**Young Social Entrepreneurship: The KKN Program Leading them to be one**

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| ARTICLE INFO  ***Article History:***  *Received 24 July 2024*  *Revised 5 August 2024*  *Accepted 3 August 2024*  ***Keywords:*** *young student, social entrepreneurship, KKN program, social program, qualitative method* |  | **ABSTRACT**  This study investigates the impact of community service programs (KKN) on management and business student’s career choices as social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship emphasizes sustainability and solving social problems, requiring innovative and practical approaches. The research focuses on understanding how KKN experiences influence students’ decisions to pursue social entrepreneurship careers. The methodology is narrative-based, with interviews conducted to gather in-depth participant insights. Five students who participated in KKN were selected, and their stories were analyzed to identify common themes related to social entrepreneurship. Results reveal that KKN experiences impact students’ career choices by exposing them to real-world social issues and enabling them to apply academic knowledge in practical settings. The study finds that students develop strong motivations to pursue social entrepreneurship careers through KKN, driven by their desire to solve community problems and contribute positively to society. The narratives highlight critical themes of well-being and sustainability, showcasing the transformation effect of KKN on students’ career aspirations. In conclusion, the research underscores the importance of integrating social entrepreneurship into higher education curricula, mainly through community service programs, to foster future social entrepreneurs capable of addressing societal challenges effectively.  Copyright (c) 2024 Tsabita Khwarazmita, Widhyo Sudiyono  Creative Commons License  Creative Commons License  This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. |

**Introduction**

Collaboration has now been implemented in the business world. Business collaboration emphasizes the business sustainability that the younger generation must face. The younger generation in the succession can depend on and support each other to expand their business. The business pattern of embracing partners is emphasized in social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship may be known as NGOs and various fields of social-purpose entrepreneurship. That's true, even though NGOs and others are only one small part of the field of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is based on ​​solving problems by raising and spreading social values (Capella-Peris et al., 2020). Barba-Sánchez et al. (2022) revealed that social entrepreneurs are encouraged to contribute more to regional social and economic development. Even so, social entrepreneurship still emphasizes the same financial scheme as business. However, what needs to be underlined is that a much more significant percentage of their distribution is directed toward their social goals (Andriyansah & Zahra, 2017). This thought can be stated that social entrepreneurship does not require capital and generates profits while managing its business. Chell et al. (2016) responded that superficial assumptions about social entrepreneurship can mislead how social enterprises conduct their business.

The assumptions about social entrepreneurship that students perceive (Satar & Natasha, 2019) are also the same as those of those who do not understand the concept of social entrepreneurship. Almost the entire basis of business studied by management and business students leads to capitalism and rationalism, namely, as little capital as possible to produce maximum profits. In contrast, Yu et al. (2021) said that social entrepreneurship is different because this entrepreneurship leads to socialism, which relies on welfare by reducing individual suffering. It would be a shame if people from various fields of entrepreneurship did not gain an understanding of multiple fields, especially social entrepreneurship. Students never specifically study social entrepreneurship, but it is realized based on their experience. Experience gained during the learning process wherever they are, following programs related to learning and social programs. Neck et al. (2017) strongly emphasized that entrepreneurs' best practice is through experience; no matter how good their knowledge is, it becomes unreal without that experience.

However, management and business students are close to the real entrepreneurial and implementation process. It cannot be denied that entrepreneurship is a part of the learning subject. Entrepreneurship learning is close to real-time problems and requires a pragmatic approach (Neck et al., 2017). Therefore, management and business students can better understand entrepreneurship as a whole. Moreover, social programs such as KKN regularly support implementing entrepreneurial learning. The KKN program is a theoretical exercise and a practical application of entrepreneurial skills. The KKN program is mandatory for all students to fulfill their compulsory learning requirements. The KKN program is part of routine activities and has various noble goals. Service-learning goals depend on the institution, but most emphasize implementing theory and problem-solving to help society. This program is not just about seeing their capabilities and potential, but about actively using them to overcome real problems that occur in society.

The research of Vallaster et al. (2019) declared that views on social entrepreneurship still need to be more understood and rarely discussed in entrepreneurship research, which is exposed from the analytical results of their journals. This indicates that social entrepreneurs still need to be discussed in scientific research. Research related to social entrepreneurship needs to be increased and developed to understand the concept more widely. Hence, this research will focus on students majoring in management and business who have taken the KKN program and have a career choice as social entrepreneurs in the future.

**Literature Review**

Background of the study

**Social entrepreneurship as a career choice**

Social entrepreneurship is one of the career options that students can choose, especially management and business students. Entrepreneur management and business students cannot be separated, considering the learning activities that support each other. It is impossible for management and business students not to have the goal of becoming entrepreneurs because entrepreneurship is one of the most popular career choices (Lynch et al., 2021). By noticing this, various fields of entrepreneurship will open up opportunities for them to pursue specific career choices.

The importance of social entrepreneurship introduced by higher education, especially for management and business students, must be addressed. According to research, participation in social entrepreneurship activities helps students develop other skills, such as leadership, problem-solving, and innovation, which are much needed in business (Bozhikin et al., 2019). Social programs, such as KKN (Real Work Lectures) and PMM (Student Community Service), provide open opportunities for students to engage directly and deeply with a community in society, identify social problems, design sustainable solutions, and provide shared prosperity. With this experience, students learn about management and business in a theoretical context and implement it in the real world. Klofsten et al. (2019) stated that the connection between entrepreneurship theory and education can be very useful in developing competencies to implement entrepreneurship in the real world. Additionally, they learn about the social impact of business decisions indirectly. Therefore, integrating social entrepreneurship activities in the management and business curriculum should facilitate the development of competent social entrepreneurs with high value and competitiveness.

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Research that explores the social environment can be integrated with social cognitive theory when considering career choices. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of observational teaching, social experience, and cognitive behavior (Bandura, 2002). Based on this theory, individuals can be influenced by personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental context. This theory underscores that individuals can achieve their goals, missions, and challenges through observed learning from others regarding self-efficacy (Bandura, 2002; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020) when embedding social cognitive theory with individual career choices. Individual career decisions are shaped by their beliefs about abilities, expected outcomes in career choices, social influences, and experiences.

In the context of management and business students, they can directly observe successful entrepreneurs and business leaders in their social environment (Cinar, 2019). The aim is to develop a stronger belief in their potential to pursue a social entrepreneurship career. This process can be facilitated by internship programs, business mentoring, and participation in social entrepreneur activities (Capella-Peris et al., 2020). Bergmann et al. (2016) suggest that gathering experienced entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs in the field during their studies is a valuable part of facilitation. Additionally, real encouragement from peers, professors, and mentors increases students' self-confidence and belief in their choices (Akhmetshin et al., 2018). Therefore, social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of creating a learning environment that supports students' opportunities to succeed in their business practices and guides their future career choices.

**Management and Business student’s choice of Social entrepreneurs career**

Management and business students understand social entrepreneurship from their experiences. This experience encouraged them to realize that pursuing their career choices while applying the academic knowledge they gained to real-world challenges would have a more positive impact (Satar & Natasha, 2019). The KKN program carried out regularly, becomes a platform to connect academic knowledge and field studies for students. The benefit is that they can further grow their feelings and understanding of social issues and community needs in the field. In addition, students are tasked with identifying and solving societal problems, thereby improving their problem-solving abilities and instilling social responsibility (Tran & Von Korflesch, 2016). This authentic experience bridges the theoretical and practical in real life.

The KKN program also encourages cultural exchange and community development, which is essential for aspiring social entrepreneurs. Working directly with community members accurately reflects cultural insights, practices, and values. They can improve their ability to design sustainable and prosperous solutions through it. Direct interaction enriches their educational experience and equips them with innovative skills in driving the development of community initiatives. As they witness firsthand, it is not impossible to pursue career options as a social entrepreneur (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022). A social entrepreneur is often created by their inspiration for the surrounding community and is motivated to make meaningful changes or breakthroughs.

**Method**

In order to find out the KKN experiences of business management students and their relevance in choosing a career as a social entrepreneur in the future, this research uses narrative methodology (Wengraf, 2001). The respondents will convey their career selection process related to their KKN experience. This research examines the stories of their social experiences in their career choices.

Participants

The KKN program, which has become routine and is mandatory for all students majoring in management and business, is most commonly implemented in semester 5. The time required is 3-4 months or one semester. This program is included in the curriculum with high points, such as a final project. After completing the program, there is a unique report regarding the activities carried out during the program. Of course, the activities must be approved by the supervisor and community representatives after discussing the appropriate activities. In one wave, universities usually send 20-30 people, with 4-5 people per group, to an area with a combination of various faculties and study programs. Therefore, management and business students who have taken this program are determined to participate in this research. The selection is based on students interested in entrepreneurship in the social sector. Three participants were men, and the remaining two were women aged 21 to 23. The average age of the participants who are currently taking semester 5. The participants also have backgrounds that are relevant to their career choices. Some of them have been involved as volunteers and running businesses.

Research procedure and instruments

The participants were asked to conduct interviews about the relevance of the KKN program to their career choices as potential social entrepreneurs. The interview process was carried out with participants in a convenient place that had been determined. Previously, they had been informed about the purpose and basis for conducting this research. Next, interviews were conducted separately in a short, rotating fashion. According to Wengraf (2001), qualitative research based on narrative interviews should slowly understand participants without interrupting their statements. Therefore, following these guidelines will help build a comfortable atmosphere in this study.

Moreover, I will slowly ask them about their reasons and processes for implementing the KKN program. "Halo. How are you? Please tell your story as comfortably as possible during the service-learning process. We will not interrupt." Participants were also informed that their statements would be recorded and approved by them. Kass & Miller (2018) stated that the advantage of a methodology that includes life experiences helps respondents convey it to the end. Not only was it based on the researcher's conclusions, but the respondents participated in improving and agreeing with the interpretation made by the researcher. During the process, the respondents did not mind being questioned further. Moreover, they have agreed with the interpretation that the researchers have made.

Data analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher reread them several times. The data is explained with open content, based on Kass & Miller (2018) that there are four stages: getting to know the data, combining codes together, categorizing the same concepts, and developing theoretical explanations that emerge in the interview process. Researchers found two similar categories, namely welfare and desire.

Ethical consideration

Respondents were guaranteed anonymity so that personal details would not be revealed. Personal details include names, places, and those explicitly related to their identity (Kass & Miller, 2018). Therefore, the researchers deliberated fully in this study to protect the respondents.

**Result and Discussion**

**Result**

The research results were explained in two ways, namely by describing the short stories of the respondents. The researcher will present descriptions of the findings one by one. All descriptions are as neat as possible and in sequence according to the interview procedures that have been carried out.

A’s Case

When participating in the KKN program, A said that A was placed in a village that could be called rural. Before that, A understood that KKN was a mandatory program that included learning to synchronize the theory and practice A had acquired over the past few semesters. A never imagined that the reality would be so different, even though A had taken an entrepreneurship course. The problems faced are very complex, and it is challenging to solve them following the objectives of this KKN program. While participating in the KKN process, the most essential thing A discovered was the use of technology that farmers still needed to be qualified for. According to A, the farmers are already at an advanced age, and very few young people are joining to continue this business, which makes A worried that they will be interested in this farmer's industry. At first, A needed to be more confident in teaching digitalization for village agricultural products. A is also not convinced that his developing program will help the villagers. However, running the program is helpful, even though it takes a long time, and the results are not immediately visible.

I feel that this program needs to be continued continuously and disseminated by experts with the help of young people. The villagers did show gratitude for A innovative actions, but A was also worried that his departure would end the program. This experience made him think about developing village agriculture, although A still thinks about how to do it effectively. A wants to help the sustainability of farmers' businesses. However, after participating in the KKN program, A views regarding his choice of work changed slightly. Being a management and business student seems so general and does not have a specific specialty that can help society. A could propose and implement these innovative ideas to help farmers sell their products digitally. A was never sure of a career choice but is now even more convinced that A has the intensity to shape himself as a social entrepreneur. According to him, "I felt unsure about my career choice. I thought I would go with the flow, but there was no other choice. However, I realized that being an entrepreneur is my passion, especially in the social sector. I was thinking about how I can help farmers digitalize their products and how much I can help them. I am processing it."

B’s Case

For B, the KKN program is long-awaited because B has done the volunteer program several times. B felt confident that participating in the KKN program aimed to satisfy residents' complaints. B found that the village produces more products from livestock, making B think about solving environmental problems there. This thought was initiated by a resident who complained about dumping livestock waste in the river. B processes the complaint and discusses it with colleagues. Diverse teammates make B come up with ideas to solve the problem. B said that livestock waste management could be carried out provided there was free land to process it. This idea was also inspired by several village residents who used this waste for household gas. However, it requires empty land. Several teammates said that besides gas, several things can be produced through waste, such as fertilizer.

B thinks this cycle will create a benefits scheme that will return to the citizens. Of course, the process takes work. B and B's colleagues need to study, and the process is long and complicated. Moreover, concerning licensing, we do not repeat it. After completing the KKN program, B still had not completed the idea because these things hampered B. However, B still often returns to see the development of B's ideas with B's colleagues. B stated, "Because this is a big project, it cannot be done quickly. This also requires approval from various parties. However, I am not afraid of that and am still doing outreach to increase public awareness. Thankfully, some residents are quite aware. However, we cannot fully handle these complaints." This KKN program makes people aware of their determination to improve the environment. B believes that choosing a career as a social entrepreneur from the start to solve environmental problems was B's initial intention. Therefore, after participating in the KKN Program, B felt happy to pursue this field.

C’s Case

   C revealed that the KKN program aims to impact their presence in society positively. While implementing the KKN program, C discovered that young women needed several skills to continue the family business. In this case, C realized these young women needed strong leadership skills for empowerment. Apart from that, C teaches creativity in packaging ornamental plants. Ornamental plants are a characteristic of the business in that place. Many of them only continue their parents' business but do not try to develop it further. Providing training programs on mindset, leadership, and creativity in product packaging has become C's area of ​​interest. C is already familiar with the movement of young women trying to achieve their dreams. C is involved in social activities related to women's empowerment. C is very moved to help young women to be able to contribute to themselves, their families, and even the people around them. Despite this, the training seemed simple. Many young women were moved to take part and felt the benefits of the training. C still visited several times to see how progress was made. C found that young female entrepreneurs' development was still moving forward, and the community was getting stronger. C said, "The KKN program helped me strengthen my personal goals. "This program will continue to be carried out from generation to generation by the women there." C felt a different excitement when C succeeded in providing something empowering women. C spoke enthusiastically about C's career choice as a social entrepreneur. For C, the KKN program is one of the programs that makes C strengthen C’s choice of work.

D’s case

D never imagined having to deal directly with artisans in the KKN program he participated in. D imagined that the KKN program D was participating in would be the same as other mandatory social activities. These activities must be understood and followed only to fulfill the learning requirements. D said that he was interested in something other than becoming an entrepreneur. D's future career was to be a 9 to 5 office worker. In the process of this activity, the team leader divided the positions of D’s teammates. D has the responsibility to speak directly to the artisans about their complaints. To be honest, D did not feel confident because D did not understand the furniture business, such as complaints made by residents.

            D met residents one by one and listened to their complaints. On average, they reveal that their furniture products are less competitive with industrial products that are mass-produced and cheaper. They do this business not only to survive but also to preserve their woodworking culture. D listens attentively and thinks of natural solutions. Ultimately, D gave the organization ideas to implement several things, such as providing entrepreneurial education for local products and digitizing their furniture products. D also provided several business suggestions to local artisans during the KKN process. D said, "I am proud that local products continue, even though survival is difficult. Even so, there are many things I have to face to make local products exist." I feel the view of entrepreneurship is not so bad, mainly to save and maintain local products. D also said there was a bitter sense of loss when local products with cultural value were simply lost. However, it does not say you want to become a social entrepreneur. D is quite interested in providing the best solutions to problems that occur in society. So far, D has never returned to visit his KKN site, even though he has carried out valuable activities during the process. D felt that through the KKN program, D had learned something new, which led D to rethink D’s future career choices.

E’s Case

E took part in the KKN program to provide him with new experiences. The program aims to implement the theory and practice they learned during their studies. However, I still need to figure out the implementation process. After observing societal problems, E discovered that some communities could not afford to send their children to school. So, they send their children to an Islamic boarding school near their house with a sincere payment system. E and his friends approached the Islamic boarding school owner to be able to mobilize their energy to help provide services at the Islamic boarding school. E put forward the idea of ​​providing general learning that is not taught optimally in Islamic boarding schools. These ideas were accommodated and discussed with the Islamic boarding school owner. The owner of the Islamic boarding school entrusted E and E’s friends to execute this idea. Those who have the opportunity to gain trust emphasize that their programs can be carried out even after they are gone. Finally, E is trying to build a reading room or mini library for the children there as a long-term program. However, after implementing the idea, E and E’s friends taught the children general and computer lessons. E and friends started the program well. Children like the idea and actively participate in its implementation. E tries hard to continue contacting E’s seniors and community friends to share knowledge when they have free time, especially after the program is finished. "Reading is part of developing creativity and a good experience for children.

Moreover, reading is a habit that should be developed as young as possible. Apart from that, introducing various kinds of knowledge helps them to know the various knowledge in the world. Hence, it helps them continue to enjoy learning activities and dream for their future." This valuable experience made E think about future career options that E had never thought about before. E wants to continue trying to be involved in this field. I have never returned, but E wants to develop the same method in E’s hometown.

**Discussion**

Various kinds of thoughts emerged from students who chose a career as a social entrepreneur, which emphasized their abilities to analyze information, observe directly, and take initiative in solving problems. However, the background of their diversity is their social environment, which shapes themselves and their thinking. Personally, some of them have an interest in the field of social entrepreneurship, but it does not include social programs that help them in determining their future careers. The KKN program as a social program linked to research shows its usefulness and achieves appropriate goals. This program indirectly builds the social awareness of management and business students. Thus, this research found that the social environment and social experiences obtained from the activity process during the program impacted their career choices. Lackéus (2020) supports the idea that social experiences can lead them to profoundly change their perspective about themselves and their dreams. Management and business students who have the potential to become social entrepreneurs have demonstrated unique criteria. These criteria can be shown in their willingness to listen, observe the social environment, examine possible solutions, provide ideas or concepts that have long-term impacts, and send ideas discussed with parties involved in solving the problem. Through this, social cognitive theory emphasizes that individuals can achieve all their goals and challenges by observing their social environment, which becomes very relevant. An unlimited learning environment forces them to think more flexibly, broadly, innovatively, and creatively when facing problems with limited resources. On the other hand, their actions and thought patterns are already sufficiently built into the entrepreneurial familiarity that has been studied previously. It is not specifically in certain areas of entrepreneurship. However, the results made them understand the context without feeling foreign and strange during the program.

These management and business students combine their knowledge and experience to tailor a picture of the desirability of their activities. They were well aware that their actions led to social behavior, as some expressed feelings of satisfaction with their meaningful actions. Confident and self-confident students lead prototypes of ideas they implement in real life through complex processes. This complexity becomes a real lesson for them to face social entrepreneurship career choices and become a social entrepreneur (Bergmann et al., 2016). However, all entrepreneurs in all fields are trying to overcome the same challenges, namely, solving the gaps that exist in society. Social entrepreneurship is different because, during the completion process, it prioritizes the social missions carried out to build collective desires and prosperity (Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021).

**Conclusion**

This research aims to determine the relationship between social programs and encouraging entrepreneurial career choices, especially social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is always familiar and mentioned in every management and business discussion. It has even spread to management and business students. In learning, it is only emphasized that students have an entrepreneurial spirit. Strong and inspiring entrepreneurial spirit. Because even though they are familiar, only some have an entrepreneurial spirit or want to be one. Even though they understand that being a true entrepreneur means seeking to solve societal problems, they cannot be forced to do so, but they can be directed to do so regularly. The routines that lead to social entrepreneurship are attached to them. At least they have independent competencies that support whatever career choice they make. Social entrepreneurship skills are intended for entrepreneurs and anyone who aims to maximize their life. These skills include many complex things that can help them survive.

In this research, it has also been explained that the KKN program is part of a social program. The KKN program helps them grow and have direct and actual experience in social activities. Social activities that prioritize solving quite complex problems. Through this program, management and business students with different cases have the same views and experiences in solving problems that occur in society as part of their responsibilities. These views and experiences led them to their future career choice, namely social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship, for them, is more flexible and accessible for discussing social matters and actions they can carry out personally with a big goal of reducing the scarcity that still exists in society.

**Limitations and Future Research Potential**

The limitation of this research is that it needs to discuss the encouragement of the Pembina program further. The failure to convey the role of social program supervisors can be included in further research. Through the stories that have been told, everything focuses on him, and there is no influence from third parties. It is interesting to discuss further the third parties who should play a significant role as drivers of idea formation and ongoing supervision during the program. Some questions might be asked: Do they have certain emotions during the activity, such as empathy? Is there anything affecting them on a more personal level regarding their emotions? Is there another party? Does the coach have a significant role? What is the process from idea management to execution? In this case, competence is needed to gain and accompany them in their entrepreneurial journals. For example, leadership and financial management of social entrepreneurs. However, this idea must, of course, be tested empirically.

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**Appendix**

What is the KKN program?

What is the purpose of the program?

What is the reason you do the KKN program? Force or volunteer

What do you find in the KKN program? The problem in the area

What do you do during the KKN program to solve the finding?

Do you think your solution is temporary or permanent?

What do you think is your contribution to the team and the citizen? Or the place that you visit?

Do you think your contribution would be long-lasting implemented or temporary?

Does the contribution fit with the purpose?

Do you want to go back to the place to monitor after the program ends?

Is the KKN program growing your social intention?

After the KKN program, do you want to build a social business or be a social entrepreneur? Why?

What do you get from the KKN program?