Empowering Teachers in Academic Publication through Community-Based Mentorship and Participatory Appraisal

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Abstract. This community service project aims to empower teachers in Semarang City to improve their skills in academic writing and publication through a community-based mentorship program. The project addresses critical challenges faced by teachers, including limited time for research, lack of experience in scientific publication, and funding constraints. Using the participatory Community Appraisal (PCA) method, the program was designed to actively involve teachers in planning, executing, and evaluating. The community of teachers, particularly those involved in the PKY (Pengembangan Konten Youtube) Teacher Community, received intensive training and guidance in scientific writing, article submission, and the duplication processes. The project result include a significant improvement in a teacher's academic writing abilities, with several article prepared for submission to national journals. The collaborative approach fostered a sense of ownership among participants, making the outcome more sustainable. This initiative highlights the importance of providing structured mentorship to improve teacher professional development and their contributions to academic knowledge.

Keywords: scientific teacher publications, community-based mentoring, participatory community appraisal, professional development.

INTRODUCTION

The role of teacher in educational system was paramount, not only in the imparting knowledge but also in contributing to the academic field through research and publication (Abdallah & Abdallah, 2023; Mythiri et al., 2023). In Indonesia, teacher were expected to continuously develop their professional skills, which include the ability to conduct research and publication scientific articles. However, many teachers, particularly those in the Semarang, Indonesia, face several challenge in achieving these goals. Among the key issues were the lack of time for research due to administrative responsibilities, limited experience in academic writing and publishing, and financial constraint for submitting article to reputable journals. These challenges create a gap between a teacher's potential and their actual contributions to the academic community, which can hinder their career advancement and the dissemination of educational innovations (Estefan, 2024; Henry et al., 2023; Stark et al., 2024).

The main problem faced by the teacher in the Youtube Content Development by Teacher Community or PKY (Pengembangan Konten Youtube) Teacher Community can be summarized as follows:
a) The teacher were often burdened with

administrative tasks that left them with little time to conduct research and write academic papers.

b) Many teachers lack the knowledge and experience needed to write and publish academic articles. This includes difficulties in structuring scientific papers, proper citation methods, and choosing the right journal for submission.

c) Publishing in a reputable journal often requires financial investment, which many teacher were unable to meet the limited funding.

This issue necessitate with a comprehensive solution that addresses both practical and financial aspects of academic publishing for teachers (Koopman & Beijaard, 2024; Rivadeneira & Inga, 2023; Rosenke, 2019).

The objective of this community service program was to empower teachers, particularly those in PKY Teacher Community, by providing them with the necessary skills and mentorship to successfully write and publish academic articles (Haryadi et al., 2020a; Merdekawati, 2022; Ngabiyanto et al., 2021). Specifically, the program aims to:

a) Provide structure mentorship in academic writing, focusing on improving teachers' abilities to research, write, and format scientific articles.

b) Guide teachers in navigating the publication process, from manuscript preparation to submission to national journals.

c) Assist teachers in finding financial support for them for their publications, thereby easing the burden of publication fees.

d) Foster a collaborative environment that encourage knowledge-sharing and peer support among teachers, strengthening their professional networks.

The importance of teacher development in academic research and publication has been widely reorganized in the educational sector. According to the Ramadina et al. (2023) professional development for teachers should include in the ability to write scientific article as a part of continuously professional development for teachers or Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan (PKB). This was crucial not only for personal career advancement, but also for improving the overall quality of education. Teacher who engages in research and publication contribute to the advancement of educational theories and practices, thus improving their teacher methods and the learning outcome of their students (Munianti, 2022; Pramono et al., 2021a; Ramadina et al.,

2023b).

However, challenges remain, as documented by Utomo et al. (2021), many teachers find it difficult to meet the expectations of writing and publishing article due to a lack of experience and knowledge about the academic writing process. These challenges were exacerbated by the administrative workloads that consume much of their time, leaving little room for research and writing. Furthermore, the financial burden associated with the publication fees, especially in the international journals, present an additional obstacle (Munianti, 2022; Pramono et al., 2021; Ramadina et al., 2023).

The participatory Community Appraisal (PCA) method, adapted from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), has been recognized as an effective tool for empowering communities to solve their own problems by actively involving them in planning and implementation of the programs (Chambers & Sukoco, 1996). This approach has been widely used in various community development programs and has proven effective in ensuring that the solutions were tailor-made to the community's specific needs. In the context of teacher development, PCA can be adopted to empower teacher communities by involving them in designing and executing academic development programs. By allowing teachers to take ownership of their professional growth, the PCA method fosters a sense of responsibility and motivation, which was critical for the successful of such a program (Chambers & Sukoco, 1996).

In the context of teacher development, research by Utomo (2020) demonstrated that collaborative mentorship programs significantly improved teacher abilities to engage in academic writing and research. The study showed that when teachers were provided with structured guidance, and peer support, they were more likely to produce high quality research papers that were eligible for publication. Similarly, Pramono et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of integrating technology and digital platforms into teacher development programs to increase accessibility and efficiency. This included the use of online mentoring system, collaborative writing tools, and the digital submission platform, which can streamline the research and publication process.

The key component of a successful teacher mentorship program was collaboration. Studies by Haryadi et al. (2020); Pramono et al. (2021) emphasize the value of creating teacher communities that foster peer-to-peer learning and Support. In these communities, teacher can share their experience, offer feedback on other's work,

and provide moral support throughout the writing and publication process. This collaborative approach not only reduces the burden on individual teachers but also increases the likelihood of producing publishable Research.

The financial aspect of academic publishing was another area that required attention. Utomo et al. (2021) suggest that any institutions and teacher communities should explore alternative funding mechanism to support teachers in their publication efforts. This can include seeking grants from educational foundations, partnering with academic institutions that our application subsidies, or developing a cost-sharing model within teacher communities. By addressing the financial barrier to publication, these programs can significantly improve teachers' participation in academic discourse.

The combination of structured mentorship, collaborative communities, and financial support were crucial for empowering teachers to engage in academic research and publication. The PCA method provides an effective framework for designing and implementing such programs, ensuring that the specific needs and challenges of teacher communities are addressed (Ayu & Muzayin, 2021; Brennan & Canny, 2023; Garcia et al., 2024; Jainiyah et al., 2023; Mahmudah, 2022). By fostering a supportive environment and providing practical resources this program aims to improve the professional development of teacher and their contribution to the academic field. The outcome of this initiative were expected to have a lasting impact on both individual teachers and the border educational system, promoting a culture of research and innovation among educators (Drastiawati et al., 2020; Raharjo et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2022).

METHODS

The PCA method, an adaptation of the PRA approach, is designed to actively engage participants in identifying problem and crafting solution based on their own needs. In this context, the PCA method is applied to empower teachers from the PKY Teacher Community by involving them in every stage of the program, from planning to implementation and evaluation. This method ensure that the teachers play an effective role in defining their academic development goals, thus fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

The program began with an initial assessment phase, where teachers' challenges related to academic writing and publication were identified through surveys and group discussions. Based on these findings, a structured mentorship plan was developed, including workshops, training sessions, and continuous peer support. Teachers received practical guidance on scientific writing techniques, article structuring, and navigating the publication process.

To measure the success of the program, several indicators were used:

a) The number of articles submitted for publication in national journals was tracked as a primary indicator of success. The target was for at least 25% of participating teachers to submit article by the end of the program.

b) Teachers' progress in academic writing was assessed through regular evaluations, feedback from mentors, and peer reviews. The quality of the articles, based on their adherence to academic standards, was also evaluated.

c) Surveys were conducted at the end of the program to gauge participant satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and measure the perceived impact of their professional development.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments ensured that the program's objectives were met, and the mentorship provided tangible improvements in teacher academic writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program aimed at empowering teachers in the PKY Teacher Community to improve their academic writing and publication skills through the PCA methods. The project was conducted over several phases, including needs assessment, mentorship, writing workshops, and article submission.

The first phase involved assessing the challenges faced by the teachers. This was conducted through surveys and group discussions, which revealed several key obstacles. Figure 1 illustrates this phase, highlighting the collaborative discussions where teachers identified such as; lack of time for writing due to administrative burdens,

limited experience in academic publishing, and financial constraints for journal submissions. This assessment provide the foundation for designing and mentorship program to target these specific issues.
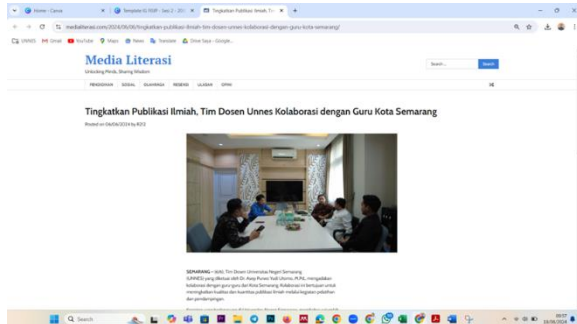

Figure 1. Needs Assessment

The second phase focused on providing training workshops. These sessions covered the fundamentals of academic writing, including structuring and research paper, citing sources, choosing the right journals, and the publication process. Participants were divided into small groups; each assigned a mentor who provided personalized guidance. In **Figure 2** depicts an active workshop session where participants engaged in collaborative exercises to refine their research ideas and improve their academic writing skills.

Figure 2. Mentorship Activities

Mentorship was the third phase and ran concurrently with the article writing process. Teachers were given individual feedback on their drafts, with the continuous support provided via online and in-person consultations. Mentors guided participants through each stage of writing, ensuring they adhered to academic standards. The mentorship also included assistance with journal selection and submission processes, further addressing the teachers' inexperience with publishing.

The final phase involved the submission of articles to national journals. Teachers who completed their manuscripts were supported in the submitting their work the appropriate journals, ensuring that all administrative and technical requirements were met.

Achievement of Objectiveness

The primary objective of the program was to improve the ability of teacher to produce academic publications. The success of this objective was measured through several indicators:

a) The program set a target of having 25% of participants submit their article to national journals by the end of the project. By the conclusion of mentorship, 30% of the teachers had submitted the articles, surpassing the initial target. This indicates the effectiveness of mentorship and training workshops.

b) The quality of the submitted article was another key indicator of success. Mentors evaluated the manuscripts based on clarity, coherence, adherence to scientific standards, and the relevance to the educational field. Most articles were rated as meeting the criteria for submission to reputable journals. Feedback from journal editors, though limited at this stage, indicated that several submissions were under review, further reflecting the quality of the work produced.

c) A survey conducted at the end of the program revealed a marked increase the teacher's confidence in their academic writing skills. Over 80% of participants reported feeling more prepared to undertake further research and publication projects, a significant improvement from the initial assessment, where most expressed apprehension about their ability to write for academic journals.

d) Participant feedback highlighted high levels of satisfaction with the program. Teachers particularly appreciated the mentorship component, with 90% of respondents rating it as highly effective. Personalized guidance was seen as a key factor in helping them overcome their initial challenges.

Strength and Weakness

The program's strengths can be attributed to its collaborative and participatory nature. By involving the teacher in the planning process through the PCA methods, the program or tailored to their specific needs, which resulted in a more effective intervention. The mentoring system was also a critical success factor, providing the necessary support and feedback that teachers needed to improve their writing.

The program successfully addressed the major challenges identified the initial assessment:

a) The teacher reported that the structured timeline and collaborative approach helped them allocate time more effectively for research and writing, which was a significant improvement over their previous struggles with time constraints.

b) Through the workshops and mentorship, teachers gain practical skills in academic writing and learned how to navigate the publication process, which were area they previously struggled with.

c) While the program could not entirely eliminate the financial burden of publication fees, it did assist teachers in identifying potential funding sources and cost-sharing strategies. Some participants also managed to secure partial funding for their submissions, which helped alleviate the burden.

However, the program also had some limitations. The most significant challenge was the short duration of the mentorship. Although the teachers made substantial progress, many expressed a need for longer-term support, particularly those who were still in the preliminary stages of their research. Additionally, while the PCA method ensured that the program was aligned with the teachers' needs, it was time-consuming and required significant coordination. This presented logistical challenges, especially for teachers with demanding schedules.

Another limitation was the financial aspect of publishing high-quality journals. Although the program provided guidance for finding funding, the financial burden remains a significant barrier for many teachers. This was particularly true for those wishing to publish in international journals, where fees can be prohibitively high. More extensive financial support or partnerships with educational institutions could help mitigate this issue in the future iterations of the program.

Challenges and Future Development

The implementation of this program was not without its difficulties. One of the main challenges was coordinating schedules for the workshops and mentorship sessions, as many teachers had to balance their participation with their regular teaching duties. The initial phase of the program, which involved assessing the teachers' needs through the PCA method, took longer than expected due to the need for data collection and analysis. Additionally, maintaining the teacher's motivation throughout the writing process was challenging, particularly for those who struggled with time management and balancing multiple responsibilities.

Beside these challenges, the program has significant potential for future development. Expanding the duration of the mentorship would allow for more comprehensive support, particularly for teachers who were new to academic writing. Offering more advanced workshops on the topics such as data analysis, advanced research methods, and international journal submission processes would also benefit participants. Additionally, integrating more technology-based solutions, such as an online portal for peer reviews and feedback, could increase the program's efficiency and accessibility.

In term of financial sustainability, establishing partnerships with universities, research institutes, and educational NGOs could provide teachers with more with more robust support in securing funding for publication. Collaborative grants and institutional subsidies could also help reduce the financial burden on individual teachers. Another possibility was to create a network of teacher-researchers who can share resources and collaborate on joint research project, thus spreading the costs and workload more evenly.

CONCLUSION

The community service program successfully empowered teacher in the PKY Teach Community to improve their academic writing and publication skill through the process with the PCA method. The exceeded its objectives, with the high percentage of teachers submitting their articles for publication, and notable improvements in their writing quality. The structured mentorship and the collaborative environment proved to be significant strengths of the program, allowing teacher to overcome initial challenges such as time constraints and the lack of experience. However, the short duration of the mentorship and ongoing financial barriers for publication, remaining limitations that require further attention. Future developments should focus on extending mentorship duration, offering more

advanced training, and securing greater financial support. This program has the potential to be scaled and adapted for broader educational communities, contributing to the professional growth of teachers and the enhancement of educational quality in Indonesia.

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