

Motivation-Building to Continue Studies for Junior High School Students through Training and Campus Visit Facilitating a First-Hand Experience

Membangun Motivasi Melanjutkan Studi Siswa SMP Melalui Pelatihan dan *Campus Visit* Memfasilitasi Pengalaman Langsung

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(Diterima 13-01-2024; Disetujui 02-03-2024)

ABSTRACT

This community service programme was conducted to raise awareness of the students of SMP Negeri 2 Purwosari Gunungkidul, the school partner, on the importance of pursuing higher education for their future. This programme was designed and conducted in response to the needs analysis suggesting that the students at the school had a low learning motivation and many of them did not have any plan to pursue education even to high school. The programme was conducted in the form of two consecutive motivation-building activities. The first was conducted in the form of a session with the school partner. The session aimed to provide a venue for the students to share their actual dreams and to make them realise that achieving those dreams was not an impossibility. The second activity was a campus visit where the students of SMPN 2 Purwosari visited Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana and joined fun learning sessions. It was aimed to give them a first-hand experience of the learning atmosphere at university so that they could be motivated to pursue their study even at the university level. They were also facilitated to realise the many scholarship opportunities available allowing them to study at university even if they came from financially struggling families. More such community service programmes should be conducted in other contexts bearing similar characteristics of students to allow for the younger generation to dream high and fight for it.

Keywords: Community service programme, motivation-building, first-hand experience, training

ABSTRAK

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran siswa SMP Negeri 2 Purwosari Gunungkidul, sekolah mitra, akan pentingnya menempuh pendidikan yang lebih tinggi untuk masa depan mereka. Program ini dirancang dan dilaksanakan sebagai respon terhadap analisis kebutuhan yang menunjukkan bahwa siswa di sekolah tersebut memiliki motivasi belajar yang rendah dan banyak dari mereka yang tidak mempunyai rencana untuk melanjutkan pendidikan bahkan sampai SMA. Program tersebut dilaksanakan dalam bentuk kegiatan peningkatan motivasi (motivation-building) dalam dua kegiatan berbeda. Yang pertama dilakukan dalam bentuk sesi di sekolah mitra. Sesi ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wadah bagi para siswa untuk berbagi mimpi mereka yang sebenarnya dan menyadarkan mereka bahwa mencapai mimpi tersebut bukanlah suatu hal yang mustahil. Kegiatan kedua adalah campus visit dimana siswa SMP N 2 Purwosari mengunjungi Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana dan mengikuti sesi pembelajaran yang menyenangkan. Hal ini bertujuan untuk memberikan mereka pengalaman langsung tentang suasana pembelajaran di universitas sehingga mereka dapat termotivasi untuk melanjutkan studi bahkan sampai ke tingkat universitas. Mereka juga difasilitasi untuk menyadari banyaknya peluang beasiswa yang memungkinkan mereka untuk belajar di universitas meskipun mereka berasal dari keluarga yang memiliki kesulitan keuangan. Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat seperti ini sebaiknya lebih banyak dilakukan pada konteks lain yang memiliki kesamaan karakteristik agar generasi muda dapat memiliki mimpi yang tinggi dan memperjuangkannya.

Kata kunci: Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat, motivation-building, pengalaman langsung, pelatihan

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is often regarded as the driving force for learning (Dornyei, 2005). It gives humans energy and direction to reach certain objectives, and as such it can be said that motivation directs human behaviours. Because of this reason, numerous empirical studies

have investigated the role of learning motivation in the success of learning (Saragih & Subekti, 2023; Subekti, 2018). Informed by the reiteration of the importance of learning motivation, we deemed it important to maintain the learning motivation of students.

Concerning this, we conducted an exploration of possible partnerships with a junior high school in a rural area of Gunungkidul district, in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The school is SMP Negeri (SMPN) 2 Purwosari. In the 2022/2023 academic year, the number of students at the school was 146 students, spread into six different classes. Of the total students, 90% (or 131 students) were the recipients of the Smart Indonesia Programme (PIP). PIP is social assistance given by the Indonesian government in the form of cash transfers for students from poor or vulnerable families to finance their education (Social Protection, 2019).

Based on the accounts of the teachers at the school, the majority of students did not have the motivation to continue their studies at a higher level. Some of them would likely work after finishing their study at junior high school, few others would continue to high school. Interestingly, they already had one high school destination, namely SMK Negeri 1 Purwosari. Many of the students' seniors already went to the high school and it is situated very close to SMPN 2 Purwosari. After they finished high school, none of them seemed to have any desire to continue to college. As an illustration of the low learning motivation, during a peak season in paragliding tourism at Parangtritis Beach, many students chose to skip classes to work as assistants taking the paragliding equipment back from the beach to the paragliding starting point. This lack of motivation partly made some teachers experience difficulties in teaching them. They find it extremely difficult to make students active in the classes they teach.

We deemed it important to conduct a community service programme aiming at building the motivation of the students of SMPN 2 Purwosari both in learning and pursuing a higher education at the college level. First, it was in line with our line of previous community service programmes partnering with junior and senior high schools (Subekti, 2020; Subekti et al., 2021; Subekti, Ermerawati, et al., 2022; Subekti, Winardi, et al., 2022; Subekti & Susyetina, 2019, 2020; Subekti & Wati, 2019; Winardi et al., 2023). Besides, as we are lecturers at a language education department preparing future teachers, it becomes very relevant to partner with schools and help them with their challenges using our expertise. Furthermore, helping the community is also the implementation of one of the core values of Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW): Service to the World (Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, 2017), suggesting that all the academic community to serve others for the

betterment of the world. Last and perhaps most importantly, especially concerning the students of SMPN 2 Purwosari, the community service programme could be a start in making them realise the importance of education as the ‘capital’ to eradicate and cut the circle of poverty in their community.

Similar community service programmes may have been conducted by others (Kirana et al., 2021; Noorfikri et al., 2021; Suherman et al., 2022; Suwarma et al., 2023). These programmes typically aim to increase students' learning motivation, for example in mathematics (Suwarma et al., 2023), in online learning (Suherman et al., 2022) or to increase their competence, for example in computer skills (Noorfikri et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the particular programme aiming at increasing student motivation to pursue higher education may be one of a kind. Some community service programmes have aimed to make their participants aware of the importance of education and pursuing higher education (Aini et al., 2022; Maharani, 2021; Maskar & Wulantina, 2019; Susanti & Zumrudiana, 2022). For example, a community service activity by Maskar and Wulantina (2019) was conducted to facilitate the residents of Hanura village on possible cooperation and opportunities to pursue further studies.

Not only would the effect of such programmes be long-lasting, but if it is successful, the effects on students and their community could be more holistic. Hence, conducting such a programme is worthwhile.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Needs analysis phase

A needs analysis was conducted before the implementation of the programme. It was conducted in February 2023 using interviewing the principal and all of the teachers. In the need analysis stage, we identify the problems of the partner school, SMPN 2 Purwosari. The main problem lies in the very low level of student learning motivation. As explained by the vice principal of the school, many students did not want to continue their studies after graduating from SMPN 2 Purwosari because they felt they did not need to study hard. For them, graduating from junior high school was sufficient. Besides that, the students seemed to have low self-esteem and self-confidence. They were also generally very passive in class and hardly contributed to the dynamics of the class. Nonetheless, the students seemed to be interested in artistic activities, such as singing and dancing activities. These students would immediately become enthusiastic if they were given the freedom to engage in artistic

activities. This interest could be leveraged during the programme for students' betterment. The needs analysis situation can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Needs Analysis

Implementation phase

After processing the results of the needs analysis, we formulated a possible community service programme to build students' motivation to pursue higher education. We proposed two consecutive activities. The first one was to conduct a motivation-building session attended by the students at SMPN 2 Purwosari. The second one was a campus-visit activity where students of SMPN 2 Purwosari would be facilitated to visit the UKDW campus, around 33 kilometres from the school, to experience first-hand some facilities and learning atmosphere at the university. The discussion was conducted with the school principal and teachers to determine the time and all the arrangements, suggesting that the partner school also took an active role in this community service programme.

From the discussion, it was agreed that the motivation-building session was to be conducted on Thursday, 22 June 2023 in the Indonesian language. The UKDW campus visit by the students of SMPN 2 Purwosari was on Wednesday, 5 July 2023. The activity was named "SMPN 2 Purwosari Goes to UKDW" where the students would learn an application in a computer laboratory and join a "Fun English" session entitled "Future". The activity was to be conducted in both Indonesian and English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first activity on Thursday, 22 June 2023 was a motivation-building session conducted at the school. 85 students from Grades XIII and IX attended the session. The facilitators were three students of the English Language Education Department of UKDW. The session was titled "*Kenapa sih Harus Nglanjutin Sekolah?*" (translation: Why do we have to continue our study?)

The three facilitators opened the session by introducing themselves whilst also sharing their inspirational figures: B.J. Habibie, George Bezos, and Ki Hajar Dewantara. After that, they invited the student participants to share what they knew about these aforementioned figures and what they could learn from them. Next, one of the facilitators shared her story of successfully attending the university even though her family was not materially affluent. She shared her story of winning a full scholarship funding her study at the university and told the students that such an opportunity was now widely available.

Next, the students were divided into three groups where they were facilitated to share their opinions and dreams. “*Saya ingin jadi dokter*” (I want to be a doctor.), “*insinyur*” (an engineer), “*pengusaha*” (businessman) were heard during the light and fun discussion. A student said that he wanted to be like his father. When asked the reason, he said "My father is a responsible person", a spontaneous response which was applauded by many of the students. The situation in one of the discussion groups can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Group Discussion on Dreams

After having this discussion, the students were divided into smaller groups. In each of the groups, they were then tasked to create a poster related to their dreams or the future they desired. They seemed to enjoy the activity so much. Most of them draw pictures related to their dream jobs or professions in the future, the example of which can be seen in Figure 3.

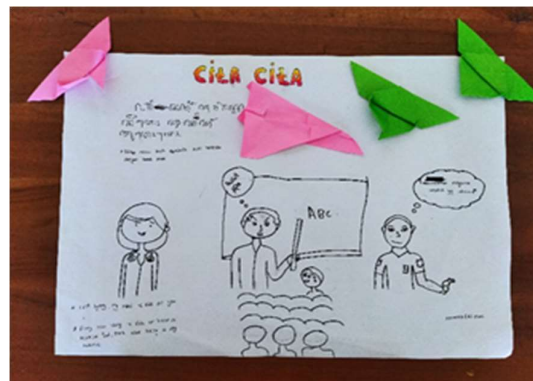


Figure 3. A Students' Poster related to their Dreams

After all the students finished drawing their posters, they were invited to share what they drew and the reasons behind that. One group drew Kaaba. One of the students in the group shared that he wanted to be able to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca along with his parents. One student shared that she wanted to be a teacher because she wanted to teach children and "make them smart". By the end of the poster-sharing session, the facilitator concluded that whatever dreams they wished to achieve, be it a doctor, an engineer, a teacher, or to be able to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, very likely they would need to pursue higher education. The conclusion of the session can be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Facilitators Concluding the Session

The second activity in the motivation-building programme was on Wednesday, 5 July 2023. It was titled “SMPN 2 Purwosari Goes to UKDW” and aimed at giving the students of SMPN 2 Purwosari a first-hand experience of university life, albeit only in a day. The students along with several teachers arrived at campus at around 08.30 local time and were immediately directed to an already prepared room. After a short opening ceremony, the main session began. It was titled “Fun English” carrying the topic “Future”. Generally, it aimed to boost students’ motivation to continue their education to a higher level.

In the middle of the session, one of the UKDW students shared her experience about how she could continue her studies at university for free through a scholarship. She said that she did not need to pay to be able to go to college and motivated the students to continue learning and that nothing was impossible. Cost constraints should not be an obstacle to achieving their goals because there is always a way out as long as students are willing to look for funding opportunities and never give up.

The Basic English lesson carried a ‘hidden mission’ to motivate students as well. For example, the Future Tense material "I will..." was delivered in such a way that the students

would need to reflect on their dreams or future dream jobs. For example, a student came up with these strings of sentences: "After graduating from Junior High School, I will study at SMA N Pundong. After graduating from Senior High School, I will study at UII majoring in accounting. In the future, I will work as a bank teller." Towards the end of the session, the students were asked to write a reflection. Some of the student reflections included "Because there are many mistakes in the past, we can learn from the mistakes for future goals" and "We must make our past a lesson. We can reap the sweet after we have tried our best." Activities were carried out in small groups to allow for more relaxing discussion and mutual inspiration. Figure 5 shows one of the moments during the session.



Figure 5. "Fun English: Future" Session

Before going back to the school, the students were also facilitated to have a campus tour and experienced learning a simple application in an up-to-date computer laboratory, aiming to further boost their motivation to pursue further study at the college level when the time came. Figure 6 shows students learning in the laboratory.



Figure 6. Students Experiencing Learning at the Laboratory

Based on the student evaluation of the whole programme, it was found that from 71 students filling out the evaluation questionnaire, the students were generally satisfied and reported that they obtained new insights and knowledge through joining the motivation-building programme. The details can be seen in Figure 5.

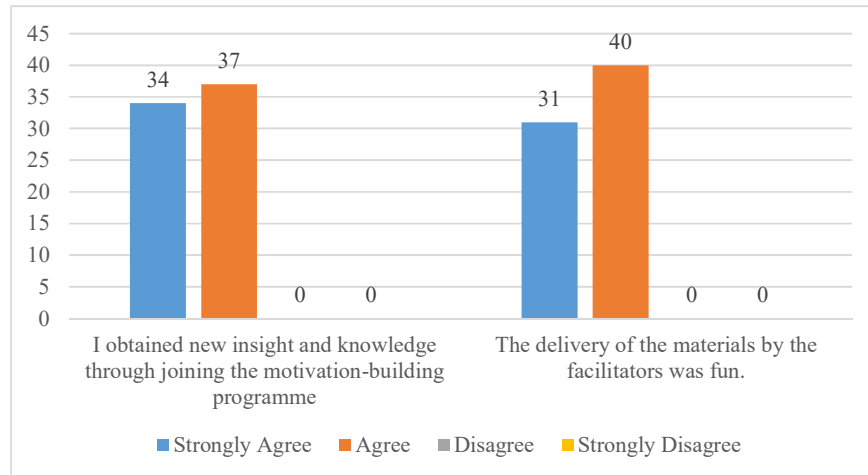


Figure 7. Student Evaluation

From the data, it can be seen that all the students considered the programme beneficial in giving them new insights and knowledge. Similarly, they also seemed to enjoy the delivery of the materials by the facilitators.

It is fully understood that the results of this community service programme may not be feasible right after this programme. Nevertheless, such a programme can be a breakthrough because many community service programmes thus far focused on how to increase students' learning motivation in certain subjects only (Noorfikri et al., 2021; Suwarma et al., 2023). Furthermore, this programme allowed students who may not have dreamed of enrolling at universities to experience learning at a university, albeit only for a day. This could instil the students to dream high and find funding opportunities. Several community service programmes facilitated participants to know various funding opportunities for pursuing higher studies (Aini et al., 2022; Maharani, 2021; Susanti & Zumrudiana, 2022). It suggested that even if the students in the present community service programme were from financially struggling families, this should not hinder their dream to pursue their study and their dreams. In the long run, students' high aspirations can help the community around the students to level up not only their education level but also their prosperity level in general.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions can be made regarding the community service programme. In the needs analyses meeting, the teachers of the school stated that the students generally had low motivation. Nevertheless, during the implementation of the programme, students seemed to be very enthusiastic and active. They may not be A-list students, but with the right teaching approaches and techniques, as evidenced in this programme, they could be facilitated to learn many things. They could also be active in class provided that the facilitators channelled their interests and talents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We express our gratitude to all the student participants of SMPN 2 Purwosari for being such active and enthusiastic students willing to learn new things during the programme. Our gratitude also goes to all the teachers of the school who supported the students throughout the programme.

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