

Important Factors in the Development of Young Entrepreneurial Groups in Forest Honeybee Cultivation and Products

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Abstract

The younger generation emerges as a pivotal subject in perpetuating sustainable development, with an expectation to also play a role in rural areas to optimize the potential of local resources, thereby mitigating the negative impacts of urbanization and reducing labor migration. Thus, the research aims to analyze the crucial factors supporting the role of youth in the development of socio-economic institutions in rural areas. The study employs the Participatory Learning and Action method to construct community learning experiences through interviews, Focus Group Discussions, documentation analysis, and observation. The research informants consist of the Young Farmer Group "Prawita Garden", which has successfully cultivated forest honeybees and developed rural tourism destinations. Interactive research analysis is utilized for data reduction, verification, and triangulation, complemented by modeling using the Vensim application. The research findings indicate that the "Prawita Garden" young farmer group has emerged as a pioneer and inspirator in honeybee cultivation and production, particularly of unique honey types such as Klanceng Honeybee, imported European Honeybee, and local Honeybee. Crucial factors in the development of young farmer institutionalization include entrepreneurial motivation and group formation, local indigenous practices passed down through generations or integrated into traditions intertwined with the social capital prevalent in rural communities.

Keywords: *Young farmer groups; Partnerships; Social capital; Socio-economic empowerment; Honeybee products.*

Introduction

The development of villages represents the most tangible, immediate, and beneficial manifestation of national development at the local level, particularly in socio-economic terms, felt by the community. Thus, the strong socio-economic institutional basis of village communities becomes the foundation and determinant of socio-economic development at the regional, urban, and national levels. According to data from the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, in 2023 Indonesia had reached 75,265 villages spread across 36 provinces. The categories of villages are as follows: Very Disadvantaged Villages amounting to 4,850, Disadvantaged Villages numbering 7,154, Developing Villages totaling 28,766, Advanced Villages reaching 23,035, and Independent Villages amounting to 11,456. This condition contradicts the goal of regional autonomy, which should ideally enable independent development with socio-economic institutionalization to enhance the welfare of communities in rural and remote areas.

Public policy support for accelerating development at the regional and village levels is evident through the implementation of Law Number 32 of 2004, subsequently amended by Law Number 12 of 2008 concerning Regional Governance. This law stipulates that regional autonomy is the right, authority, and obligation of autonomous regions to regulate and manage their own affairs, further reinforced by Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. This law aims to establish village autonomy for governance and socio-economic institutional management according to local needs, resource potential, and community participation.

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Development with village autonomy holds the promise of enhancing opportunities, care, and community participation in designing, agreeing upon, and implementing development programs tailored to local issues, needs, and resource potentials. Thus, it can create job opportunities, improve group enterprise or entrepreneurship, income and welfare, and more broadly address poverty in villages while fostering independence.

The realization of autonomous, prosperous, and self-reliant village communities can be achieved through the development of village community economic institutions such as entrepreneurship in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Village-Owned Enterprises (VOE) (Ahsan, Adomako, & Mole., 2021; Kusumastuti et al., 2023; Setyawanto et al., 2023; Sinarwati et al., 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022)

However, several issues persist as identified in the author's 2023 study: (1) Organizational management or institutions are not yet professionally managed. For instance, MSMEs are not fully integrated administratively, relying only on informal friendships and lacking involvement in meetings or deliberations. (2) Administrative and financial management are not well-organized and still manual or not based on computer or digital applications. (3) Business development, including improving the quality and quantity of products, still needs enhancement. (4) The rural youth are reluctant to become farmers, which hampers the continuity of farming generations within families. (5) Products do not fully meet established quality standards such as permits from the Household Industry Food, Drug and Food Supervisory Agency, as well as Halal certification, including packaging quality and attractive or marketable branding. (6) Promotion and marketing of MSMEs products are not maximizing digital technology adoption.

Based on the findings of the author's research in 2023, numerous potential socio-economic resources within communities have been identified, particularly within the context of MSMEs. These socio-economic potentials, which could be harnessed to enhance the involvement of the younger generation, productivity, and community well-being, encompass: (1) The significant, strategic, and productive economic resources within agriculture, particularly in horticulture, encompassing fruits and vegetables, supported by suitable and fertile demographic locations. (2) Post-harvest processing of horticultural products could simultaneously enhance the quality and quantity of produce. (3) The younger generation, notably students or graduates of secondary schools and vocational institutions, as well as those pursuing tertiary education, represent a pool of potentially creative, productive, and innovative human resources capable of becoming young entrepreneurs capable of driving MSMEs forward if provided with socio-economic empowerment rooted in digital platforms. (4) Entrepreneurship within MSMEs could evolve into Village-Owned Enterprises, thereby contributing to the development and strengthening of community economic institutions.

Hence, it is imperative to design and implement institutional empowerment strategies for MSMEs to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for the younger generation and increase rural community income through unique business cultivation and locally informed products, such as the Forest Farmer Group MSME "Darma Jaya" — particularly the Young Farmers Group "Prawita Garden" cultivating honey in the Darmakradenan area, Ajibarang District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. The Young Farmers Group serves as a pioneer in driving rural economic development by not only accommodating the outputs of their business production but also serving as a transactional medium for marketing and meeting the honey needs of the wider community, thereby potentially enhancing community income and welfare.

These insights underscore the critical and strategic role of entrepreneurship within MSMEs in rural development, serving to create employment opportunities for the younger generation, develop local socio-economic resources, and enhance overall rural community welfare (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Fitra, & Sinatra, 2020; Kobba et al., 2021; Okoi et al., 2022; Sholihah, Fadlillah, & Rahmi, 2022)

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) Research Method

PLA, as a method with an approach involving participative learning, practice, and interaction with communities to explore and share experiences, knowledge, skills, or abilities, serves as a foundation in

planning, decision-making, and implementation of activities to enhance the quality of life leading to positive changes (Chambers, 2008).

The main aspects of participatory methods are (1) Empowerment. Knowledge is power acquired from participatory research processes and outcomes that become collective ownership. Hence, external professional groups (experts) cannot monopolize and must reinforce the knowledge of the community concerning the validity of their knowledge. External knowledge should be disseminated alongside local knowledge.

(2) Respect. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) involves a self-transformation process of a researcher into learners and listeners, respecting the intellectual capacity and analysis of local communities. (3) Localization. Extensively and creatively utilize local resources. (4) Enjoyment. PRA is conducted in an enjoyable (fun) and non-coercive manner, with the emphasis not on speed but on the process. (5) Inclusiveness. High attention to the process and to marginalized and vulnerable empowerment groups (VanderStoep, & Johnston, 2009).

The research location was in MSMEs cultivating bee honey in Prawita Garden, Darmakradenan Village, Ajibarang Sub-District, Banyumas Regency, which possessed uniqueness, attractiveness, and served as a product of local wisdom.

This consideration underscores the importance of researching the community economic institutions gathered within MSMEs cultivating bee honey, which act as the driving force of rural economic development by not only accommodating the outputs of their business production but also serving as a transactional medium for marketing and meeting the needs of the wider community, thereby potentially enhancing community income or welfare.

The research subjects included the management and members of young business groups as bee honey MSMEs, village government officials, practitioners or enthusiasts of honey products or beekeepers, as well as customers or partners of bee honey.

Data collection was conducted through observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) interviews, and documentation. The analysis of community development research data involved identifying and categorizing issues, general and specific objectives, analyzing problems, preparing action plans, and evaluating the entire process and action plans.

As per the participatory research design, data validation involves triangulation. Therefore, to analyze data: (1) Triangulation principles are applied to methods, sources, and disciplines. (2) Diversity and differences are sought. (3) Direct investigation is conducted with and among the local community (Diannita et al., 2021).

Triangulation analysis for data compilation entails classifying it into patterns, themes, or categories. Data analysis begins with formulating and explaining the problem. It involves organizing and simplifying data to facilitate reading and interpretation.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) further elaborate on the three components: (1) Data reduction, which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and classifying raw data emerging from field notes, continuously occurring throughout the research. (2) Data presentation is a structured collection of information that allows for drawing conclusions and taking action. (3) Drawing conclusions or verification. After collecting data, it is qualitatively analyzed to identify regularities, patterns, explanations, and complete configurations. Conclusions are verified throughout the research, reviewed against field notes, and exchanged among peers to develop "intersubjective agreement."

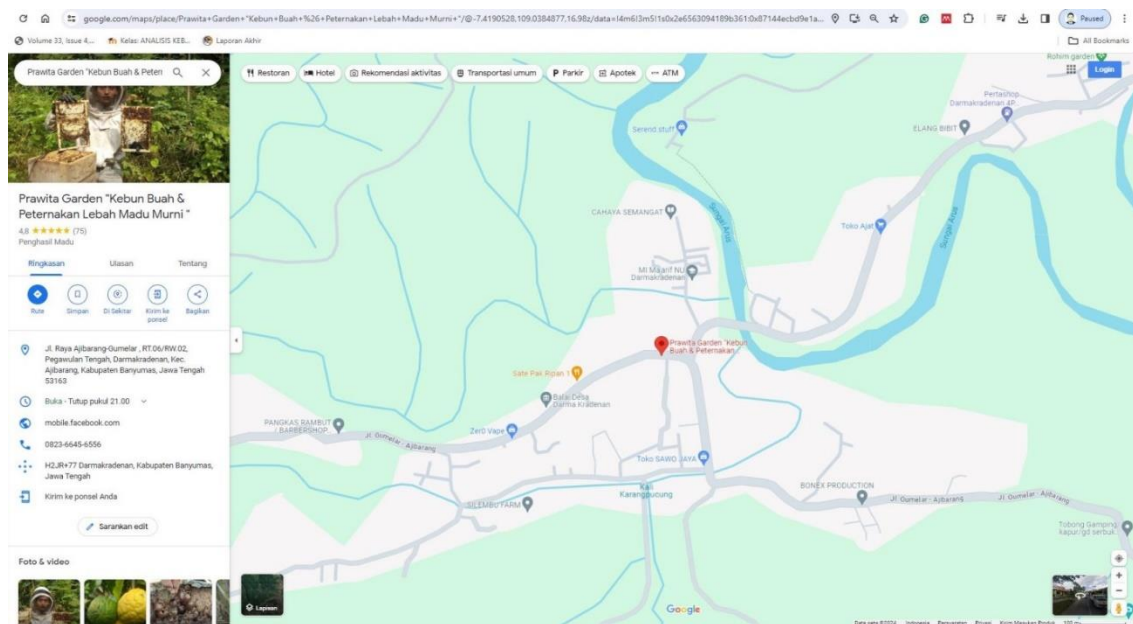
Subsequently, categorization or classification with modeling design as the outcome of research analysis is conducted using a Loop Diagram with Vensim software (Bimantio, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Development of Young Bee Honey Entrepreneurial Groups

The youth group in the Ajibarang District of Banyumas Regency successfully formed a group called Darma Jaya Forest Farmers with activities including beekeeping, farming, and forest management since 2014. This farmer group consisted of twenty-five young members from various areas in Darmakradenan Village in Figures 1. They then established the Prawita Garden Youth Group, initiated by several young individuals who recognized the potential of their area, abundant with wild bee nests in the mountainous forest region between Brebes and Banyumas Regencies, which they learned to domesticate to produce honey.

Figure 1. Location of the Prawita Garden Youth Group as a producer of honey cultivation and products



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/>

The strategic role of youth as pioneers in rural development needs support from local government stakeholders to continually optimize local resource potentials in various fields such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and rural tourism. This support aims to prevent the younger generation from leaving their villages in search of faster and more promising employment opportunities in urban areas or becoming migrant workers abroad (Helmi et al., 2021; Prasetyo, Sulaiman, & Prastyanti, 2022; Prastyanti et al., 2022; Sugito et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2023a)

Subsequently, the further development of the Prawita Garden business group involved a honey and fruit orchard located in Darmakradenan, Banyumas. Prawita Garden also provides nature-themed tourism or ecotourism and educates visitors on various activities such as farming practices and fruit and honey harvesting. It boasts a variety of fruits including guava, grapes, pomegranates, durians, olives, figs, dates, and soursop, among others. Prawita Garden also utilizes available land for seedling development, creating attractive destinations by leveraging natural and comfortable environmental potentials for visitors.

Prawita Garden originated as a youth business group interested in farming, later attempting to increase income by acquiring wild bee colonies, which were easily found, resulting in approximately 30 colonies between 2014 and 2015. With the assistance of extension agents from the local village and sub-district, they developed beekeeping practices. Prawita Garden offers various bee products such as wild bee honey, stingless bee honey, forest bee honey, bee pollen, propolis, royal jelly, and stingless bee honey tea. These bee products not only come from Prawita Garden's individual production but also from assisted farmers and partnerships as drivers, educators, supervisors, and marketers of their products.

The potential of bee honey in Prawita Garden Group, based on an assumption of 30 group members, was estimated to have an average of 7.2 hives per member. Monthly cost allocation included fixed costs such as land rent per hive at IDR 41,000, average equipment costs of IDR 2,768,000, and variable costs such as medicine expenses for honeybee farmers at IDR 330,000, simultaneous costs at IDR 246,000, fuel costs at IDR 61,800, maintenance or caretaking and transportation costs at an average of IDR 540,000, surveillance or security costs at an average of IDR 170,000, and packaging costs for honey bottles at an average of IDR 690,000. Based on cost analysis, the average total cost was IDR 2,024,800. Fixed costs averaged IDR 2,900,000, while variable costs averaged IDR 2,035,000. Fixed costs dominated the expenditure as equipment was essential for beekeeping and honey farming activities.

Initiated with paid training for the public and free training for supported farmers and farmer groups, Prawita Garden has potential bee farming resources to support the rural youth's business, which can serve as an example in Banyumas Regency. Some of the bee species cultivated to produce honey include *Tetragonula Laevicep*, *Tetragonula Drescheri*, *Heterotrigona Itama*, *Lepidotrigona Terminata*, *Lepidotrigona Javanica*, and *Apis Cerana*.

The empowerment process of the Prawita Garden business group, producing bee honey, ranged from mentoring and coaching to partnerships over a period of three years (2020-2023), resulting in an approximate production of 100 kg of stingless bee honey per month and approximately 50 kg of propolis per month, which could be maximized up to 100 kg.

Furthermore, there are still 31 locations under Prawita Garden's mentoring and partnership, indicating business development in creativity, innovation, agricultural cooperatives, and entrepreneurship. However, Prawita Garden still faces challenges such as the need for ongoing mentoring to improve product quality and marketing, additional working capital, and honeybee colonies as their colonies are in high demand by other beekeepers outside the village, including pest attacks that disrupt bee productivity.

Therefore, a sustainable community empowerment program is necessary, conducted by local and village governments with appropriate policies and budgets targeting rural youth. Community empowerment can be accomplished through partnerships with academia for research and development, particularly involving young people to encourage them to explore bee honey as a research and economic venture, including small business groups and bee honey enthusiasts.

Community empowerment programs can be implemented by formulating work programs based on issues, needs, and resource potentials owned by business groups or communities. This involves conducting outreach, mentoring, benchmarking, and partnerships regarding farming practices, product quality and quantity improvement, marketing, and fostering partnerships (Dewi, Eliyana, & Anwar, 2022). Sabiq, Sulaiman, & Sugito, 2020; Sugito et al., 2022; Sulaiman & Ahmadi, 2020; Windiasih et al., 2023).

Important Factors in the Development of Young Entrepreneurial Groups

The young entrepreneurial group “Prawita Garden”, as a form of enterprise integrating various types of activities ranging from beekeeping to honey production, is able to make a positive contribution to society. This contribution is evident from the participation of the community around the village actively involved in empowerment activities. Prawita Garden offers various flagship products such as wasp honey, stingless bee honey, figs, guava, grapes, durian, and others.

The important factors in the development of the young entrepreneurial group “Prawita Garden” are as follows: (1) Motivation Factor: This factor directs the strong motivation and initiative of beekeepers to utilize and optimize the potential of honey bee resources existing around the forest village.

The motivation to strive and change fate for the better through entrepreneurship is a key factor in community development. Thus, the potential of local resources can be optimized to become economic opportunities that generate income, create job opportunities, and enhance the well-being of the community and society.

Motivation stems from the word "motive," which means a driving force within an individual that leads to action. Motives are not directly observable but can be interpreted through behavioral reflections such as impulses, desires, or wishes that manifest in certain behaviors. Motivation is the driving force within an individual to perform certain activities in order to achieve specific goals. Thus, motivation is a driving force that originates from within or outside the individual to perform actions that arise from needs, desires, and hopes that must be fulfilled (Andersen, 2018; Efendi & Firmansyah, 2021; Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; Hadiwijaya, Muttaqijijn & Rachman, 2024; Ozkeser, 2019; Riyanto, Endri & Herlisha, 2021).

McClelland's motivation theory suggests that individuals have the potential energy to become driving forces or to be developed depending on individual needs supported by available situations and opportunities. There are three types of needs that drive motivation: (a) Need for achievement, (b) Need for power, (c) Need for affiliation (Boyatzis, 2017).

Prawita Garden entrepreneurial group has the motivation or enthusiasm to change, strive, and progress, always being the main factor as a motivation for fulfilling desires and needs in advancing the organization or economic enterprise as a form of need for affiliation. Even companies and organizations, whether service-oriented or profit-oriented, always conduct workshops, seminars, and upgrades to achieve good performance and achievements as a form of motivation for the need for achievement. Furthermore, motivation to increase knowledge, skills, or abilities in empowerment programs to achieve greater prosperity, independence, or no longer dependence, and to become pioneers as a motivation for the need for power.

(2) Indigenous Factor: The presence of human resources within the beekeeping farmer groups who have innate and inherited understanding and skills for beekeeping and breeding. Subsequently, the young business groups are equipped with empowerment by facilitators through education and training on beekeeping. This becomes a factor of excellence or strength that can ensure the success of honey bee community development.

The local knowledge and skills possessed by the community need to be preserved and developed to advance economic enterprises because if they are not given attention, they will be lost, not passed down, and replaced by pragmatic abilities such as becoming construction laborers and textile factory workers in urban areas.

Factors of local knowledge or local indigenous, originating from the beliefs, convictions, knowledge, and abilities of both individuals and communities in sustaining, adapting, or adapting their lives in the social, economic, and cultural fields. Thus, they can continue to actively participate with their inherent potential, usually passed down or taught to the next generation. For example, agricultural cultivation techniques, breeding, fertilization, planting and harvesting schedules, both in agriculture and animal husbandry (Hatu, Wisadhirana, & Susilo, 2019; Sopanah, Harnovinsah, & Sulistyan, 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2023b; Tamma & Duile, 2020).

Therefore, the local indigenous knowledge possessed by the group also serves as an important asset in business development because the community within the group already has local knowledge and skills that can be developed and will further advance with the assistance of empowerment programs from external parties such as facilitators, local governments, and academia.

(3) Social Capital Factor: Awareness and the need for grouping efforts in business to help each other, accompany, and unite for mutual success are important forms of social capital. Social capital is just as important as financial capital. Even if there is a lot of financial capital, but weak social capital, the business group and community will not develop. Hence, it is important to maintain and cultivate social capital in the form of cohesion, mutual assistance, solidarity, mutual cooperation, and willingness to sacrifice to advance the community.

According to several studies on social capital, the strength of solidarity or mutual understanding, assistance, and reinforcement among individuals and communities in a unique and typical society are essential to face

the challenges of life in economic, social, and cultural fields to maintain harmony, peace, and unity for collective welfare (Alpino, & Mehlum, 2021; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Gannon & Roberts, 2020; Hardini & Wasiaturrahma, 2020; Irsan, 2022; Yasni et al., 2023).

(4) Empowerment Program Factor: This can be designed starting from formulating program activities by organizing communication forums that are dialogical, egalitarian, and open to anyone interested. This will result in empowerment program activities based on the needs, problems, and resource potentials of the community. Empowerment programs will be more effective, directly supported, and become a shared responsibility because the community business groups are directly involved in the planning process. The subsequent stages of empowerment program activities involve providing and enhancing motivation, patterns of thinking, and mental attitudes to strive, persevere, and cooperate for prosperity or success.

Community empowerment is a participatory action by the local community to generate solutions to the problems faced and optimize the potential of available resources for change and improvement of welfare until achieving self-reliance.

Subsequent community empowerment programs involve providing knowledge and understanding as cognitive aspects of cultivation or entrepreneurship supplemented by conative aspects, namely skills or abilities in business and cultivation, including processing and marketing products (Chusmeru et al., 2023; Handoko et al., 2024; Hermawan, 2019; Purworini et al., 2023).

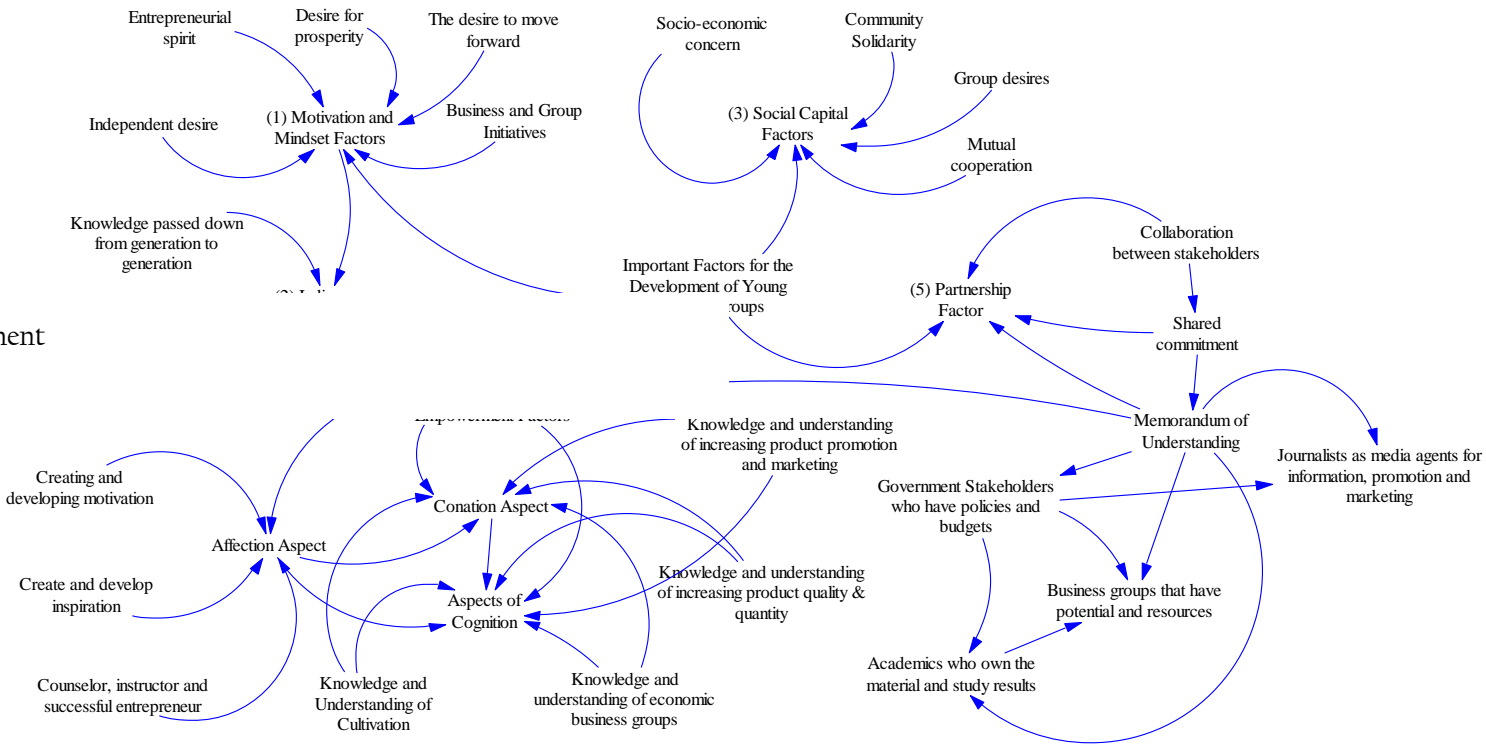
Empowerment, in its implementation, involves outreach activities to create and enhance motivation, inspiration, patterns of thinking, mental attitudes, and community knowledge. The next stage involves simulations and practical exercises to enhance skills or expertise. Then, conducting benchmarking with communities or groups that have succeeded to establish partnerships. Finally, the goal of empowerment is to create and enhance the welfare and self-reliance of the group.

(5) Partnership Factor: This creates and enhances synergy, collaboration, and cooperation between business groups and local government stakeholders, especially to provide policy and budget support. It is further strengthened by the role of academic stakeholders who have expertise and journalistic media stakeholders who have access and the power of mass media to promote and assist in marketing the products or achievements of business communities.

Partnerships are the next stage of community empowerment after acquiring knowledge, understanding, and skills in economic activities that produce products or services to obtain investment capital support, improve product quality and quantity management, and access promotion and marketing.

Partnerships achieve effective targets if they can collaborate and synergize all stakeholders such as governments with policies and budgets, civil society such as small business groups and development activists, academia, and journalistic media which have become the model of the Pentahelix stakeholder. (Akoh & Lekhanya, 2022; Ardiansyah, et al., 2023; Suherlan, Hidayah, & Mada, 2019; Tadung, 2023)

Based on the explanation of the important factors that determine the institutional development of young businesses, a circle model of Important Factors for Business Group Development can be designed using Ventana-Simulation in Figure 2.



Conclusion

The role of young generations is highly strategic and crucial in the sustainability of development, particularly in harnessing and maximizing the potential of social, economic, and cultural resources, as well as the natural environment in rural areas. Thus, not all young people migrate to urban areas, which would lead to population density, hidden unemployment, and economic disparity in urban areas due to mismatched human resource competencies. Moreover, becoming migrant workers, perceived as the most prospective and promising in terms of employment and income, still poses many problems.

The Young Farmer Entrepreneurial Group “Prawita Garden” in Banyumas Regency can serve as a pioneer and inspiration for other young generations in entrepreneurship, particularly in beekeeping with its unique, attractive, and healthy honey products. Its business development has progressed by establishing rural tourism destinations that offer scenic and natural views of lush greenery while enjoying honey or honey-based beverages directly. This includes offering fruit tree seedlings that can be purchased by visitors.

Key factors for developing young farmer business groups include having high motivation to venture into entrepreneurship and establish business institutions, ingrained social capital factors in rural communities such as solidarity, mutual assistance, and mutually beneficial cooperation in business rather than open

competition. Additionally, the local indigenous factor, which has been a tradition passed down through generations in farming and entrepreneurship, is supported by community empowerment programs to enhance the quality and quantity of products and marketing with the assistance of partnerships among stakeholders.

The Young Farmer Entrepreneurial Group “Prawita Garden” needs to expand beyond villages and sub-districts to become agents of empowerment in beekeeping and honey product development in other areas. This would enable them to become business partners with other youth groups, including initiating partnerships with other stakeholders supported by government stakeholders with policies and budgets.

Village and regional governments should ideally have priority community empowerment programs specifically for unique, attractive, and healthy beekeeping and honey products. This is because most community empowerment program implementations tend to focus on non-beekeeping agriculture and animal husbandry. Furthermore, initiating partnership programs involving other stakeholders, including private entities, development activists, academia, or campus and journalistic media, would be beneficial.

Academic stakeholders with many students as young generations need to be introduced and assigned tasks, internships, practicums, and relevant coursework that involve beekeeping, its products, and product marketing promotion in the Young Farmer Business Group of Prawita Garden, which has already succeeded and advanced.

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