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EMPOWERING SCHOOL-DROPOUT YOUTH THROUGH WOODCRAFT EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IN A COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

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Abstract: School dropout remains a persistent challenge that limits young people's educational and employment opportunities. This study examined the implementation of a woodcraft education program as an empowerment strategy for school-dropout youth at Community Learning Center (CLC) Insan Kreatif Lubuklinggau, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive case study design, the study involved 15 school-dropout youth aged 15–21 years. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the program manager and tutors, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the program was implemented through collaboration with a local furniture enterprise, providing participants with hands-on training in wood identification, machine operation, cutting, shaping, sanding, varnishing, and painting. The program not only enhanced vocational skills but also fostered self-confidence, discipline, responsibility, and active engagement. This study contributes to the literature by exploring the implementation of a community-based woodcraft education program among school-dropout youth, a population that remains underexplored in vocational education research. The findings highlight the potential of non-formal vocational education to support youth empowerment and social inclusion.

Keywords: Youth Empowerment; School-Dropout Youth; Non-Formal Education; Woodcraft Education; Vocational Training.

INTRODUCTION

School dropout remains a persistent challenge in educational and social development, particularly in contexts where socioeconomic inequalities limit young people's access to formal education. Youth who leave school prematurely often encounter restricted opportunities for skill development, employment, and social participation, making them vulnerable to long-term economic and social disadvantages (Profiroiu., et al, 2024) . In response to these challenges, researchers and policymakers have increasingly emphasized the importance of non-formal education and vocational training as alternative pathways for supporting disadvantaged youth. Previous studies have shown that vocational and life-skills education can enhance employability, self-confidence, and individual capacity development among young people who are excluded from formal educational systems (Kaniati, 2013; UNESCO, 2023). Consequently, empowerment initiatives that combine practical learning experiences with skill acquisition have become an important area of research and practice, particularly in efforts to promote social inclusion and sustainable youth development

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(Kulmie et al., 2023).

Existing research on youth empowerment through vocational education has generally focused on several interconnected themes. One prominent strand of research examines the role of vocational and technical training in improving employability, entrepreneurship, and economic self-reliance among disadvantaged youth. Another body of literature highlights the contribution of life-skills education to personal development, including self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, and social adaptation. Within these broader discussions, hands-on and experiential learning approaches have received increasing attention because they enable participants to acquire practical competencies while actively engaging in meaningful learning processes. Although craft-based learning has occasionally been discussed as part of vocational education initiatives, existing studies have predominantly emphasized training outcomes rather than the implementation processes through which participants experience empowerment and skill development. As a result, the educational dynamics, participant engagement, and learning experiences that characterize craft-based empowerment programs remain less visible in the current literature (Kulmie et al., 2023).

Despite the growing interest in vocational education and youth empowerment, several important gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature focuses on measurable outcomes such as employment opportunities, entrepreneurial intentions, or vocational competencies, while comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding how empowerment programs are implemented in practice (Sánchez, 2013). Second, studies specifically examining woodcraft education as a medium for empowering school-dropout youth remain limited. Third, empirical evidence from Indonesia is still relatively scarce, despite the continuing relevance of school dropout as a social and educational issue in the country (Buli, 2015). Indonesia represents an important context for examining this issue because non-formal educational initiatives frequently serve as complementary mechanisms for addressing educational exclusion and supporting marginalized youth (Ibnu, 2019). However, limited research has explored how woodcraft-based educational activities are organized, experienced, and perceived within empowerment programs targeting school-dropout adolescents. This gap suggests the need for a more contextually grounded understanding of the implementation of craft-based empowerment initiatives in Indonesia.

To address these gaps, the present study investigates the implementation of a youth empowerment program through woodcraft education for school-dropout adolescents in Indonesia. Rather than focusing solely on program outcomes, this study seeks to describe how the program is designed and implemented, how participants engage in learning activities, and how woodcraft education is utilized as a strategy for promoting youth

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empowerment. Specifically, the study aims to examine the stages of program implementation, participant experiences, and the perceived benefits associated with participation in woodcraft-making activities. The study is guided by the following research question: How is a woodcraft education-based empowerment program implemented to support the development of school-dropout youth? By providing a detailed account of program implementation within a non-formal educational setting, this study contributes to the literature on youth empowerment and vocational learning while offering contextual insights into educational strategies for marginalized youth in Indonesia.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Youth Empowerment and Non-Formal Education

Youth empowerment has become a central concern in educational and social development research, particularly for young people who experience educational exclusion. In general, empowerment refers to a process through which individuals develop the knowledge, skills, confidence, and opportunities necessary to improve their life circumstances and participate actively in society. For school-dropout youth, empowerment is especially important because limited access to formal education often reduces opportunities for personal growth, skill acquisition, and economic participation Simac, et, al., (2021). Consequently, educational interventions targeting marginalized youth increasingly emphasize the development of practical competencies alongside personal and social capacities that can support long-term self-reliance and social inclusion.

Within this context, non-formal education has emerged as an important alternative pathway for addressing the needs of young people who are unable to continue formal schooling. Unlike formal education systems that follow standardized curricula and institutional structures, non-formal education is generally characterized by flexibility, community orientation, and responsiveness to local needs (Ferrer, et al., 2022). Such characteristics enable non-formal programs to provide accessible learning opportunities for vulnerable populations while promoting skills that are directly relevant to participants' everyday lives (Solehuddin, et, al., 2025). As a result, non-formal education has been widely recognized as an effective mechanism for fostering empowerment among disadvantaged youth.

The relationship between non-formal education and empowerment is often reflected in the integration of life-skills development within educational programs. Life skills are not

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limited to technical competencies but also include communication, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, responsibility, and self-confidence (Saravanakumar, 2020). These competencies are considered essential for helping young people navigate social and economic challenges. Educational initiatives that combine practical training with life-skills development therefore offer opportunities for participants to strengthen both their vocational capacities and their ability to function effectively within their communities.

Vocational learning represents one of the most widely implemented forms of non-formal education for marginalized youth. Previous scholarship suggests that vocational education can contribute to employability, economic independence, and social participation by equipping learners with practical and marketable skills. Beyond preparing individuals for work, vocational learning can also serve as a platform for personal development by encouraging active participation, experiential learning, and self-directed growth. These characteristics make vocational education particularly relevant for empowerment initiatives targeting school-dropout youth (Kicherova, 2023).

Vocational Learning and Craft-Based Education for School-Dropout Youth

Research on vocational learning has consistently emphasized its potential to support the socioeconomic development of disadvantaged populations. Existing studies generally demonstrate that vocational training can improve participants' technical competencies, employability, and entrepreneurial capacity (McQuilten, 2022). Such findings have contributed to the growing recognition of vocational education as a strategic intervention for reducing social exclusion and enhancing economic opportunities among vulnerable youth. Consequently, vocational training has become a prominent component of many youth empowerment programs implemented across diverse educational and community settings.

In addition to economic outcomes, previous studies have highlighted the psychosocial benefits associated with vocational education. Persson , et al., (2019) said that participation in skill-development programs has been linked to increased self-confidence, stronger motivation, greater social engagement, and improved perceptions of future opportunities. These findings suggest that vocational learning contributes not only to workforce preparation but also to broader processes of personal development. From this perspective, empowerment involves both the acquisition of practical skills and the strengthening of individual capacities that enable young people to pursue meaningful life goals.

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Among various forms of vocational learning, craft-based education offers distinctive educational advantages because it emphasizes learning through direct experience. Zabulis, et al., (2023) said that craft activities require participants to engage in planning, designing, problem-solving, and product creation, thereby encouraging active involvement throughout the learning process. Such experiences can foster creativity, perseverance, discipline, and responsibility while simultaneously developing technical skills. As a result, craft-based learning has increasingly been viewed as a valuable approach for promoting holistic development among young people within non-formal educational environments.

Woodcraft education represents one form of craft-based learning that combines practical skill acquisition with experiential engagement. Through woodcraft activities, participants learn to transform raw materials into functional or artistic products while developing competencies related to design, craftsmanship, and production processes (Grüger, et al., 2025). Beyond technical learning, woodcraft activities may encourage participants to develop patience, confidence, and a sense of achievement derived from creating tangible products. Therefore, woodcraft education has the potential to function not only as a vocational activity but also as a meaningful educational strategy for supporting youth empowerment.

Previous studies on youth empowerment have predominantly focused on vocational education, life-skills training, and employability development among disadvantaged populations. Existing research generally demonstrates that vocational interventions can enhance participants' occupational competencies, entrepreneurial readiness, and economic self-sufficiency. Similarly, studies examining life-skills education emphasize the importance of developing personal and social competencies that enable young people to adapt to changing social and economic environments. Collectively, these studies indicate that educational interventions can play an important role in facilitating the transition of vulnerable youth toward greater independence and social participation (Gupta & Datta, 2023).

Another notable trend within the literature is the growing emphasis on participant experiences and psychosocial development. Recent research suggests that empowerment programs are most effective when they provide opportunities for active engagement, experiential learning, and meaningful participation (Boaventura, et al., 2026). Rather than viewing empowerment solely as an economic outcome, scholars increasingly recognize its multidimensional nature, encompassing confidence, motivation, resilience, and social

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connectedness. This shift has broadened understanding of vocational education by highlighting the importance of educational processes alongside measurable outcomes. Despite these contributions, several limitations remain evident in the existing literature. Most studies continue to focus primarily on training outcomes, such as employability, vocational competence, or entrepreneurial potential, while comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding how empowerment programs are implemented in practice. Furthermore, research examining craft-based educational activities remains limited compared to studies on general vocational training. Existing evidence also provides relatively little insight into how participants experience educational activities and how specific learning processes contribute to empowerment outcomes within non-formal educational settings (Abbe, 2024).

Although vocational education has been widely recognized as an effective empowerment strategy, limited research has explored the implementation of woodcraft-based educational programs for school-dropout youth, particularly in Indonesia. Existing studies predominantly focus on training outcomes rather than educational processes and participant experiences. Therefore, further research is needed to examine how woodcraft education is implemented as a non-formal learning strategy to support youth empowerment. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the implementation of a woodcraft education-based empowerment program for school-dropout youth and seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how such educational initiatives contribute to the development of skills, confidence, and self-reliance among marginalized young people (Abbe, 2024).

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to investigate the implementation of a woodcraft education-based empowerment program for school-dropout youth. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how the program was planned, implemented, and experienced within its natural setting. The case study design enabled an in-depth exploration of the educational activities, participant engagement, and empowerment processes occurring within a specific community-based learning context.

Research Setting and Participants

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The study was conducted at PKBM Insan Kreatif Lubuklinggau South Sumatra, a community learning center that provides educational and empowerment programs for marginalized youth. The program examined in this study focused on empowering school-dropout youth through woodcraft education and training activities (Trivedi, 2023). The beneficiaries of the program consisted of 15 school-dropout youth aged between 15 and 21 years who were actively enrolled in learning activities at PKBM Insan Kreatif (Mustajab, 2023).

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who possessed direct experience and knowledge relevant to the research objectives. The primary informants consisted of the program manager and woodcraft tutors who were directly involved in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the training program. These informants were selected because they had comprehensive knowledge regarding the program objectives, instructional strategies, participant development, and implementation challenges. Meanwhile, the 15 school-dropout youth served as the subjects of observation throughout the training process.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the program manager and tutors to explore the objectives of the program, implementation procedures, instructional approaches, participant engagement, challenges encountered during implementation, and perceived outcomes of the training activities. The interviews provided rich descriptions of how the empowerment program was organized and delivered within the PKBM setting (Planas-llad & Valdivia-vizarreta, 2023).

Participant observation was carried out during woodcraft training sessions involving the 15 school-dropout youth. The observations focused on participant attendance, engagement in learning activities, interactions between tutors and participants, collaborative learning practices, skill-development processes, and overall program implementation. Observation enabled the researchers to document naturally occurring behaviors and educational practices that could not be fully captured through interviews alone.

To complement the interview and observation data, document analysis was conducted on relevant program documents, including training modules, attendance records, activity reports, photographs, and institutional documents. The combination of interviews,

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observations, and documentation facilitated data triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the research findings.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis process involved six stages: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were systematically examined to identify recurring patterns related to program implementation, learning activities, participant engagement, and empowerment practices.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing information obtained from program managers, tutors, observations, and documents. Method triangulation involved the use of multiple data collection techniques to verify the consistency of the findings. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with key informants to confirm the accuracy of the data. In addition, peer debriefing was undertaken to strengthen analytical rigor and minimize researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, research procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Written informed consent was obtained from all informants before participation. To protect privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings, and all personal information was anonymized. The study adhered to ethical principles governing research involving human participants and respected the rights and welfare of all individuals involved in the research process.

Findings

Theme 1. Industry-Based Collaboration as a Strategy for Youth Empowerment

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The findings revealed that the empowerment program was implemented through a strategic partnership between PKBM Insan Kreatif and Sungkai Indah Furniture, a local woodcraft enterprise in Lubuklinggau. According to the program manager, the collaboration was established to provide school-dropout youth with opportunities to learn directly in a professional work environment while acquiring practical vocational skills. Rather than relying solely on classroom instruction, the program integrated workplace-based learning to expose participants to real production processes and industry practices. The program manager emphasized that the initiative was designed not only to teach technical competencies but also to create meaningful and productive activities for young people who were no longer participating in formal education.

> "Many of these young people have discontinued their formal education and spend much of their time without structured activities. Through this program, we aim to provide productive learning experiences and practical skills that may support their future livelihoods" (Program Manager, Interview 1).

This statement indicates that the program viewed empowerment as a process of providing opportunities, skills, and constructive activities that could contribute to participants' personal and social development. The collaboration with a local furniture enterprise also enabled participants to gain direct exposure to professional practices. According to the program manager:

> "Learning in a real workshop environment helps participants understand how woodcraft products are designed, produced, and finished. They can see the complete process rather than only learning theory" (Program Manager, Interview 1).

The findings suggest that industry-based collaboration enhanced the authenticity of the learning experience and increased the relevance of vocational education for participants. Overall, the partnership between PKBM Insan Kreatif and Sungkai Indah Furniture functioned as an important foundation for the empowerment program. It provided access to facilities, equipment, practical expertise, and real-world learning experiences that supported participant engagement and skill development.

Theme 2. Progressive Skill Development through Experiential Learning

The implementation of the program followed a structured sequence of learning activities over a one-month period with five training sessions each week. Participants were

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first introduced to different types of wood and their characteristics before progressing to more advanced technical skills. The curriculum included wood identification, wood-drying techniques, machine operation, sanding, cutting, shaping, gluing, varnishing, and painting. Observations indicated that tutors adopted a demonstration-and-practice approach in which participants were encouraged to learn by directly engaging in production activities. Tutors explained each procedure before providing opportunities for supervised practice. According to one tutor:

> "Most participants had no previous experience with woodworking. Therefore, we started with the basics and gradually introduced more complex activities so that they could learn step by step" (Tutor A, Interview 2).

Picture 1 below shows one of the participants practicing the use of woodworking equipment during the training session.



Picture 1: The participant uses the woodworking equipment

This approach enabled participants to develop foundational knowledge before progressing to more advanced technical tasks. The tutors also emphasized the importance of repeated practice in facilitating skill development. Through continuous engagement in production activities, participants became increasingly familiar with tools, materials, and production procedures.

> "At first, many participants were hesitant to use woodworking equipment because they were unfamiliar with the tools. However, after several training sessions, they became more confident and capable of completing tasks independently" (Tutor B, Interview 3).

This finding demonstrates how experiential learning contributed to the gradual

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development of technical competence and confidence.Observational data further showed that participants actively applied newly acquired knowledge throughout the production process. By directly transforming raw materials into finished products, participants were able to connect theoretical understanding with practical application. This hands-on learning environment facilitated deeper engagement and promoted meaningful skill acquisition.

Theme 3. Participant Engagement and Positive Learning Experiences

Participant engagement emerged as one of the most prominent findings of the study. Observations conducted during training sessions indicated that learners regularly attended activities and demonstrated enthusiasm when participating in practical tasks. Tutors reported that the practical nature of the learning activities played an important role in maintaining participant motivation.

> "The participants enjoyed seeing the results of their work. When they completed a product, they felt proud because they could see something they had created themselves" (Tutor A, Interview 2).

The practical activities and products produced during the training program are shown in picture 2.



Picture 2. The practical activities

The production of visible outputs appeared to strengthen participants' sense of accomplishment and encourage continued participation. In addition to technical learning, the program fostered positive interactions between participants and tutors. Observations showed that participants frequently sought guidance, exchanged ideas, and collaborated during learning activities. These interactions contributed to a supportive educational environment that encouraged active engagement and continuous learning.

The findings indicate that participant engagement was influenced by several interconnected factors, including practical learning activities, supportive tutor guidance, and

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opportunities to observe tangible outcomes. Together, these elements created a positive learning experience that encouraged sustained participation throughout the training period.

Theme 4. Woodcraft Education as a Pathway to Personal and Vocational Development

The findings suggest that the program contributed not only to vocational skill development but also to broader aspects of personal growth. Throughout the training process, participants were required to follow instructions, manage materials responsibly, complete assigned tasks, and collaborate with others. These experiences encouraged the development of discipline, responsibility, patience, and perseverance. According to the program manager, one of the primary objectives of the initiative was to equip participants with skills that could be utilized in future employment or self-employment opportunities.

> "We do not expect all participants to become furniture craftsmen. However, we hope they gain skills that can be useful in finding work, starting small businesses, or pursuing further vocational training" (Program Manager, Interview 1).

This statement highlights the program's broader empowerment goals beyond immediate skill acquisition.

Tutors similarly observed positive changes in participants' confidence and willingness to engage in learning activities. As participants became more familiar with woodworking processes, they appeared more comfortable undertaking new tasks and solving practical problems independently.

> "Many participants became more confident over time. They were willing to try new tasks and showed greater initiative during the training sessions" (Tutor B, Interview 3).

The interview findings indicate that participants gradually developed greater self-confidence throughout the training program. Continuous practice and direct involvement in woodworking activities encouraged them to become more active, independent, and willing to take on new challenges. This improvement was particularly evident during the finishing stage, where participants confidently carried out varnishing and painting activities with less assistance from tutors. Their growing confidence in performing wood finishing tasks can be seen in Figure 3.



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Figure 3. Wood Finishing Process

Such observations suggest that the program contributed to the development of personal capacities that are essential for future learning and employment. Overall, the findings demonstrate that woodcraft education functioned as more than a vocational training activity. It provided school-dropout youth with opportunities to acquire practical skills, engage in meaningful learning experiences, and develop personal attributes associated with empowerment. Consequently, the program represents a promising community-based approach for supporting the social and vocational development of marginalized youth.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine how a woodcraft education program was implemented as an empowerment strategy for school-dropout youth at PKBM Insan Kreatif. The findings indicate that the program was implemented through a structured collaboration between PKBM Insan Kreatif and a local furniture enterprise, enabling participants to engage in intensive hands-on learning activities over a one-month period. The training covered a comprehensive sequence of woodworking competencies, including wood identification, wood drying, machine operation, cutting, shaping, gluing, sanding, varnishing, and painting. More importantly, the program provided school-dropout youth with opportunities to engage in meaningful and productive activities while developing vocational competencies that may support future educational, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities. These findings reinforce the argument that vocational learning can serve as an effective mechanism for supporting youth empowerment, particularly among vulnerable populations who have limited access to formal educational pathways.

A notable finding of this study is the effectiveness of experiential learning in fostering participant engagement and skill development. The observations revealed that participants learned primarily through direct involvement in production activities rather than through theoretical instruction. As participants repeatedly practiced woodworking techniques under tutor supervision, they gradually developed confidence in using tools and

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completing tasks independently. This finding supports previous research suggesting that vocational education contributes not only to technical competence but also to the development of self-confidence, motivation, and personal agency among disadvantaged youth (Shi & Bangpan, 2022; Tripney & Hombrados, 2013). However, unlike many previous studies that focus primarily on vocational outcomes, the present study demonstrates how empowerment emerges through everyday learning processes, participant–tutor interactions, and sustained engagement in authentic production activities. This suggests that the educational process itself may be as important as the vocational outcomes commonly reported in the literature.

Another important finding concerns the role of community–industry partnerships in strengthening non-formal education programs. Previous studies have generally examined vocational training within institutional settings, government programs, or formal vocational education systems. In contrast, the present study highlights how collaboration between a community learning center and a local furniture enterprise created an authentic learning environment where participants could directly observe and engage in real production processes (Kicherova, & Trifonova, 2023). The findings suggest that workplace-based learning provides participants with practical experiences that extend beyond technical instruction by exposing them to workplace discipline, professional standards, and production routines. This finding expands existing discussions on youth empowerment by demonstrating that local industry partnerships can function as valuable educational resources for community-based learning programs.

Although the findings are broadly consistent with previous studies reporting positive outcomes of vocational training programs, the context of the present study differs substantially from much of the existing literature. Previous research has predominantly focused on vocational school students, unemployed youth, participants in entrepreneurship programs, or beneficiaries of general life-skills training initiatives (Ibnu, 2019). Comparatively fewer studies have specifically examined school-dropout youth enrolled in community-based learning centers. This distinction is important because school-dropout youth often experience multiple forms of disadvantage, including interrupted educational trajectories, limited access to skill-development opportunities, and increased vulnerability to unemployment and social exclusion. Consequently, the learning experiences and empowerment processes observed in this study cannot be fully explained by evidence derived from formal educational contexts.

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The study also contributes to the literature by highlighting the potential of woodcraft education as a medium for empowerment. Existing empowerment research has frequently concentrated on entrepreneurship training, digital literacy programs, life-skills education, and general vocational training. In comparison, woodcraft-based educational programs remain relatively underrepresented in the literature, despite their potential to integrate technical learning, creativity, problem-solving, and productive engagement. The findings indicate that woodcraft education provides participants with opportunities to develop both vocational competencies and personal attributes such as responsibility, perseverance, patience, and self-confidence (Saravanakumar, 2020). These outcomes suggest that craft-based learning should be viewed not merely as a technical activity but as a holistic educational approach capable of supporting multiple dimensions of youth development.

The novelty of this study lies in three significant contributions. First, unlike many previous studies that evaluate training effectiveness through measurable outcomes, this research focuses on the implementation process of a woodcraft-based empowerment program. Second, the study investigates a population that remains relatively underexplored in the vocational education literature, namely school-dropout youth participating in non-formal educational programs at a community learning center. Third, the study provides empirical evidence regarding the use of woodcraft education as a community-based empowerment strategy within the Indonesian context, where research on vocational empowerment programs for school-dropout youth remains limited (Thamrin, & Can , 2024). By addressing these empirical, contextual, and programmatic gaps, the study extends current understanding of how non-formal vocational education can contribute to youth empowerment beyond conventional measures of employability and economic outcomes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that woodcraft education can function as a multidimensional empowerment strategy that combines vocational skill development, experiential learning, personal growth, and social engagement. The study therefore contributes to the growing body of literature on youth empowerment and non-formal education by providing evidence from a marginalized population that has received limited scholarly attention. Given the persistent challenges associated with school dropout in Indonesia, the findings underscore the importance of developing community-based vocational learning initiatives that provide vulnerable youth with meaningful opportunities for participation, skill acquisition, and future socioeconomic inclusion.

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CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the implementation of a woodcraft education program as an empowerment strategy for school-dropout youth at PKBM Insan Kreatif. The findings indicate that the program was successfully implemented through collaboration with a local furniture enterprise, providing participants with hands-on learning experiences that developed both vocational competencies and personal attributes such as discipline, responsibility, confidence, and perseverance. These findings suggest that woodcraft education can serve as an effective community-based empowerment approach for supporting the personal and vocational development of school-dropout youth. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single program, a relatively small number of participants, and its emphasis on implementation rather than long-term outcomes. Therefore, future studies should investigate similar programs in different contexts, incorporate the perspectives of school-dropout youth more extensively, and examine the long-term effects of vocational empowerment programs on employment opportunities, economic independence, and social inclusion. Through such efforts, non-formal vocational education can be further strengthened as a sustainable strategy for empowering marginalized youth (Thamrin & Can, 2024).

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