGOs, local community organizations, community leaders, religious figures, universities, cooperative/banking institutions, and others play a pivotal role as facilitators. Their support is vital in empowering Village-Owned Enterprise members to professionally, progressively, and prosperously manage tourism while concurrently enhancing the welfare of the Berjo Village populace.

As researchers aim to explore the novelty of research by tracing previous studies, the outcomes of tracing previous research related to empowerment models and strategies in managing tourism objects are summarized as follows:

- 1) Mudana analyzed the empowerment initiatives in the Pemuteran Village community, Gerokgak Sub-District, revealing a predominantly mezzo-level empowerment strategy (Mudana, 2015). The study highlighted instances where micro and macro strategies were employed, fostering support for nature conservation, socio-cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism development within the community.
- 2) A study by Hilmy et al. examined the effectiveness of a centralized system in managing Telaga Madirda Lake tourism in Berjo Village, Ngargoyoso Sub-District, Karanganyar Regency (Hilmy et al., 2020). Findings indicated that the tourism zone at Telaga Madirda had been meticulously prepared, with six distinct zones mapped out to cater to various components of tourism. The centralized system streamlined contour processing, reinforcing Telaga Madirda's status as a premier tourist attraction.
- 3) Sinaga et al. analyzed the implementation of community empowerment-based tourism development policies in Pantai Cermin Sub-District, Serdang Regency (Sinaga et al., 2021). The study underscored the significance of demographic aspects and regional potential in policy formulation, emphasizing collaboration between the government, private sector, and community for successful development.
- 4) Sagita et al. explored the sustainable farming community in Griya Taman Lestari Housing, Gudang Village, Tanjung Sari Sub-District, Sumedang Regency (Sagita et al., 2021). This community, established during the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to enhance food security and economic welfare through agricultural and fishery activities. Despite challenges in citizen participation due to improper empowerment stages, the study proposed a model for strengthening community empowerment and fostering communication forums to bolster knowledge and skills.
- 5) Damayanti and Indriyani investigated the impact of the Kuta Mandalika Circuit's development on micro, small, and medium enterprises from an Islamic economic perspective (Damayanti & Indriyani, 2021). The study revealed mixed outcomes, with some enterprises experiencing growth while others faced challenges due to inadequate understanding of business concepts and strategies. The development of MSMEs in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone underscored the pivotal role of the local community in catering to tourists' needs while adhering to Islamic principles.

Previous studies on empowerment for tourism attraction management have elucidated various policies, strategies, and forms of empowerment, emphasizing dynamism through community-driven actions and analysis of structural and functional aspects within local traditions. This study aims to delve deeper into the principles and processes of empowerment, fostering a strong commitment from Village-Owned Enterprise to implement innovative models such as spiritual tourism and facilitating community members' independent isolation for COVID-19 recovery at Telaga Madirda. Additionally, the study aims to establish partnership networks within the tourism community to bolster visitor numbers during the pandemic.

This study is designed with three main objectives in mind. First, it aims to identify and analyze the phases involved in the empowerment process. Second, it seeks to examine the application of empowerment models and strategies. Finally, the study intends to investigate the obstacles encountered in implementing the Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise empowerment model and strategy to increase visitors to the Telaga Madirda tourist destination.

2. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a qualitative approach, emphasizing the collection of descriptive data through written or spoken words and observable behavior. This approach aims to capture natural characteristics directly from the source, prioritizing the process over the outcome (Moleong, 2006). The qualitative analysis is conducted inductively, focusing on generating meaningful interpretations (Moleong, 2006). Through this approach, the study aims to gather valid, reliable, and relevant data. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The research data is analyzed using an interpretative descriptive analysis technique involving selecting relevant documents/data, coding, making objective and reflective notes, summarizing the data, and conducting triangulation to ensure data credibility (Sugiyono, 2007).

As described by Wiliam Wiersma, triangulation is utilized as a qualitative cross-validation method to assess data sufficiency through the convergence of multiple data sources or collection procedures (Sugiyono, 2007). This study's triangulation is achieved through three data sources: village officials, Village-Owned Enterprise heads and members, and other relevant groups. Triangulation is also applied to data collection techniques, including interviews, observation, and focus group discussions (Bachri, 2010). The observational phase spans three years, focusing on each year: readiness assessment, model and strategy development, and implementation of innovative models and strategies (Bachri, 2010).

Informants are selected purposively based on their roles and expertise in empowering village tourism. This purposive sampling technique aims to include individuals with in-depth knowledge of the problem. Informants include village officials, Village-Owned Enterprise administrators, village elders, community leaders, and members directly involved in managing and empowering village tourism in Telaga Madirda. The primary data collection instrument is the researchers, who conduct field observations and interviews with informants to gather firsthand insights.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Empowerment Stages and Processes

Telaga Madirda, situated at the foot of Mount Lawu in Karanganyar Regency, is a village-owned tourist attraction managed by Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise. Nestled amidst the picturesque landscape, this lake stands at an elevation of approximately 1,050 meters above sea level, offering visitors breathtaking scenery and refreshing mountain air. Positioned to the east of Karanganyar Regency's center, Telaga Madirda is easily accessible, located about 20 km from Karanganyar and 35 km from Solo City.

According to interviews with the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction manager, the entrance ticket for regular visitors is priced at IDR 15,000 per person, with children below 110 cm in height granted free admission. However, different ticket prices apply for visitors staying overnight or camping. The regular visiting hours are from 08:00 AM to 04:30 PM. Still, since mid-2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Telaga Madirda has extended its hours to accommodate tourists interested in overnight stays or camping.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to Telaga Madirda's designation as a self-isolation location for COVID-19 patients, implementing strict health protocols and close supervision involving the community and medical personnel. This initiative gained widespread attention, with special events such as night camping gaining popularity, particularly on social media platforms. The event attracted significant interest, garnering viral attention and even drawing the participation of Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo, who led reforestation efforts on Mount Lawu's

slopes. Governor Pranowo's positive response to the special night camping event at Telaga Madirda further contributed to its prominence.



Figure 1. Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo, and residents planting trees for large-scale reforestation, followed by a visit to Telaga Madirda

Source: Central Java Public Relations (2021).

Regarding the reforestation tree planting and the initiation of the night camping event, insights gleaned from interviews with the head of Berjo Village, several Village-Owned Enterprise members, and Ki Warseno Slank, a renowned puppeteer, shed light on the significance of preserving Telaga Madirda and the Mount Lawu area. Telaga Madirda, often called the “barrel” of Karanganyar Regency, requires continuous attention and management from stakeholders, communities, and government officials in Karanganyar Regency and Central Java Province. The tree planting initiative led by the Governor of Central Java is prioritized and ongoing, highlighting the importance of nurturing local wisdom as a village tourism asset. Spanning approximately 3.5 hectares, Telaga Madirda boasts numerous springs, six notably large. Managed commercially as a natural tourist spot by Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise and residents, it served as a quarantine facility for COVID-19 patients from mid-May to June 2020. Embracing an innovative approach by introducing a night camping event, the Head of Berjo Village is committed to enhancing facilities for night tourism, ensuring attractive and comfortable tents are designed to capitalize on the breathtaking panorama and cool ambiance of Telaga Madirda at night.

Empowerment initiatives for village tourism managers at Telaga Madirda entail the development of empowerment principles and training models. These efforts aim to elevate the quality of human resources and bolster the dignity of tourism managers, particularly members of Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise and business actors at tourist destinations. The community is empowered to participate actively in tourism management through encouragement, motivation, awareness-raising, and skill development. However, the initial management transition to Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise in 2020 encountered various challenges, including narrow and poorly marked access roads, unprofessional tourist zone arrangements, reduced visitor numbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, inadequate public awareness, and subpar waste management practices leading to litter accumulation. Moreover, the ticketing system lacked a proper mechanism.

Despite these developmental needs, Telaga Madirda remains an appealing tourist destination, boasting a picturesque lake nestled at the foothills of Mount Lawu. The tranquil

atmosphere, enhanced by the cool mountain air, offers visitors a serene environment for leisurely walks around the pristine lake, showcasing the allure of this natural gem.

As the manager, Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise remains dedicated to the professional management of this tourist attraction, continually striving for progress and development. Collaborating with partners serving as empowerment consultants, efforts are underway to enhance human resources for destination management and innovate models to enhance visitor appeal. Therefore, in assessing the current state of tourism management and facilities, implementing the principles of the empowerment approach and the phased process is imperative. This involves engaging with institutions and activity partners to outline activities and track achieved outputs and results, as outlined in the following table.

Table 1. The Stages of the Empowerment Model for Managers of Telaga Madirda Tourist Destination

Stage	Activities/Models	Partners and Contributors	Outcome/Result
Awareness	Counseling, meetings, FGDs	Regency, sub-district, village levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of empowerment models and strategies for Telaga Madirda tourism managers ▪ Increased awareness among managers regarding the importance of empowerment principles
Capacity Building	Training and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultants, assistants from universities and agencies ▪ Karanganyar Regency Environmental Office ▪ Karanganyar Regency Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office ▪ Matching Fund Team, Speakers from various universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training on innovative tourism promotion, local cultural potential development ▪ Souvenir-making models, waste sorting, and processing models ▪ Patterning batik crafts model, improved institutional administration and partnerships
Empowerment	Involvement of various parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Karanganyar Regent ▪ Environmental Office ▪ Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office ▪ Matching Fund Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth of leadership commitment and enthusiasm, enhancement of structural

Stage	Activities/Models	Partners and Contributors	Outcome/Result
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speakers from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Universitas Islam Batiik Surakarta Ki Warseno Slank 	communication skills

Source: Primary data analysis, adapted from Wrihatnolo and Dwidjowijoto research (Wrihatnolo & Dwidjowijoto, 2007)

The table above outlines the three stages of awareness, capacity building, and empowerment, highlighting the consistent application of empowerment principles to identify models and strategies utilized by Telaga Madirda tourist attraction managers. These efforts involve counseling sessions, meetings, and focus group discussions at the regency, sub-district, and village levels, complemented by hands-on training and implementing various innovative models. These models include tourism promotion, local cultural development, souvenir making, waste management, and administrative improvement, facilitated by consultants and experts from universities and agencies, including the Karanganyar Regent, Environmental Office of Karanganyar Regency, Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office of Karanganyar Regency, and various academic institutions.

The involvement of these stakeholders has led to the implementation of several tourism development activities, resulting in increased leadership commitment, improved communication skills within the village-owned enterprise, and successful procurement of state budget assistance and village development funds. Additionally, plans for infrastructure development, such as road widening, facility planning, and night camping events, have been initiated to enhance visitor experiences and address community needs, including establishing COVID-19 isolation centers.

Furthermore, efforts have been made to enhance tourism facilities, including water features, gazebos, public toilets, and prayer rooms, while focusing on environmental sustainability through waste utilization and reforestation initiatives. Plans include procuring cable cars, drinking water treatment, and developing innovative night camping attractions, emphasizing community involvement and partnerships.

These meticulous efforts, guided by continuous evaluation and strategic planning, aim to capitalize on the post-pandemic economic recovery momentum and foster optimism among managers to increase visitor numbers further and enhance the overall tourism experience at Telaga Madirda.

3.2. Implementation of Empowerment Models and Strategies

Empowerment is a fundamental approach that should serve as the guiding principle for all government, non-governmental institutions, and companies in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to provide social services, as its outcomes benefit various groups. Mardikanto's research identified three groups of empowerment beneficiaries within the community: (1) the primary group comprising the community and their families; (2) the determinant group consisting of decision-makers regarding community empowerment policies; and (3) the support group, which includes other stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the empowerment process (Mardikanto, 2003).

Efforts toward community empowerment necessitate strategic involvement to ensure that applying empowerment models effectively enhances people's welfare. One commonly employed strategy in community empowerment is mentoring, which Sumodiningrat defines as an activity capable of facilitating empowerment. It is essential for Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise to carefully analyze the optimal application of models and strategies, both institutionally and in task implementation, to manage the Telaga Madirda tourist destination effectively.

In its execution, empowerment through the utilization of innovative models and strategies for night camping tourism events is complemented by the implementation of models for enhancing tourism facilities and pioneering advancements in tourism services at Telaga Madirda. This is supported by establishing mentoring partnerships and meticulous management of this tourist destination through consultations with various levels of government, including the village, sub-district, regency/municipality, province, and central government. Direct beneficiaries of this empowerment model include destination managers, Village-Owned Enterprise, and Telaga Madirda tourism operators.

Besides identifying models and strategies for empowerment through a consistent phasing process, research conducted in the field has also uncovered a crucial principle of "commitment" that extends beyond the conventional empowerment theory. This principle includes (1) equality, (2) participation, (3) self-sufficiency or independence, and (4) sustainability (Najiyati et al., 2005). However, at the implementation level, it is evident that these four principles alone may not fully achieve the desired empowerment targets.

This study reveals that, in addition to the Village-Owned Enterprise's dedication as Telaga Madirda's manager and various assistants' involvement, a strong commitment from leaders, particularly the Head of Berjo Village, is indispensable. Without such commitment, the effectiveness of implementing empowerment models and strategies to enhance the progress and performance of Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise is compromised, hindering the achievement of optimal targets.

Therefore, "commitment" emerges as a novel finding that supplements the existing principles of empowerment (Najiyati et al., 2005). The empowerment model, underpinned by the main concepts of these principles and the phased approach, must be complemented by leadership commitment. Suppose these five principles of empowerment—equality, participation, self-sufficiency or independence, sustainability, and leadership commitment—are effectively implemented through the stages of empowerment. In that case, efforts to apply models and strategies to empower Berjo Village-Owned Enterprise can increase the number of visitors at Telaga Madirda during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the economic recovery phase post-pandemic.

According to the Indonesian Official Dictionary, commitment is an agreement or attachment to fulfill a contract. Commitment is an attitude wherein committed individuals are willing to invest in their organization (Mowday et al., 1979). They are inclined to contribute to the organization's benefit to ensure its well-being (Muslim, 2013). Commitment is framed within leadership commitment. This is particularly relevant as the research focuses on the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction manager in Berjo Village, which entails cross-organizational collaboration. Thus, organizational leadership commitment signifies strong organizational involvement and representation. To achieve shared objectives in collaborative scenarios, a leader must foster cooperation and inspire individuals to work harmoniously towards common goals.

In this context, leadership commitment to empowerment through implementing the tourism object management empowerment model can be understood as the leader's willingness, particularly the Head of Berjo Village, to go above and beyond to enhance empowerment processes and services through the tourism manager empowerment model. This commitment aims to maximize innovation, thereby enhancing the quality of events and the overall appearance of tourism, consequently expediting the attainment of desired goals effectively and efficiently. Essentially, the empowerment process in managing tourism objects is a shared responsibility among the chairperson, Village-Owned Enterprise members, and tourism actors in Berjo Village. Therefore, the leadership's commitment, embodied by the Head of Berjo Village as the implementer, is anticipated to inspire enthusiasm and loyalty among Village-Owned Enterprise members and assistants, ultimately increasing visitor numbers. Leadership commitment represents a steadfast promise from the leader, who is dedicated to attracting more visitors and is resolute in doing so wholeheartedly under any circumstances.

The execution of nighttime events and the development of the Telaga Madirda tourist destination will enhance the allure of this tourist attraction, especially considering the pristine condition of its water source. Despite its small size, the spring flows steadily, even during extended dry periods. Telaga Madirda has gained renown as a natural tourist destination due to its professional development through various innovative models. Consequently, the scenery exudes exceptional beauty and charm. In its development, Telaga Madirda has been outfitted with numerous attractions and supplementary facilities, including pavilions and selfie spots adorned with Telaga Madirda signage as a backdrop. Couples for pre-wedding photoshoots also favor this locale.

Additionally, several points and camping areas are equipped with solar-powered energy sources. Plans include the construction of a small pier to serve as a harbor for small boats, alongside proposals for a flying fox and cable car. If successfully implemented as a model for innovation and tourism facility development, Telaga Madirda stands to attract more visitors, boost the income of tourism managers, and benefit the residents of Berjo Village.

3.3. Challenges in Community Empowerment in the Telaga Madirda Tourism Sector

Community empowerment entails the development of principles and a phased process to strengthen internal community factors by harnessing community resources through facilitation. This process also involves support from external parties actively assisting tourism managers and demonstrating leadership commitment. To achieve the ultimate goal of community empowerment, which is to empower tourism managers and business actors, stakeholders must consistently identify and address issues about existing tourist destinations at the location, implementing collaborative programs. However, it is important to acknowledge that community empowerment activities in the Telaga Madirda tourism sector often encounter obstacles. Tourism managers and accompanying staff face numerous challenges, including:

1) **Lack of Awareness and Knowledge**

Members of Village-Owned Enterprise and tourism business actors may lack awareness, knowledge, experience, and a sense of self-concept in executing activities related to community empowerment.

2) **Insufficient Skills**

Village-Owned enterprise members and tourism business actors may lack the necessary skills to conduct tourism business activities effectively.

- 3) **Competing Priorities**
Individuals may prioritize money-generating activities over community empowerment due to their profession, occupation, and social and cultural commitments, such as religious or economic activities.
- 4) **Limited Interaction**
Limited interaction with the outside community makes it challenging for partners/facilitators to engage with existing forums, such as farmer groups, Family Welfare Empowerment, and Youth Organizations.
- 5) **Inadequate Tourism Promotion:**
Inadequate promotion through print media (newspapers, posters, brochures) and electronic media hinders the visibility of Telaga Madirda tourism.
- 6) **Conflicts of Interest:**
Differences in perceptions between Village-Owned enterprise members and business actors may lead to conflicts of interest, hindering the implementation of tourism development programs and reducing the enthusiasm of village tourism managers.
- 7) **Competition from Other Tourist Destinations:**
The growth and development of other tourist destinations managed by the village government or the private sector present competition with attractive events and offerings, prompting Telaga Madirda tourism managers to innovate continually to remain competitive and attract visitors.

These obstacles, identified through interviews and observations, primarily stem from internal factors within the Village-Owned enterprise organizational community and business actors in Telaga Madirda tourism. However, these challenges can be addressed by leveraging the existing potential within Village-Owned enterprise members of Berjo Village and tourism business actors through facilitation resources supported by human resource assistance from external parties acting as consultants and assistants. Ultimately, empowering tourism site managers aims to enable them to identify and address problems according to their capacity through empowerment principles and stages, consistently implementing joint and sustainable programs.

4. Conclusion

The study examined empowerment models and strategies through a phased approach, supported by empowerment partners, to enhance the management of the Telaga Madirda tourist destination. Implementing the empowerment model across three stages—awareness, capacity building, and empowerment—consistently and effectively improved human resources managing the Village-Owned enterprise. This was evidenced by the increased leadership commitment and enthusiasm for managing Telaga Madirda tourism and enhanced structural communication skills from Village-Owned enterprises, enabling them to secure state budget assistance and carry out various development initiatives.

The study also highlighted the significance of implementing new tourist events, such as night camping, and enhancing tourism facilities, alongside establishing partnerships and utilizing community networks for promotional purposes in improving tourist destination management. A notable finding was the emergence of “commitment” as a novel aspect in the study, complementing existing theories of empowerment principles. By effectively implementing the five principles of empowerment—equality, participation, self-sufficiency, sustainability, and leadership commitment—through the empowerment stages, the study

suggests that efforts to empower Berjo Village-Owned enterprise can effectively increase the number of visitors at Telaga Madirda, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery period.

However, internal obstacles within the Berjo Village-Owned enterprise, particularly conflicts arising from differences in perceptions between Village-Owned enterprise members and business actors, were identified as challenges. The study recommends immediate measures to bridge the interests of these parties to minimize friction and enhance support for Telaga Madirda tourism development programs, ultimately boosting the enthusiasm of village tourism managers.

The new management of the Berjo Village-Owned enterprise needs to prioritize effective communication and coordination among stakeholders to consistently manage the Telaga Madirda tourist attraction in a professional, innovative, and prosperous manner, thereby improving the welfare of the people of Berjo Village.

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6. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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About the Authors

1. **Yitno Puguh Martomo** obtained his Doctoral degree from Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia, in 2019. The author is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Surakarta, Indonesia.
E-Mail: yitnopuguh_martomo@unsu.ac.id
2. **Samsi** obtained his Doctoral degree from Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia, in 2020. The author is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Administrative Science, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Surakarta, Indonesia.
E-Mail: samsi_rosi@unsu.ac.id
3. **Erwinda Sam Anafih** obtained her Master's degree from Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Adi Unggul Bhirawa, Indonesia, in 2017. The author is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Digital Business, Faculty of Communication and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Karanganyar, Indonesia.
E-Mail: erwindasam@umuka.ac.id
4. **Liem Gai Sin** obtained his Ph.D degree from University of Central Queensland, Australia, in 2017. The author is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Innovation Management, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Ma Chung, Indonesia.
E-Mail: liem.gaisin@machung.ac.id