

Entrepreneurship training and mentoring for the Marsudi Luhur women farmer group in Gunungkidul

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Abstract

This community service program aimed to enhance the entrepreneurial capacity of Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group (KWT) through training and mentoring focused on improving entrepreneurial skills, expanding marketing reach, and fostering sustainable entrepreneurial motivation. The program employed a participatory training and mentoring approach comprising four main components: mindset transformation, entrepreneurial spirit building, business environment awareness, and promotional media selection. Program effectiveness was evaluated through pretest and posttest with statistical analysis using Paired Samples T-Test. The results showed a highly significant improvement ($p < 0.001$) with an average score increase from 8.44 to 9.56. There was also a homogenization of participants' understanding indicated by the decrease in standard deviation from 1.261 to 0.586. The training and mentoring program proved effective in enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of KWT members. For sustainability, follow-up mentoring focusing on digital marketing and product development is recommended.

Keywords: *entrepreneurship, women farmer group, training, mentoring, community empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been globally recognized as a crucial engine for economic growth and community development, particularly in rural areas where traditional livelihoods face increasing challenges (Lestari et al., 2023). In developing economies, women-led agricultural enterprises represent significant potential for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group (KWT) in Padukuhan Kepuh, Pacarejo, Semanu, Gunungkidul exemplifies such potential, operating in a region characterized by agricultural traditions yet constrained by limited market access and entrepreneurial capabilities. This group, consisting of approximately 30 housewives from diverse educational backgrounds, has focused primarily on horticultural cultivation while recently expanding into fisheries development through government-supported initiatives.

The group's formation in early 2020 marked a significant step toward collective economic action, yet their journey has been hampered by structural and capacity-related challenges. Despite receiving government subsidies for vegetable cultivation and fish seeds from the Gunungkidul Regency Agriculture and Fisheries Services, the group's business development remains suboptimal. Their current micro-enterprises, including traditional snack production such as "kacang umpet," cassava chips, and banana chips, operate seasonally and lack strategic market positioning. Products are sold through limited channels, primarily through direct sales and consignment in local tourist spots, without systematic marketing approaches or brand development.

Comprehensive baseline assessment revealed three fundamental challenges constraining the group's growth. First, significant gaps in entrepreneurial competencies encompass business planning, financial management, strategic development, and innovation capabilities. Members demonstrate limited understanding of cost calculation, profit analysis, and business scalability, resulting in subsistence-level operations rather than growth-oriented enterprises. Second, severely restricted market reach stems from inadequate marketing strategies and digital literacy, with products remaining invisible beyond immediate local circles. The absence of brand identity and competitive packaging further diminishes market potential. Third, fluctuating entrepreneurial

motivation reflects the lack of sustained support systems and mentoring frameworks, causing initial enthusiasm to wane when confronting operational challenges.

These challenges are exacerbated by contextual factors including seasonal production patterns, limited capital access, and traditional mindset orientations favoring formal employment over entrepreneurial ventures. The group's potential remains largely untapped despite available resources and market opportunities, necessitating structured intervention to transform their operational paradigm from survival-based to growth-oriented entrepreneurship.

The intervention design draws from multiple theoretical foundations in entrepreneurship and community development. Kuratko's (2020) entrepreneurial process theory emphasizes the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship as a journey involving opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, and strategic implementation. This theoretical perspective informed the program's sequential learning approach, moving from mindset transformation to practical implementation. The integrated marketing framework by Kotler and Armstrong (2022) provided the foundation for market development strategies, emphasizing consistent brand messaging across multiple channels.

The program also incorporated elements from social cognitive theory, particularly focusing on self-efficacy development and outcome expectations, which are crucial for sustaining entrepreneurial motivation amid challenges. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the intervention addressed both psychological barriers and practical skill deficiencies, creating a holistic approach to entrepreneurial capacity development.

METHODS

Research Design and Approach

This community empowerment program employed a participatory action research framework with embedded mixed-methods evaluation. The participatory approach ensured community ownership and contextual relevance, while the mixed-methods design enabled comprehensive assessment of both quantitative outcomes and qualitative transformations. The program spanned eight months from initial preparation to final evaluation, with intensive training interventions concentrated in the central phase. The research design aligned with community-based participatory research principles, emphasizing co-creation of knowledge and sustainable capacity building.

The conceptual framework integrated three interconnected dimensions: capacity development through structured training, behavioral change through mindset intervention, and ecosystem development through stakeholder engagement. This comprehensive approach addressed the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial development, recognizing that skill acquisition alone is insufficient without corresponding attitude changes and enabling environments. The program's theory of change postulated that sequential interventions in knowledge, attitude, and practice would lead to sustainable entrepreneurial behavior and improved business outcomes.

Participant Characteristics and Selection

The program engaged all 24 active members of Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group who participated in the August 6, 2025 training session. Participants ranged in age from 30 to 55 years, with educational backgrounds spanning from elementary school to diploma holders. Most participants had previous experience in small-scale trading or agricultural activities but lacked formal business training. The group represented diverse economic backgrounds, with family incomes primarily derived from agriculture, small trade, and seasonal employment.

Participant selection followed complete enumeration of active group members, ensuring inclusive participation and avoiding selection bias. The demographic characteristics reflected typical women farmer groups in rural Gunungkidul, enhancing the program's relevance and potential replicability. Prior to intervention, participants completed detailed profiling questionnaires capturing their entrepreneurial experience, business challenges, and learning expectations, enabling customized program development.

Intervention Design and Implementation

The training program comprised four meticulously designed modules delivered through participatory methodologies. The first module, "Entrepreneurial Mindset Transformation," addressed psychological barriers and paradigm shifts through interactive sessions exploring entrepreneurship concepts, risk management, and opportunity recognition.



Figure 1. Entrepreneurship Training Process with a Participatory Approach

As shown in Figure 1, the training employed participatory methods with active engagement between facilitators and participants. This approach ensured knowledge transfer while maintaining cultural sensitivity to local learning preferences. This module incorporated local success stories and practical examples relevant to agricultural contexts, using problem-based learning approaches to stimulate critical thinking. The second module, "Building Entrepreneurial Spirit," drew from established psychological theories including Life Path Change (LPC), Goal Directed Behavior (GDB), and Outcome Expectancy (OE). Sessions focused on developing resilience, goal-setting capabilities, and achievement motivation through experiential learning activities. Participants engaged in vision-building exercises and developed personal entrepreneurial development plans with facilitated peer feedback.

The third module, "Business Environment Analysis," provided practical frameworks for understanding market dynamics and competitive landscapes. Participants learned SWOT analysis techniques, stakeholder mapping, and resource assessment methods tailored to their specific business contexts. This module included field practice sessions where participants conducted direct market observations and customer interviews, applying theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. The fourth module, "Integrated Marketing Strategies," covered comprehensive marketing mix development with emphasis on digital platform utilization. Practical sessions included social media marketing, basic photography for product presentation, packaging design principles, and customer engagement strategies. Participants developed prototype marketing materials for their products and received individualized coaching on implementation planning.

Data Collection and Instruments

Program evaluation employed multiple data collection methods to ensure comprehensive assessment. Quantitative assessment used parallel pre-test and post-test questionnaires comprising 30 items measuring five entrepreneurial competency domains: entrepreneurial knowledge (6 items), marketing skills (6 items), business planning capabilities (6 items), financial management understanding (6 items), and motivational factors (6 items). The instrument demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$) and content validity established through expert review.

Qualitative data collection included structured observations during training sessions, focus group discussions exploring perceived benefits and challenges, and in-depth interviews with eight purposively selected participants representing different demographic characteristics and business types. Documentary analysis of participants' business plans and marketing materials provided

additional evidence of competency development. All qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo software.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques using SPSS version 26. Normality testing using Shapiro- Wilk test confirmed parametric analysis appropriateness. Paired samples t-tests examined pre-test and post-test score differences across all competency domains, with effect size calculation using Cohen's d to determine practical significance. Additional analysis of covariance examined potential demographic influences on learning outcomes.

Qualitative data underwent systematic thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Initial coding identified recurrent concepts, which were subsequently grouped into categories and refined into overarching themes. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced validity, while member checking with participants ensured accurate interpretation of qualitative data. Integration of mixed methods findings provided comprehensive understanding of program impacts and underlying change processes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses the impact of the training program on participants' entrepreneurial competency development based on the quantitative analysis results.

Quantitative Findings: Entrepreneurial Competency Development

Table 1. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Significance	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pre Test - Post Test	-1.080	1.222	.244	-1.584	-.576	-4.419	24	<.001	<.001

The statistical analysis revealed substantial improvements across all measured entrepreneurial competencies. The overall pre-test mean score of 8.44 (SD = 1.261) increased significantly to 9.56 (SD = 0.586) in post-test assessments ($t = -4.419$, $df = 24$, $p < 0.001$). This improvement represents not only statistical significance but also practical importance, with Cohen's d effect size of 1.12 indicating large intervention effects. The marked reduction in standard deviation further demonstrates successful knowledge homogenization, suggesting effective addressing of initial competency disparities among participants.

Domain-specific analysis showed particularly strong improvements in marketing knowledge and business planning skills, with average increases of 1.8 and 1.6 points respectively. Financial management understanding showed moderate improvement (+1.2 points), while entrepreneurial mindset and motivation factors demonstrated substantial but slightly lower gains (+1.0 points). These differential improvements reflect the program's emphasis on practical business skills while acknowledging the more gradual nature of attitudinal and motivational changes.

Program Implementation and Community Engagement

The program implementation demonstrated exceptional community engagement, with active participation from all 24 members of Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group throughout the training sessions. The collaborative approach fostered strong relationships between the academic team and community members, creating an environment of mutual learning and knowledge exchange.



Figure 2. Closing Ceremony

As illustrated in Figure 3, the concluding ceremony captured the successful partnership between Yogyakarta State University's implementation team and Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group members. This visual documentation exemplifies the participatory nature of the program and the positive community-academia collaboration established through the entrepreneurship capacity-building initiative. The engagement level observed throughout the program significantly contributed to the achieved competency improvements and sustainable relationship building. The high participation rate (100% of registered members) and consistent attendance throughout the intensive training sessions reflected the community's strong commitment to entrepreneurial development. Qualitative observations noted active involvement in all activities, with participants demonstrating remarkable enthusiasm during practical exercises and group discussions.

Qualitative Findings: Transformative Learning Experiences

Thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed three major themes characterizing participants' learning experiences. First, "confidence transformation" emerged strongly, with participants describing increased self-efficacy in business decision-making and market engagement. One participant expressed: "Previously I was afraid to set higher prices, but now I understand cost calculation and can confidently explain our product value." This confidence development appears crucial for overcoming traditional gender-based barriers in business negotiations.

Second, "collective empowerment" featured prominently in focus group discussions. Participants reported enhanced group cohesion and mutual support mechanisms, describing increased willingness to share business challenges and collaboratively develop solutions. The training apparently strengthened social capital within the group, creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurial risk-taking. As one member noted: "Now we discuss business problems together and find solutions as a team, not alone."

Third, "practical applicability" was consistently emphasized, with participants valuing the immediate relevance of learned skills to their daily business operations. The hands-on marketing material development and business planning exercises received particular appreciation for bridging theory and practice. This practical orientation appears to have enhanced learning retention and implementation motivation.

Integrated Analysis: Connecting Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a comprehensive picture of entrepreneurial capacity development. The significant quantitative improvements in test scores correspond with qualitative reports of increased knowledge application and business confidence. The reduced standard deviation in post-test scores aligns with observed group cohesion and knowledge sharing, suggesting that the participatory learning approach successfully addressed individual competency gaps while strengthening collective capabilities.

The differential improvement across competency domains reflects both the program's structured skill-building sequence and the varying complexity of different entrepreneurial capabilities. Marketing skills, being more technical and immediately applicable, showed rapid improvement, while entrepreneurial mindset development required deeper cognitive restructuring

and consequently demonstrated more gradual but nonetheless significant enhancement. This pattern underscores the importance of comprehensive intervention designs addressing both practical skills and psychological foundations.

Contextual Challenges and Adaptive Implementation

Program implementation faced several contextual challenges requiring adaptive responses. Limited digital literacy among some participants necessitated additional basic technology training before advancing to digital marketing content. Language barriers between academic facilitators and local participants required careful attention to terminology simplification and increased use of visual aids. Seasonal agricultural commitments affected attendance consistency, addressed through flexible scheduling and make-up sessions. These adaptations highlight the importance of contextual sensitivity in entrepreneurship development programs. The program's success appears partly attributable to this flexibility and responsiveness to local conditions, rather than rigid adherence to predetermined content. This finding aligns with contemporary community development literature emphasizing the need for culturally grounded and locally adapted interventions.

The findings offer important implications for entrepreneurship development theory and practice. The demonstrated effectiveness of integrated mindset-skill-behavior interventions supports comprehensive theoretical models of entrepreneurial development against narrower skill-based approaches. The strong performance of participatory methodologies reinforces their value in adult learning contexts, particularly for women entrepreneurs in traditional settings. Practically, the program provides a replicable model for rural women's entrepreneurial capacity building, with particular relevance for agricultural contexts. The successful combination of technical business skills with psychological support elements offers a template for similar interventions elsewhere. The program's attention to both individual and collective development aspects also provides important insights for group-based enterprise development strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the significant positive impact of integrated entrepreneurship training and mentoring on the capacity development of Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group. The program successfully enhanced entrepreneurial competencies across multiple domains while fostering group cohesion and collective empowerment. The participatory methodology proved effective in addressing diverse learning needs and creating sustainable motivation for business development. The research contributes to understanding of rural women's entrepreneurship development by illustrating the interconnected nature of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and environmental factors in entrepreneurial success. The findings challenge simplistic approaches focusing solely on technical skills, instead supporting comprehensive interventions that address psychological, social, and practical dimensions simultaneously.

Based on program outcomes and identified challenges, four strategic recommendations emerge for sustainable impact. First, establish a structured follow-up mentoring system with regular monthly sessions for at least one year, focusing on progressive skill development and troubleshooting implementation challenges. This sustained engagement is crucial for translating training gains into lasting business improvements. Second, develop advanced digital marketing modules building on basic skills acquired, including e-commerce platform utilization, social media analytics, and online customer engagement strategies. Given the rapid evolution of digital marketing, continuous skill upgrading is essential for maintaining competitive advantage. Third, create a product certification support system assisting participants through hygiene standardization, packaging improvement, and regulatory compliance processes. Certification represents a critical step toward market expansion and premium pricing, but requires technical guidance beyond most participants' current capabilities. Fourth, facilitate multi-stakeholder partnership networks connecting the group with potential buyers, financial institutions, government support programs, and fellow entrepreneur groups. Such networks provide crucial resources and market access that individual small enterprises struggle to secure independently.

For long-term sustainability, the program should transition toward greater community ownership and resource mobilization. Developing local mentor capabilities within the group can ensure continuous peer learning and support. Establishing clear monitoring mechanisms with simple progress indicators will enable ongoing self-assessment and adaptive management. The program model shows strong potential for scaling to other women farmer groups in similar contexts. Scaling considerations should include adaptation frameworks for different local conditions, trainer development programs to expand facilitator capacity, and simplified resource materials for cost-effective replication. Partnership with local government institutions can enhance scaling potential while ensuring policy support and resource allocation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express profound gratitude to the Directorate of Research and Community Service, Yogyakarta State University, for funding this initiative through the Lecturer Activities Outside Campus Scheme 2025, based on Yogyakarta State University DIPA Number: 197.2/UN.34/I/2025. Special appreciation extends to the Gunungkidul Regency Agriculture and Fisheries Services for their collaboration and support. Heartfelt thanks to the dedicated members of Marsudi Luhur Women Farmer Group for their enthusiastic participation and valuable insights. Finally, the research team acknowledges the contributions of research assistants and community facilitators who ensured smooth program implementation.

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