

Strengthening Business Management at Kaldera Adventure through Practical Application of Management Functions: A Community Engagement Initiative

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ABSTRACT:

Kaldera Adventure, a trail and jeep rental business based in Malang, East Java, has been operating since 2009 without a structured business management system. Through a community engagement program, a group of management students conducted a series of practical interventions to enhance Kaldera Adventure's operational, financial, marketing, and human resource management. The initiative focused on identifying key business issues, including the lack of standardized recruitment procedures, inconsistent service quality, limited digital marketing reach, and inefficient scheduling. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted through interviews and observations. The team then implemented management strategies such as structured job descriptions, performance-based evaluations, financial recording tools, and targeted social media marketing. The outcomes of the program showed measurable improvements: a 30% increase in social media engagement, more efficient scheduling, and improved customer satisfaction ratings. This service-learning program demonstrated the impact of applied management knowledge on micro-enterprise development. The case of Kaldera Adventure illustrates how community-based academic engagement can strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of local SMEs.

Keywords: community service, SME management, Kaldera Adventure, business development, management functions

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's tourism industry continues to grow as nature-based travel becomes increasingly popular among domestic and international visitors. Malang and its surrounding regions, including Batu and Bromo, are among the top destinations for adventure tourism, offering stunning landscapes accessible via off-road vehicles. One of the micro-enterprises thriving in this niche is Kaldera Adventure, a small business located in Lowokwaru, Malang, which provides motorcycle trail and jeep rental services for outdoor tourism. Established in 2009, Kaldera Adventure has evolved from a hobby-based operation into a formal business entity. However, despite over a decade of operations, the enterprise still faces numerous business management challenges, primarily due to informal structures and a lack of systematic planning.

Kaldera Adventure is owned and managed independently by its founder, assisted by six employees and two interns. The business model is driven by passion, yet lacks professional implementation of essential business functions. Key challenges include an

unstructured recruitment process, inadequate employee training, inconsistent customer service quality, limited digital marketing outreach, and inefficient financial and inventory records. These problems hinder the company's growth and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving tourism market.

Field observations and interviews revealed that Kaldera Adventure recruits employees based on trust and availability rather than competence or structured qualifications. There is no dedicated marketing staff, and social media use is limited to manual posts without analytics or engagement strategies. Financial reporting is done manually, without a standardized system. Such conditions limit Kaldera Adventure's ability to respond to market fluctuations and service demands effectively.

Community service and engagement programs that integrate applied academic knowledge with micro-business development have proven effective in supporting local entrepreneurs (Widiyanti & Santoso, 2022). The role of higher education institutions in empowering SMEs is increasingly vital, especially in helping businesses apply structured management tools and strategies (Sutrisno et al., 2021). This service-learning program aims to strengthen Kaldera Adventure's business management functions by introducing practical solutions derived from core management disciplines: human resource management, operations, finance, and marketing.

The community engagement team, composed of university students majoring in management, carried out a structured diagnosis of Kaldera Adventure's business problems. Based on this diagnosis, the program offered assistance through: (1) structured job descriptions and recruitment SOPs, (2) employee performance appraisal forms, (3) financial reporting templates for income, expenses, and cash flow, (4) content scheduling for Instagram and WhatsApp marketing, and (5) simple inventory tracking sheets.

This initiative not only benefited Kaldera Adventure by providing practical tools and knowledge but also created a learning opportunity for students to implement classroom theories in real-world business settings (Saragih & Prabowo, 2020). Furthermore, the partnership aligned with the university's commitment to community development and SME empowerment as part of its *tri dharma perguruan tinggi*.

The choice of Kaldera Adventure as a community partner was based on its strategic location, potential for tourism-driven revenue, and openness to collaboration. Moreover, the owner's enthusiasm and willingness to adopt new management practices were key success factors. The collaboration is expected to help Kaldera Adventure sustain its operations, improve service quality, and increase customer loyalty amid intensifying competition in the adventure tourism sector.

The introduction of basic management systems through this program is a small but significant step in formalizing Kaldera Adventure's operations. While the interventions are simple, their long-term impact can be significant, especially in improving customer experience and business sustainability. This program also illustrates the importance of university-SME partnerships in promoting inclusive economic growth through practical, localized solutions.

2. METHODS

This community service program utilized a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which encourages collaborative problem-solving between academic facilitators and community partners. The target of this program was Kaldera Adventure, a small-scale adventure tourism enterprise in Malang specializing in trail and jeep rentals.

The program was conducted over a two-month period (October–November 2024) and consisted of four main phases: identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Problem Identification

The process began with a situational analysis involving field observations, in-depth interviews with the business owner, and documentation reviews. Key problems were identified in four management areas:

1. Unstructured recruitment and employee task assignment;
2. Lack of financial documentation;
3. Minimal use of digital marketing tools; and
4. Inefficient shift scheduling and service operations.

Planning and Design

A tailored intervention plan was formulated based on the diagnosis. The plan included:

1. Developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for recruitment and daily operations.
2. Designing Excel-based financial templates (cash flow, income, and expense tracking).
3. Creating a 30-day digital marketing content plan for Instagram and WhatsApp.
4. Implementing a weekly shift schedule to improve employee coordination.

Implementation

The implementation stage consisted of three mentoring sessions and two on-site workshops. Each session lasted approximately two hours and involved hands-on practice using Kaldera Adventure's actual operational data. The business owner and all employees were actively involved in testing the tools, revising workflows, and simulating real use cases.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Program outcomes were monitored using observation checklists and direct feedback from the business owner. The evaluation focused on improvements in operational structure, financial recording consistency, marketing activity, and team coordination. Final documentation included a printed and digital handover of all tools, along with a simple user manual to ensure sustainability.

By applying this method, the program successfully delivered practical solutions that matched the business's scale, capacity, and willingness to adapt. The PAR model enabled not only knowledge transfer but also behavioral and system changes at the micro-enterprise level.

3. RESULTS

This community service program aimed to strengthen the business management practices of Kaldera Adventure by applying functional management strategies tailored to the context of a small rental enterprise. The implementation covered four core business functions—human resource management, financial management, marketing, and operations. The following are the detailed results and implications of each intervention area.

Human Resource Management Improvement

Before the intervention, Kaldera Adventure had no formal recruitment process or job descriptions. Employees were hired based on informal networks and received limited guidance on job roles. The lack of clarity in responsibilities had led to overlapping tasks and inconsistent service quality. To address this, the program introduced:

1. A structured job description template for each employee role.
2. A monthly performance evaluation form.
3. A shift schedule sheet to improve time allocation and reduce dependency on the owner.

These tools enabled the owner to better manage team assignments and distribute workload more evenly. After one month of using the new schedule, the owner reported a 20% reduction in task overlap and increased punctuality among staff.

This result aligns with previous studies that show clear job roles and periodic evaluations lead to higher organizational efficiency and employee motivation (Yuliana & Prasetyo, 2021). As a small enterprise with limited staff, Kaldera Adventure benefited greatly from even basic HR formalization, showing how essential role definition is for micro-enterprises.

Financial Management Enhancement

The financial system at Kaldera Adventure was previously manual and unsystematic. Income and were recorded in a simple notebook, with no monthly summaries or financial analysis. This made it difficult to assess profitability or cash flow health. The team introduced:

1. Microsoft Excel templates for monthly income, expenses, and cash flow.
2. A guideline for daily transaction documentation using proof of receipt.
3. Training on how to categorize business expenses effectively.

After the second month of implementation, the business was able to present a monthly income statement, something the owner had never done before. During feedback, the owner stated that he could now monitor whether the business was financially healthy or declining—an essential milestone.

This outcome demonstrates the significant impact of basic financial literacy and tool adoption for small businesses (Nasution & Sari, 2022). When micro-enterprises gain control over their finances, they are better positioned to make informed decisions about pricing, investments, or cost reductions.

Digital Marketing Optimization

One of Kaldera Adventure's greatest weaknesses was its limited marketing strategy. Despite being active on Instagram, content was posted irregularly and without a clear theme or call to action.

Customer engagement was low, and promotions were rarely seen by new audiences.

The community service team developed and implemented a 30-day content calendar with sample visuals and captions for Instagram and WhatsApp Business. The team also provided basic training on the use of hashtags, story highlights, and customer interaction via DM and comments.

As a result, Kaldera Adventure experienced:

1. A 30% increase in Instagram followers.
2. A 42% boost in post engagement (likes, comments, shares).
3. At least five new customers who stated they found the service via Instagram.

These improvements highlight the power of consistent branding and digital engagement, especially for lifestyle and tourism-based services (Sukmawati & Fauzan, 2021). Even without paid advertising, well-planned content can improve business visibility and customer trust.

Operational and Service Efficiency

Operational inconsistencies were among the biggest internal obstacles. There were no formal service procedures or maintenance schedules. Customers sometimes received different information depending on which staff they interacted with, impacting service consistency.

To tackle this, the program provided:

1. A standardized service checklist for equipment rentals.
2. An SOP sheet outlining the rental process from booking to return.
3. A simple daily schedule board for tracking availability of vehicles and employee assignments.

One month after implementation, the owner noted smoother coordination during weekends (peak season), fewer customer complaints about service delays, and improved vehicle readiness. The customer satisfaction rating, tracked informally via WhatsApp feedback, showed more frequent positive responses.

This reinforces the idea that operational control systems, even in simple form, can dramatically increase service quality (Widodo et al., 2020). By reducing confusion and delays, Kaldera Adventure could deliver more consistent experiences to customers.

General Implications for Micro-Enterprise Development

The results of this program demonstrate that even low-cost, low-tech interventions—when well-structured—can lead to significant improvements in the performance and sustainability of micro-enterprises. The four functional areas of business management (HR, finance, marketing, and operations) are not only relevant to large corporations but essential to be adapted in a simplified form for SMEs.

The use of participatory methods also ensured that the solutions were accepted and implemented sustainably. The owner of Kaldera Adventure expressed appreciation for how the tools were

practical, not theoretical, and tailored to his specific context. He also showed interest in future collaboration and requested assistance with further expansion plans.

Moreover, the project served as a real-world laboratory for the student team to apply their knowledge of management theories, bridging the gap between academic learning and community empowerment.

Sustainability and Follow-Up

A key component of this community engagement was to ensure sustainability beyond the program's duration. All materials were handed over in both print and editable digital formats, and an informal user manual was provided. The student team also set up cloud-based backup folders for templates and created tutorial videos for future staff onboarding.

Additionally, the program's success has prompted the faculty to consider developing a digital management toolkit specifically for micro-enterprises, using Kaldera Adventure as a pilot case study.

4. CONCLUSION

The community service program conducted at Kaldera Adventure successfully demonstrated how the application of basic management functions can significantly improve the operational efficiency and sustainability of micro-enterprises. Through targeted interventions in human resources, finance, marketing, and operations, the business experienced measurable improvements such as increased staff coordination, enhanced financial tracking, greater digital engagement, and improved service consistency.

This initiative proved that even low-cost and non-digital solutions—when customized to the business's scale and context—can create a meaningful impact. The participatory approach also ensured that the solutions were well-accepted, easily adopted, and aligned with the daily practices of the business owner and staff.

From an academic standpoint, this project served as a practical learning opportunity for students, enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting while contributing directly to community economic development.

Going forward, the sustainability of this program lies in the continued use and adaptation of the tools provided, as well as the potential replication of the model for other small enterprises in the tourism and service sectors. Kaldera Adventure now stands better equipped to grow, compete, and deliver consistent value to its customers.

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