

Women's Empowerment through Non-Formal Education Programs to Increase Women's Confidence and Self-Potential

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Abstract

Background: Women's empowerment is an important component of sustainable development. However, gender inequality remains evident in Indonesia's agricultural sector. Although women account for about 36.7% of the agricultural workforce, their contributions are often viewed only as supporting roles rather than as primary actors. Women Farmers Groups (WFG) have emerged as grassroots organizations that promote women's empowerment through non-formal education programs, including skills development, entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, and awareness of women's rights.

Research Urgency: Previous studies on WFG empowerment mainly emphasize economic outcomes, while psychological empowerment such as self-confidence and personal potential development has received limited attention. Understanding these aspects is important to strengthen women's participation and independence in rural communities.

Research Objectives: This study aims to analyze the empowerment process through non-formal education programs in WFG, focusing on strengthening women's self-confidence and personal potential, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors.

Research Method: This study employed a qualitative case study approach with data were collected through interviews with six informants, observations, and documentation analysis. Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's interactive model combined with Longwe's gender empowerment framework.

Research Findings: The findings show that empowerment occurs through four stages: awareness building, capacity development, participation, and self-reliance. Non-formal education programs such as skills training, life skills education, entrepreneurship training, and literacy activities significantly increased members' confidence and potential. Internal support from leadership and member commitment, along with external institutional support, strengthened the empowerment process despite challenges related to time limitations and diverse member capacities.

Research Conclusion: Non-formal education within women farmers groups provides an effective approach to strengthening women's psychological and social empowerment in rural agricultural communities.

Research Novelty: This study highlights psychological empowerment through non-formal education within women farmers groups, a dimension rarely explored in previous research that mainly focused on economic outcomes.

Keywords: women's empowerment, self-confidence, self-potential, women farmers' group

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development, which aims to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations (Trindade et al., 2017; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), is highly dependent on active community participation. Women's empowerment becomes one of sustainable development's strategic aspects that enables local communities to actively participate in the development process (Olaleye & Abiona, 2015). In Indonesia's agricultural sector, although women absorb the amount 36.7% of the total agricultural labour, their roles are often underrecognized and undervalued, with their contributions seen merely as 'assisting their husbands' rather than as primary workers (Qanti et al., 2022). This situation reflects the gender gap that still needs to be resolved in various aspects of life, including the access to education, health, decent work, and participation in decision-making (Omar et al., 2025; Unterhalter et al., 2022).

Women farmers' group, known as WFG in Indonesia, has emerged as a grassroots organization with the potential to become an agent of change in women's empowerment through non-formal education (Namooog & Agyekum, 2024; Adu-Boahen et al., 2024; Isgren et al., 2025). WFG not only focuses on increasing agricultural productivity but also develops entrepreneurial skills (Kwasi Bannor & Kofi Arthur, 2024) financial management (Raharja et al., 2026) and raising awareness of women's rights (Nakazi et al., 2017; Nasfi et al., 2023). Non-formal education plays a crucial role as an empowerment's instrument aimed at replacing, supplementing, and complementing formal education to enhance knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on community needs (Puspito et al., 2021; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2003) also increasing community participation in various aspects of life (Bacquelaine & Raymaekers, 1991). This is in line with several key principles of non-formal education, such as lifelong learning (Mayombe, 2017; Berková et al., 2024), flexibility (Owusu-Agyeman, 2024), active participation (Zikargae et al., 2022), community-based (Merino et al., 2025), inclusiveness (Bortoli & Marchi, 2022), andragogical approach (Corrales-Herrero & Rodríguez-Prado, 2018), practical and skills-oriented (Brennan, 1997).

Previous research on women's empowerment in WFG has focused on economic aspects, particularly increasing agricultural productivity (Asitik & Abu, 2020; Nath, 2022; Maikhuri et al., 2011), food security (Sarma et al., 2024; Gladwin et al., 2001; Asadullah & Kambhampati, 2021), and improving family economics (Murugani & Thamaga-Chitja, 2019; Nadeem et al., 2023; Wambugu et al., 2011). However, psychological empowerment aspects such as enhancing women's self-confidence and self-potential have not received adequate attention, despite these being crucial prerequisites for empowering other dimensions (Azizi et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021; Chakraborty & Biswal, 2022). Therefore, further theoretical exploration of this empowerment aspect in the context of WFG is needed (Nadeem et al., 2023; Wambugu et al., 2011). The empirical gap phenomenon is also evident in the differences of research results, which some studies indicate that WFG successfully enhances economic independence, while others suggest that the benefits of WFG are not evenly distributed and remain limited to specific groups.

Ketapang Village is the most densely populated village in Susukan Subdistrict, Semarang Regency, Central Java, with the majority of its population working in the agricultural, with organic rice as its flagship commodity. The role of farmers in this sector has been widely recognized, both in terms of innovation in organic rice farming techniques and their contribution to the rural economy. Farmers in this village are organized into several farming groups, such as Al Barokah, Walisongo, and Al Mazroah. However, despite this progress, there remains a gap in the recognition and participation of female farmers. Although women often play a crucial role in the organic rice production process, their contributions are often undervalued and overlooked. Women farmers' participation in decision-making, access to resources, and opportunities for skill development remain limited. This situation is due to the low self-confidence of women farmers and their perception that they lack the potential to develop themselves. This not only harms women farmers individually but also hinders the potential for growth and innovation in the organic farming sector as a whole. Seeing this situation, one female farmer who is also a women's activist in Ketapang Village invited other female farmers and initiated the formation of Women Farmers Group to empower themselves, named WFG Bunga Al

Barokah. The initiator also serves as an internal empowerment agent (Dash et al., 2025; Singh, 2014) within the WFG, as she was chosen by the other female farmers to be the group's chairperson. The WFG organizes various nonformal education programs (skills training, life skills education, entrepreneurship training, and reading post) to empower its members. As time goes by, research on this WFG has not been conducted, particularly regarding how the women's empowerment strategies are implemented and to what extent they have been achieved.

Given the importance of women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development, especially in agricultural areas, and the empirical also theoretical gaps related to the conditions at WFG Bunga Al Barokah as described above, this study was conducted to comprehensively examine women's empowerment in the WFG. This study aimed to analyze the empowerment process, efforts to strengthen self-confidence and self-potential, and identifies supporting and inhibiting factors of women's empowerment through non-formal education programs to increase women confidence and self-potential in WFG Bunga Al Barokah. The results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of more effective and contextual strategies for women's empowerment. Additionally, this contribution will ultimately support the achievement of sustainable development goals, particularly in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.

METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach because it is suitable for exploring and understanding in depth the phenomenon of women's empowerment through non-formal education programs to increase women's confidence and self-potential in the WFG Bunga Al Barokah. The qualitative approach allows researchers to reveal the experiences, perceptions, and meanings provided by informants (Creswell, 2013; Bowker et al., 1978; Mertens, 2023) regarding the empowerment process they have experienced. This type of research is a case study because it examines real phenomena in the context of life, specifically women's empowerment with clear geographical boundaries (Yin, 2018) in Ketapang Village, Susukan Sub-district, Semarang Regency.

Source of Data

The data in this study consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data obtained from interviews with six informants. The informants consisted of one key informant who acted as the initiator and facilitator of empowerment as well as the head of the WFG, three WFG members (named Bu RTN, Bu RS and Bu TNT) as primary informants, and two additional informants from village officials and local community leaders. Secondary data obtained from observations of WFG activities and documents related to WFG activities.

Data Collection Techniques

Data is collected by in-depth interviews which is conducted with the key informant, WFG members, and other informants to obtain in-depth information about their experiences and perceptions of the empowerment program. Within participatory observation, the researcher participated in WFG's activities to directly observe the empowerment process. Document analysis is used to review documents related to the WFG's activities to obtain additional data.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collection was analysed using Miles & Huberman's interactive model (Miles dan Huberman, 1992), which includes data condensation, data display and drawing conclusions/verifying. This data analysis was carried out iteratively (repeatedly) and continuously during the research process to ensure the depth and richness of the research findings. In this process, researcher assisted by the NVivo application in the coding process and visualized data (Alam, 2020). NVivo processes qualitative data through a systematic process that begins with importing various types of files into a project. Next, researchers create nodes or theme categories, then code by highlighting relevant text and linking it to the appropriate node. A single text can be coded into multiple categories simultaneously. Once coding is complete, NVivo offers various visualization options, such

as word clouds to display word frequency, cluster analysis to group similar themes, mind maps to illustrate relationships between concepts, and charts and graphs for comparative data analysis. The data collected was also analysed using the Longwe's gender analysis framework (Longwe, 2000; Joseph, 2013) which has focus on women's empowerment and its ability to comprehensively analyse levels of well-being and women's empowerment.

Data Validity Techniques

Several techniques were used in this qualitative case study research (Yin, 2018). To ensure data validity, data source triangulation and data collection method triangulation were employed by gathering information from interview with 6 informants, observation and documentation study.



Figure 1. *Word Cloud*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from interviews with six informants, observations of WFG activities and documents related to WFG activities was analysed using Miles & Huberman's interactive model and Longwe's gender analysis. The result of this study describes the process of empowerment, the efforts to increase self-confidence and self-potential, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors for women's empowerment through non-formal education programs to increase women's confidence and self-potential in WFG Bunga Al Barokah.

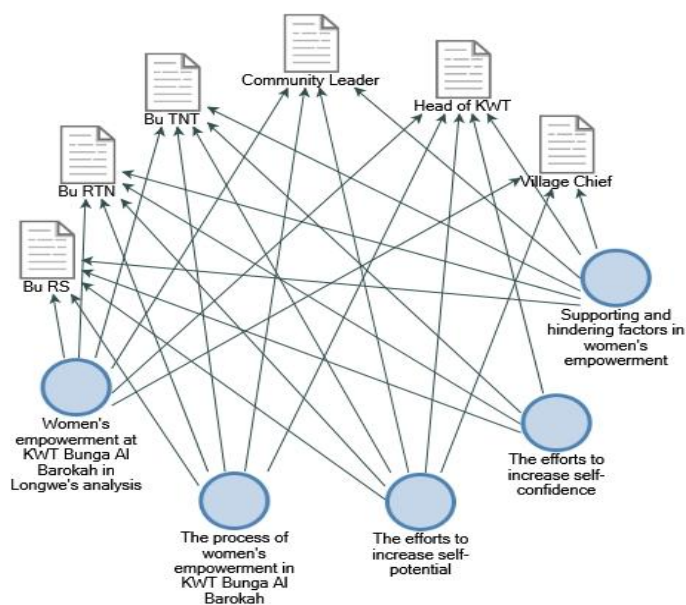


Figure 2. *Project Map*

The Process of Empowering Women in WFG Bunga Al Barokah

The empowerment process is carried out through four systematic and interrelated stages: awareness, capacity enhancement, empowerment, and capacity building and networking (Rao & Robinson-Pant, 2006; Chrifou et al., 2024). The awareness stage serves as the primary foundation for transforming the mindset of WFG's members from traditional to modern thinking. This process is carried out through various comprehensive activities, including human resource development in managing natural resources, enhancing agricultural products, developing grassroots economic enterprises, and literacy activities. WFG Bunga Al Barokah adopts a two-ways democratic approach through monthly meetings held on the 3rd of each month, providing members with opportunities to actively participate in decision-making and share experiences. Awareness-raising materials cover strategic aspects such as capacity building, human resource development, institutional strengthening, capital accumulation, and the provision of relevant information. The life skills training program discusses the dimensions of health, the environment, and the “sakinah mawadah warohmah” family from a religious perspective. Technical skills focus on the production of processed food such as crackers, chips, candies, and the latest innovation in the form of eco-friendly batik development.

Members' positive response to the awareness-raising process is reflected in their high enthusiasm and motivation to participate in various activities. Communication among members is maintained through a WhatsApp group, ensuring information is disseminated even when not all members attend every meeting. Significant mindset transformation is evident in the members' changed perspectives, as expressed by Bu TNT, who emphasizes the importance of women's independence: “Women should not depend on their husbands. Women must be strong. They must have the spirit and strive to improve their abilities.” Bu RS adds that after joining the WFG, she “became brave enough to speak in front of many people” and realized that “women have the same rights as men.” The increase in members' self-confidence is significant, as experienced by Bu RTN, who saw an improvement from a scale of “1 to 3” to “8 to 9.5” after joining the WFG. Despite facing challenges such as traditional mindset and time conflicts between domestic roles and empowerment activities, the WFG successfully overcame these obstacles through capacity enhancement program and continuous mentoring.

The capacity enhancement stage was implemented through a variety of comprehensive education and training programs, including life skills education, entrepreneurship training, production workshops, and eco-printed batik training. The materials taught covered aspects of health, the environment, religious dimensions, and practical skills in food processing and handicraft production. Programs for capacity enhancement, human resource development, institutional strengthening, capital accumulation, and the provision of relevant information are integral components of this phase. The learning methodology applied prioritizes a participatory

and communicative approach through group discussions, practical training, mentoring and coaching, and knowledge sharing. Self-exploration methods are conducted through individual experience writing, which is then discussed collectively to identify the potential of each member. The two-ways communication approach encourages active participation of all members in the learning process. Flexibility in time management is a unique characteristic of this program, where activities do not have a fixed schedule but are conducted at least once a month. The annual program is discussed together with a flexible postponement system in case of implementation constraints. Member participation is very high, marked by great enthusiasm and motivation. Bu TNT expressed high enthusiasm because “there is a lot of knowledge and friends,” while Bu RS expressed enthusiasm because “what I didn't know before, I now know.”

The empowerment stage is a critical phase in providing members with the power and strength to achieve economic independence. Empowerment activities are carried out through financial literacy as the foundation of economic management, seeking market access appropriate to the products produced, and building networks with strategic partners. This strategy aims to develop members' capacity to manage their businesses independently and sustainably. Providing opportunities to practice new skills, develop independent businesses, and engage in group decision-making are important components of this stage. Leadership development and the assignment of organizational responsibilities, such as those experienced by Bu RS, who is always encouraged to share her knowledge and lead training sessions, and Bu RTN, who has been entrusted with the role of vice-chair, demonstrate the practical implementation of the empowerment process.

Access to vital resources has been established through a comprehensive system, including access to literacy and information through a reading post in collaboration with SKB Susukan, access to plant seeds from the Agriculture Department, and access to capital through assistance from various training programs. Market access has been developed independently through partnerships with marketing institutions and social media platforms actively managed by the group. The decision-making process adopts a democratic leadership style with two-ways communication, where all members have equal rights to express opinions, provide input, and voice criticism. Final decisions are made through consensus-based deliberation without domination by any particular party, with the chairperson acting as a facilitator ensuring active participation from all members. The level of independence achieved by members is very high, with the group's ability to operate and develop activities independently without relying on external assistance programs. Individual independence varies, with Bu TNT able to independently learn advanced eco-print techniques, while Bu RS rates her independence at 70% because she “still occasionally needs guidance.”

The economic impact is significant, reflected in improved well-being through the development of various businesses such as processed food products and eco-printed batik. Bu TNT mentioned new income from eco-printing, Bu RTN experienced improved family economics through coffee powder making, massage services, and eco-printed batik products, while Bu RS successfully transformed from a housewife into an entrepreneur who can “take care of her children while working and earning an income.” Improved financial literacy has led to better family financial management, fostering family harmony and holistic well-being.

The final stage in the empowerment process is strengthening organizational capacity and developing partnership networks. Strengthening organizational capacity is carried out so that group organization is more focused on building collective strength and networking is carried out to build strategic alliances that support the empowerment process (Berkes & Davidson–Hunt, 2007; Ebers & Maurer, 2014; Rothman et al., 2019) WFG Bunga Al Barokah implements a democratic and two-ways communicative organizational management model with a clear structure. The main principles of management are prioritizing democracy, avoiding political elements, and implementing an organizational structure that is adhered to by all members. The decision-making process upholds consensus-based deliberation by providing active participation opportunities for every member. Member commitment levels are good with high loyalty, although attendance is not always 100%, communication remains maintained through a WhatsApp group. The group dynamics that have been established include improved performance, growing mutual trust, openness, cooperation, and effective communication among members. Organizational development efforts are carried out through motivating all members, allowing freedom of expression, exploring various programs, and developing economic projections.

Annual program planning mechanisms are established through deliberation, with implementation at least once a month and flexibility in rescheduling. Various technical training and social skill development, such as practicing speaking in front of a forum and expressing opinions without fear, are the focus of capacity building.

Strategic partnerships include the Susukan Learning Activity Centre (known as SKB Susukan) as the initiator, Sebelas Maret University for eco-printed batik training, the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, the Qoryah Toyibah Farmers Association Salatiga, the Al Barokah Farmers Association of Susukan District, Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises and the Agriculture Department. Institutional support received includes the *Pendidikan Kecakapan Hidup Perempuan (PKHP)* Organic Rice Post-Harvest Processing Program, entrepreneurship training, eco-printed batik making program, and a cooperative incubator. The benefits of the partnership are extensive, covering economic, religious, educational, and literacy aspects through the establishment of reading posts, member capacity building, start-up capital assistance, and market access. The partnership also provides opportunities for study tours and visits to other institutions to deepen knowledge. Through this partnership network, WFG Bunga Al Barokah has successfully expanded access to resources and enhanced its presence in the community while maintaining organizational autonomy.

The Efforts to Increase Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is part of the psychological aspect, which is one of the key dimensions in empowerment, making it an important prerequisite in empowerment (Kong et al., 2016; Meng & Sun, 2019) along with five other dimensions (Milia et al., 2026). Self-confidence, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to perform the necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes (Mathur & Agarwal, 2017), acts as a catalyst that drives active participation and decision-making, thereby serving as a crucial foundation for women's empowerment (Sultan et al., 2026). Efforts to increase women's confidence at WFG Bunga Al Barokah cover individual and group aspects and are done using specific methods in terms of attitude, emotion, spirituality, rationality, and economics (Liu et al., 2025; Palash et al., 2024; Murphy-Graham, 2008). Research shows that the non-formal education programs in WFG Bunga Al Barokah has successfully increased the self-confidence of its members through a systematic approach that encourages real action. The process of building self-confidence begins with taking small steps to achieve goals, followed by consistent practice and facilitation of mutual feedback among members. Significant transformations are evident in members such as Bu TNT, who experienced an increase in self-confidence and stated, "Alhamdulillah, I feel more confident" and "I am more certain of my abilities." Similarly, Bu RTN quantified her self-confidence improvement from a scale of "1 to 3" to "8 to 9.5" after joining the WFG. Members' optimism is cultivated through the development of positive thinking patterns with self-affirmations such as "I can do it. I will succeed," combined with concrete and realistic steps, so that the optimism built is not merely unfounded hope but is based on measurable real actions.

Group confidence is developed through strong cohesiveness, optimal member performance, and healthy group dynamics. Cohesion or a sense of belonging among members is built through good communication, building trust, and increasing concern, reinforced by monthly routine activities and "Nahdatul Ulama"-based spiritual aspects. Bu RTN said that cohesion is built through a culture of openness with the principles of "mutual trust, mutual openness" and "if there is anything, please bring it up and discuss it openly." Group dynamics are formed through democratic leadership with decision-making by consensus, where the chairperson remains a member and members are given the freedom to provide input, ideas or recommendations. Member performance shows significant development with a high level of independence, where all members have their own businesses and the group can exist without external assistance.

WFG Bunga Al Barokah implements a comprehensive training and mentoring program as the main instrument for women's empowerment. The training program covers life skills education, entrepreneurship, and specific technical training such as eco-printed batik making, food processing, and waste management. The training method combines theory and hands-on practice with continuous mentoring, as explained by Bu TNT, who stated that the method applied is "Lecture, followed by immediate practice. Mentoring is also provided until they can do it on their own." The mentoring model is implemented through continuous mentoring and coaching focused on developing various dimensions of self-confidence. Mentoring covers attitudinal aspects

through regular training and recognition, emotional aspects through team-building, spiritual aspects through religious activities, rational aspects through critical thinking facilitation, and economic aspects through financial literacy training and business development.

The development of WFG members' self-confidence successfully covered five main dimensions: attitude, emotion, spirituality, rationality, and economy. In the attitude dimension, there has been a transformation from “shy” to “more confident” and “more able to speak in front of others,” as experienced by Bu RS. The emotional dimension has developed through increased pride and the ability to manage emotions, with Bu RTN expressing her ability to “better control emotions” and “better choose words.” The spiritual dimension is strengthened through structured religious activities based on NU principles, while the rational dimension is developed through critical thinking training and SWOT analysis. The economic dimension shows the most concrete impact, with all members having successful independent businesses, such as Bu TNT acknowledging the “increase in family well-being” through her eco-printed batik business, and Bu RS stating, “I can now take care of my children while working and earning an income.” This multi-dimensional transformation demonstrates the success of the non-formal education programs in empowering women holistically, not only boosting their self-confidence but also developing their potential across various aspects of life.

The Effort to Increase Self-Potential

Self-potential, defined as the abilities and strengths, both realised and unrealised, that a person possesses but has not yet fully revealed or used maximum (Sharma-Brymer et al., 2025), is part of the psychological dimension of empowerment (Chowdhury et al., 2026). The efforts to increase the potential of women in WFG Bunga Al Barokah can be seen from the fulfilment of basic needs (Sengupta et al., 2024) in potential development, self-awareness, capacity building, and the achievements of individual members and the WFG organisation itself. The empowerment of women to increase self-potential in WFG Bunga Al Barokah begins with meeting basic needs through three main aspects: improving family welfare, providing access to education and training, and providing social support. Significant economic impacts are evident from the success of all members in establishing independent businesses that contribute to increased family income. WFG offers a variety of education and training programs, including life skills education, entrepreneurship, production groups, and eco-printed batik-making training. Social support is realized through partnerships with various institutions such as SKB Susukan, UNS, UNDIP, and the implementation of democratic leadership styles that create a conducive environment for member development.

The identification of members' potential is conducted through a structured approach, involving direct observation of behaviour and in-depth interviews about interests and talents. The exploration of self-capabilities is carried out through activities such as writing personal experiences, group discussions, and various technical training programs. The results of this process demonstrate significant transformation among members, such as the discovery of potential in coffee production, massage skills, eco-printing, waste processing, and culinary fields. Members' understanding of their roles is not limited to the organizational context but extends to their roles within families and communities, encouraging active participation in community activities and business development that creates job opportunities.

Basic capacity enhancement, for broader empowerment (Dixit et al., 2023), of WFG Bunga Al Barokah's members are carried out through three dimensions of skills. Technical skills include training in food processing, plastic waste management, organic fertilizer production, and eco-friendly batik innovation. Social skills focus on developing effective communication abilities, public speaking, and expressing opinions without fear. Personal skills are developed through capacity development program with mentoring and coaching support, fostering a positive mindset, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses, and taking concrete actions toward achieving goals.

Potential found can be seen through the achievement in the WFG. The individual achievements of WFG members demonstrate a significant transformation from traditional to modern entrepreneurial thinking. Personal success is reflected in increased self-confidence, emotional management skills, improved family

economic conditions, and the ability to hold leadership positions in various community organizations. Some members have even developed into resource persons in various training programs. At the organizational level, WFG received an award as the Third-Ranked of Kelompok UPPKS Teladan at the district level in 2019, successfully established strategic partnerships with various institutions, and became a reference for similar groups through benchmarking program.

Members of the WFG Bunga Al Barokah play a significant role in community activities through active participation in various organizations such as PKK, Fatayat, Moslem women's association, and religious activities. Knowledge transfer to the community is carried out through training, discussions, and outreach on organic farming, product processing, eco-printed batik making, and financial literacy. This process creates a positive multiplier effect, expanding benefits not only locally but also regionally.

The existence of WFG Bunga Al Barokah has had a multidimensional impact on social life. The Increased of member's income has created a domino effect on the overall economic improvement of the community and raised public awareness of the importance of women's role in the social life. The WFG has successfully shifted patriarchal values gradually, increased women's participation in village development, and created a more inclusive environment in decision-making forums. The existence of the WFG also facilitates the village government in implementing women's empowerment and food security program, and serves as a model for empowerment that other groups visit for benchmarking.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in Women's Empowerment at WFG Bunga Al Barokah

In the process of women empowerment in women farmers groups, there are many factors affect (Ousalah & Van Praag, 2026; Gütte et al., 2025; Anim et al., 2025), internal and external, both support and hinder their success. The success of women's empowerment at WFG Bunga Al Barokah is supported by various internal and external factors that work synergistically. Internally, democratic leadership with two-ways communication is a key factor, as demonstrated by the chairperson's leadership style, who acts not only as a leader but also as a 'mother to all members' with extraordinary enthusiasm. The commitment and high motivation of the members are reflected in their enthusiasm for participating in various training programmes, effective communication through WhatsApp groups and monthly meetings, and transparency in decision-making through consensus. The group's independence is also a major strength, with the principle of "whether or not there is assistance, we will continue" demonstrating the resilience and sustainability of the organisation. From an external perspective, institutional support from higher education institutions such as UNS, UNIP, and government agencies provides comprehensive training and mentoring facilitation. Financial support from various government programmes, positive changes in societal acceptance of women's roles, and family support (particularly from husbands) are significant driving factors.

Despite having many supportive factors, WFG Bunga Al Barokah also faces various obstacles that need to be overcome. Internal obstacles include members' time constraints due to their dual roles as homemakers, leading to schedule conflicts between domestic responsibilities and WFG's activities, the diversity of members' ages requiring special mentoring for senior members, and varying levels of commitment among members in developing skills into productive businesses. Traditional mindsets still prevalent among some members and the strong influence of religious values also impact the group's decision-making process. Externally, the main challenges include society's traditional views on women's roles, which still confine them to the concept of "well, bed, and kitchen," low levels of education among women in the village, and the sceptical attitudes of some community members who underestimate WFG activities. Nevertheless, the WFG Bunga Al Barokah has been able to develop adaptive strategies through literacy improvement, social skill development, and strengthening group dynamics to overcome these various obstacles while maintaining the principle of organisational independence.

Women's Empowerment at WFG Bunga Al Barokah in Longwe's Gender Analysis

The women's empowerment programs through non-formal education in the WFG Bunga Al Barokah has shown significant success in increasing women's self-confidence and potential based on Longwe's gender

analysis. This study identified transformations that occurred in five dimensions of empowerment (Longwe, 2000; Gupta et al., 2024).

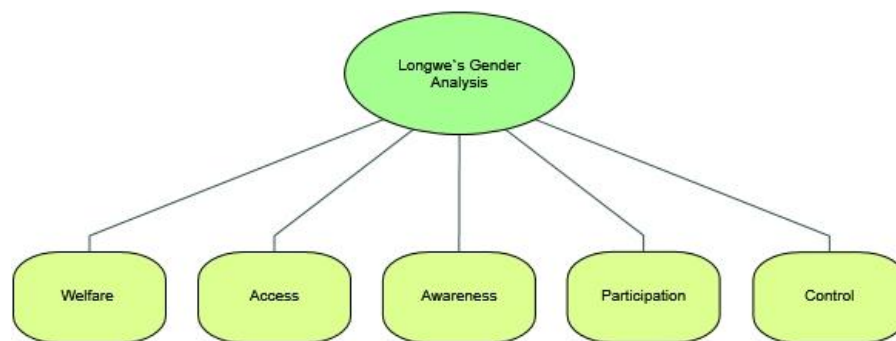


Figure 3. *Five Dimensions of Longwe's Gender Analysis*

The welfare dimension shows a fundamental shift from traditional farming practices toward sustainable economic diversification. WFG members who previously only served as homemakers without additional income have now developed various productive businesses. This transformation is reflected in the statement by Bu RS, who stated that she successfully manages her children while working and earning an income through her eco-printed batik and culinary businesses. Business diversification includes the production of crackers, chips, papaya candies, eco-friendly, eco-printed batik, “onde-onde” made from glutinous rice flour, coffee, and massage services. The success of this program is supported by the village government's commitment to allocate 1.2 billion rupiah from the village fund, with 20 percent earmarked for food security and women's welfare, as well as increasing the allocation for women's activities from less than 100 million to 150 million rupiah for the year 2025.

WFG Bunga Al Barokah has created a democratic and inclusive access system to non-formal education programs. All members have equal opportunities to participate in various training programs, ranging from crop processing, eco-printed batik making, financial management, business development, to the utilization of plastic waste into economically valuable products. Access to information is facilitated by the use of communication technology through WhatsApp groups and monthly meetings. Strategic partnerships with various institutions such as SKB Susukan, universities (UNS, UNDIP, ITB, IPB, UNNES), the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, and the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology have strengthened access to quality education and training resources. The three-year cooperative incubator program (2022–2024) in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has had a significant impact on the development of business management and product marketing capabilities.

The dimension of awareness shows a fundamental paradigm shift regarding the role and position of women in society. The transformation of mindset from “traditional to modern” is reflected in Bu RS's statement, which reveals her changing perception of women's roles from the concept of “well, bed, and kitchen” to the awareness that women have equal rights with men in education, speaking, and expressing opinions. A significant increase in self-confidence is evident from Bu RTN's experience, who rated her self-confidence as having improved from a scale of 1-3 to 8-9.5. This awareness-raising process was carried out through various methods such as capacity enhancement, human resource development, institutional development, and the provision of appropriate information. Awareness of one's potential also increased, as evidenced by Bu RS's decision to continue her education through the Kejar Paket B program after previously only graduating from primary school, as well as the discovery of new potential such as Bu TNT's ability in making eco-printed batik.

The level of participation among WFG members demonstrates democratic and inclusive characteristics in decision-making. The consensus-based deliberation system is applied, where all members have the right to

express opinions, provide input, and offer constructive criticism. Active participation in group activities is evident from the high commitment to monthly meetings on the 3rd of each month, training sessions, benchmarking studies, and various special events. Development initiatives emerge from members, such as marketing ideas through websites and Instagram, creating eco-printed product logos, and developing crafts from waste materials. Participation in community activities is also high, with members actively involved in various organizations such as PKK, Fatayat, Garfa, and political parties. Members are not merely passive participants but act as agents of change by sharing the knowledge they have gained with the broader community through PKK forums and other community activities.

The control dimension reflects women's ability to manage businesses independently and have control over decision-making at both the organizational and family levels. Economic independence is reflected in members' ability to manage their own businesses, such as Bu TNT, who runs an eco-printed batik business based on the principle of "make it yourself, manage it yourself," as well as their ability to learn independently through the internet. Control over family decision-making has significantly improved, with Bu RS stating that she has more "power" in decision-making and Bu TNT reporting that decision-making within the family has become more equitable based on the principle of "what is best determines the decision." Independence in developing potential is evident in the sustained initiative to continue learning and the ability to overcome business challenges independently.

The findings of this study confirm the relevance of Longwe's gender analysis in the context of women's empowerment through non-formal education in Indonesia. The progression from the dimension of well-being to control indicates that women's empowerment requires a holistic approach that not only focuses on economic aspects but also on transforming awareness, increasing access, fostering active participation, and achieving control. WFG Bunga Al Barokah has successfully created a sustainable empowerment model by involving various stakeholders and leveraging strategic partnerships. The success of this program makes a significant contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the fifth goal on gender equality and the first goal on poverty eradication.

The women's empowerment in WFG Bunga Al Barokah has proven that non-formal education programs can be an effective tool for social and economic transformation for women. The increasing of women's confidence and self-potential not only impacts the individual level but also the family and community levels, creating a sustainable multiplier effect in village development. This model can be replicated in other areas with adjustments to the local context and adequate policy support.

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment through non-formal education programs in the WFG Bunga Al Barokah has succeeded in increasing the confidence and potential of its members through four systematic stages: awareness, capacity enhancement, empowerment, and capacity building and networking. This empowerment program includes the development of five dimensions of self-confidence (attitudinal, emotional, spiritual, rational, and economic) has resulted in the holistic transformation from traditional to modern mindset, the improvement of economic independence through business diversification, and strengthened active participation in decision-making and community life. The success of the program is supported by internal factors such as democratic leadership, high member commitment, and effective communication, as well as external factors such as institutional support and socio-cultural changes, although it faces obstacles in the form of time constraints, diversity in member capacity, and traditional views of the community. Through Longwe's gender analysis, this empowerment not only improves economic welfare but also changes the position of women from mere housewives to empowered individuals who have more control over their personal and social lives, thus proving the effectiveness of non-formal education programs can be an effective tool for a sustainable model of women's empowerment with multidimensional impact.

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