

Enhancing Student Entrepreneurship through Empowerment of Local Wisdom in the Community of Bangko

Meningkatkan Kewirausahaan Mahasiswa melalui Pemberdayaan Kearifan Lokal di Masyarakat Bangko

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Abstract:

This community service program aims to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of Law Faculty students at Merangin University through the empowerment of local wisdom in Bangko. The method used is a participatory approach with training, mentoring, and collaboration with the local community. The results show that students successfully developed competitive products based on local wisdom. The main challenges faced include limited knowledge of business management and digital marketing. However, through comprehensive empowerment strategies, students were able to overcome these obstacles and contribute to cultural preservation and local economic development.

Abstrak:

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan kewirausahaan mahasiswa Fakultas Hukum Universitas Merangin melalui pemberdayaan kearifan lokal di Bangko. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan partisipatif dengan pelatihan, pendampingan, dan kolaborasi bersama masyarakat lokal. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa berhasil mengembangkan produk berbasis kearifan lokal dengan daya saing tinggi. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi meliputi keterbatasan pengetahuan tentang manajemen bisnis dan pemasaran digital. Namun, melalui strategi pemberdayaan yang komprehensif, mahasiswa mampu mengatasi hambatan tersebut dan berkontribusi pada pelestarian budaya serta pembangunan ekonomi lokal.



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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is one of the important pillars in economic development, especially among the younger generation such as students. Students as agents of change are expected to be able to develop their potential and the surrounding environment through innovation and creativity in the field of entrepreneurship. One approach that can be used is the empowerment of local wisdom, which not only strengthens cultural identity but also increases the economic value of the local community.

Local wisdom includes knowledge, skills, and values that are inherited from generation to generation in society (Chandra, 2024). In Bangko, there is a lot of potential for local wisdom that has not been optimally exploited, such as handicrafts, traditional culinary, and local arts and culture. By utilizing local wisdom, students can create products and services that are unique and have high selling value in the market, both locally and nationally

However, there are still many obstacles faced in integrating local wisdom into the world of student entrepreneurship. Lack of knowledge about business management, limited access to capital and markets, and lack of academic assistance are some of the main obstacles. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to empower students through training programs, mentoring, and collaboration with local communities.

This community service program aims to improve the entrepreneurial skills of students of the Faculty of Law, University of Merangin by utilizing local wisdom in Bangko. Through this approach, it is hoped that students will not only be able to develop sustainable businesses but also contribute to the preservation of local culture.

In addition, empowering local wisdom can be a solution to overcome the challenges of globalization which often erode local cultural identity. By integrating local values into entrepreneurial practices, students can create businesses that are not only economically profitable but also play a role in cultural preservation. This can also strengthen the competitiveness of local products in the global market (Destemi & Hartati, 2020).

The involvement of students in empowering local wisdom also provides valuable practical experience in the development of soft skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork. This experience is very important in preparing students to face the challenges of the world of work after graduation. In addition, students also learn about the importance of business ethics and social responsibility in running a business (Hartati, Chandra, & Diar, 2023).

In the context of Bangko, the empowerment of local wisdom can be focused on sectors that have great potential to be developed, such as culture-based tourism, handicraft products, and traditional culinary. For example, the development of tourist villages that display the uniqueness of local culture can be an attraction for domestic and foreign tourists. Students can play a role as facilitators in designing and managing these programs (Harmaini & Chandra, 2020).

Cooperation between the university and the local community is crucial to the success of this program. Universities can provide the necessary resources, knowledge, and networks to support the development of businesses based on local wisdom. Meanwhile, local communities can provide practical insights and experiences that academics do not have. This synergy will create a sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem (Sari, Astria, & Alisa, 2024).

In addition, it is important to integrate technology in the development of entrepreneurship based on local wisdom. Technology can be used to expand market reach, improve production efficiency, and introduce innovations in products and services. Students can take advantage of social media, e-commerce, and other digital platforms to market their products more widely (Sasmita et al., 2024).

However, the application of technology in businesses based on local wisdom also requires special training. Students need to be equipped with digital skills such as online marketing, social media management, and data analysis. This training can be carried out through workshops, seminars, and online courses facilitated by universities or industry partners (Febriani et al., 2024).

The impact of empowering local wisdom is not only felt by students and local communities, but also by the university itself. The university can strengthen its role as an agent of social and economic change in the surrounding community. In addition, this program can also improve the reputation of the university at the national and international levels as an institution that cares about community development.

The sustainability of this program also requires support from various parties, including the government, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. The government can provide support in the form of policies that support the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) based on local wisdom. The private sector can play a role as a partner in the provision of funding, training, and market access. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations can help in aspects of community empowerment and advocacy (Hartati, Chandra, & Diar, 2023).

With a comprehensive and collaborative approach, this local wisdom empowerment program is expected to have a significant impact in increasing student entrepreneurship. In addition, this program also contributes to the preservation of local culture and sustainable economic development in Bangko.

In closing, it is important to continue to evaluate and improve this program based on input from students, the community, and other stakeholders. This evaluation will help in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as developing more effective strategies to achieve the desired goals. Thus, this program can continue to grow and provide long-term benefits for all parties involved.

METHOD

The community service methods applied in this program integrate various approaches, with a primary focus on a participatory approach. In this approach, students, lecturers, and the local community actively collaborate in planning, implementing, and evaluating each stage of the activity. This participatory process begins with conducting an initial assessment of the condition of the community, including the potential and needs in the field. This allows the service program to be adapted to the local context and has a significant impact on community welfare. This program aims to empower the community to be able to develop entrepreneurial potential based on their local wisdom.

The first stage in this service method is the identification of the potential for local wisdom that can be used as a basis for entrepreneurial development. Students together with the community deepen their cultural wealth, local products, traditional skills, and existing natural potential. This activity is carried out through various forms of communication, such as interviews with community leaders, traditional leaders, and local business actors. This process aims to find entrepreneurial ideas that can be developed based on existing local wisdom. The determination of the potential to be developed is carried out through deliberation by considering the needs and abilities of the community to maintain the sustainability of the business to be built.

After the local potential is identified, the program continues with entrepreneurship training and workshops. This training activity is designed to equip the community with basic skills in running a business, such as business management, marketing, finance, and product development based on local wisdom. In this training, students and lecturers act as facilitators who provide material on the importance of innovation in entrepreneurship, efficient business management, and effective marketing techniques. This workshop also emphasized the importance of using technology to support the marketing of locally-based products, as well as how to reach a wider market while maintaining existing cultural values.

In addition to training, this service method also involves direct assistance to local business actors. Assistance is carried out by assisting the implementation of businesses that have been built, providing solutions to the challenges faced, and ensuring that the community can manage their businesses independently and sustainably. Students and lecturers provide guidance related to business planning, monitoring business operations, and the preparation of better marketing strategies. This assistance is also carried out by providing periodic feedback on the development of the business being run, as well as providing relevant recommendations for improvement.

In order to measure the impact of this service program, data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, ranging from local business actors to the surrounding community, to dig up information about the changes that occurred after the service program was implemented. Observations are carried out to monitor the development of the business and the implementation of marketing techniques that have been taught. The focus group discussion was to collect the opinions of the community about the success of the program and the challenges they face in running a business based on local wisdom. The data obtained from this activity is then analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses in program implementation. Primary data was obtained through interviews, observations, and focused group discussions with local communities and business actors. Secondary data is collected from literature, journals, and official documents related to local wisdom and entrepreneurship. Data analysis is carried out qualitatively with a thematic analysis approach to identify relevant patterns and themes (Ali, 2021).

Evaluation and follow-up are also an important part of this method. After the training and mentoring program is completed, an evaluation is carried out to assess the achievement of community service goals. This evaluation not only looks at the aspects of success in developing entrepreneurship, but also how people can maintain and develop their businesses independently after the program ends. The results of the evaluation are used to provide follow-up recommendations and design strengthening programs that can be implemented in the future. Thus, this program not only has a short-term impact, but also contributes to community empowerment in the long term.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Potential of Local Wisdom in Bangko

Bangko has various potentials for local wisdom that can be developed into business opportunities with high economic value. One of the most prominent is the woven craft of rattan and bamboo. These crafts not only have aesthetic value, but are also environmentally friendly, in line with the global trend of increasingly prioritizing sustainable products (Sari, 2020). In addition, Bangko's typical batik with motifs that represent local culture has the potential to be marketed nationally and even internationally, especially when combined with design innovations that suit the tastes of the modern market (Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2022).

Traditional culinary such as lemang and tempoyak curry also has great potential to be developed. The increasingly popular trend of culinary tourism provides an opportunity to introduce regional specialties to tourists. The challenge lies in innovation in presentation and packaging, so that this traditional food remains attractive to the younger generation and foreign tourists without losing its authenticity (Putra & Yuliani, 2021). For example, modern packaging of lemang in vacuum packaging can extend the shelf life of products and facilitate distribution to a wider market.

In addition to handicrafts and culinary, traditional performing arts such as regional dances and traditional music have great potential to be developed as tourist attractions. Packaging this performing arts in the form of cultural festivals or routine performances can attract domestic and foreign tourists. Cultural festivals not only increase local income, but also strengthen the cultural identity of the Bangko people (Rahman & Suryani, 2023). For example, an annual festival that combines arts, food, and crafts can be a permanent agenda that brings in tourists in a sustainable way.

Bangko's natural potential also offers great opportunities in ecotourism development. Natural beauty such as forests, rivers, and waterfalls can be used as tourist destinations that prioritize the principles of sustainability. Students can play an active role in promoting this natural tourism with environmentally friendly approaches, such as good waste management, the use of renewable energy, and educating tourists about the importance of preserving nature (Widodo, 2022). Collaboration with local communities in preserving nature will be an added value, as tourists increasingly appreciate destinations that prioritize environmental and community aspects.

Seeing these potentials, the key to the success of the development of local wisdom in Bangko lies in how this potential is packaged and marketed in an innovative way without eliminating existing cultural values. Innovation in product design, packaging, and promotion methods is essential to attract consumer interest, especially in a competitive market like today. Students have a strategic role in bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. With their knowledge and access to technology, students can help local communities modernize their products without losing cultural essence.

In addition, it is also important to build a supportive business ecosystem, ranging from entrepreneurship training, access to capital, to intellectual property rights protection. Support from the government and educational institutions is urgently needed to ensure the sustainability of this business based on local wisdom. The potential that exists in Bangko is not only for economic interests, but also as a tool to preserve culture and strengthen local identity in the midst of increasingly strong globalization.

Challenges and Obstacles

Students face various challenges in developing businesses based on local wisdom. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding of digital marketing strategies. In today's era of globalization, digital marketing is the key to expanding market reach, both locally and internationally. Students often understand the importance of social media such as Instagram or TikTok for promotion, but not all are able to optimize the platform strategically, for example in the use of paid advertising, marketing analytics, or search engine optimization (SEO). This shows that more technical and in-depth digital skills are still a need that must be met so that products based on local wisdom can compete in an increasingly competitive market (Putra & Yuliani, 2021).

In addition, access to business capital is also a significant obstacle. Despite various funding programs from the government or financial institutions, students often do not have enough information or feel hesitant to apply for funds due to a lack of experience in managing business finances. Even when they get capital, the next challenge is to manage the finances efficiently so that the business remains sustainable. This shows the need for practical and hands-on experience-based financial management training in the field, not just theory (Nugroho & Santoso, 2020).

Another challenge that is often overlooked is the lack of awareness about the importance of intellectual property rights (IPR). Many students focus on production and marketing but neglect the legality aspects of their products. In fact, without legal protection, the innovations they create can be easily adopted or misused by other parties. IPR protection is not only a matter of law, but also a matter of building a strong and trusted brand in the eyes of consumers. Students need to be given an understanding that IPR is an asset that can significantly increase the selling value of their products (Suryana, 2019).

Beyond technical factors, there are also challenges that are social and cultural. The consumption patterns of modern people who prefer instant and technology-based products often make local wisdom products less in demand, especially by the younger generation. Traditional products are considered outdated or less relevant to today's lifestyle. To address this, students need to innovate in terms of design, packaging, and even marketing narratives. For example, by linking traditional products to current issues such as environmental sustainability or local community empowerment. This not only increases the attractiveness of the product but also builds social awareness among consumers (Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2022).

From my perspective, the biggest challenge actually lies in the mindset. Many students still see entrepreneurship as a side activity, not as a serious career. In fact, with the right approach, businesses based on local wisdom can be the main source of income as well as a tool to preserve culture. A paradigm shift is needed among students to see entrepreneurship not only as an economic opportunity, but also as a means to contribute to society and the nation's cultural identity.

More than just technical skills or access to capital, the success of local wisdom-based businesses also depends heavily on students' ability to build strong networks. Collaboration with local communities, governments, and other industry players can open up new opportunities that cannot be achieved by working individually. This is where the role of universities becomes important, not only as educational institutions but also as facilitators that connect students with the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Empowerment Strategy

This program implements several empowerment strategies to improve students' entrepreneurial skills. This approach includes entrepreneurship training, business mentoring, and facilitating access to market networks. Each strategy is designed to equip students with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to manage a business based on local wisdom.

1. Entrepreneurship Training

Entrepreneurship training focuses on the development of managerial skills and product innovation. Training materials include business planning, financial management, digital marketing, and product development. Students are taught to develop realistic business plans, manage cash flow, and utilize digital technology to promote their products. Digital marketing, for example, includes an understanding of social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and the use of e-commerce platforms to expand market reach (Putra & Yuliani, 2021).

In addition to the technical aspect, the training also emphasized the importance of innovation in products based on local wisdom. Students are encouraged to modify designs, improve packaging, and adapt products to market needs without eliminating the cultural values contained in them. This innovation is important to maintain product competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market (Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2022).

2. Business Assistance

Business assistance is carried out by lecturers and practitioners who have experience in the field of entrepreneurship. Students are given guidance in facing real challenges in the field, such as operational, marketing, or financial management issues. This mentoring is sustainable and not only focuses on technical aspects, but also includes the development of entrepreneurial character, such as leadership, resilience, and risk-taking skills (Rahman & Suryani, 2023).

This mentoring also provides students with the opportunity to learn from the experience of practitioners who have been successful in their fields. Thus, students not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical insights that are relevant to current market conditions. This approach is effective in increasing students' confidence in running their businesses (Widodo, 2022).

3. Facilitate Access to Market Networks

Facilitation of access to the market network is carried out through cooperation with various parties, such as local governments, business actors, and e-commerce platforms. Students are introduced to various distribution channels that they can utilize to market their products. In addition, they are also taught how to build networks and partnerships that can support the development of their businesses (Sari, 2020).

The use of e-commerce platforms is one of the main strategies in expanding the market. Students are taught to take advantage of marketplaces such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak, as well as international platforms such as Etsy or Amazon for products that have export potential. In addition, social media-based marketing strategies such as Instagram and TikTok are also introduced as effective promotional tools (Putra & Yuliani, 2021).

Cooperation with local governments also plays an important role in opening up wider market access opportunities. The government can provide support through policies that support the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as provide a platform to promote local products through cultural exhibitions or festivals (Rahman & Suryani, 2023).

Through this empowerment strategy, students not only gain technical skills in managing a business, but also a deeper understanding of the importance of innovation and collaboration. One of the biggest challenges in developing businesses based on local wisdom is how to maintain a balance between maintaining cultural values and meeting the needs of the modern market. This is where the importance of training and mentoring that not only focuses on economic aspects, but also pays attention to social and cultural aspects.

In addition, the active involvement of various parties in facilitating market access shows that entrepreneurial development cannot be done individually. A supportive ecosystem is needed, ranging from educational institutions, governments, to local communities. With this synergy, the potential of local wisdom can be raised to become a sustainable and wide-impact economic force.

Results and Impact

This program shows positive results, where students succeed in developing products based on local wisdom that have competitiveness in the market. In addition, active community involvement in the program strengthens the relationship between the university and the local community, as well as promotes the preservation of local culture (Hartati, Chandra, & Diar, 2023).

Several products developed by students have succeeded in penetrating the national and even international markets. For example, Bangko's typical woven products marketed through e-commerce platforms have succeeded in attracting consumers from abroad. This success shows that products based on local wisdom have great potential if managed properly.

In addition to the economic impact, this program also has a significant social impact. The involvement of students in empowering local wisdom increases their awareness of the importance of cultural preservation. Students become more appreciative and proud of their local culture, which in turn strengthens their cultural identity.

The program also strengthens the relationship between the university and the local community. Through close collaboration, universities can act as agents of change that drive economic and social development in the surrounding communities. This relationship creates a mutually beneficial synergy for both parties.

From the community side, this program provides new economic opportunities that can improve their welfare. With training and mentoring, local communities can develop their own businesses with more confidence. In addition, they also gain access to a wider market through a network built with students and universities.

Overall, this local wisdom empowerment program makes a significant contribution to increasing student entrepreneurship and local economic development in Bangko. With a comprehensive and collaborative approach, this program is expected to be a model for the development of entrepreneurship based on local wisdom in other regions.

CONCLUSION

The community service program carried out by the Faculty of Law, University of Merangin in Bangko shows that empowering local wisdom can be an effective strategy in improving students' entrepreneurial skills. By identifying local potentials such as handicrafts, traditional culinary, performing arts, and ecotourism, students are able to create products that are competitive in the market. However, challenges such as limited access to capital, lack of understanding of digital marketing, and intellectual property rights protection are obstacles that must be overcome through training, mentoring, and collaboration with various parties.

Through a comprehensive empowerment strategy, students not only acquire technical skills in managing businesses but also develop strong entrepreneurial characters. This program not only has an impact on improving the local economy but also contributes to cultural preservation and strengthening local identity. Synergy between universities, the community, and the government is the key to creating a sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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CONFLICT INTEREST

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the implementation and writing of this article.

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