

Communication In The Meratus Geopark Community For Job Diversification and Innovation In Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Communication
Meratus Geopark
Opinion Leader
Job Diversification
Innovation
Rural

This study aims to determine and describe how communication in the Meratus Geopark community in carrying out job diversification as an effort to improve the economy. The research was conducted in Belangian Village, Aranio Subdistrict, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province, which is included in the Meratus Geopark area which has been designated by the Indonesian National Geopark Committee (KNGI) as an Indonesian National Geopark in 2018 and the first Geopark in Kalimantan. This research uses data collection techniques of documentation, observation, and in-depth interviews. Qualitative data from key informants, farmers and gardeners will be elaborated in FGD activities. The collected data is then processed using qualitative data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman. Based on the results of the research, it was found that communication in the community in Belangian village has a very important opinion leader role in job diversification. The role of opinion leader is the role of leader, innovator, motivator, visual information center, and role model. With this role, opinion leaders have succeeded in providing innovations in rural employment diversification that can increase community income.

1. Introduction

The Meratus Geopark is not only a symbol of pride due to its geological and ecological diversity in South Kalimantan, but it also serves as a vital key in the economic empowerment of local communities. The economic transformation of communities surrounding the geopark area has become an intense topic of debate and discussion, particularly given its yet-to-be-fully-tapped potential.

In the midst of abundant natural wealth, the paradox of poverty and the lack of economic diversification remain a perplexing dilemma. The fading of local wisdom in natural resource management has been identified as a concern, emphasizing the need to harmonize resource utilization with the surrounding environment and local communities (Hidayati, 2017).

Initiatives have been taken to involve local communities in tourism and natural conservation efforts; however, these efforts are often hindered by a lack of knowledge and skills in sustainable resource management. In the context of rural economic development, community-based initiatives such as entrepreneurship education for home industries have been shown to enhance local economic creativity and utilize local resources effectively (Rossanty et al., 2022).

An aspect often overlooked is the crucial need to build strong social infrastructure, which creates a conducive environment for innovation and economic development. This paper proposes a comprehensive approach, integrating development communication theory and social network theory to leverage opinion leaders, as derived from Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory (2003), as catalysts in promoting and encouraging the adoption of innovative and sustainable business practices among local communities.

In the context of increasing the income of rural communities, the role of opinion leaders is very important. Opinion leaders are individuals who have great influence in the community and are able

to motivate and guide others. They can be role models who inspire people to try new things, including occupational diversification.

As a concrete example of the role of opinion leaders, we can see what happened in Belangian village. This village is located in a rural area that has a long history as a traditional agricultural area. Previously, the majority of Belangian villagers depended on working as field or tugal farmers. However, thanks to the initiative of an opinion leader who is respected by the community, they managed to switch to peanut and chili farming.

This innovation has not only changed the way they generate income, but has also had a significant positive impact on their well-being. These new agricultural jobs bring higher and more stable incomes, helping Belangian villagers to escape the cycle of poverty that often haunts farmers. They now have greater economic freedom, allowing them to fulfill their basic needs and even invest in education and healthcare for their families.

This diversification of occupations also creates local employment opportunities, reduces the unemployment rate and increases purchasing power in Belangian village. It also strengthens social ties among the community, as they work together on this new agricultural venture. A visionary opinion leader not only succeeded in creating alternative jobs but also stimulated the entrepreneurial spirit among the community.

It is important to remember that job diversification is not just about income. It is also about giving rural communities a wider range of choices in how they earn money and live. This gives them more control over their lives and allows them to participate more actively in their local economy.

While occupational diversification in Belangian village is a successful example, there are still many questions that need to be answered in this context. These questions have a significant impact on how we understand the role of opinion leaders in the development of alternative rural employment. Some of the important questions that need to be addressed in this research include:

1. How can we identify the characteristics of opinion leaders who play a role in innovative work diversification within the communities surrounding Meratus Geopark, particularly in Belangian village?
2. What are the features of alternative employment options provided by opinion leaders?
3. How do we understand the role of opinion leaders in the process of information diffusion and the innovation of alternative work in the community?

This research has great significance in the context of rural development and rural community welfare. Through a deeper understanding of the role of opinion leaders in driving rural employment diversification, we can develop more effective strategies to increase the income of rural communities.

This study aims to enrich the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of how the theory of innovation diffusion and social networks can be applied within the context of geoparks and local economic development. This contribution is significant not only at a theoretical level but also practically, offering new insights into approaches for sustainable community economic development.

In addition, this research can also provide valuable insights for policy makers. They can use the findings of this research to design programs that support the welfare of rural communities and address their anxiety in the face of changing times. As such, this research can contribute positively to efforts to address the issues of anxiety faced by rural communities in this global village era. This paper goes a step further by identifying the critical role of opinion leaders in facilitating this relationship, a component that is often overlooked. The aim of this research is to identify and analyze the role of opinion leaders in the communication processes that facilitate job diversification in the Meratus Geopark.

Meanwhile, actual studies related to opinion leaders today are more directed at activities in the media, especially social media. Like the studies conducted by (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018; Bobkowski, 2015; Lin et al., 2018; Turcotte et al., 2015; Zhang & Gong, 2021). Specifically, we found studies on the role of opinion leaders geared towards communal activities in Health services (Disch et al., 2016a; Flodgren G & Grimshaw, 2019; Locock et al., 2001; van den Nieuwboer et al., 2016).. The main problem at the center of this research is that studies on the role of opinion leaders in rural areas have received little attention from researchers. This is especially true of their role as

drivers of innovation and job diversification in rural areas. Some similar studies do not focus on the issue of innovation and job diversification. (Flodgren G & Grimshaw, 2019; Lamm et al., 2016; Matous & Wang, 2019; Mubarak et al., 2021; Nurazira et al., 2021b; Yusnita et al., 2016).. Some local studies have not touched on the central point in the search for opinion leader characteristics of rural job innovation and diversification (Cantika, 2023; Nurazira et al., 2021b; Yusnita et al., 2016). (Cantika, 2023; Nurazira et al., 2021; Yulianto, 2023; Yusnita et al., 2016).

This research aims to provide both empirical and theoretical evidence supporting the use of social networks and opinion leaders as tools to accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices. As a result, policy recommendations and economic development programs can be directed to strengthen social networks and encourage the involvement of opinion leaders.

By highlighting the role of local communities and opinion leaders, this study underscores the importance of a bottom-up, community-based approach in achieving sustainable development in the Meratus Geopark. It aims to support global initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

In other words, the presentation of this paper seeks to make a significant contribution to the literature on sustainable local economic development, community development, and geopark studies, while providing a framework that can be applied in similar settings worldwide. This research will delve deeper into what makes opinion leaders successful in motivating people to try new things, as well as the positive impact of job diversification on the welfare of rural communities. Through this research, we can provide a better understanding of how to address the anxieties of rural communities and give them hope for a better future. This research can also make a real contribution to achieving sustainable and inclusive rural development.

1.1 State of the Arts

Geopark Meratus, located in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, is part of the broader geopark network that has been the subject of extensive research and analysis. Studies have focused on various aspects of geoparks, including geodiversity assessments, the global research landscape on geoparks, and the societal embedding of geoparks. Research has highlighted the importance of assessing geodiversity and geosites within geoparks to understand their scientific and educational value (Muslim et al., 2022). Additionally, a bibliometric analysis has provided insights into the worldwide research trends on geoparks, emphasizing the significant number of journal articles dedicated to this topic (Herrera-Franco et al., 2021). Furthermore, a systematic literature review has called for increased attention to the societal aspects of geoparks, stressing the need to analyze human-environment interactions and promote sustainable development within geopark communities (Stoffelen, 2019).

These studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of geoparks, including their geological significance, research trends, and community involvement. By synthesizing these findings, researchers and policymakers can enhance the management and promotion of geoparks like Meratus to ensure their long-term sustainability and positive impact on local communities.

The research conducted in Desa Belangian, Kecamatan Aranio, Kabupaten Banjar, Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan, aims to understand and describe how communication among the community of Geopark Meratus residents facilitates job diversification to enhance the local economy. The study focuses on the role of opinion leaders in driving job diversification efforts. The findings highlight the crucial role of opinion leaders as leaders, innovators, motivators, information hubs, and role models in introducing innovative job diversification initiatives that boost the community's income (Eck et al., 2011).

Opinion leaders play a significant role in influencing behaviors and promoting evidence-based practices, driving innovation diffusion, and enhancing professional practices, leading to positive outcomes (Flodgren et al., 2011). The study emphasizes the importance of community participation in selecting opinion leaders to overcome challenges and ensure successful knowledge dissemination (Feder & Savastano, 2006).

Furthermore, the research underscores the need for policy strategies to develop Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through geoproducts to enhance economic activities and income sources in geopark areas (Butolo, 2022). Geoparks, like the one in the study area, are essential for

sustainability and require active community involvement in their development and management (Zuvara et al., 2022).

In the other side, the study sheds light on the pivotal role of opinion leaders in fostering job diversification initiatives within the Geopark Meratus community. By leveraging the influence and innovative capabilities of opinion leaders, communities can drive economic growth and enhance livelihoods through diversified job opportunities.

Meanwhile, previous studies tend to focus on infrastructure development and promotion without giving ample attention to the social and cultural aspects, which are vital for the acceptance and sustainability of any economic initiative. This paper argues that there is a strong need for a deeper integration of social communication aspects in the process of job diversification, particularly through the role of local opinion leaders who can act as catalysts in changing community's economic perceptions and behaviors.

The rural development in the Meratus Geopark is inseparable from the role of opinion leaders, given the rural situation which is still rudimentary in terms of both human resources and economic capabilities. Subsistence villages need not only innovation but also examples of application and innovation to diversify into more productive work that can change their living conditions for the better.

Theoretical Overview

1.2 The Meratus Geopark

The Meratus Geopark, located in the Meratus Mountains of South Kalimantan, Indonesia, has garnered attention for its potential in eco-geotourism and ecotourism development (Normelani et al., 2022; Normelani et al., 2021). The government has been actively involved in preserving the Meratus Mountains through the establishment of the Meratus Geopark (Cahyadi, 2022). Additionally, the region has been a subject of geological studies, including a case study on carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects (Irzon, 2024). Efforts have been made to achieve UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) status for the Meratus Geopark, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting the site as a global geotourism destination (Choirunnisa et al., 2022).

The potential for ecotourism and geotourism in the Meratus Geopark has been a focal point of research, emphasizing the importance of sustainable development and responsible travel practices in the natural ecosystem (Normelani et al., 2022; Normelani et al., 2021). Furthermore, the government's diplomatic efforts to obtain UGG status for the geopark highlight the significance of international recognition and collaboration in promoting geotourism (Choirunnisa et al., 2022).

The Meratus Geopark in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, has been the subject of various studies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable ecotourism, geotourism, and geological preservation. The government's involvement and research focus on the region's potential for tourism development underscore its significance as a geotourism destination with global recognition aspirations.

1.3 Job Diversification Innovation

So far, the innovations carried out are loaded with concepts translated from definitions that emphasize the element of novelty. This has implications for the innovation model, planning and main programs launched by the government. Some experts define innovation as something new or creative (Edquist et al., 2014). (Edquist et al., 2015; Morey et al., 1994; Rogers, 1993; Rosenfeld, 2002).. This was implemented by the government, among others, by issuing KepmenDesa PDTT No. 48 of 2018, which launched the Village Innovation Program (PID).

The Village Innovation Program (PID) can be interpreted as one of the government's efforts to improve the welfare of village communities through increasing village capacity in developing village development plans and implementation, which is focused on 3 program objectives including entrepreneurial development, improving Human Resources (HR), and procuring village infrastructure.

The main objective of the Village Innovation Program according to the Kementerian Desa above is to encourage higher quality, effective and efficient village development through various village community development & empowerment activities that are more innovative & sensitive to the needs of village communities so that in this case, this effort can encourage the productivity & economic growth of rural communities in a sustainable manner to improve the socio-economic welfare of the

community and village independence. (Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Jember, 2022).

According to an organization that cares about rural innovation DIGIDES (sponsored by Telkom Indonesia, Indigo, startup academy, Pasifik Nusantara and others), there are several programs that can be a reference for villages to innovate for the welfare of the village community, namely the BPJS independent village program (With independent BPJS, residents are expected to be able to do mutual cooperation for good. This is because the government's BPJS fee is often an obstacle for underprivileged residents); Well Technology for Water Supply in the Village (This program was carried out with the help of professionals from the Association of Water Users Pam (HIPPAM); Turning Waste Oil into PAD (BUMDes in one village has collaborated with PT Tirta Investama. Where the waste will be used as a fuel mixture product); Micro Hydro Power Plant (Residents together with experts make PLTMH innovations); Land Information Compilation Program Owned by Residents (This program is also accompanied by education about the importance of having land certificates by professionals); Integrated Waste Processing Site (Inorganic waste is processed into recycled crafts which of course also has a selling value). From the explanation above, it can be seen that innovation occurs because of a helping hand, and little develops local potential. This has the disadvantage that after the assistance is over, sustainability can be jeopardized and the potential of the village is less touched.

Innovation and diversification of jobs are important concepts in the field of business and entrepreneurship. Innovation refers to the process of introducing new ideas, products, or processes that bring about positive change and create value. (Alum & Drucker, 1986). It involves identifying opportunities, developing creative solutions, and implementing them in a way that leads to growth and success. (Deck, 2005). On the other hand, diversification of jobs refers to the expansion of job roles and responsibilities within an organization or industry. (Meilanda et al., 2020).. It involves creating new job positions, modifying existing ones, or combining different roles to enhance productivity and adapt to changing market demands.

Innovation and diversification of jobs are closely related concepts that can contribute to the growth and sustainability of businesses. By fostering a culture of innovation, organizations can encourage employees to think creatively, explore new ideas, and develop innovative solutions to challenges. (Hamid & Ismail, 2021). This can lead to the development of new products or services, improved processes, and increased competitiveness in the market. (Wirapraja & Aribowo, 2018). Additionally, innovation can also result in the creation of new job opportunities, as organizations expand their operations or venture into new markets (Alum & Drucker, 1986). (Alum & Drucker, 1986).

Diversification of jobs, on the other hand, can help organizations adapt to changing market conditions and reduce the risk of relying too heavily on a single product or service. (Meilanda et al., 2020). By diversifying job roles and responsibilities, organizations can ensure that they have the necessary skills and expertise to meet the evolving needs of their customers. (Jayanti & Artiningsih, 2020).. This can involve cross-training employees, hiring individuals with diverse backgrounds and skill sets, or outsourcing certain tasks to specialized professionals. (Astarini & Utomo, 2021). Diversification of jobs can also lead to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, as individuals are given the opportunity to learn and grow in their careers. (Dhamayantie & Fauzan, 2017)..

In conclusion, innovation and diversification of jobs are important concepts in the business and entrepreneurship field. Innovation involves the introduction of new ideas, products, or processes that create value and lead to growth and success. Diversification of jobs, on the other hand, refers to the expansion of job roles and responsibilities to adapt to changing market demands. Both concepts can contribute to the growth and sustainability of businesses by fostering creativity, improving processes, and adapting to market changes. By embracing innovation and diversification of jobs, organizations can position themselves for long-term success in a dynamic and competitive business environment.

1.4 Role of Opinion Leader

Opinion leaders play a significant role in influencing public opinion and shaping attitudes and behaviors. (Turcotte et al., 2015). In the context of social media, opinion leaders are individuals who

have a significant following and are seen as credible sources of information (Turcotte et al., 2015). (Turcotte et al., 2015). They have the ability to shape public opinion through their recommendations and endorsements (Mubarak et al., 2015). (Mubarak et al., 2021). Opinion leaders can be found in various domains, including politics, agriculture, and marketing.

In the political realm, opinion leaders are often referred to as "buzzers" or "netizens" (Yulianto, 2023). They have the power to influence public opinion and shape political discourse through their online activities. These opinion leaders are seen as influential figures who can sway public opinion in favor of certain political candidates or parties.

In the agricultural sector, opinion leaders play a crucial role in communication within farming communities (Nurazira et al., 2021). They are individuals who are respected and trusted by their peers and have the ability to disseminate information and influence decision-making processes. Opinion leaders in this context can provide guidance and advice to farmers, helping them make informed choices and adopt new practices.

In the realm of marketing and social media, opinion leaders are often referred to as "key opinion leaders" (KOLs). (Cantika, 2023). These individuals have a strong presence on social media platforms and are seen as trustworthy sources of information and recommendations. Companies often collaborate with KOLs to promote their products or services, leveraging their influence and reach to target specific audiences.

Overall, opinion leaders have the power to shape public opinion, influence decision-making processes, and drive behavior change. Their credibility, reach, and ability to connect with their audience make them valuable assets in various domains, including politics, agriculture, and marketing.

1.5 The Role of Opinion Leaders in Rural Areas

Opinion leaders play a crucial role in rural areas, influencing public opinion and shaping attitudes and behaviors within these communities. In the context of rural development and governance, opinion leaders can have a significant impact on decision-making processes and the management of village funds. (Budiati et al., 2020; Hamzah & Asy'ari, 2023). They are individuals who are respected and trusted by the community, and their opinions and recommendations carry weight (Budiati et al., 2020).

In the realm of rural development, opinion leaders can help disseminate information and promote the adoption of new practices. They can play a vital role in communicating with farmers and guiding them in making informed choices. Opinion leaders in rural areas can provide valuable insights and advice on agricultural practices, helping farmers improve their productivity and sustainability. (Shofia et al., 2022).

Furthermore, opinion leaders in rural areas can also influence the perception and acceptance of government policies and initiatives. (Mada et al., 2017). Their role in shaping public opinion can impact the level of trust and accountability in the management of village funds. (Hamzah & Asy'ari, 2023; Mada et al., 2017). Effective communication and collaboration with opinion leaders can enhance transparency and ensure the efficient utilization of resources. (Hamzah & Asy'ari, 2023; Mada et al., 2017).

In the digital age, the role of opinion leaders in rural areas has expanded to include online platforms and social media (Balci et al., 2022; Turcotte et al., 2015). Opinion leaders can leverage social media platforms to reach a wider audience and disseminate information (Turcotte et al., 2015). They can use their influence to advocate for rural development issues, raise awareness, and mobilize support (Balci et al., 2015). (Balci et al., 2022). Online opinion leaders can also facilitate knowledge sharing and networking among rural communities, fostering collaboration and innovation (Balci et al., 2022). (Balci et al., 2022; Turcotte et al., 2015).

In conclusion, opinion leaders in rural areas play a crucial role in influencing public opinion, shaping attitudes and behaviors, and driving rural development. Their credibility, trustworthiness, and ability to connect with the community make them valuable assets in decision-making processes, agricultural practices, and the management of village funds. With the advent of digital platforms, opinion leaders in rural areas can extend their reach and impact, contributing to the development and empowerment of rural communities.

2. Method

This research approaches the object of research to collect qualitative data holistically. Primary data collection is done directly in the field (field research). Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from library research. This research was conducted in Kabupaten Banjar, Kecamatan Aranio, specifically in Belangian Village as part of The Meratus Geopark. The village is a combination of wetlands and hills.

Informants were selected based on predetermined criteria, then from the previous informant the next informant was obtained to fulfill the required data. Validity is obtained by performing triangulation techniques in collecting data from informants.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Presenting the Results

Based on the snowball technique, seven informants were selected who have professional backgrounds as: Farmer and shop owner, support opinion leader, main opinion leader, village secretary, boat driver, former head of social organization and village head. More details can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Background of Research Informants

No.	Informant	Profession
1	Informant 1	Farmer and shop owner
2	Informant 2	Support opinion leaders
3	Informant 3	Main opinion Leader
4	Informant 4	Village secretary
5	Informant 5	Boat driver
6	Informant 6	Former head of social organization
7	Informant 7	Village head

From the informants above, data was collected related to job diversification innovations in Belangian Village. This village is a supplier of plantation products in the form of peanuts and chilies that are able to provide tons per week, so that this village is the largest supplier of these two commodities in Kabupaten Banjar. The village's ability to supply peanuts, chilies and tomatoes outside the region has significantly increased the community's income, making them quite prosperous.

The above fact is inseparable from the role of opinion that has certain characteristics, it can be captured by an opinion leader who likes to look out (visionary), or has a curiosity about the other world. Then it was also revealed that the person concerned saw something from both positive and negative aspects, and reflected it on his or her situation or society. So in addition to being visionary, the person concerned is wise (fair) in judging things.

From the interview excerpt, it can be seen that opinion leaders learn a lot from their parents. It is not excessive if in the future the opinion leader becomes an optimistic, honest, and religious person. On another occasion, it was seen that the opinion leader is a person who is well known (credible) and helpful (care) and even a person who has stable self-esteem (seft convident). This is recorded from the exposure of the person concerned interacting with his friend when he met in the holy land of Makkah who wanted to give a considerable amount of money which the opinion leader refused to give.

Opinion leader is also a consistent person, this can be seen, among others, when he promised to send his parents and wife to Hajj he kept it, even though there was no demand to keep the promise. Opinion leaders are people who are good at seeing opportunities and utilizing them (use opportunity). This can be understood in addition to being a farmer and breeder, the opinion leader is also a buyer or collector of small gold in the mine and sells it again to gold traders in Martapura and Banjarmasin.

Opinion leaders are risk-takers, optimistic and best negotiators. This can be understood, among other things, by how he made a profit by buying diamonds from his in-laws and then selling them at multiple prices to bona fide diamond buyers and sellers. The 4 (four) crates of diamonds bought from his in-laws for Rp 4 million could be sold for Rp 12 million.

Occupations that have succeeded in increasing the income of the people of Belangian village are peanut, chili and tomato farming as well as cattle and buffalo raising. Peanut, chili and tomato farming can be practiced by intercropping on the same land. In Belangian village, these three crops are planted in between tugal rice plants. They can be harvested 2 to 3 times a year. It is a plantation product that is needed by the wider community so that marketing is easy. In addition, the price is quite expensive and stable, so it can bring significant profits.

Cattle and buffalo are animals that are needed every day by the community at large. They can be sold once they are big enough, and are generally sold once a year. Although they are sold once a year, due to the high selling price, the average monthly income is quite large.

It should be noted that the innovation of occupational diversification among the people of Belangian village is carried out evenly, through imitation of opinion leader behavior. The success of the opinion leader in gardening, and with these results he appears as an economically capable person, apparently makes the community moved to imitate what he does. So, the opinion leader does not actively invite people to switch from their main job to gardening and livestock raising. So, the opinion leader does not spread his success to the public, but the public itself actively observes what the opinion leader does and then imitates it.

3.2. Create a Discussion

In the research on job diversification innovations in Belangian Village, the snowballing technique was used to find relevant informants. From this technique, seven informants with diverse professional backgrounds were identified. These informants reflect various aspects of the Belangian Village community, ranging from farmer and shop owner to village head.

Belangian Village, which has been recognized as the main supplier of peanut and chili plantations in Kabupaten Banjar, shows significant economic potential. The village's prowess in supplying groundnuts and chillies indicates an innovation in occupational diversification that has increased community income. This diversification does not only seem to stem from personal initiative, but is also influenced by the role of opinion leaders in the village.

Opinion leaders have characteristics that make them a source of inspiration for the community. His vision allows him to see opportunities beyond his immediate surroundings. His visionary nature is supported by the ability to assess things from various perspectives, making him a wise and fair person. From the interviews, it was revealed that the formation of the opinion leader's character was influenced by the values taught by his parents.

The opinion leader's success in business is based not only on his skills in spotting opportunities, but also his ability to interact with others, personal integrity, and risk-taking. For example, his decision to buy diamonds from his in-laws and then sell them at three times the profit shows his sharpness in negotiating and making business decisions.

The main occupations that have diversified the income of Belangian villagers are gardening and livestock farming. The use of land for intercropping allows them to increase land productivity and earn a more stable income. Crops such as peanuts, chili, and tomatoes, which have a high demand in the market, provide significant economic benefits to the villagers. On the other hand, raising cattle and buffalo offers a substantial income even though they are only sold once a year.

What is interesting about this phenomenon is how the people of Belangian Village chose to adopt this occupational diversification. Not through active promotion from opinion leaders, but through observation and imitation of the opinion leader's successful behavior. This indicates that in this context, the role of the opinion leader is more passive. Their success is modeled and imitated by the surrounding community, not the result of active persuasion or campaigning efforts.

In the research findings, occupational diversification in Belangian Village shows how important the role of an opinion leader is in influencing people's economic choices and behavior. Although not

actively promoting diversification, the success and behavior of opinion leaders has inspired the community to adopt new profitable practices.

Belangian Village marks a success story in the field of rural employment diversification. But what makes this village stand out and how do opinion leaders play a key role in this economic transformation? Through an in-depth analysis of the data, we can extract the following key arguments that explain this phenomenon.

3.2.1 Importance of Job Diversification

In many villages, residents tend to have one or two main sources of income, often related to agriculture or fishing. In Belangian Village, while groundnuts and chillies are the main commodities, there is an opportunity for further diversification in the form of livestock farming and trading in gold and diamonds. This diversification is important because:

- **Risks:** Relying on one or two sources of income makes communities vulnerable to price fluctuations or natural disasters. Diversification can reduce this risk.
- **Stability:** With multiple sources of income, people are more likely to have a stable cash flow, allowing them to invest back into their communities and families.
- **Opportunities:** Diversification creates new opportunities, both in employment and in education and training, that may not be available if people only focus on one source of income.

3.2.2 Role of Opinion Leader

Opinion leaders play a significant role in shaping and guiding communities. But what makes opinion leaders in Belangian Village so influential?

- **Character and Integrity:** From the data provided, opinion leaders in Belangian Village are known to have the characteristics of visionary, wise, fair and religious. This integrity builds trust within the community, which is important for influence and credibility.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** This opinion leader is not only well known in the community, but also has strong negotiation skills, as seen in the diamond sales story.
- **Risk Taking Ability:** Innovation requires the ability to see opportunities and the willingness to take risks. The opinion leader in Belangian Village demonstrated both of these qualities, buying diamonds from his in-laws and selling them at three times the profit.

3.2.3 Imitation as an Innovation Adoption Mechanism

One interesting finding from the data is that Belangian villagers adopt innovations through imitation of opinion leader behavior, rather than through active promotion on the part of opinion leaders. This underscores two important points:

- **Indirect Impact of Opinion Leaders:** Although opinion leaders do not actively promote diversification, their own behavior sets an example that makes a big impact. This shows that concrete actions are more influential than words.
- **Community Readiness to Innovate:** The adoption of innovations through imitation shows that the people of Belangian Village are ready to innovate. They just need a model or guide.

3.2.4 Sustainability and Future Potential

Based on the success of Belangian Village, there is great potential for replication in other villages. However, for that, some important considerations include:

- **Training and Education:** Adopting innovations requires skills and knowledge. Training programs for communities can increase adoption and success of occupational diversification.
- **Funding and Investment:** Sustainable occupational diversification requires investment, whether in capital, infrastructure or technology.

3.2.5 Social Interaction and Information Networks

It cannot be ignored that the snowball technique was used to select informants, indicating that there are strong social networks in Belangian Village. These networks not only helped in sampling the research, but also played a role in information dissemination and innovation adoption.

- **Information Dissemination:** Social networks allow information to spread quickly. When opinion leaders try a new innovation and it works, the news spreads quickly among the community, accelerating adoption by others.
- **Social Support:** Social networks also provide social support for community members who want to try the innovation but may be hesitant or need help.

3.2.6 Local and National Economic Environment

Belangian village seems to have geographical and economic advantages that allow them to become the main supplier of groundnuts and chili in Banjar district. But what makes these commodities so successful?

- **Economic Growth:** National or regional economic growth can increase demand for certain products. Greater access to markets, perhaps due to better infrastructure or changes in trade policies, can increase demand and prices.
- **Agricultural Innovation:** The use of improved farming techniques, such as crop rotation, can increase yields and product quality, giving Belangian Village farmers a competitive advantage.

3.2.8 Challenges and Future Outlook

While Belangian Village has enjoyed significant success in diversifying employment, it is important to consider the potential challenges ahead.

Dependence on a Few Commodities: While occupational diversification reduces risk, over-reliance on a few commodities can still be risky in the event of sudden changes in demand or prices.

- **Education and Training:** To ensure that future generations in Belangian Village can continue and expand diversified employment, ongoing education and training is key.
- **Environmental Changes:** Climate change and other environmental factors can affect agricultural productivity. Belangian Village needs to prepare itself with adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In the context of local economic development, the role of opinion leaders in a community can be a key factor in promoting innovation and job diversification. This research discusses the characteristics and important role of opinion leaders in creating economic opportunities in Belangian Village. Specifically, this paper explores the characteristics of vision, ability to capitalise on opportunities, integrity and the inspirational role that opinion leaders play in driving sustainable economic growth and welfare improvements in their communities.

The first characteristic worth exploring is the visionary nature of the opinion leaders in Belangian Village. They have the foresight to see economic opportunities and potential that others may miss. This foresight is a key cornerstone in creating new and diverse jobs in the community. With the ability to anticipate economic trends and market needs, opinion leaders can identify areas with growth potential, creating opportunities for villagers to innovate and create relevant jobs.

Optimism and self-confidence are also important characteristics of opinion leaders. High self-confidence enables them to overcome obstacles and barriers that may arise in implementing their innovative ideas. Their optimism is also contagious, motivating people to take risks in new ventures. In an often uncertain economic environment, the positive attitude of opinion leaders can be an important driver of local economic development.

Furthermore, the ability of opinion leaders to take advantage of economic opportunities is a critical factor in the success of employment diversification in Belangian Village. They have the ability to see the economic potential in various enterprises such as peanut, chilli and tomato farming. These enterprises have significant advantages such as multiple harvests per year, intercropping and high selling prices. By promoting and supporting these enterprises, opinion leaders open the door for villagers to engage in promising economic sectors.

Opinion leaders also introduce cattle and/or buffalo rearing to the community. This work is characterised by ease of maintenance, daily community support and involvement, and high selling prices that tend to increase each year. This makes it a profitable and attractive option for the community. In this way, opinion leaders support employment diversification not only through agriculture, but also through the livestock sector.

The importance of integrity in the leadership of opinion leaders cannot be overlooked. Belangian villagers see opinion leaders as honest, caring and trustworthy individuals. They uphold religious values and create strong bonds and relationships with the community. This integrity provides a strong moral foundation for economic innovation and job diversification. People are more likely to follow leaders they trust and respect, and the integrity of opinion leaders provides a solid foundation for successful cooperation in addressing economic challenges.

It should be noted that the role of opinion leaders is not limited to offering alternative jobs directly to the public. Rather, they serve as role models for community members to follow. Through their actions and success in creating innovative jobs, opinion leaders inspire people to take bold steps in developing their own businesses. They pave the way for sustainable economic growth by providing tangible examples of how thinking creatively and taking measured risks can lead to economic success.

Finally, this study illustrates the important role of opinion leaders in job diversification innovation in Belangian. Characteristics such as vision, optimism, confidence, ability to seize opportunities, honesty, caring, integrity and negotiation skills are key building blocks that enable them to create positive change in their communities. As role models and inspirations to the community, they not only create new economic opportunities, but also empower the community to achieve sustainable economic growth and improve overall well-being. As such, Belangian Village's opinion leaders play a very important role in stimulating local economic development and improving the quality of life for villagers.

4. Conclusion

In this study, we explored the role of opinion leaders in driving job diversification innovation in Belangian Village. Based on the results of our research, we were able to identify some key characteristics of opinion leaders that play a role in influencing the community in creating new jobs.

The first characteristic is visionary. Opinion leaders in Belangian Village have foresight and are able to see the opportunities and potential that exist to create new jobs. They are also optimistic and confident, which enables them to overcome obstacles that may arise in realizing their innovative ideas. The ability of opinion leaders to take advantage of opportunities is also an important factor in the success of job diversification. They were able to see the economic potential in peanut, chili, and tomato farming. The advantages of this business include 2-3 harvests per year, ease of intercropping, and high selling prices.

In addition, opinion leaders also introduce cattle and/or buffalo farming to the community. This work is characterized by easy maintenance, daily community support and involvement, and high selling prices with a tendency to increase every year. This makes the job profitable and attractive to the community. The importance of integrity in leadership cannot be ignored. Opinion leaders in Belangian Village are considered honest, caring, trustworthy and have the qualities of the best negotiators. They treat everyone fairly, uphold religious values, and create strong bonds and relationships with the community.

It should be noted that opinion leaders do not directly offer alternative jobs to the community. Instead, they serve as examples that community members follow. They inspire people to take bold steps in creating innovative jobs.

In conclusion, this study shows that opinion leaders who possess characteristics such as vision, optimism, confidence, ability to capitalize on opportunities, honesty, caring, integrity, and negotiation skills play an important role in driving job diversification innovation in Belangian Village. In their role as role models and inspiration for the community, they effectively create positive change and empower the community to achieve sustainable economic growth and improved welfare.

5. Advice

The government has an important need to work with opinion leaders to develop rural job diversification innovations. Through collaboration with opinion leaders, the government can create significant changes by promoting the role of role models. In developing job diversification programs, opinion leaders can be influencers who inspire villagers to try new and diverse jobs.

Opinion leaders are figures who have influence and are respected by the surrounding community. They can communicate the needs of the community and inspire them to innovate and develop. By working with opinion leaders, the government can involve them in the establishment of rural employment diversification programs. Through role models demonstrated by opinion leaders, villagers can see real examples of the success and potential of different types of work. This will encourage them to develop new skills and take up available opportunities. By supporting opinion leaders, the government can create a conducive environment for innovation and job diversification in rural areas. This will help improve welfare and strengthen the local economy as well as reduce social inequality in the region.

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