

Analysis of the Role of Local Government in Empowering Local Papuan Msmes in Sorong City

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Abstract

Indigenous Papuans (OAPs) have an important role in cultural and economic diversity in the Unitary State of Indonesia, especially in Southwest Papua Province which is a newly formed province. The empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs is a form of maintaining cultural sustainability and providing economic opportunities to the indigenous Papuan people. The local government of Sorong city has a great responsibility in supporting the development of MSMEs of indigenous Papuans so that they are able to compete in the local market. The urgency in this study is to identify policy recommendations to increase the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs, reduce economic disparities, and increase the economic independence of indigenous Papuans. The purpose of this study is to analyze (1) The role of local governments in the empowerment of local Papuan Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the city of Sorong, (2) The supporting and inhibiting factors in the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs in the city of Sorong, (3) The proposed policy recommendations to improve the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs in the city of Sorong that are effective and sustainable. The research method used in this study is qualitative, data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, documentation, and focus group discussions. The results of the study show that the Sorong City Regional Government, in this case the Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, has a strategic role in the development of local MSMEs in Sorong City, which is carried out through two functions, namely as a facilitator and as a catalyst.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of local governments in community empowerment is essential, particularly for small businesses. The government's role in community empowerment, such as for MSMEs, includes acting as a facilitator and catalyst (Muhammadiyah & Hasanuddin, 2017). Furthermore, the government plays a crucial role in assisting MSMEs (Ramadhanti et al., 2022). Government efforts to empower MSMEs include providing capital assistance, mentoring, and marketing training (Vianney, 2024). Furthermore, one of the primary tasks of local governments is community empowerment (Ariani et al., 2024; Muhammad Nurjaya, Syamsul Baktiar ASS, Bohari, 2023).

Local economic development is the process of creating better conditions for economic growth, characterized by collective work with partners from the public and private sectors (Monica Dwipi Salam, 2022). Furthermore, this collective work is the driving force behind development, leading to increased economic prosperity and a better quality of life for the community (Febrian & Kristianti, 2020; Zia, 2020). Furthermore,

economic development policies that utilize the potential of local human resources and natural resources to build regional competitiveness are a key characteristic of local economic development (Dewi Wuryandani, 2013).

Empowerment is a condition that creates an independent society, free from poverty and underdevelopment, and provides community capacity in all aspects (Merina et al., 2023; Siti Nurhalita, 2022). Furthermore, the government has at least three functions: regulatory function, empowerment function, and service function (Ondang et al., 2019). The empowerment movement carried out by the government is a movement to improve the quality of MSMEs, empowerment has a crucial role in improving community welfare (Helmi et al., 2025; Wilda Karunia Eka, 2019). MSME empowerment aims to create a society with a just economic structure (Definta Alfiana, 2018). In addition, empowerment also aims to realize a sustainable life and is an effort to provide opportunities and facilities to poor groups (Wahid, 2023; Yani et al., 2024). Empowerment serves to instill self-confidence in beneficiaries (Alhammadi & Saleh, 2024).

Small businesses are independent productive economic enterprises carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches owned, controlled, or are part of either directly or indirectly medium-sized or large businesses that meet the criteria of small businesses (Ihdina Hanif, Wahju Gunawan, 2022; Permana, 2017). Micro-enterprises are independent productive economic enterprises carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies (Aulia, 2022; Ibrahim, 2022). Furthermore, empowerment and entrepreneurship are inseparable (Sugiyanto et al., 2024).

Papuans is a term associated with all indigenous Papuan tribes (Lopulalan, 2018). According to the Papuan Special Autonomy Law, indigenous Papuans (OAP) are people from the Melanesian racial group, consisting of various indigenous tribes on the island of Papua, and/or those accepted and recognized as indigenous Papuans by the Papuan customary law community (Iriawan & Edyanto, 2023; Salehuddin & Edyanto, 2023). The term indigenous Papuans is associated with the term Indigenous Law Community (MHA), which describes the identity of indigenous Papuans themselves, including in the contestation over the management of natural resources in Papua (Lewerissa & Edyanto, 2024; Pratama et al., 2022).

This research is important because MSMEs are the mainstay of most indigenous Papuans in meeting their daily needs. However, among the conditions experienced by indigenous Papuans, namely; there is quite sharp competition with immigrant communities, immigrants have more opportunities and tend to control some market assets, both in terms of facilities and knowledge of business management (Muhammad Arifin Abd Kadir, Muhammad Ali, 2022). In addition, the lack of social equality in Papua is due to the government's very limited reach of control over the Papuan community (Nashrullah & Lohalo, 2022). The special autonomy granted by the Indonesian government has not been able to provide welfare to the Papuan people (Hidayatulloh et al., 2022). Furthermore, research by Salehuddin et al., found that a inhibiting factor in the economic development of MSMEs in Papuan communities is a lack of knowledge about entrepreneurship (Salehuddin et al., 2021). Furthermore, research by Khairani & Syarvina found that the government plays a key role in empowering street vendors by providing them with space to sell, such as stalls, kiosks, stalls, and toilets (Khairani & Syarvina, 2023). Research by Romadhoni et al. found that MSMEs can implement marketing strategies through product innovation (Romadhoni et al., 2022). Research by Leiwakabessy & Lahallo found that low MSME productivity is due to low human resource quality (Leiwakabessy & Lahallo, 2019).

The urgency of this research is to identify policy recommendations to increase the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs, reduce economic disparities, and increase the

economic independence of indigenous Papuans. The formulation of the problem in this research: (1) How is the Empowerment of Local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City, (2) What factors are the obstacles and supporters in the Empowerment of Local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City, (3) What are the appropriate policy recommendations in the Empowerment of Local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City. The approach and problem-solving strategy in this research use a qualitative method that begins with problem identification and literature studies whose findings will be used to create a research plan, formulate and design a research proposal about what problems will be studied, and how to solve the problems, to the presentation and reporting of research. This research has previous scientific studies, namely:

1. Research by Salehuddin et al. found that a limiting factor in the economic development of Papuan MSMEs was a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge (Salehuddin et al., 2021). A weakness of this study is that it does not identify supporting factors for empowering Papuan MSMEs or policies for MSME empowerment.
2. Khairani & Syarvina's research found that the government plays a significant role in empowering street vendors by providing them with space to sell, such as stalls, kiosks, stalls, and toilets (Khairani & Syarvina, 2023). A weakness of this study is that it only examines the government's role in supporting street vendors.
3. Research by Romadhoni et al. found that MSMEs can implement marketing strategies through product innovation (Romadhoni et al., 2022). A weakness of the study is that it only looked at MSME development strategies from an economic and business perspective.
4. Leiwakabessy & Lahallo's research found that low MSME productivity is due to low human resource quality. A weakness of this study is that it only looked at MSMEs in terms of productivity (Leiwakabessy & Lahallo, 2019).
5. Kurniawan & Fauziah's research found that there are supporting factors in empowering MSMEs, namely human resources, raw materials, and low capital. Inhibiting factors include inadequate infrastructure, lack of government assistance, and the absence of production marketing centers (Kurniawan & Fauziah, 2014). A weakness of this research is that it only addresses supporting and inhibiting factors in empowerment without considering policies related to MSME empowerment.

Based on the above research, the novelty in this research is that it includes a policy context to increase the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs, reduce the economic gap between local Papuan communities and immigrant communities, and increase the economic independence of indigenous Papuans that is better, more effective and sustainable.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Place and Time of Research, this research was conducted in Sorong City, July-September 2025. This research is qualitative. The researcher attempts to present facts about the role of local government in empowering local MSMEs in Sorong City. Qualitative research requires researchers to conduct grounded research, which involves discovering new theories based on data found in the field (Sugiyono, 2013). The subjects of this research are the Cooperatives and SMEs Service of Sorong City and indigenous Papuans who are MSME actors in Sorong city. The subjects in this study were determined using the technique, *purposive sampling*. In qualitative research, samples are called informants (Sugiyono, 2011). The techniques used in collecting data in this study include; This observation will be used to directly observe the Role of the Government in Empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Local Papuan Community in Sorong City. Interviews were conducted face-to-face to obtain complete and detailed information from informants. Focus Group

Discussion Focus Group Discussion is a group discussion used to obtain data on the Role of the Government in Empowering Local Papuan MSMEs in the city of Sorong. Documentation, the author uses this method to obtain data in the form of written documents, images and electronic data. Data analysis in this study used an interactive data analysis model (Nursapiah, 2020; Yusuf, 2014). There are three stages in the interactive data analysis technique: Data reduction, namely data obtained in the field is written very completely and in large quantities, the data is then reduced, summarized, and the main points are selected, data presentation, drawing conclusions.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The role of local government in empowering local Papuan Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sorong City.

This study focuses on understanding the role of the local government in empowering local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City. Through a qualitative approach, data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants (the Sorong City Cooperative and MSME Office and indigenous Papuan MSME operators in Sorong City), direct field observations, documentation, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The collected data were then analyzed descriptively to illustrate the extent of the government's role in encouraging MSME development. Based on the results of the interviews, observations, and documentation, it can be seen that the Sorong City regional government plays a strategic role in empowering local Papuan MSMEs, which is manifested through several aspects.

a. Role of Facilitator

In its capacity as a facilitator, the local government creates a conducive environment for the development of MSMEs. Among the forms of the government's role as a facilitator are providing entrepreneurship training facilities, access to information, and technical and managerial assistance. The government's role as a facilitator is the government's role to connect the interests of the government with the community in optimizing regional development activities. In addition, the government must be able to provide facilities and act as an agent that provides facilities that are appropriate to the community's needs. Furthermore, based on the results of an interview with informant Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa, it was stated that;

"Most Papuan mothers sell betel nuts and vegetables. We, the Cooperatives and MSMEs Department, are continuously striving to provide training and technical guidance to MSMEs, especially local Papuan MSMEs. We also provide them with suitable selling spaces." (Interview, August 5, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of the interview with informant Mrs. Maria M. Tawoy, who is a Papuan mother, stated that;

"...So far, the assistance provided by the government has been limited. Frankly, we desperately need government assistance, especially business capital. The government should also strengthen ongoing training, not just one-offs. Marketing facilities are also crucial so our crafts can reach a wider market." (Interview, August 2, 2025).

Based on the interview results, it was shown that the Sorong city regional government has played a role as a facilitator through several programs, although the implementation still needs to be more even and sustainable.

b. The Role of a Catalyst

The government's role as a catalyst is to accelerate the growth of the MSME ecosystem by encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration between businesses,

financial institutions, and the public. This catalytic role is realized through government efforts to connect MSMEs with broader markets, facilitate collaboration with the private sector, and establish sustainable partnership networks.

Furthermore, based on the results of the interview with informant Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa, it was stated that;

"...We strive to be a liaison between MSMEs and the private sector. For example, we once facilitated a collaboration between a noken craft MSME and a mall manager in Sorong so that noken craft products could enter the MSME market. This way, MSME products are not only sold on the roadside but also enter modern distribution networks." (Interview, August 1, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of the interview with informant Maria M. Tawoy, who is a Papuan mother, stated that;

"The government once invited us to participate in an exhibition of our handicraft products. Through this activity, we were able to meet new buyers and form a network with entrepreneurs from outside Sorong. We believe this is very helpful, as without government assistance, it would be very difficult to enter a larger network." (Interview, August 2, 2025).

Based on the interview results, it shows that the local government of Sorong City, in this case the Cooperatives and MSMEs Office of Sorong City, has played a role as a catalyst through several programs, including facilitating collaboration between noken craft MSMEs and mall managers in Sorong so that noken craft products can enter the MSME market.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Empowering MSMEs

To answer the research question regarding the supporting and inhibiting factors in empowering local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City, the analysis was conducted by combining information from observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The data processing revealed information regarding the supporting and inhibiting factors in the MSME empowerment process in Sorong City, namely:

A. Supporting Factors

1. Natural resource potential

Sorong City and its surrounding areas are rich in natural resources, particularly marine and forest products, which are the primary basis for local development in Papua. Sorong City's strategic location, serving as the gateway to Papua, makes it a distribution center for fishery products, both for local consumption and for marketing outside the region. This potential is reflected in the abundant catch of fish, such as tuna, skipjack tuna, and grouper, which fishermen supply daily to local markets and the fish processing industry. In addition to fisheries potential, other potential supporting the empowerment of MSMEs are forest products such as sago, red fruit, and various spices, which are essential raw materials for MSMEs in culinary and health products. These local ingredients not only possess high nutritional value but also hold local wisdom that can be leveraged as attractive Papuan products. Thus, these abundant natural resources provide a significant opportunity for local MSMEs to develop superior products that are unique and competitive in regional and national markets.

Furthermore, based on the results of an interview with informant Mrs. Yuliana Ayenu, an MSME actor, it was stated that;

"...Raw materials in Sorong are abundant, especially fishery products. Fishermen supply us almost every day. This greatly helps our efforts in producing smoked fish and fish floss." 2025. (Interview, August 31).

The results of the interview with informant Mrs. Yuliana Ayenu, who is a representative of the Cooperatives and MSMEs Service of Sorong City, stated that; "It is well known that Papua's rich natural resources, particularly marine and forest products, are the primary capital for the development of MSMEs. We, as the government, simply need to direct the development of this region's potential into value-added products." (Interview, August 2025)

Based on the interviews conducted, it was discovered that Sorong City possesses abundant natural resource potential, significantly supporting the development of local MSMEs in the city.

2. Regulatory support

One important factor supporting the empowerment of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City is regulatory support from both the central and regional governments. These regulations encompass not only general regulations regarding MSMEs but also specific regulations derived from the Papuan context through the Papuan Special Autonomy Law (Otsus). The articles of the Papuan Special Autonomy Law emphasize that the provincial and district/city governments have special authority to improve the welfare of the Papuan people, including through the development of the people's economy and the empowerment of local businesses within indigenous Papuans. With this special autonomy, the Sorong City government has a strong legal basis to allocate special funds to support MSMEs, provide affirmation to indigenous Papuan entrepreneurs, and prioritize them in various training and capital assistance programs.

Based on the results of interviews with informants from the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Service, Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa stated that;

"I think the government is very concerned about local Papuan MSMEs. It's important to note that Papua is a region granted special autonomy and given affirmative action to address the welfare of indigenous Papuans. Therefore, there are already regional regulations (Perda) and policies that support MSME empowerment, such as protecting local businesses and providing assistance to local Papuan MSMEs." (Interview, August 2025)

Furthermore, the results of an interview with informant Yuliana Yenu, a local MSME actor, stated that;

"We feel helped by the special autonomy program. Without it, we might have struggled to obtain capital assistance. But with a special program from the local government, our business has been able to operate and thrive to this day." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Based on the interviews, it was revealed that the Sorong City government, specifically the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, has provided regulations related to the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City. Therefore, the regulations, particularly through the Papua Special Autonomy Law, serve as an affirmative action instrument that strengthens the institutions and competitiveness of local MSMEs and enables the creation of greater economic justice for competitive and independent indigenous Papuan MSMEs.

B. Inhibiting Factors

1. Limited access to capital

One of the main obstacles faced by local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City is limited access to capital. Most MSMEs still rely on personal capital or even family loans to run their businesses. Access to formal financial institutions like banks is often limited because MSMEs lack collateral, complete business administration, or adequate financial track records. This situation makes it difficult for them to expand or increase production capacity.

Based on the results of interviews with informants from the Cooperatives and MSMEs Service of Sorong City, Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa stated that:

"...Capitalization is indeed still a major obstacle. The government has actually collaborated with us in distributing the People's Business Credit (KUR), but many local MSMEs still struggle to meet the administrative requirements. We continue to strive to find ways to provide easier financing schemes." (Interview, August 5, 2025)

Furthermore, the results of an interview with an informant from the local MSME actors in Sorong City, Yuliana Yenu, stated that;

"...It's very difficult for us to borrow money from the bank because we're always asked for collateral. Even though our business is running, we can't get a loan without a land certificate or collateral." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Based on the results of interviews with informants, information was obtained that access to capital is one of the inhibiting factors in the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

2. Low human resources

Low human resource capacity, particularly in managerial, entrepreneurial, and financial literacy, is also a serious obstacle. Many MSMEs lack the skills to manage their businesses professionally, such as financial record keeping, marketing strategies, or the use of digital technology. This situation makes it difficult for MSMEs to compete in an increasingly open market.

Based on the results of an interview with informant Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa from the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Service, it was stated that:

"So, the majority of local MSMEs in Sorong City are still family-owned businesses. Marketing and digitalization are still very low, and this is our main challenge as the local government." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of an interview with an informant from the local MSME actors in Sorong City, Yuliana Yenu, stated that;

"We can make products, but when it comes to marketing and calculating capital and profit, it's a challenge. Sometimes the business mixes with household needs. So, it's hard for me to know whether the business is making a profit or a loss." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Based on the results of interviews with informants, information was obtained that low human resources are one of the inhibiting factors in the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

3. Lack of training and mentoring

Although the local government has attempted to organize various training programs, their frequency and scope remain limited. Many MSMEs have never received training in entrepreneurship, product processing, or access to digital markets. The lack of ongoing mentoring also means that the knowledge and skills acquired are not always optimally implemented. An interview with Marta Rosita Sesa from the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office stated that:

"We have held training, but it hasn't been evenly distributed and hasn't reached all MSMEs. Frankly, our limited budget and human resources have limited our activities, even though the training should be ongoing." (Interview, August 5, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of an interview with an informant from the local MSME actors in Sorong City, Mrs. Yuliaana Yenu stated that;

"...Actually, we really need training to help develop our business. We did participate in training once, but after that, there was no follow-up. We really hope the government will provide training for us, local Papuan MSMEs." (Interview results, August 2025).

Based on the results of interviews with informants, information was obtained that the lack of is one of the inhibiting factors in the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

3. Policy Recommendations to Improve the Empowerment of Local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

The formulation of policy recommendations was obtained from the analysis of field findings combined with input from stakeholders through FGDs. The discussion process was carried out in a participatory manner involving local governments and MSMEs. With this approach, the resulting recommendations are expected to be not only conceptual, but also applicable according to the real needs of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City. The results of the interviews showed a common view from various parties. From the side of the local government, especially the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, it was acknowledged that the role of the local government has been running, but has not been optimal. Based on the results of interviews with informants, Mrs. Marta Rosita Sesa from the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office from the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, stated that;

"We actually already have several MSME empowerment programs, such as entrepreneurship training and the Small Business Credit (KUR) program. However, many are still not fully utilized due to budget limitations and limited human resources. We hope that the development of local MSMEs will continue." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of the interview with MSME actor Mrs. Yuliana Yenua stated that;

"...There is indeed training, but it's not routine and only happens occasionally. There should be ongoing support after the training. We are also struggling with capital, so we hope for capital assistance from the government. It would be better if there was ongoing support from the government. If possible, the government could establish a cooperative specifically for Papuans, as there are cooperatives." (Interview, August 31, 2025).

Based on the interview results, it was obtained that the Sorong City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office has implemented several programs to empower local MSMEs, such as entrepreneurship training and facilitating access to business credit. However, these efforts face various challenges, especially in terms of budget and limited available human resources. These conditions have resulted in existing programs being less than fully optimized. Therefore, the government hopes that the development of local MSMEs can run more sustainably. In addition, based on the results of interviews with MSME actors, it was obtained that they hoped the government could provide a capital assistance scheme through the establishment of a cooperative specifically for indigenous Papuans

to provide them with access to cheaper capital while strengthening economic solidarity among indigenous Papuans. Thus, the results of this study indicate that the provision of continuous mentoring and easier access to capital for local Papuan MSMEs is a policy recommendation to strengthen the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results that have been presented above, there are several conclusions; The Sorong City Regional Government, in this case the Cooperatives and MSMEs Service, has a strategic role in the development of local MSMEs in Sorong City, which is carried out through two functions, namely as a facilitator and as a catalyst. Supporting factors for the development of local MSMEs in Sorong City include abundant natural resources and affirmative action policies in the form of the implementation of the Papuan special autonomy law. Inhibiting factors include limited access to capital, low human resource capacity, and a lack of ongoing training and mentoring. The provision of ongoing mentoring and easier access to capital for local Papuan MSMEs is a policy recommendation to strengthen the development of local Papuan MSMEs in Sorong City.

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