

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH METHODS IN SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR UNISKA KEDIRI STUDENTS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract :

The phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused crises in various sectors around the world, especially in the economic sector. During this COVID-19 pandemic, many obstacles should be faced in research, inspection, and observation. Therefore, various alternative methods have emerged to be applied in research during the COVID-19 pandemic hence that the expected research objectives could be achieved. A qualitative research approach that has been considered quite appropriate to be applied in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic is the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. PAR is a type of action research, a term that encompasses many research approaches in which researchers work collaboratively with stakeholders through iterative cycles of fieldwork or practice, reflection, planning, research, and action. The essence of the PAR approach is participation, action, and research, all three of which are productively combined to bring about positive political changes. Several studies that have been obtained using the PAR approach during the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the impact of COVID-19 on population research, including Research and Ethics, Participant Recruitment, Data Collection, and Data Quality. This discussion focused on the extent to which the process of achieving participation and empowerment of participants involved in the PAR project was. Great participation in PAR activities was directed at developing the entrepreneurial competence of UNISKA Kediri students. We implemented the PAR method in community service activities that aimed to assist the processing of black grass jelly industrial waste into organic fertilizer.

Introductions:

The phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused crises in various sectors around the world, especially in the economic sector. The economic sector requires follow-up actions that have a significant impact to stop the economic decline, as well as to protect the quality of life of the people who are very vulnerable to the infection with COVID-19. In this case, the government is faced with the following choices: 1. Use this moment to build stronger economy; or 2. Facing a drastic decline in the economic rate so as to threatens the welfare of the whole communities and states (Jung and Murphy, 2020).

To deal with various crises and challenges simultaneously, further action is required to restore the declining economic sector. Recovery of the economic sector as a whole is possible in three phases. The first phase is the stabilization phase, which is related to providing urgent support to support community work in all corners of the region, as well as ensuring that each business unit can survive and run continuously. The second phase focuses on investing in employment-rich projects, reducing emissions, restoring nature, developing business units that have survived, and fostering broader equity of business units. The last phase is strengthening of the previous two phases, that is to say the development of all business units evenly so that they be able to survive, be stable, and run continuously (Jung and Murphy, 2020).

During this COVID-19 pandemic, many obstacles have to be faced in research, inspection, and observation. This situation provided limited mobility during the study due to limitations on interpersonal interactions, restrictions on community collection, to face-to-face time during the data mining process in interviews. And also, this situation caused data to be all the time more difficult to obtain for research purposes so that the purpose of research to solve problems or the development of aspects became constrained and hampered. Therefore, various alternative methods have emerged to be applied in research during the COVID-19 pandemic thus the expected research objectives could be achieved without delay (Lehner-Mear, 2020; Dawson, 2020).

Currently, it is necessary to apply a more appropriate methodology that could be applied by adjusting social conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research methodology that is often applied during this pandemic was qualitative method, which this method generally visited the research location and conducted interviews with respondents to obtained the data looked-for for research (Lehner-Mear, 2020; Sappleton, 2013). This method also provided opportunities to be applied online, where the interview process was carried out through social media or using online platforms or telephone to explored and collected research data. However, this method at novateurpublication.com

rest desired further refinement regarding research questions, technical requirements, and implications of information sources and ethically due to limited interaction with respondents and mobility in the research location (Evans, *et.al.*, 2010; Fielding, *et.al.*, 2013; Germain, *et.al.*, 2017; Hughes, 2012). Ethics is something specifically greatly highlighted in this research method, to be exact the willingness and permission of the respondents to give permission to the interviewer in digging up data for research. Certainly, it was applied ethically by taking into account the health protocols, conditions, and comfort of respondents and researchers as interviewers (Lehner-Mear, 2020; Roberts, 2015; Tiidenberg, 2018). This is challenge for us as academics at the Kadiri Islamic University (UNISKA) to perform research in facing the latest national issue like this COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Kadiri Islamic University (*Universitas Islam Kadiri/ UNISKA*) Kediri is one of the private higher education institutions in Kediri, East Java, Indonesia which has three main missions: 1) Implementing the *Tri Dharma* (three scientific norms of Education, Research, and Community Service that was been united as “*tri dharma*” following javanese/local/traditional language) of Higher Education with national standards; 2) Developing students who are competitive with fighting spirit and entrepreneurship; 3) Practicing Islamic values in daily life. One implementation of the formulated mission concept is the Student Entrepreneurship Development Program (PPKM). This program is long-term program that aimed to produce new entrepreneurial candidates from among students in addition, encouraging the formation of entrepreneurial students who are educated, have Islamic character, and have clear business concepts. PPKM is program designed by each department to produce new independent entrepreneurs based on science and technology (Science and Technology) (*Universitas Islam Kadiri*, 2017). To realize the mission of UNISKA Kediri, each department continued to improve the quality of higher education *tri dharma* activities, carries out coaching that is focused on students who are running businesses through training programs and business management assistance, improving business skills, and strengthening entrepreneurial mentality. Each head of departments also directed lecturers and students to always actively participate in supporting the implementation of the Indonesian Student Entrepreneurship Program (PKMI) organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Directorate of Learning and Student Affairs every year. There are PKMI's goals for students: 1) to motivate students who have an interest in entrepreneurship to develop their business early and be guided, and 2) dealing with unemployment problems that result in intellectual unemployment from scholars (Belmawa, 2021). Students are expected to meet the specified requirements so that they are eligible to receive capital assistance for student entrepreneurship practices.

Students are part of the University's Human Resources that could contribute to the growth of National entrepreneurship. The student entrepreneurship development program is one of the important efforts to improve the entrepreneurial quality of UNISKA Kediri students. We believe that with curriculum design and the formulation of appropriate learning outcomes could encourage and facilitate the entrepreneurial development requests of UNISKA Kediri students. The purpose of the learning curriculum in accordance with the concept of Curriculum of Independent Learning Campus (MBKM) is to encourage students not only to excel academically but also to be skilled in terms of skills looked-for by the market (Hasyim, 2020). Lecturers also continued to provide assistance to improve students' entrepreneurial competencies starting from getting entrepreneurial ideas, implementation or entrepreneurial practices, presentations, and follow-up for entrepreneurial development. The implementation conditions of PPKM UNISKA Kediri still experienced many technical obstacles such as limited budget for entrepreneurship practicum for all students who have run businesses or startups, limited entrepreneurship laboratory space for production activities, weak student entrepreneurial abilities, student entrepreneurial mentality, and student technology mastery. This phenomenon made the achievement of PPKM outputs and outcomes not optimal or stacked. The results of the preliminary survey obtained information that the level of creativity of students in producing goods or services was still relatively low, the products produced by students still did not meet the quality standards of eligibility to be sold in the market, the level of promotion and marketing of student products was still unwell organized. UNISKA lied in the selection of mentoring methods that were less effective in supporting the goals of PPKM because they had not prioritized aspects of collaboration and partnership with parties that are considered capable of increasing PPKM outputs and outcomes.

Previous qualitative studies related to economics have been obtained in compliance with health protocols. A qualitative research approach that was considered quite appropriate to be applied in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic was Participatory Action Research (PAR). Several studies that have been performed using the PAR approach during the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the following impact of COVID-19 on population research: 1) Research and Ethics, 2) Participant Recruitment, 3) Data Collection, and 4) Data Quality (Villarosa, 2021). Research and ethics were certainly an important concern, which researchers required to measure to achieve the value of research projects that had been previously defined by considering health protocols (WHO,

2020; Lurie, 2013). The selected participant recruitment method needed to consider the value and quality of the data obtained to achieve the research target by paying attention to health protocols, thus the selection of participants became very strict when compared to normal conditions (Liu, *et.al.*, 2020; Ali, *et.al.*, 2020). Data collection in this pandemic situation caused researchers and participants to required meetings in limited scope. During the data collection process, it was necessary to pay attention with biophysical health protocols such as interaction distance, participant conditions and comfort, COVID-19 test results of each researcher and participants, until environmental conditions during the interaction processes to collected demanded research data (Liu, *et.al.*, 2020; Poudel, *et.al.*, 2018). The difficulties of conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic could have impact on data quality. Data quality might be poor due to limited interaction with participants and interaction procedures that were very necessary to comply with health protocols, thus requiring a longer time and data collection processes in order to obtain higher quality research data in order to achieve research targets as decided previously (Nicola, *et.al.*, 2020). This PAR approach had also been implemented by UNISKA researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of business and economic feasibility study of MSMEs, and obtained good quality economic data even though the data was very specific and took longer time with limited mobilities (Srikalimah, *et.al.*, 2020; 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of UNISKA PPKM requires the implementation of new, more effective methods so that it could achieve the expected goals. The proposed learning method is a method that puts forward the practice of action research (Action Research). According to McCutcheon and Jung, (1990) action research is characterized as a systemic investigation that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and carried out by the participants of the investigation. According to Arikunto (2002), action research is research on things that happen in the community or target group, and the results can be directly charged to the community concerned. The main characteristic of this research is the participation and collaboration between the researcher and the target members (Rosali, *et.al.*, n.d.). Action research will be effective if participatory elements are added to it. The participatory approach has been widely recognized by the international community as an effective method of community empowerment. Participatory action research (PAR) is collaborative process of research, education, and action that is explicitly oriented towards social change (Kindon, *et.al.*, 2009). PAR can be used as a lecturer approach to carry out the task of carrying out the tridharma of higher education professionally. Participatory Action Research as a teacher professional development approach (Morales, 2016). PAR is a scientific activity that combines its implementation as well as research and community service (Kustiari, *et.al.*, 2021). With the PAR approach, it is hoped that the implementation of PPKM at UNISKA can achieve optimal results. Participatory action research involving lecturers, students, government, and the community in the student's neighborhood is the method proposed in this paper. The advantages of the PAR approach are that it allows for research collaboration, empowerment of participants during the project implementation process, and benefits that are felt directly by all personnel involved. The purpose of this study was to describe the process and results of implementing participatory action research methods to support PPKM UNISKA Kediri during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussions:

The entrepreneurship learning method through online classes is an interesting challenge, especially in carrying out practical activities. Entrepreneurship learning will feel meaningful if students can gain direct experience and feel real benefits from the learning activities carried out. Entrepreneurial learning methods that were practiced in classes before the COVID-19 pandemic could still run effectively. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, lecturers required to find new learning methods and in accordance with the existing situation to ensure the achievement of learning effectiveness. Entrepreneurship is a science that has a special object in the form of the human ability to create something new and different based on theories, concepts and scientific methods. Entrepreneurship learning needs to be designed in such a way that it could develop all student potential holistically (whole) through the use or application of more innovative approaches, models and learning methods, centered on student centered learning (SCL), contextual, utilizing various learning resources and educational technology in an integrated manner with the learning materials being taught. The entrepreneurial learning needed is learning that is able to truly develop various entrepreneurial competencies such as creative, innovative, decision making, building social networks, working with teams, time management, utilizing technology and so on. This can be realized if the lecturer is able to choose the right approach and learning method. The scientific approach is an approach that is considered capable of achieving the objectives of entrepreneurship learning. This learning activity is directed at the application of the scientific method, namely a series of data collection activities through observation or experimentation, processing information or data, analyzing, then formulating, and testing hypotheses. Nusfiqon & Nurdyansyah (2015) explained that the scientific approach in learning activities not only develops the competence of students to conduct

observations or experiments, but also develops students' critical and creative thinking skills in innovating or creating. The scientific approach can develop students' attitudes, knowledge and skills. The challenge faced is how the learning system can facilitate students to develop themselves in capturing business opportunities, getting guidance from the right mentor in running a business and developing a business. According to Garavan and Barra (1994), and Ferreira and Raposo (2008) in Kurniati (2015), concluded that the focus of attention on entrepreneurship learning lies in seven goals, namely: 1) disseminating knowledge about the benefits of entrepreneurship, 2) obtaining tools for analyzing and reading, business environment in developing business planning, 3) developing entrepreneurial skills, management, and talents, 4) individual motivation to support entrepreneurship, 5) stimulation of creative thinking, 6) developing a positive attitude and desire to change, 7) giving hope and supporting entrepreneurship new.

Lecturers as learning facilitators have very big role in determining the achievement of outputs and outcomes of the learning process. In carrying out the tridharma of higher education, lecturers as agents of change must encourage research activities. Education and teaching aims to produce professional researchers and community servants so as to produce new discoveries and innovations that enrich knowledge. Research is a search for knowledge through objective and systematic methods to find a solution to a problem (Kothari, 2004). The results of research and community service can be used for the benefit of community, nation and state development. The type of research that is often applied in learning activities is action research. The definition of action research is the study of things that occur in interesting groups or communities, and the results can be applied directly to the relevant community which aims to improve the performance of an activity that takes place systematically (Rosali, *et.al.*, n.d.). Action research is research on things that happen in the community or target group, and the results can be directly applied to the community or target group concerned. The main characteristic of this research is the participation and collaboration between researchers and target members (Rosali, *et.al.*, n.d.). The history of the development of action research is inspired by the thoughts of Paulo Freire (1960) which states that research is a means of social transformation and awareness. Researchers involve research subjects directly in producing knowledge.

PAR is a type of action research, a term that encompasses many research approaches in which researchers work collaboratively with stakeholders through iterative cycles of fieldwork or practice, reflection, planning, research, and action (Ozer, *et.al.*, 2010). PAR is a transformative empowerment process in which academic researchers and core seekers jointly create knowledge; develop a sense of community; often educate one another by negotiating meaning; raise awareness; and mobilize to change, generate, or evaluate practices or policies. The essence of the PAR approach is participation, action, and research, all three of which are combined productively to make positive political change (Kendon, *et.al.*, 2009).

This discussion focused on the extent to which the process of achieving participation and empowerment of participants involved in the PAR project was. Great participation in PAR activities is directed at developing the entrepreneurial competence of UNISKA Kediri students. We implement the PAR method in community service activities that aim to assist the processing of black grass jelly industrial waste into organic fertilizer. This activity involved four main personnel, namely lecturers, students, industry, and village government. The participation of each activity participant is reviewed from the beginning to the end of project implementation, starting from the stage of defining problems, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data for project development and continuous analysis.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Methods

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an action research methodology that focuses on social change, fostering collaboration between participants and researchers. PAR is a process for conducting social investigations, taking action to address problems faced by individuals and groups in society. PAR is used when conducting research that focuses on problems or phenomena that directly affect society. Our research is related to the management of black grass jelly industrial waste which was the waste from processing black grass jelly food products produced by UD RSA Kediri, East Java, Indonesia. The purpose of this research activity was to process black grass jelly industrial waste into organic fertilizer. This activity was expected to be able to support PPKM UNISKA Kediri by gaining direct experience in conducting research and producing a product. The participants involved consisted of lecturers from several study programs, students from several departments, universities, industry, activity funders, village governments, organic fertilizer producers, community parties. Types of data collection methods which used in PAR projects included: mapping, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups, as well as approaches involving technologies such as photography and video. People involved in the community would work collaboratively and participatively to conduct research and take action to improve the situation. The flow of the PAR method is as showed on **fig. 1**.



Figure 1. PAR Method Flow

The procedure for PAR implementation consisted of four stages:

1) Diagnosis Stage

Diagnosis generally consisted of two parts, specifically questions ask and collecting data. Researchers could ask reflective questions to research subjects that were useful for starting the process of thinking about the topic to be studied.

2) Action Stage

Based on the diagnostic activities, the researcher mapped the required and actions to be taken. Researchers were set research objectives, built synergistic process with the involved PAR team and all stakeholders. The action taken by the researcher and the team was cycle consisting of planning, implementation, and evaluation. This cycle was repeated until it reaches the expected goal.

3) Measurement Stage

The researcher collected series of statistical analysis processes with the principle of combining and analyzing useful shared data obtained from the results of the actions of each participant involved in a PAR project.

4) Reflection Stage

It was the process of making conclusions on the results of participation activities and empowerment of participants. This stage also looked at changes in behavior that occur or what participants performed after the PAR project was completed within a certain period of time.

Table 1. Stages of PAR Implementation

Diagnosis Stage	Action Stage	Measurement Stage	Reflection Stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make initial observations at the research location. Students conduct interviews with resource persons. Students make reflective questions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [1] What are the impacts if industrial waste is not handled? [2] What activities might be done to deal with this problem? [3] What is the process for dealing with this problem? [4] How to collect data and information to find solutions to problems? [5] How to monitor and evaluate the success of dealing with this problem? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students form a research team. Students and teams formulate actions to be taken including several action plans. Students and research teams set research objectives and coordinate with lecturers to develop technical implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research team and lecturers both carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. Collecting activity results and outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research team and lecturers both carry out reflection activities or contemplation of the results and outcomes that have been achieved after the research activities are completed. The research team reports on the results of the PAR activities.

Obstacles and Solutions to the PAR Implementation

During the implementation of participatory action research activities, there were obstacles that arise at each stage of the activity. There were obstacles faced as well as being part of the student learning process in solving a community problem. The following is a table of examples of constraints and solutions during the application of the PAR method.

Table 2. Constraints and Solutions to the Application of PAR Method

No	Obstacles encountered	Solutions done
1	Diagnostic Stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students found its difficulties to obtain information through the interview process. Students had difficulties finding solutions to problems that will be carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed interview guidelines in consultation with lecturers. Made a problem mapping and develop alternative solutions to problems by considering the capabilities and costs.
2	Action Stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students found its difficulties to find a solid team to work with in carrying out technical research activities. Students found its difficulties to carry out black grass jelly waste processing activities with the target community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturers helped organized research team consisting of students, lecturers, and the target community. Lecturers helped students to made demonstrations of activities, recorded activities and presented the results of activities in the form of videos.
3	Measurement Stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students had difficulties in carrying out the monitoring process. Students found its difficulties to evaluate the research activities carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturers helped students to obtained the monitoring process by collecting reports of results on a regular basis. This document could be in the form of photos, products, power point materials, banner designs, brochures, and others. Lecturers helped students to made assessment rubrics for research activities.
4	Reflection Stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students found its difficulties to formulate the results of their reflection in an article. Students found its difficulties to arrange follow-up steps based on the results of reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturers helped to formulate the results of reflection in an article. Lecturers helped students to made follow-up steps based on the results of reflection.

PAR Data Processing and Analysis

PAR data processing includes editing, coding, classifying, and tabulating the collected data so that it can be analyzed. Data editing is the process of examining raw data collected based on survey results from research respondent data to detect errors or deficiencies when recording respondents' responses. Classification or coding is the process of assigning numbers or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a number of categories or classes. Coding is required for efficient analysis and reduces large amounts of data into small data classes that contain important information needed for analysis. Classification is the process of compiling data in groups or classes based on similar characteristics. Tabulation is the process of summarizing raw data and displaying it in a concise form (that is, in the form of statistical tables) for further analysis. Data analysis activities refer to the calculation of certain measures together with the search for patterns of relationships that exist between groups of data. . Thus, in the process of analysis, relationships or differences that support or contradict the original or new hypothesis must be tested for statistical significance to determine the validity of what data can show any conclusions.

Impact of PAR Implementation

The impact of applying the PAR method in the activities carried out can be explored based on the results of reflections carried out at the end of project implementation. The impact that can be felt from the results of the implementation of the PAR method is as follows.

• For students

The implementation of PAR in learning can develop knowledge, animate attitudes, and hone students' skills in achieving activity goals. In PAR projects that have been run, students have applied the principles of scientific learning such as observing; ask; try/gather information; reasoning/associating; and form a network/conduct communication.

• For Lecturers

PAR can accommodate research activities and community service that must be carried out by lecturers. PAR can develop knowledge for social change as well as change research practices (Ozer,

et.al., 2010).

- For partners involved such as government, business people, community

The implementation of PAR can support strengthening partnerships between academics, government, business people, and the community. Partnership is a cooperative relationship between people or groups of people who agree to share responsibility for achieving certain goals that have been set (Suwathi, 2019).

Conclusions:

Participatory action research is a research method that can be used by lecturers to realize meaningful entrepreneurial learning for students. This learning method emphasizes collaboration and research partnerships between all participants involved in the PAR project. This will encourage students to understand the problems that occur in the community, try to solve problems by means of deliberation to reach mutual consensus. PAR is an innovative approach in research, learning and community service activities, the tridharma activities of higher education can be carried out well and have effective results. To support the implementation of PPKM Team of UNISKA Kediri during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended to use the PAR approach.

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