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## Innovation in Communication Models for Women's Economic Empowerment through Business Incubators: A Case Study of the *PADU* Program at Universitas Subang

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the empowerment communication model implemented in the PADU (Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha Women Champions in Business) business incubator program at Universitas Subang as a means to enhance entrepreneurial capacity among female students. Using a mixed-method approach, this research combined quantitative data collected through questionnaires (50 respondents) and qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The findings from 50 respondents indicate significant improvements in financial literacy (80%), digital marketing skills (70%), self-confidence (90%), and the ability to create business prototypes (70%). However, challenges remain regarding business sustainability after the incubation process and participants' independence. Based on interview results, the communication model employed in the program is participatory, transformative, and contextual. Participatory communication encourages active involvement from participants; transformative communication helps shift their mindset from consumers to entrepreneurs; and contextual communication ensures that the materials delivered are relevant to Subang's local potential. This research emphasizes that communication innovation within university-based business incubators is not merely aimed at transferring technical skills but also at fostering critical awareness, entrepreneurial identity, and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly gender equality (SDG 5) and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8).*

**Keywords:** *Communication Model; Women's Empowerment; Business Incubator; Entrepreneurship; PADU Program*

### INTRODUCTION

Women's economic empowerment has become a central focus in various global and national policies due to its significant impact on improving family welfare, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable development (Ogbari et al., 2024). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) place gender equality (Goal 5) and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8) as key indicators for fostering social justice and inclusive development (Salim, 2021). According to *UN Women*, women in many countries, including Indonesia, continue to face structural barriers in accessing economic resources, such as limited capital, low financial literacy, restricted access to technology, and patriarchal cultural norms that weaken women's bargaining power in economic decision-making (Commission on the Status of Women, 2016). Data from Indonesia's *Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS)* also indicates that the female labour force participation rate remains lower than that of men, with many women working in the informal sector without social security or legal protection (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Cilacap, 2024).

In the local context, Subang Regency, one of the regions with great potential for creative

economic development, particularly in the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, faces challenges in optimizing women's roles in entrepreneurship (Asriati et al., 2025; Fatimah et al., 2021; Putri & Aduldaecha, 2024). Many young women, including university students, possess strong entrepreneurial potential but lack structured support in the form of training, mentoring, or an inclusive business ecosystem (Antara & Sumarniasih, 2017).

To address this issue, Universitas Subang initiated the *PADU (Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha/Women Champions in Business)* program, a campus-based business incubation model targeting female students. This program not only focuses on the technical aspects of entrepreneurship, such as production and marketing training, but also emphasizes empowerment communication that is participatory, dialogic, and contextual (Ortiz & Huber-Heim, 2017; Santos et al., 2019; Wiranata et al., 2025). Through this approach, participants are expected not only to gain technical skills but also to develop self-awareness, confidence, and business networks.

However, based on a literature review, there remains a research gap in academic studies regarding how empowerment communication models are specifically implemented within university-based business incubators for female students. Most previous research has focused on the success of incubators from the perspective of business outputs (products, income, number of participants) rather than on the communication processes that drive psychological, social, and economic transformation among women participants.

Several studies highlight the importance of two-way communication in women's empowerment programs, but have yet to formulate a systematic communication model (Baharudin et al., 2021). Likewise, Baharudin's research emphasizes the role of business mentoring in developing microenterprises but lacks an analysis of the communicative dimension between mentors and participants (Hamid et al., 2023). On the other hand, Hatini's study notes that dialogic approaches in women's entrepreneurship training positively influence self-efficacy, yet they have not been directly linked to the design of university incubators (Hartini et al., 2022).

Therefore, this research is crucial to fill the gap in the literature on empowerment communication models in the context of campus-based business incubators for female students. It aims to provide both practical and theoretical insights into communication innovation for economic empowerment, and to formulate an empowerment communication model that is applicable, innovative, and replicable by other universities and women's empowerment institutions.

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing need to address gender inequality in entrepreneurship. Women's participation in entrepreneurship is a proven strategy for economic growth, but this potential remains untapped without adequate support systems. Furthermore, the integration of communication as a tool for empowerment remains underappreciated. This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring the communication strategies within the *PADU* program, providing valuable insights into the ways that communication can transform women's roles in the economy.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the communication models that empower women within business incubators, particularly in the context of higher education. Unlike previous studies,

which have focused predominantly on business metrics, this research will examine how empowerment communication fosters not only technical skills but also shifts in mindset, self-efficacy, and confidence. The study will contribute to the development of an innovative, replicable model for women's entrepreneurship, applicable to universities and women's empowerment institutions worldwide.

This research aims to formulate a communication model that enhances women's economic empowerment through university-based business incubators. By investigating the *PADU* program, the study seeks to understand the dynamics of participatory, transformative, and contextual communication in empowering female entrepreneurs. The research will provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of women's empowerment by proposing an adaptable communication model that integrates technical and psychological aspects of entrepreneurship.

The objective of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the communication model within the *PADU* program in fostering entrepreneurial skills and self-confidence among female students. Specifically, the study will evaluate the impact of participatory, transformative, and contextual communication strategies on the participants' economic independence, decision-making, and entrepreneurial identity. Additionally, the research aims to offer recommendations for improving communication strategies to further enhance the sustainability and scalability of women's entrepreneurship programs.

The benefits of this study extend beyond the academic realm. The findings will inform policymakers, educators, and practitioners in higher education and women's empowerment institutions about the critical role of communication in promoting women's economic independence. By demonstrating how communication can transform women's entrepreneurial capabilities, this research will contribute to achieving the SDGs, particularly in the areas of gender equality (SDG 5) and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8). The study also offers a model that can be applied across other regions and contexts, driving inclusive economic development globally.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative descriptive methods. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the empowerment communication model in the *PADU* program, both from a numerical (quantitative) perspective and an in-depth narrative (qualitative) viewpoint. The study is descriptive-exploratory in nature and uses a case study approach. The case study method was selected to explore communication and empowerment processes contextually within a single focused case the *PADU* program at Universitas Subang. This approach aligns with the view of Creswell (2018) who state that case studies are used to investigate phenomena in depth within defined boundaries of space and time (Creswell, 2018).

This research was conducted at Universitas Subang, the implementing institution of the *PADU* program. The location was chosen because *PADU* is one of the university's innovative initiatives targeting female students in entrepreneurial empowerment. The research was carried out

from June to early September 2025.

The research subjects consist of: The *PADU* Program Coordinator, who understands the program's design and implementation. *PADU* incubator participants, namely female students of Universitas Subang who actively participated in training and business mentoring. The quantitative respondents were determined using a total sampling technique, involving all 50 active *PADU* participants. The qualitative informants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of ten participants who demonstrated active involvement and one program coordinator.

This research collected both quantitative and qualitative data: Quantitative data were gathered to measure participants' perceptions of the communication patterns in the program and the impact of communication on motivation and business skills. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale (1–5) and tested for validity and reliability through statistical analysis (Kriyantono, 2020). Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews aimed at exploring personal narratives from participants and the coordinator regarding the empowerment process, challenges, and their communication experiences within the *PADU* program. Observation was also conducted by attending *PADU* training sessions and discussions to observe communication processes among mentors, participants, and program managers. The observations recorded verbal and non-verbal interactions as well as participant engagement. Lastly, Documentation such as training modules, session recordings, program pamphlets, and participants' project outputs were collected to enrich the analysis.

Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and percentage) to identify general response patterns among participants. Qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed following the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, consisting of three stages: Data Reduction, simplifying and organizing data relevant to the research focus. Data Display, presenting the data in narrative matrices for better interpretation. Conclusion Drawing, interpreting emerging patterns and themes from field data.

For qualitative data, validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, by comparing interview results with observations and documentation (Ghozali, 2021). For quantitative data, validity and reliability tests were conducted statistically using SPSS software.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **General Description of the *PADU* Program at Universitas Subang**

The *PADU* Program is one of Universitas Subang's innovations in responding to the issue of low female participation in the economy, particularly among female students who possess great potential but have limited access to business resources, entrepreneurship training, and business mentoring. The program is designed as a campus-based business incubator that adopts a holistic and participatory approach.

Since its launch in 2022, *PADU* has conducted three incubation cycles that include a variety of activities such as:

1. Soft skills training (public speaking, personal branding, leadership).
2. Hard skills training (product development, digital marketing, financial management).
3. Business mentoring by local MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) practitioners and entrepreneurship lecturers.
4. Initial capital assistance facilitation, and
5. Campus bazaars and community-based business networking.

The *PADU* program emphasizes empowerment through active participant involvement, contextualization of training materials based on Subang's local culture and potential, and transforming women's perspectives on their roles in the economic sphere. The program is held regularly every semester and is open to all female students across different study programs at Universitas Subang.

The Women Champions in Business (*PADU*) initiative at Universitas Subang serves as a business incubator focused on enhancing entrepreneurial capacity among female students. The program encompasses entrepreneurship training, mentorship, business legality facilitation, and market access support. Since 2022, *PADU* has successfully organized three incubation cycles involving primarily female university students.

The *PADU* activities are carried out in three main stages:

1. Pre-incubation – Orientation and basic training,
2. Core incubation – Intensive mentoring and business development, and
3. Post-incubation – Monitoring, evaluation, and product showcasing.

### **Communication Model Implemented**

The research findings show that the communication model applied in the *PADU* Program consists of three main characteristics:

1. Participatory Communication – Participants are actively involved in expressing ideas, identifying needs, and evaluating the program. This aligns with Servaes theory of development communication, which emphasizes collaboration and dialogue between facilitators and participants.
2. Transformative Communication – The mentoring process encourages a shift in participants' mindset from merely being consumers to becoming producers and entrepreneurs. This reflects Freire's theory of critical education, where dialogue serves as a means of transformation and empowerment.
3. Contextual Communication – The training materials are adapted to Subang's local potential, such as the processing of local food products and regionally inspired promotional strategies, supporting the ideas of Melkote & Steeves (2015) on the importance of culturally relevant communication in development (Melkote & Steeves, 2018).

### **Impact on Economic Empowerment (Quantitative & Qualitative Results)**

Based on data collected through questionnaires (50 respondents) and interviews, the following findings were obtained:



**Figure 1 Results of the Questionnaire from 50 Respondents on Key Empowerment Indicators**

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2025)

Based on the figure above, the Financial Literacy indicator shows a high level of understanding, with the majority of participants (70%) rating an improvement (scores 4–5). This supports interview results indicating that the *PADU* training was effective in developing participants’ basic financial management skills. For the Digital Marketing indicator, results were varied; although improvement was noted, 14% of respondents scored at level 2, indicating a need for further assistance in using digital platforms such as Shopee, Instagram, and TikTok. The Self-Confidence indicator showed very positive results, with 90% of respondents scoring between 3–5. This supports the qualitative findings that transformative communication encouraged participants’ confidence to present themselves as entrepreneurs.

For the Entrepreneurial Independence indicator, results were still limited, with 22% of respondents scoring at level 2, suggesting that some participants were not yet ready to run their businesses independently without the incubator’s support. The Mentorship Benefit indicator showed a high level of satisfaction, with most participants finding the mentoring sessions beneficial, though mentor quality still needs to be improved to become more personalized and aligned with participants’ individual needs. These quantitative findings are consistent with interview data, which revealed that participants experienced significant improvement in self-confidence and financial literacy. However, the main challenge remains business sustainability after the program ends, especially regarding digital market access and independent business management.

### **Impact on Economic Empowerment**

Findings from interviews and questionnaires show a significant transformation among participants:

1. 80% reported major improvements in financial literacy and digital marketing skills;
2. 70% successfully created business product prototypes and sold them through campus events or social media;
3. 90% expressed increased self-confidence, risk-taking ability, and a new perspective on their role as women entrepreneurs.

These outcomes reinforce Naila Kabeer's theory of women's economic empowerment, which encompasses the ability to make strategic life choices, exercise control over economic resources, and strengthen one's agency both socially and economically. Contextual communication, in line with Melkote & Steeves (2015), shows that materials aligned with local potential are more easily accepted. The participants' economic and confidence growth supports Kabeer's (2016) concept that empowerment is reflected in women's ability to make economic decisions.

The research on the implementation of the *PADU (Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha)* business incubator at Universitas Subang demonstrates a strong connection between field findings and development communication and empowerment theories forming the study's foundation. This correlation can be described as follows:

1. Participatory Communication and Servaes' Theory (2020): One major finding shows that *PADU* applies participatory communication, where participants actively engage in planning, implementation, and program evaluation. This participation cultivates a sense of ownership and motivation to develop their own business ideas. Servaes' theory emphasizes that community participation is the key to achieving empowerment and sustainable development. Through dialogue and collaboration, participatory communication transforms top-down power relations into horizontal relationships. Thus, *PADU's* participatory communication model supports Servaes' (2020) theory that active participation increases ownership and motivation (Servaes, 2022).
2. Transformative Communication and Freire's Theory (1970): The study also found that *PADU* successfully encouraged a mindset shift among participants, particularly in how they view themselves as entrepreneurs. Participants moved from a consumer mindset to seeing themselves as producers and innovators. This transformation occurred through dialogic mentoring and reflective training practices, consistent with Freire's critical pedagogy, which views transformative communication as a tool of liberation helping individuals move from passive thinking toward critical consciousness. Hence, *PADU* functions as a dialogical space that empowers women to discover their potential (Widianingsih et al., 2025).
3. Contextual Communication and Melkote & Steeves (2015): The training materials in *PADU* were developed based on participants' real needs and the socio-cultural context of Subang, such as creating local food-based products and digital marketing strategies adapted to community capacity. This approach made the materials easier to understand and apply directly in

participants' businesses. It supports Melkote & Steeves' view that effective development communication depends on how well messages and methods are adapted to local cultural, social, and economic contexts. By positioning local potential as the main source of innovation, *PADU* created relevant and applicable learning experiences.

Overall, the observable impacts of this research include improvements in financial literacy, self-confidence, and participants' courage in making economic decisions, such as starting new businesses, managing capital, and marketing products. These findings reinforce Kabeer's (2016) theory that women's empowerment is reflected through their ability to access resources, make strategic decisions, and exercise control over key aspects of their economic lives. Through *PADU*, women not only gain technical skills but also a platform to strengthen their social and economic bargaining power.

The following is the correlation between the field findings and the theories discussed in Chapter 2:

**Table 1 Field Findings and Theoretical Correlation**

No.	Field Findings	Theoretical Correlation
1	Participatory communication between participants, mentors, and facilitators	In line with Servaes' (2020) development communication theory, which emphasizes collaboration and two-way dialogue.
2	Changes in women's perspectives on entrepreneurship and gender roles	Supported by Freire's (1970) theory of liberating education, which promotes social transformation through critical communication.
3	Adaptation of training materials to the local Subang context	Consistent with Melkote & Steeves' (2015) contextual communication theory, which prioritizes cultural relevance and local adaptation.
4	Increased economic capacity and entrepreneurial courage	In accordance with Kabeer's (2016) concept of women's economic empowerment, which emphasizes greater control over decision-making and access to resources.

The strengths of the *PADU* model are as follows: The participatory, dialogic, and locally based communication model fosters close relationships between participants and facilitators. The program's activities are driven by participants' needs, not by a top-down campus agenda. There is continuity after incubation, including access to funding, exhibitions, and an alumni community where former *PADU* participants serve as new mentors. The program is effective in improving financial literacy and self-confidence. Locally contextualized communication makes the program relevant and easy to implement and the mentoring approach provides both psychological and practical support.

Meanwhile, the weaknesses of the *PADU* program include: Participants' business independence has not yet been fully achieved after the incubation stage. Digital marketing skills among participants remain uneven. The program is still dependent on campus and partner support, and has not become fully self-sustaining. A high dependency on the campus as the main facilitator limits the program's scalability. There is a lack of a long-term success measurement system for

participants’ businesses (e.g., sustainability after 6–12 months). and there has not yet been replication of the *PADU* program in villages or other institutions beyond Universitas Subang.

### **SWOT Analysis of the *PADU* Communication Model**

**Table 2 SWOT Analysis**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
1	Dialogic and participatory communication	Limited facilities; uneven mentor quality.
2	Program based on participants’ needs	Low business independence after the program.
<b>No.</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
3	Collaboration with village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) and local MSMEs	Dependence on campus or CSR funding.
4	Replication in off-campus community settings	Declining participant interest after the incubation phase.

By integrating the quantitative and qualitative results, it can be concluded that the *PADU* Program is effective as a communication model for women’s economic empowerment, particularly in enhancing participants’ knowledge and self-confidence. However, strengthening aspects of digital marketing and business independence remains a challenge that needs to be addressed in future program cycles.

This chapter demonstrates that a communication approach designed with attention to active participation, local relevance, and transformative elements can produce tangible impacts on women’s economic empowerment. Nevertheless, challenges persist in terms of sustainability and scalability of the model, which can be overcome through cross-sector collaboration and the implementation of long-term monitoring strategies.

## **Discussion**

### **Relevance of the *PADU* Communication Model to Women’s Economic Empowerment**

The research findings indicate that the communication model applied in the *PADU* Program (*Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha*) at Universitas Subang has a strong relationship with the process of women’s economic empowerment both within the campus environment and the surrounding community. The communication developed in this program functions not merely as a medium for information delivery or technical knowledge transfer, but as an instrument of social transformation that fosters changes in participants’ ways of thinking, attitudes, and behaviors.

Three key communication approaches participatory, transformative, and contextual serve as the foundation for fostering active participant engagement while also transforming their mindset from passive recipients of benefits into active agents in the business development process.

#### **1. Participatory Communication**

The participatory approach is clearly evident in participants’ involvement at all stages of the

program from activity planning and business development strategy formulation to program evaluation. This process cultivates a sense of ownership and motivates participants to more seriously develop their business ideas.

Questionnaire data support this finding: 70% of respondents reported feeling fully involved in the program formulation process, and 68% said their ideas were accepted in discussion forums. This aligns with Servaes' (2020) theory of inclusive development communication, which emphasizes that the success of empowerment depends on how effectively communication opens space for full participation.

## **2. Transformative Communication**

The communication model within *PADU* also demonstrates a transformative character. Participants not only gain technical entrepreneurial skills but also experience a transformation in mindset and self-identity.

According to questionnaire results, 90% of respondents stated that their self-confidence increased after joining the program, while 80% reported a shift in perspective regarding economic independence. This transformation is consistent with Freire's (1970) concept of critical education, which posits that dialogue-based education can liberate individuals from passive thinking toward critical consciousness. Thus, *PADU* has successfully encouraged participants to gain the confidence to make economic decisions and to emerge as more independent female entrepreneurs.

## **3. Contextual Communication**

The effectiveness of *PADU*'s communication is also shaped by its contextual nature. The training materials, case studies, and business promotion strategies were designed according to the social, cultural, and local economic realities of Subang.

Quantitative findings show that 65% of participants considered the training materials highly relevant to local needs, and 72% stated that they could better understand materials based on local case studies. These findings support Melkote & Steeves (2015), who argue that development communication tailored to the cultural and social context of the community is more readily accepted and yields tangible impact.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the success of the *PADU* Program lies not only in delivering entrepreneurship content but also in how communication is designed and implemented. Supported by quantitative data, it is evident that the majority of participants experienced significant improvement in financial literacy (80%), self-confidence (90%), and digital marketing skills (70%). This indicates a strong synergy between participatory, transformative, and contextual communication in strengthening the process of women's economic empowerment.

Therefore, the *PADU* Program at Universitas Subang stands as a tangible example of how innovative communication models can create sustainable empowerment based on active participation, mindset transformation, and contextual relevance within the local environment.

## **Social Transformation through Transformative Communication**

From several **participant interview excerpts**, the following key transformations were identified:

**1. Change in Self-Confidence**

“Before joining *PADU*, I doubted whether I could run my own business. After receiving guidance and discussing with mentors, I became more confident to start. It turns out that women can also make important business decisions without always depending on others.”*(Participant A, 22 years old, Student of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Subang)*

**2. Economic Independence**

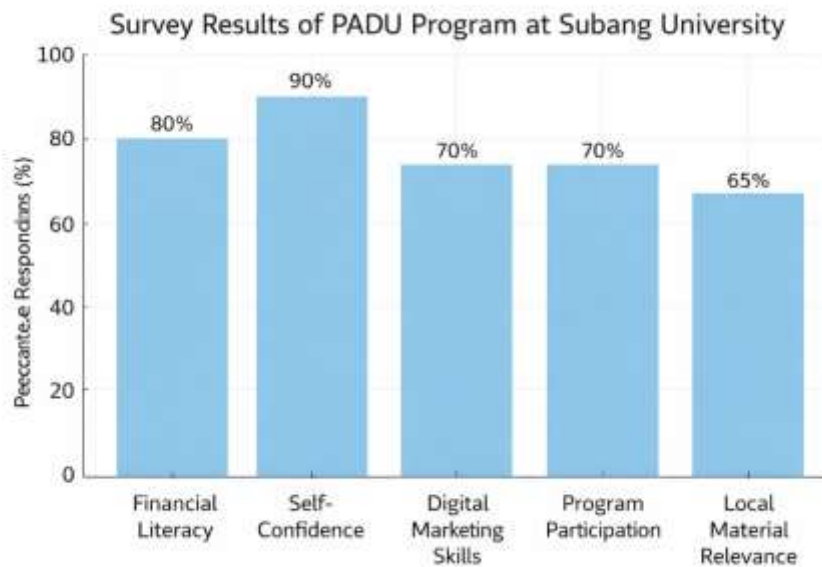
“I used to think that after graduation I just needed to find a job, but through this program, I learned that I can also create my own business. Now I’ve started selling snacks, and that gives me my own income *(Participant B, 21 years old, Student of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Subang)*

**3. Gender Roles and New Identity**

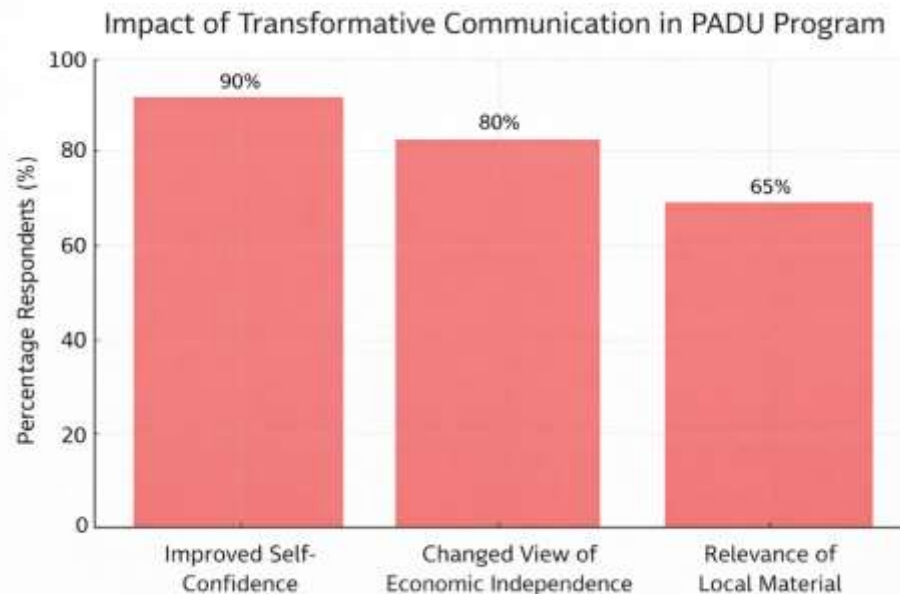
“I feel that women have often been underestimated in business matters. But through *PADU*, I can show that women can also be entrepreneurs and even build their own business networks. I’ve become more confident in my own potential *(Participant C, 23 years old, Student of the Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Subang)*

From the first excerpt, a psychological transformation is evident an increase in self-confidence and decision-making ability. In the second excerpt, there emerges a dimension of economic independence, where the participant shifts from being job-oriented to seeing herself as a job creator. Meanwhile, the third excerpt reflects a shift in gender perspective, where women are no longer seen merely as followers but as leaders in business.

Thus, these interview excerpts reinforce the quantitative data showing that 90% of participants experienced increased self-confidence and 80% reported a change in perspective on economic independence demonstrating that the *PADU* Program successfully fostered social transformation through transformative communication.



**Figure 2 Questionnaire Results of *PADU* Program at Universitas Subang**



**Figure 3 Impact of Transformative Communication in the *PADU* Program**

### **The Integration of Local Context in the Business Incubation Process**

One of the main strengths of the *PADU* Business Incubator Program at Universitas Subang lies in its ability to integrate the local context into every stage of implementation from the training curriculum and entrepreneurial practice to participants' marketing strategies. This approach demonstrates that the success of an empowerment program is determined not only by the transfer of technical skills but also by the relevance of training materials to local values (local wisdom) and regional potential.

In practice, participants are guided to utilize Subang's unique local potential as the foundation for business development. This is reflected in several key aspects:

#### **1. Use of Local Language in Marketing Communication**

Participants are encouraged to use Sundanese or other local expressions in their promotional strategies, both on social media and in direct interactions with consumers. This approach makes marketing communication more familiar, human-centred, and easily accepted by the local community.

#### **2. Utilization of Local Raw Materials**

Most business products developed make use of locally available raw materials, such as cassava-based snacks, pineapple products, and other agricultural outputs from Subang. This strategy not only reduces production costs but also adds value to local commodities.

#### **3. Incorporation of Subang's Culture into Brand Identity**

The brand identities created by participants often reflect local culture, either through logo design, packaging, or product storytelling. This enhances the brand image while

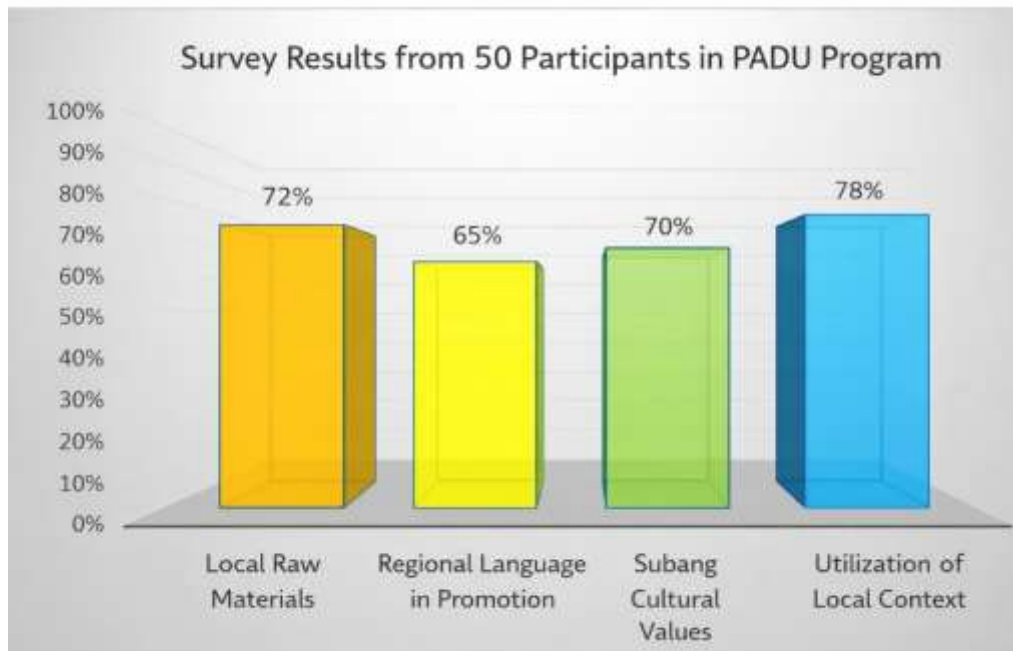
simultaneously serving as a medium to promote Subang's cultural heritage to a wider audience.

This approach aligns with the ideas of Melkote & Steeves (2015), who emphasize the importance of contextual communication in development. According to them, the effectiveness of empowerment programs largely depends on how well communication interventions adapt to the values, norms, and social practices of the community.

In the context of *PADU*, the integration of local wisdom makes the program more inclusive, understandable, and capable of producing long-term impact. Furthermore, this local contextualization contributes to business sustainability. Participants do not merely imitate external business models which are often incompatible with local conditions but instead develop enterprises based on existing local strengths that are already recognized and accepted by the community. As a result, their products more easily penetrate local markets, become embedded in the community, and generate broader social impacts, such as increased household income, creation of new jobs, and strengthening of regional cultural identity.

Overall, the experience of *PADU* demonstrates that local context is not just a complement but a foundational pillar in building a successful incubation-based enterprise. By combining local potential with modern entrepreneurial knowledge, the program has successfully cultivated female entrepreneurs who are not only economically independent but also serve as ambassadors of cultural preservation and promoters of Subang's regional potential.

Based on the questionnaire results from 50 participants of the *PADU* Program



**Figure 4 Questionnaire Results from 50 Participants of the *PADU* Program on Local Context Utilization**

The quantitative data show that the majority of participants not only gained practical benefits from integrating the local context but also experienced strategic impacts on their business sustainability. This aligns with Melkote & Steeves (2015), who argue that contextual communication enhances the effectiveness of empowerment programs by aligning strategies with local culture and values.

### **Effectiveness and Challenges in Implementing the *PADU* Communication Model**

The research findings indicate that the communication model implemented in the *PADU* Business Incubator Program (*Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha*) at Universitas Subang has demonstrated a high level of effectiveness in improving female students' entrepreneurial capacity. This effectiveness can be observed through several key achievements, as well as some challenges that must be addressed to ensure program sustainability.

#### **Effectiveness of the Communication Model**

##### **1. Improvement in Financial Literacy**

Most participants showed a significant increase in their understanding of financial literacy. Questionnaire data revealed that 80% of participants felt more capable of managing business capital, keeping simple records, and organizing profits after joining the program. This proves that participatory communication in training sessions effectively transferred applicable knowledge.

##### **2. Increased Participant Confidence**

The transformative communication applied in *PADU* had a positive psychological effect on participants. As many as 90% of respondents stated they were more confident in making business decisions and presenting themselves as entrepreneurs. This improvement reflects the success of a dialogue-based communication approach, as explained by Freire (1970).

##### **3. Product Success in Local Markets**

Incubation outcomes showed that over 70% of participants succeeded in creating product prototypes and selling them within the campus or local Subang markets. This finding demonstrates that contextual communication aligned with local potential helped participants design products that were relevant and well-received by the community.

### **Program Challenges**

Despite the program's effectiveness, there remains a high dependence on Universitas Subang as the main facilitator. This indicates the need to expand partnerships with the private sector, local communities, and external funding institutions to establish a more independent entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Currently, *PADU* does not yet have a systematic replication mechanism to reach women outside the campus. The potential for women's economic empowerment in the wider Subang community remains underutilized, highlighting the need for a village- or community-based replication strategy.

Additionally, not all participants continued their businesses after the incubation period ended, revealing weaknesses in program sustainability strategies. Post-incubation support—such

as continued mentoring, sustained market access, and long-term impact measurement—remains essential to strengthen program outcomes.

The effectiveness of *PADU* lies mainly in its success in knowledge transfer, self-capacity development, and local relevance. However, the challenges of sustainability and replication suggest that the communication model still requires institutional strengthening and external networking strategies to achieve broader and longer-lasting impacts.

### ***PADU's* Role in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The *PADU* Business Incubator Program at Universitas Subang functions not only as an entrepreneurship training platform but also plays a strategic role in supporting sustainable development goals. Specifically, *PADU's* contribution aligns with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

*PADU* provides opportunities for women, particularly female students, to access knowledge, skills, and business opportunities that were previously limited by cultural and structural barriers. Through participatory communication, participants are encouraged to take an active role in idea formulation and decision-making.

As many as 90% of participants reported an increase in self-confidence, demonstrating that the program successfully fostered critical awareness of women's roles as agents of development. Thus, *PADU* strengthens women's positions as economic actors with greater bargaining power within their families and communities.

The program also contributes to developing a generation of competitive young women entrepreneurs. Over 70% of participants created product prototypes and marketed them within the campus and local markets. Participants also acquired skills in financial management, digital marketing, and sustainable business strategy, which contribute to job creation and strengthened local economic growth.

As part of a higher education institution, Universitas Subang has demonstrated that universities can play a strategic role in community empowerment. Through *PADU*, the university not only fulfils its Tri Dharma (education, research, and community service) but also acts as a driver of social transformation, fostering a gender- and locality-based entrepreneurial ecosystem.

More than a business training initiative, *PADU* serves as a vehicle for social transformation. Participants not only acquire technical skills but also gain courage, a new entrepreneurial identity, and social networks that strengthen their role as agents of change.

Thus, this program demonstrates that women's economic empowerment through innovative communication produces broader and more sustainable social impacts. *PADU's* contribution to the SDGs confirms its success in linking global goals with local action.

Gender equality is reflected in women's enhanced capacity as entrepreneurs, while economic growth is evident in the emergence of new local-based businesses. Through its empowerment communication approach, *PADU* stands as a best-practice model of sustainable development rooted in community engagement and tailored to regional needs.

## CONCLUSION

This research explores and analyzes the innovation of communication models used in the women's economic empowerment program through the *PADU* Business Incubator (*Perempuan Andalan dalam Dunia Usaha*) organized by Universitas Subang. The communication model employed in *PADU* is participatory, transformative, and contextual, involving a two-way communication process that engages participants at every stage, from planning to evaluation, while being adapted to the participants' characteristics and local potential. Beyond merely delivering information, the communication within *PADU* fosters mindset change and critical awareness, which has resulted in increased self-confidence, motivation, and the ability of participants to manage and develop their businesses independently. The program has contributed to women's social transformation, especially in terms of economic independence, strengthened gender roles, and the integration of local potential into business development. *PADU* has successfully bridged the gap in access to entrepreneurial training for women in higher education. However, challenges remain in ensuring program sustainability and replication beyond the university environment, as some participants still rely heavily on the university's role as a facilitator, and not all businesses survive after the incubation phase. Overall, the *PADU* Program contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and demonstrates that higher education institutions play a strategic role in creating effective, communication-based models of women's economic empowerment.

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