

## Mentoring Of Women's Empowerment Program

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### Abstract

In their operations, non-formal education institutions implement centralized strategic approaches managed by the community. Community Learning Center (Indonesian, and hence forth, Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat/PKBM) serves a significant role as a center of information, partnership network, and a center for the development of various community potentials with the philosophical basis of "of the people, by the people, and for the people". The problem lies in the aftermath of the empowerment program managed by the PKBM, as the members still require guidance and consultation as a follow-up of the program towards an independent/autonomous community. This research has revealed the characteristic roles of mentors in creating community's entrepreneurial independence/autonomy that is developed through the learning process in PKBM Ashodiq, Bandung Barat Regency.

**Keywords:** Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) or Community Learning Center, Entrepreneurial Independence.

### I. INTRODUCTION

PKBM Ashodiqis located in Lembang District, Bandung Barat Regency. Most of the population of Bandung Barat Regency is centered in Lembang District, namely for 11.58%, followed by Padalarang and Ngamprah Districts for 10.32% and 10.20%, respectively. Based on this population distribution, Lembang District ranks the first for the greatest number of population [1]. The greater the number of population, the more problems of welfare there will be; and this is especially true for Lembang District that is occupied by 44, 926 households, with 6, 818 of them were at the category of pre-prosperous households[2].

The findings of this research are in the forms of descriptions of the roles of mentors in helping realize community's entrepreneurial independence that is developed through the learning process in PKBM Ashodiq Kabupaten Bandung Barat. Previous research

[3, 4] has shown that the program of women's empowerment in the PKBM is intended for women as family breadwinners, thereby necessitating a pedagogical approach to develop students' autonomy in learning. In addition, previous studies show that participatory learning is able to develop personality and attitudes, especially in entrepreneurship. However, the previous research merely analyzed the teaching and learning process, not specifically addressing the process in the aftermath of the empowerment program, where the sustainability of the program serves an important role in answering community's needs. This research then will reveal the characteristic roles of mentors in shaping students' autonomy in learning and managing their business as a result of the mentoring of women's empowerment program.

Based on the findings of previous research, it is found that the majority of students participating in the life skill programs in PKBM Ashodiq were graduates of primary school and women as family breadwinners from the category of poor family. According to the demography of Pagerwangi Village, it is known that 25% of the total population were graduates of primary school, or as many as 1,697, and they were categorized into lower economic class or poor family.

The social factors of the women with their low level of academic background have made these women become less informed and their productivity and their ability to meet their daily needs are low accordingly.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research adopted a qualitative approach. The qualitative research describes the conditions and behaviors of the mentors as the subjects of this research. The result of this research is in the form of a descriptive narrative that interprets the aspects of students' autonomy in learning. Data were collected through field notes, documentation, observation, and interview [5].

The respondents of this research were mentors of the program and students or participants of the women's empowerment program. The research aims to describe the roles of mentors and the embodiment of students' learning autonomy.

## **III. RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

### **The Roles of Mentors of Women's Empowerment**

Mentoring was carried out by the management staff and supported by tutors or technical speakers and the related stakeholders. Substantially, the mentoring was implemented in order to maintain business sustainability and develop the business into a larger scale (in terms of capital, marketing, and partnership). The steps of mentoring are as follows:

1. Formulating mentoring plans.
2. Establishing the approaches, strategies, and techniques of mentoring.
3. Preparing the infrastructure/media required in the mentoring.
4. Scheduling, organizing, and supervising.
5. Introducing students to partnership access and networking.
6. Conducting evaluation and reflection.

Meanwhile, the roles of mentor in the women empowerment program are:

**1. As Facilitator**

As a facilitator, a mentor is to facilitate the mentoring in terms of venue, materials, facilities, or media to be used.

**2. As Motivator**

The capacity of a mentor as a motivator is to encourage the participants to get engaged in the mentoring process and to make efforts, certainly with persuasive communication.

**3. As Communicator**

As a communicator, a mentor should be able to be a friend who can be engaged in a discussion, both concerning the materials that have been delivered or the problems encountered during the entrepreneurship. A mentor should also be a sender of information to the members during the mentoring process.

**4. As Evaluator**

At the end of each mentoring process, the mentor should conduct evaluation of members' understanding of the materials delivered and the extent to which the goals have been met.

**5. As Administrator**

As an administrator, a mentor should be able to understand various types of reports, such as installment report, members' savings, and other financial reports. Thus, the mentor is able to make the participants of the business programs learn.

The mentoring in PKBM Ash-Shoddiq takes place between "two people who are close to each other, because both mentor and students have an equal or similar position, so that there is no superior and subordinate". The definition implies that a mentor can give alternative recommendations in an attempt of developing an individual or group, but s/he does not make a one-sided decision. Hence, the mentoring is a participatory and democratic learning process. The main goals that are expected to be met through this mentoring program are: 1) To provide an integrated education on empowerment to the community; 2) To increase understanding and awareness of the emerging phenomena; and 3) To eliminate any dependence upon the program and increase community autonomy.

**The Embodiment of Learner's Autonomy**

Learner's autonomy is embodied in the following skills/abilities:

1. Students are able to practice product packaging. They are able to do so after learning about various production skills that will change one product into another more innovative product.



**Fig. 1** Product Packaging

2. Students are able to communicate well. They acquire the ability to socialize in a larger scale, solve problems, and provide services to the community.



**Fig. 2** Students' Communication

3. Students gain confidence. Their self-confidence is increased after obtaining knowledge/insight about self-confidence.



**Fig. 3** Self-Confidence

4. Students are able to develop their creativity. They can make food products with various tastes (salty, spicy, sweet) with better packaging techniques.



**Fig.4** Students' Creativity

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Some studies have defined PKBM as a unit of education aimed to build characters to develop self-identity, as well as a center for information for the community members who need life skills and increase their income [6, 7].

Autonomy/independence as a personal trait or mentality should be acquired by every individual. This trait should particularly be developed in order to help one in determining the attitudes and behaviors of being an entrepreneur. Autonomy or independence is the spirit of entrepreneurship that grows and develops in line with the understanding of life concepts that are oriented towards ability, will, perseverance, and tenacity, in the respective field [8].

In the context of community empowerment program, autonomy is the benchmarks for the program's success. Therefore, mentoring essentially means developing autonomy in each student. The implementation of the mentoring program makes student autonomy the reference and basic principle, and it is designed and conducted by the community members themselves. Thus, the mentoring program appears to be more flexible, as can be seen from the goals that are always suited to the demands and needs developing around the targets. The finding is reciprocal to those of other research, which show that community empowerment involves the aspects of participation, change of awareness, care and cooperation, knowledge improvement, managerial skills, and life changes [9].

The results of the mentoring specifically aims to cultivate entrepreneurship that is reflected in self-confidence, the willingness to take a risk, orientation towards the future, leadership, orientation towards results and tasks, and creativity and innovativeness [10].

The changes in an entrepreneur's attitudes and behaviors are affected by several factors, both internal and external. The internal factors include psychological condition, needs, desires, and wills as well as expectations inside an individual. Meanwhile, the external factors encompass social relationship, personal relationship,

experience, and learning outcomes from the outside of the individual. The internal factors are the strength that encourages one to make or do something in order to meet the desired goals. That is way, they are also called motivation. On the other hand, the external factors are the media or tools to do something in order to reach the desired goals.

Entrepreneurship entails an entrepreneur that has clear visions, desired outcomes, and tasks. This means that through mentoring, students can develop themselves to move towards the future. The success of this program is proven by the fact that many of the members continue their participation in the mentoring program, as they feel that by participating in the mentoring they will obtain knowledge and skills to open and run business. Eventually, they can support themselves economically, both individually and in group, and create employment.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

The mentoring program has an impact on the attitudes and behaviors necessary to develop and increase entrepreneurial independence. Self-confidence and courage to open one's own business has also been demonstrated by the students under study. Autonomy/independence is also affected by the internal factors, which have motivated the students to consistently participate in the mentoring program. Through this mentoring, in the aftermath of the skills or entrepreneurship programs, students are not only able to manage their capital, but they are also able and ready to be autonomous or independent without mentoring.

The mentoring activities can broaden students' insight and give them motivation, so that they can be more aware of their own potentials and have the desire to be better. Skills and motivation should be in synergy in order to create autonomy in managing business.

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