

The Role of the Life Skills Program In Increasing the Productivity of Golden Dragon Fruit Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Learning focuses more on subjects, not life skills which can play an important role in dealing with the complexity of the world of work. The aim of the research is to spread the impact and effectiveness of life skills education programs in increasing the productivity of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. This research was conducted at PKBM Anggrek Bulan Banyuwangi. This research uses a qualitative descriptive research approach. The subjects in this research were managers and students of the golden dragon entrepreneurship program at Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi. Data collection techniques use in-depth interviews, participant observation and documentation. The data validity technique used in this research is the triangulation technique. Next, the data analysis technique uses Miles and Huberman analysis. The results of the research are that the life skills education program can increase participants' knowledge and skills in technical and managerial aspects. Apart from that, there was a real increase in productivity and operational efficiency of the golden dragon fruit business after participating in the program. Participants also reported increased revenue and the ability to meet dynamic market challenges. The involvement of external parties such as industry experts and research institutions has also proven to enrich the program with insight and practical support. Life skills education programs have an important role in supporting the development of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurial capacity and making a positive contribution to local economic development. Recommendations are presented for improving the program through more dynamic curriculum adjustments, increasing regular evaluations, and expanding network collaboration with various stakeholders.

Keywords: life skills, entrepreneurship, golden dragon fruit, CLC, education and training

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and life skills have a very important role in preparing individuals to face complex challenges in the ever-growing world of work. In this context, increasing entrepreneurial productivity becomes a main focus (Meliala et al., 2014), especially in different sectors, including the promising field of agriculture. By understanding and applying relevant life skills, it is hoped that entrepreneurs will be able to optimize their businesses, increase the quality and quantity of harvests,

and open up opportunities for the growth and sustainability of their businesses in a competitive market (Ali et al., 2024; Manimala & Thomas, 2017).

Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi is a non-formal school that aims to develop the talents and interests of students both at school age and over the age of compulsory education. Learning at Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi runs smoothly and well, however, researchers want to continue to improve the quality of learning by adding subjects to the life skills education program. In this case, the researcher is of the opinion that the existence of very adequate local resources makes the material for cultivating golden dragon fruit a life skills subject in Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi. This is because the golden dragon fruit has become the mascot of the Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi.

With the life skills subject of golden dragon fruit cultivation, students have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills, not only in the academic realm but also in non-academic areas. Although some non-formal schools focus more on their academic programs, many of them also organize programs that aim to help students explore and develop their talents and interests (Meliala et al., 2014; Sipahioğlu et al., 2021; Shantini et al., 2021). However, these programs are often considered merely complementary. In this way, it is hoped that students will have comprehensive knowledge and applied skills in managing the golden dragon fruit cultivation business, which in turn will increase their chances of success in the agricultural industry.

Golden dragon fruit has a very high value compared to other types of dragon fruit (Apriliyanti et al., 2020; Jalgaonkar et al., 2022). Planting golden dragon fruit is often not an option in urban areas, where space is limited and natural resources are limited (Neolaka, 2019; Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2023). However, the situation is different at Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi, where natural resources are abundant and the majority of students or residents have a background as farmers. Therefore, the application of material regarding golden dragon fruit cultivation in Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi is very relevant and useful. Currently, studies on golden dragon fruit cultivation are still very limited, so researchers chose to conduct in-depth research on the application of life skills education programs in increasing the productivity of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs at this institution.

Golden dragon fruit (*Hylocereus undatus*) has become one of the horticultural commodities that is increasingly in demand, not only in the domestic market, but also in the international market (Sutisna & Humaedi, 2016; Balendres & Bengoa, 2019). The charm of the color and taste of golden dragon fruit has made it a favorite on the dining table as well as a raw material for various food and beverage products which are increasingly popular and very open to becoming raw materials for other products that have high economic value (M Ismail, 2021). Behind its popularity, becoming a successful entrepreneur in the field of golden dragon fruit cultivation is not an easy matter. Apart from understanding in depth the technicalities of plant cultivation, such as plant care, pest and disease control, and proper harvesting techniques, entrepreneurs also need to be equipped with management skills, effective communication skills within a wider marketing network beyond the market, and a strong understanding in financial management (Morris et al., 2022). This is why life skills education plays an important role in supporting the development of entrepreneurs in this sector. By practicing these skills, entrepreneurs are expected to be able to manage their businesses more efficiently and effectively, and be able to overcome various challenges and opportunities that exist in the market. Thus, life skills education is not only an investment in individual development, but also a key factor in the business success of students learning as part of the business community.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods and case study research to explore the impact of implementing the Lifeskills Education program in increasing the productivity of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. The aim of the research is to spread the impact and effectiveness of life skills education programs in increasing the productivity of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. The selection of this

location was based on the implementation of a life skills education program which has proven successful in supporting the development of entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, especially in the cultivation of golden dragon fruit. Through a case study approach, this research aims to describe programs that influence entrepreneurs' business practices, as well as the challenges and successes they face in running their businesses. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide comprehensive insight into the contribution of life skills education in increasing the productivity and success of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs at Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi.

The subjects in this research were managers and students of the golden dragon entrepreneurship program at Anggrek Bulan CLC in Banyuwangi. Data collection techniques use, 1) Interviews, conducting interviews with various related parties, such as program managers and students. 2) Observation, directly observing the processes that occur in the institution. 3) documentation, analyzing documents related to evaluation reports and related documents. The data validity technique used in this research is the triangulation technique. The triangulation technique is defined as a collection technique from existing data sources. Furthermore, the data analysis technique uses Miles and Huberman analysis (Thalib, 2022; Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2018). Miles and Huberman, namely data analysis is carried out interactively and continues continuously until the data is saturated, then in data analysis activities, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Developing a dragon fruit entrepreneurship life skills education program, several strategies and methods that can be considered include practical education, business teaching, industrial partnership, creative skills development, soft skills training, continuous evaluation and feedback.

Practical Education

Focus on hands-on learning through practical activities such as planting, caring for, and harvesting dragon fruit. This can be done through workshops or field activities that involve students directly. Practical education has a positive impact on students. This is in accordance with the results of the interview by the manager "Most of the students responded positively to the life skills education program. "They consider this program to provide new knowledge and skills that are useful in managing the golden dragon fruit cultivation business." Managers said that "they gained new knowledge and skills related to business management, more efficient cultivation techniques, better marketing strategies, and more careful financial management."

The positive impact was felt by the students as evidenced by the results of interviews with participants who said "increased knowledge of golden dragon fruit cultivation after participating in the program. I can understand the increase in production quantities, product quality, operational efficiency and profitability." However, some students experienced difficulties. This result was conveyed by students "some of me experienced difficulties in applying the skills I learned, but with challenges I can change my knowledge. into real action."

Based on the results of the interview, it was concluded that the life skills education program had a positive impact in increasing the productivity of golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. However, more support and mentoring is needed to help entrepreneurs apply the learned skills more effectively in their business practices (Aqmal et al., 2024; Bauman & Lucy, 2021).

Business Teaching

Students need to be prepared with basic knowledge of business management, marketing, finance, and communication skills needed to run a dragon fruit business. This could include learning through case studies, role-playing, or visits to already successful businesses. This is in accordance with

the results of interviews with managers who stated that "Students understand the management of dragon fruit productivity and some are even involved in dragon fruit entrepreneurship who have good technical skills in farming and production, but often lack business management and soft skills. ". to complement these deficiencies by providing the knowledge and skills needed to manage a business effectively, such as financial management, marketing and leadership. Managers saw positive changes in participants after participating in the program, including improvements in time management, communication skills, and ability to lead a team. This directly contributes to increasing productivity in running the Golden dragon fruit business.

The organizers also emphasized the importance of support and collaboration with related parties, including industry players and business experts, to provide additional insight and experience to participants. This life skills education program is carried out on an ongoing basis, the management said, "providing regular training sessions and updating the curriculum in accordance with the latest developments in the industry and market demands. Thus, the management confirmed that the life skills education program had succeeded in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs by providing skills and knowledge that were relevant to their business needs.

Industrial Partnership

Involving experienced dragon fruit entrepreneurs in the process of teaching and supervising students. This can provide valuable insight and help learners understand best practices in the industry. The manager stated that "partnerships with industry are very important in strengthening life skills education programs. Industry provides valuable expertise, resources and practical experience for program participants. The industry provides a diverse range of resources, from business experts to experienced dragon fruit growers, to provide training, guidance and consultation to program participants."

Industry partners play a role in developing a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the Golden dragon fruit business, ensuring that participants gain a deep understanding of the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in this business. Industry partners also provide mentorship and guidance to program participants, helping them overcome challenges and find solutions to increase their productivity and business success. Through industry partnerships, program participants gain easier access to local and international markets as well as extensive business networks, helping them market their products and develop their businesses. Managers also stated that "the industry provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the program, enabling continuous refinement and improvement to increase the positive impact of the program on the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs". Thus, industry partnerships in life skills education programs have contributed to increasing productivity and entrepreneurial success in the Golden dragon fruit industry.

Creative Skills Development

Encourage students to think creatively in developing products derived from dragon fruit, such as drinks, snacks or beauty products. This can stimulate innovation and help students understand the added value of dragon fruit. The manager said that "creative skills are a crucial aspect in increasing productivity and innovation in the Golden dragon fruit business. Creativity is needed to develop new products, attractive marketing strategies and attractive packaging designs."

The life skills education program focuses on developing creativity in creating products derived from Golden dragon fruit. Participants are encouraged to think outside the box and generate innovative ideas to increase the added value of their products. The management stated that "the program organizes special training sessions focused on developing creative skills, such as design thinking, brainstorming techniques, and the use of technology for innovation." The program also involves collaboration with

local artists, graphic designers and creative marketing experts to provide inspiration and support to participants. They provide insights and fresh ideas that help participants develop their creativity.

Soft Skills Training

In addition to technical skills, it is important to develop soft skills such as leadership, teamwork and problem solving. This will help students interact with other people and manage the challenges of running a business. Marketing and promotions are needed, administrators say “using marketing and promotions software helps program participants understand the market and reach potential customers more effectively. This software helps in planning marketing campaigns, tracking results, and conducting analysis to improve future marketing strategies.” In addition to Marketing and promotions, team collaboration helps program participants to work together efficiently, share information, and coordinate their tasks. This improves communication and collaboration between program participants, which in turn increases productivity and quality of work output. Thus, the use of software in life skills education programs has helped in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs by facilitating students efficiently.

Continuous Evaluation and Feedback

Continuously evaluate the program and provide feedback to learners to help them continue to improve their skills and knowledge in the field of dragon fruit entrepreneurship. The administrators explained that they actively collect feedback from program participants, instructors and other related parties. Based on the feedback, they have made several changes and adjustments to the program. The program continually strives to update and improve training materials in line with industry developments and market demands. Management has added new material about the latest agricultural technology and digital marketing strategies to answer the needs and demands of the ever-growing market.

To ensure the relevance of the program, the management collaborates with industry experts, academics and other stakeholders. They regularly consult with external parties to gain insight into the latest market trends and industry needs. The program carries out regular evaluations of the curriculum, teaching methods and participant learning outcomes. The results of the evaluation are used as a basis for making necessary changes or adjustments so that the program remains relevant and effective. By making changes and adjustments based on evaluation results and feedback, as well as maintaining open communication with related parties, the management ensures that the life skills education program remains relevant to the ever-changing needs and demands of the market. This enables participants to acquire appropriate skills and knowledge. By combining practical education, business teaching, industry partnerships, creative skills development, soft skills training, and continuous feedback, dragon fruit entrepreneurial life skills education programs can become more effective and relevant for students.

Analysis of the application of life skills education programs in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs at Community Learning Activity Centers (CLC) can be carried out by considering several key aspects (Firmansyah et al., 2023; I. Artha et al., 2023), namely Availability of Relevant Material: It is important to ensure that the life skills education program provides material that is relevant to the needs and challenges faced by Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. The material should cover aspects such as agricultural management, marketing techniques, financial management, and managerial skills. The availability of relevant material in the life skills education program to increase the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs appears to have fulfilled several important criteria (Saryanto, 2023; Nath et al., 2024).

Adapun dalam kewirausahaan buah naga yang harus diperhatikan seorang wirausaha adalah terkait dengan 6 komponen yang dijelaskan berikut ini antara lain (1) Comprehensive material content.

The material provided in the program covers various aspects relevant to the dragon fruit business, including agricultural management, farming techniques, selecting appropriate varieties, plant maintenance, and pest and disease control (Hubur et al., 2023; Bordoh et al., 2020); (2) Suitability for Participant Needs. The material taught seems to suit the needs of program participants, by providing basic material for participants who are just starting a dragon fruit farming business and advanced material for participants who already have experience in this industry (I. K. A. J. Artha et al., 2022); (3) Conformity with Industrial Development. This program also reflects the latest developments in the dragon fruit industry, covering market trends, technological innovations and the latest agricultural practices that can help increase productivity and efficiency in the dragon fruit business; (4) Involvement of External Parties. The program engages industry experts, agricultural experts and successful dragon fruit entrepreneurs to provide additional insight and knowledge to participants. This involvement helps enrich the material presented and ensures its relevance to industry best practices (Nugraha et al., 2023); (5) Evaluation and Feedback. This program also evaluates the material presented and collects feedback from participants to ensure that the material is useful and relevant. This evaluation helps adjust the material content according to participants' needs and expectations. Thus, the availability of relevant material in the life skills education program seems to have met the needs of participants and made a significant contribution in increasing the productivity and success of the Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurial business (Connie, 2019; Saepudin et al., 2020); (6) Collaboration with Industry. Collaboration with industry parties, such as dragon fruit farmers, agricultural experts, or successful dragon fruit entrepreneurs, can provide valuable insights and support the implementation of best practices in the dragon fruit business. The involvement of external parties in life skills education programs can provide many benefits for increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs (Dewi & Mailasari, 2020; Grasswitz, 2019).

Here are some ways in which the involvement of external parties can contribute: Industry Experts and (1) Experienced Dragon Fruit Entrepreneurs: Inviting dragon fruit entrepreneurs who have been successful in the industry to share their experiences and success stories can provide inspiration and motivation to participants. They can also provide practical insight into the challenges you may face and how to overcome them; (2) Local Agricultural and Community Associations: Involving local agricultural and community associations related to the dragon fruit industry can help participants build strong networks and gain support from fellow farmers and entrepreneurs. They can also provide access to resources, additional training, and collaboration opportunities; (3) Research Institutes and Universities: The involvement of agricultural research institutions and universities in the program can help provide the latest knowledge and information about technology and innovation in dragon fruit cultivation. They can also assist in developing research and testing new innovations to increase productivity and crop quality; (4) Government and Government Business Entities: Collaboration with the government and government business entities can provide participants with access to assistance programs, incentives, and other resources provided by the government to support agriculture and small business development. By involving relevant external parties in the life skills education program, participants will be able to gain the knowledge, skills and support they need to increase their productivity and business success in the Golden dragon fruit industry (Triwiyanto, 2022; Williams et al., 2022).

Regular Monitoring and Evaluation: It is important to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the program to assess its effectiveness in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs (Kurnia & Fitria, 2015; Hassoun et al., 2023). Evaluation can be carried out through participant surveys, class observations, and analysis of participants' business results after participating in the program (Triadi et al., 2022). Program development must also provide opportunities for participants to build networks and get support from fellow dragon fruit entrepreneurs (Dewi &

Mailasari, 2020; Adamu et al., 2023). This can be done through group discussions, networking events, or online forums supported by CLC (Cahyani, 2021; Rahma et al., 2019). By analyzing the implementation of the life skills education program by paying attention to the aspects above, CLC can evaluate the success and impact of the program in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs (Irvansyah et al., 2021). This evaluation can also provide valuable input to improve the quality and relevance of the program in the future (Yahya, 2023; de Hond et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of a life skills education program has proven to be an effective strategy in increasing the productivity of Golden dragon fruit entrepreneurs. The following are several important points that can be concluded, namely, Increased Knowledge and Skills: The life skills education program provides opportunities for participants to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to manage the Golden dragon fruit business more effectively. These include managerial, financial, marketing, and agricultural technical skills. Relevance to Market Needs: The material taught in the program reflects current market trends and needs in the dragon fruit industry. Participants are provided with insight into marketing strategies, product innovations, and the latest technologies that help them stay competitive in an ever-evolving market. External Involvement: Involving industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and research institutions has enriched the program with additional experience and knowledge. This involvement allows participants to gain deeper insight and the support necessary to succeed in the dragon fruit business. Network and Collaboration Development: The program also provides opportunities for participants to build strong networks with fellow dragon fruit farmers and entrepreneurs. This facilitates the exchange of information, resources, and beneficial collaboration opportunities to increase productivity and business success. Evaluation and Feedback: Regular evaluation of the program and feedback from participants makes it possible to continuously improve the quality and relevance of the program. This ensures that the program remains responsive to changes in the industry and participants' needs. Thus, the implementation of the life skills education program has helped improve participants' abilities in managing the Golden dragon fruit business, increasing productivity, and creating opportunities for growth.

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