

Local Economic Empowerment Model: Small and Medium Industry (IKM) in the Industry Service of Buton Regency

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study analyzes the local economic empowerment strategy of SMEs by the Buton Regency Industry Office using Ginanjar Kartasasmita's theory through the pillars of activation, empowerment, and protection. The agency's interventions successfully triggered an increase in production and business unit value through the Koholimombono Center, packaging mechanization training, and free legal facilitation "IKM IDAMAN". However, its effectiveness was hampered by inter-district logistics costs, low digital literacy due to the generation gap, and the vulnerability of downstream markets. As an operational solution, this study formulated the Regional Economic Empowerment Integration Model (MIPEL). This model proposes the establishment of sub-district logistics satellites, on-site digital assistance, and mandatory regulations for modern retailers to absorb SME product quotas for the sustainable independence of regional industries.

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Industries (SMEs) play a crucial role as the main foundation in maintaining domestic economic resilience against the shocks of global market uncertainty. Theoretically, this phenomenon is firmly rooted in *the Local Economic Development (LED) Theory*, which asserts that strengthening regional endogenous potential can trigger the multiplication of an inclusive and sustainable internal economy independently. The SME sector at the regional level not only functions as a driver of market transaction activities, but also emerges as a vital instrument in distributing community income and reducing the rate of unemployment structurally. Through the lens of *Ginanjari Kartasasmita's Empowerment Theory (1996)*, the regional development process must begin with the pillar of creating an atmosphere (*enabling*), namely building community potential by encouraging, motivating, and raising awareness of the economic wealth they possess. The theoretical construction of this *enabling pillar* is supported by recent research by (Agus Slamet, Safrin Salam¹, Rahma Fathan Hezradian¹, Rahmi Fathan Hezraria¹, Iskandar Salju¹ 2025) which found that local community awareness of the economic value of local wisdom in archipelagic regions is a crucial initial capital before the entry of external physical capital. As an archipelagic region with agro-maritime characteristics, the primary challenge to economic development in Buton Regency lies in fostering a conducive business climate that encourages local businesses to optimize the added value of commodities, ensuring that local raw materials are not distributed abroad in their raw form without processing. Therefore, accelerating small business performance requires structured policy interventions to transform traditional business units into modern entities with a competitive advantage in the national market.

In the implementation of regional autonomy, institutional agencies such as the Department of Industry hold the full mandate as the main facilitator and catalyst to translate these empowerment instruments into concrete public policies. This tactical step corresponds directly to the second pillar of the theory (Ginanjari Kartasasmita 1996), namely capacity strengthening (*empowering*), where the regional government is obliged to strengthen human capital and community institutions by improving the quality of production skills and opening access to technology. The relevance of this *empowering pillar* is in line with an empirical study from (Asrim Wa Ode Sara Suharsa 2024) which confirms that the effectiveness of the economic strengthening program in the Buton Islands cluster is largely determined by the intensity of technical training and continuous mentoring of micro-scale business groups. The urgency of this structural intervention is increasingly evident when juxtaposed with the latest demographic data from the Central Statistics Agency (Reka Sri Wigati et al. 2024) which shows that the population of Buton Regency has reached **121,720 people**, with the majority being in the abundant productive age range. This large proportion of productive age represents a massive industrial workforce potential and also poses a challenge in providing jobs, which the Buton Regency Industry Office has responded to through a technical capacity building program for high-value local commodities. As mandated by Buton Regent Regulation Number 7 of

2024, downstream processing optimization is directed at processing fishery products such as smoked fish sauce in the Koholimombono IKM Center area of Wabula District, cashew nut processing, and productive crafts such as natural dye weaving and nentu weaving to increase the economic scale of fostered business groups.

Despite their promising commodity potential, regional SMEs often face structural barriers that could potentially hinder their long-term business growth if they do not receive adequate protection. Based on *Structural Constraints Theory*, limited access to capital, weak quality standards, and low adoption of appropriate technology are the main obstacles for SMEs in developing regions to compete fairly. This is where the third pillar of Ginanjar Kartasasmita's (1996) Theory, namely protection, becomes an essential instrument to fortify weak groups to avoid unequal competition and prevent economic exploitation by aggressive penetration of foreign products. Justification for the need for this *protection aspect* is strengthened by findings (Rompas and Hos 2026), which explains that the failure of the sustainability of micro-enterprises in rural Buton is generally caused by the fragility of the legal aspects of business law and the weak bargaining power of local producers in the downstream supply chain. Through the integration of *the Theory of Diffusion of Innovations*, the Buton Regency Industry Office responded to this protection challenge by launching a policy innovation entitled "IKM IDAMAN" (Competitive, Advanced, and Independent) to facilitate legal guarantees in the form of fulfilling formal legality, quality standardization, halal certification, and protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The study by (Fathinasari et al., 2026) also emphasized that strengthening the local economy that ignores the aspects of formal legal protection and digital transformation will cause these local products to be eliminated quickly in the era of contemporary market openness.

As a tactical step in response to these dynamic obstacles, the Buton Regency Industry Office has implemented regional-based policies through the infrastructure development of the Koholimombono Small and Medium Enterprises Center and the strengthening of the digital industry database. These efforts represent a concrete manifestation of the synergy of *enabling, empowering, and protecting instruments*, integrating the use of local wisdom with measurable government program interventions. A similar evaluation of the importance of institutional governance synergy is also demonstrated by research (Tanzil, 2025), which proves that empowerment programs based on customs and local economic wisdom in the Buton region will reach their optimal point if fully supported by formal regulations from the regional bureaucracy. However, this previous research still leaves a research gap, where analysis that integrates the three pillars of the Kartasasmita empowerment instrument is needed. The integration of physical business climate (industrial centers), non-physical capacity building (digital training), and business protection facilitation (IPR legality) simultaneously within a single government agency is still very limited. Based on the empirical urgency and the literature gap, this research focuses on analyzing government agency strategies in creating a business climate (*enabling*), improving productive technology skills (*empowering*), and ensuring formal

product legality (*protecting*). The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness and formulate an ideal integration model of these three pillars of empowerment within the Buton Regency Industry Agency as a pilot model for adaptive, local wisdom-based, and digitally oriented regional industrial development.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Draft Empowerment (The Concept of Empowerment)

Contemporary Relational and Psychological Dimensions: In the current research landscape, power sharing is no longer simply a transfer of bureaucratic authority, but rather the adoption of an inclusive digital governance system. (Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020) updated this psychological dimension by linking it to the concept of *Digital Self-Efficacy* , where the confidence of local economic actors to make independent decisions in the modern era is largely determined by their level of adaptation to the digital technology ecosystem.

Transformative Sustainability Process: (Ndhlovu, 2025) emphasized that breaking the chains of structural dependency in the contemporary era requires *transformative empowerment* . *The success of the transition from powerlessness to self-reliance* is now measured by the resilience of local communities in the face of global supply chain disruptions and post-pandemic market fluctuations. (Ginanjar Kartasasmita, 1996) Empowerment Theory (1996)

Enabling Pillar Updates : Suharto et al. (Mustanir et al., 2023) argue, in a study of contemporary public policy, that the current *enabling climate requires integrating physical infrastructure with digital infrastructure. Physical centers will not function optimally without the provision of connectivity networks and local regulations that simplify electronic-based licensing bureaucracy (e-government)* .

Empowering Pillar Update : Capacity *building* is now shifting to mastering downstream technology and micro-scale packaging automation. Prasetyo (2023) stated that technical skills training for SMEs must focus on creating added value for local raw products so they can compete visually and qualitatively in the e-retail market.

Protecting Pillar Update : (Widiarty, 2023) emphasize that the state's protective function in the free market era does not take the form of indulgent subsidies, but rather *legal protectionism* . This includes facilitating free intellectual property rights (IPR), halal certification, and protecting local collective brands to protect domestic commodities from the impact of illegal imports.

3. Empowerment Models

Contemporary *Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Model* : Harrison and Baker (Widiarty, 2023) formulate repeat the ABCD model to *Digital ABCD* . They have an opinion that mapping internal assets of a region are not only includes natural and physical capital local , but also includes *digital assets* such as sectoral data perpetrator business and networking social community as the main capital driving force economy from in .

Partnership Model Synergistic (*Quadruple Helix Model*): *Triple Helix Model* classic now has develop become *Quadruple Helix* Carayannis et al (Interaction, 2021) . The latest model This confirm that partnership No Enough only involving Government , Academics , and Retail Private only , but must put Community /

Local Society (*Civil Society*) as the fourth active pillar control the implementation of the empowerment program to be appropriate target .

Empowerment Models

Community empowerment in its implementation refers to several contemporary institutional approach models:

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Model : Originally developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), this model has been updated by Harrison and Baker (Widiarty, 2023) in the modern era to become *the Digital ABCD Model* . This model assumes that empowerment must start from mapping internal assets and potentials that are already locally owned (both natural capital, physical capital, and sectoral data of domestic business actors), rather than focusing on deficiencies (*deficiency-based*) or dependence on external assistance.

Synergistic Partnership Model (*Quadruple Helix Model*): The classic *Triple Helix Model* (Government-Academics-Private Sector) has now been evolved into *the Quadruple Helix Model* by Carayannis et al. (Interaction, 2021). This latest model emphasizes that economic empowerment cannot be driven unilaterally by the bureaucracy, but rather requires an interactive organic synergy between the Government (regulator/protection), Academics (technology transfer/mentoring), the Private/Retail Sector (market absorber), and the Community/Local Community (*Civil Society*) as the fourth pillar that actively controls the program's implementation to ensure it reaches its target.

Collaborative Ecosystem- Based Empowerment Model : According to (Crona, 2016), modern empowerment models must shift from linear-topical interventions (such as simply providing instant training) to an integrated ecosystem approach. This model integrates improvements in production capacity from upstream (access to raw materials and standardization of tools) to downstream market interventions (distribution and marketing certainty), thus creating a self-sustaining empowerment cycle that is not easily collapsed by free market fluctuations.

Theoretical Dialogue (Synthesis of Empowerment Models): *A conceptual convergence has occurred between the Contemporary ABCD Model (Harrison & Baker, (Widiarty, 2023) and the Quadruple Helix Model Carayannis et al (Interaction, 2021). Both models agree that top-down interventions imposed by external parties without mapping the strength of a region's internal capital will fail. In Buton Regency, the integration of these two models has resulted in a real dialogue: internal assets mapped through the ABCD model (such as local commodities and the Koholimombono Center) are accelerated using a Quadruple Helix partnership pattern, where academics educate digital literacy, the government provides legal protection, and modern retail acts as a guarantor of downstream market absorption.*

METHODOLOGY

Study This apply approach qualitative descriptive with design studies case For dissect in a way in-depth service strategy based on reality specific regional context of research location set in a way intentionally (*purposive*) at the Buton Regency Industry Service and the Koholimombono IKM Center area in the District Wabula , with determination informant use technique *purposive sampling* which includes Head of Service, Head Field Empowerment , Village Head , and

representative group craftsmen fostered . Primary data was collected through structured in-depth interviews regarding the pillars of *enabling, empowering, and protecting* as well as direct observation of the efficiency of communal production spaces, while secondary data was obtained through documentation of internal agency reports, regional regulatory documents, and sectoral publications of the Central Statistics Agency. The data analysis technique adopted the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) (Miles, MB, Huberman, AM, and Saldana nd) which moves circularly including the stages of data condensation, data presentation into an expository matrix, and drawing conclusions whose validity was tested using source triangulation techniques to cross-examine verbal testimonies of business actors, quantitative data on official turnover, and physical reality in the field.

RESULTS

The Buton Regency Industry Office has implemented local economic empowerment instruments in a structured manner in the Small and Medium Industries (SME) sector. Based on the latest sectoral data collection, the regional industrial ecosystem is currently supported by 1,956 business units that absorb 3,463 local workers with a total asset investment value reaching Rp13,123,275,000. From this economic posture, this small-scale manufacturing cluster is able to contribute Rp8,129,100,550 to the region's real production value per month. This aggregate macroeconomic achievement is empirical evidence of the office's success in stimulating regional productivity based on superior commodities. The foundation of this success is firmly rooted in *the Local Economic Development (LED) Theory*. (Muhammad Rahmadani Lubis¹, Iskandar Zulkarnain² 2025) which is justified by research by the Journal of Sultra Research of Law (2024), where precise investment mapping in the manufacturing sector has been proven to be the main stimulus for the stability of community income in coastal areas.

In the enabling pillar , the department realizes this through the operation of the Koholimombono IKM Center strategic area in Wabula District as a joint production space for processing tuna fishery commodities into smoked fish sauce products. This policy is in line with the *enabling concept* of (Ginanjar Kartasasmita 1996) which emphasizes the importance of stimulating physical infrastructure to revive the latent economic potential of the community. This finding is supported by research (Agus Slamet^{1*}, Safrin Salam¹, Rahma Fathan Hezradian¹, Rahmi Fathan Hezraria¹, Iskandar Salju¹ 2025) which explains that the use of communal spaces based on local wisdom in the Buton Islands region has proven effective in triggering collective entrepreneurial awareness at the business initiation stage. However, through the lens of *Spatial Efficiency Theory* , the policy of centralizing physical facilities in one rural area has received sharp criticism because it triggers inequality in accessibility for thousands of IKM actors spread across 7 other districts. This counter argument is in line with the findings (Asrim, Wa Ode Sara Suharsa 2 2024) which stated that the development of physical infrastructure that is not accompanied by improvements in inter-island logistics in Buton actually creates new transaction cost burdens for the outermost micro-business actors.

the empowering pillar, the agency actively invests in human capital *through* technical training in culinary hygiene and modern packaging mechanization to optimize the potential of 121,720 productive-age residents. This skill-building pattern is fully supported by a study (Rostwentivaivi and Fizriani 2019), which proves that the transition from traditional manual procedures to standardized hygienic mechanization in the Buton region can increase the production output of household industries by up to 100%. Conversely, the effectiveness of this pillar is refuted by the *Techno-Social Resistance Theory argument*. (Muhammad Rahmadani Lubis¹, Iskandar Zulkarnain² 2025) who stated that the transfer of civil service technology often fails due to the generational gap. This empirical refutation is supported by research. Rusmadi (Malik et al. 2023) found that the adoption rate of independent technology post-training by MSMEs on the coast of Buton was still below 25% due to digital literacy constraints, limited wireless internet networks (*blank spots*), and communal habits that were reluctant to switch from conventional cash transactions.

Meanwhile, in the protection pillar, the launch of the policy innovation titled "IKM IDAMAN" (Competitive, Advanced, and Independent) serves as a legal shield that facilitates halal certification, Domestic Food Distribution Permits (MDN) from the Food and Drug Authority (POM), and free Intellectual Property Rights (HAKI) for Buton woven fabrics. This protective measure directly corresponds to a report (Sadat, Lawelai, and Basir 2025) which concluded that formal legal guarantees are an essential instrument for local products to move from the informal underground market to the modern retail supply chain. However, the achievements of this protection pillar have been strongly criticized by *the Selective Formalization Theory* (Lanamäki, Arto; Tuvikene 2021), which warns that forcing legal formalization on the small industry sector without a commitment to downstream market absorption will actually backfire on business continuity. This counter opinion is confirmed by a critical study by Sihidi (2025) which proves that hundreds of micro-business actors in rural areas of the Buton Islands who have obtained formal legality ultimately still go bankrupt due to high annual operational compliance costs that are not commensurate with sales volume due to being unable to compete with the penetration of manufacturing corporations outside the region.

To address the partial weaknesses of the three pillars in the field, this study formulated and operationalized a recommendation in the form of the Local Economic Empowerment Integration Model (MIPEL). This MIPEL model integrates *the enabling, empowering, and protecting pillars* into an interactive circular policy cycle to simultaneously address the weaknesses of each pillar. In its operationalization, spatial weaknesses in the *enabling pillar* are addressed by establishing sub-district-based "logistics satellites" that function as collectors and distributors of inter-insular raw materials. Furthermore, socio-technical obstacles in the *empowering pillar* are resolved through periodic *on-site mentoring by field extension workers to bridge the generational gap*. Finally, the risk of failure of the *protecting pillar* is structurally anticipated through regional regulations that require modern retail networks, modern markets, government agencies, and

BUMDes throughout Buton Regency to absorb a quota of certified local SME products of at least 30%.

The comprehensive and sustainable implementation of the MIPEL Model is expected to transform the traditional development model of the Buton Regency Industry Office into an independent and highly competitive regional industrial ecosystem. Through this functional integration, the provision of business space (physical centers) is no longer a stand-alone activity, but is directly linked to the improvement of digitally adaptive human resource capacity and the guarantee of legally binding downstream market protection. This model synthesis aligns with several *Program Sustainability Theories*, including Scheirer and Dearing (2011) and (Nurlita Pertiwi, 2017), which emphasize that the success of local economic empowerment in developing island regions depends heavily on the balance between public physical capital intervention and the protection of domestic market access. Therefore, the synchronization of local commodity traditions and governance modernization through the MIPEL Model will be a key pillar in realizing Buton Regency's economic independence, resilient to global market dynamics.

The following is a visual and operational description of the Local Economic Empowerment Integration Model (MIPEL) which synthesizes all research findings, data support, and theoretical confrontations in the field:

Model Synthesis Chart Visualization (MIPEL)

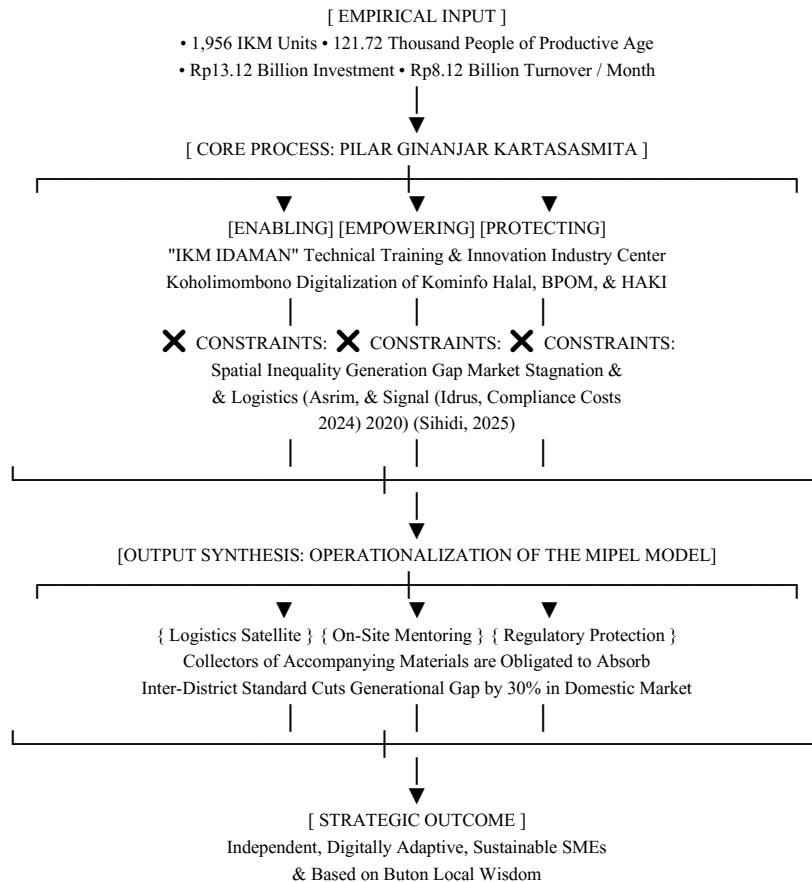


Figure. 1 Model Synthesis Chart Visualization (MIPEL)

Descriptive Operationalization of Model Components

The synthesis of the above model integrates the three pillars of economic empowerment into one circular policy cycle that mutually covers partial weaknesses in the field:

1. *Enabling Pillar Solution*): Provides secondary collection points in each outer district to address spatial disparities within the Wabula Center. This facility reduces logistics transaction costs for micro-businesses in the outermost regions.
2. On-Site Mentoring (*Empowering Pillar Solution*): Addressing the digital literacy barrier (*generational gap*) by assigning local youth as *digital buddies* . Mentoring is provided directly at the business premises on an ongoing basis, not just through formal, classical training.
3. Market Protection Regulation (*Protecting Pillar Solution*): The local government issued a regulation binding modern retail chains, local markets, and government agencies to absorb a minimum of 30% of Buton's MSME products. This downstream market guarantee ensures that legal compliance costs (BPOM/HAKI) are commensurate with increased sales volume.

DISCUSSION

The small and medium-sized industrial ecosystem in Buton Regency is supported by thousands of local businesses that have successfully absorbed thousands of local workers, with accumulated asset investment reaching tens of billions of rupiah. From this economic posture, this small-scale manufacturing cluster is able to contribute billions of rupiah to the real regional production value each month. This aggregate macroeconomic achievement is empirical evidence of the agency's success in stimulating regional productivity based on superior commodities. The foundation of this success is firmly rooted in the Local Economic Development (LED) Theory (Meli Handayani Catur Putri1, 2022) and supported by research in the Journal of Sultra Research of Law (2024), where precise investment mapping in the manufacturing sector has proven to be a major stimulus for community income stability in coastal areas. However, through the lens of Spatial Efficiency Theory, the policy of centralizing physical facilities in one rural area has received sharp criticism because it triggers inequality in accessibility for the majority of business actors spread across various other sub-districts. This counter-argument is in line with the findings of (Wardiningsih & Mokodompit, 2025) who stated that the development of physical infrastructure that is not accompanied by improvements in inter-island logistics in archipelago actually creates new transaction cost burdens for the outermost micro-business actors.

In the empowerment pillar, the service actively invests in human capital through technical training in culinary hygiene and modern packaging mechanization to optimize the potential of the abundant productive-age population. This skill-building pattern is fully supported by a study by (Yasin et al., 2026), which proved that the transition from traditional manual procedures to standardized hygienic mechanization in the Buton region was able to increase the production output of household industries manifold. Conversely, the effectiveness of this pillar is refuted by the Techno-Social Resistance Theory (Tahir et al., 2025) (, which states that the transfer of official technology often fails due to the

generational gap. This empirical rebuttal is strengthened by (Rahim et al., 2025) which found that the adoption rate of independent technology after training by business actors in coastal Buton remains very low due to digital literacy constraints, limited wireless internet networks (blank spots), and communal habits that are reluctant to switch from conventional cash transactions.

Meanwhile, in the protection pillar, the launch of the policy innovation titled "IKM IDAMAN" serves as a legal shield that facilitates halal certification, Domestic Food Distribution Permits (MDN) from the Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (POM), and free Intellectual Property Rights (HAKI) for Buton woven fabrics. This protective measure directly corresponds to the report by (Floridi et al., 2020), which concluded that formal legal guarantees are an essential instrument for local products to move from the informal underground market to the modern retail supply chain. However, the achievements of this protection pillar have been strongly criticized by the Selective Formalization Theory (Torm & Oehme, 2024), which warns that forcing legal formalization on the small industry sector without a commitment to downstream market absorption will actually backfire on business continuity. This counter opinion is confirmed by a critical study by (Rahim et al., 2025) which proves that many micro-business actors in rural areas of the Buton Islands who have obtained formal legality ultimately go bankrupt due to the high annual operational compliance costs which are not commensurate with sales volume due to being unable to compete with the penetration of manufacturing corporations outside the region.

To address these partial weaknesses, the Local Economic Empowerment Integration Model (MIPEL) integrates the three pillars into a single, interactive, circular policy cycle. Spatial weaknesses are addressed by establishing sub-district-based "logistics satellites" that serve as collectors and distributors of inter-island raw materials. Socio-technical barriers are addressed through regular on-site mentoring by field extension workers to bridge the generational gap. Finally, the risk of failure of the protection pillar is structurally anticipated through regional regulations that require modern retail networks, modern markets, government agencies, and village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) to absorb a fair share of certified local SME products. This model synthesis aligns with the Program Sustainability Theory developed by Scheirer & Dearing (2011) and is supported by the regional sustainability model by (Nurlita Pertiwi, 2017), which emphasizes that the success of local economic empowerment in developing island regions depends heavily on the balance between public physical capital intervention and protection of domestic market access.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The local economic empowerment strategy by the Buton Regency Industry Office has succeeded in stimulating the production value of SMEs by Rp8.12 billion per month through the synergy of the *enabling pillars* (Koholimombono Center), *empowering* (Kominfo technical training), and *protecting* (the "IKM IDAMAN" innovation) based on Ginanjar Kartasmita's theory (1996). However, its effectiveness is still hampered by polarizing obstacles in the form of logistical disparities between sub-districts, low digital adoption due to the generation gap, and the risk of bankruptcy due to high legal

compliance costs that are not balanced by downstream market certainty. As an operational solution, this study formulates the Local Economic Empowerment Integration Model (MIPEL) which recommends the formation of sub-district-based logistics satellites, *on-site mentoring*, and the issuance of regional regulations requiring modern retail networks and domestic agencies to absorb a minimum of 30% of the quota of certified local SME products in order to realize sustainable regional industrial independence.

FURTHER STUDY

The limitations of this study lie in the use of aggregate macro data and a single point in time (cross-sectional), which are unable to test the long-term sustainability of the MIPEL Model. Operationally, the model's effectiveness is hampered by the geographic conditions of the Buton Islands, which trigger network constraints (blank spots), the risk of logistical paralysis due to extreme weather, and the cultural inertia of older business owners who are resistant to digitalization. Furthermore, the limited capacity of field extension workers and weak law enforcement in ensuring the 30% market absorption quota are structural challenges that remain unresolved in this study.

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