

The Impact of Entrepreneurship Knowledge Transfer on Economic Empowerment among Housewives of the FELDA Second-Generation in Bera, Pahang

Roshafiza Hassan

Department of Foundations of Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Email: roshafiza@upm.edu.my

How to cite this paper: Hassan, R. (2025). The Impact of Entrepreneurship Knowledge Transfer on Economic Empowerment among Housewives of the FELDA Second-Generation in Bera, Pahang. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 13, 220-231.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2025.136015>

Received: May 20, 2025

Accepted: June 20, 2025

Published: June 23, 2025

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of a targeted entrepreneurship knowledge transfer program on the economic empowerment among the homemakers of the FELDA second-generation in Bera, Pahang. Fifteen full-time participants between the ages of 30 and 50, with minimal prior business experience, participated in a university-led intervention facilitated by the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC), Universiti Putra Malaysia. The program involved the workshops across three main modules: frozen food preparation techniques, entrepreneurship fundamentals including budgeting, planning, and operations, and digital marketing skills using mobile tools and social media platforms. The study used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate participants' entrepreneurial knowledge, confidence, and motivation changes. A pre- and post-program survey using an 11-item Likert scale revealed a statistically significant increase in scores from a mean of 3.07 to 4.33 ($t = -7.24, p \leq 0.00$). These results indicate participants' entrepreneurial readiness, enhanced self-confidence, and growing business intentions, while interview data reporting improved self-efficacy and engagement. The program contributed to broader development goals by promoting income generation, digital literacy, and social inclusion.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship Education, Economic Empowerment, Knowledge Transfer, FELDA Generation, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

1. Introduction

In recent years, the role of entrepreneurship in empowering marginalized and un-

derrepresented communities has gained significant attention, particularly in rural and semi-rural regions. In Malaysia, the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) was established with the mission of improving the socioeconomic conditions of rural populations, especially through land resettlement and agricultural development (Kamaruddin, 2018; Fiennes, 1962). While the first generation of settlers benefitted from these reforms, the second generation particularly housewives often find themselves economically inactive due to limited employment opportunities, inadequate skills, and low exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for socio-economic development (Acs et al., 2018) and has been widely recognized as a means of empowering women, particularly in marginalized communities. Studies have shown that women in rural areas face significant structural barriers to entry into entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2019), including lack of capital, education, and technical skills (Riandika & Mulyani, 2020). Knowledge transfer programs designed to build entrepreneurial skills are therefore crucial for equipping these women with the necessary competencies to start and grow their own businesses. Entrepreneurship not only drives economic growth but also acts as a catalyst for addressing socio-economic disparities in marginalized rural communities. Micro and small enterprises have been found to revitalize economic growth and the development of rural areas (Samson et al., 2017).

Research has shown that entrepreneurship education can significantly enhance individual competencies, particularly when combined with experiential learning opportunities. In the context of community-based economic development, targeted programs not only provide technical skills but also boost self-efficacy and foster social cohesion among participants (Gimah, 2019; Santi & Septiarti, 2019). For micro-entrepreneurs in today's economy, digital literacy and marketing skills are especially critical for expanding their reach and visibility. Contemporary entrepreneurship education programs should therefore emphasize the provision of digital tools and platforms that foster creativity, facilitate efficient problem-solving, enable objective analysis of business ideas, and enhance communication, cooperation, leadership, project development, and evaluation skills.

This article examines the impact of entrepreneurship knowledge transfer programs in enhancing the entrepreneurial competencies of housewives in FELDA settlements, with the goal of fostering economic empowerment and improving their quality of life. Specifically, it focuses on second-generation FELDA housewives and how targeted, skill-based interventions can equip them with practical tools for business development. In light of the growing emphasis on inclusive economic participation, there is a pressing need for initiatives that go beyond conventional job creation by enabling women to pursue self-employment through microenterprise. Microbusiness development particularly in accessible sectors like frozen food and pastry production offers a viable pathway for increasing household income and promoting sustainable livelihoods (Couva et al., 2024; Ridzwan et al., 2021; Setianingsih et al., 2023).

This study evaluates the effectiveness of a university-community engagement program designed and delivered by Universiti Putra Malaysia through its University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC). The program aimed to provide a comprehensive package of technical and business skills including digital marketing and food product development through a hands-on, workshop-based approach. The specific objectives of this research were to: 1) assess the baseline and post-program levels of knowledge, motivation, and confidence in entrepreneurship among participants, and 2) determine the program's overall impact on their entrepreneurial readiness and intentions.

2. Methods

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to capture a holistic picture of the entrepreneurship program's impact. The sample comprised fifteen housewives from the second generation of FELDA settlers in Felda Rentam, Bera, Pahang. All participants were full-time homemakers, most of whom had little to no prior experience in running a business or utilizing digital tools for marketing. Participants were recruited through local women's associations and FELDA community leadership, ensuring a representative selection from the target population.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling in collaboration with *Gerakan Persatuan Wanita* (GPW) and FELDA community leadership. While no control group was used due to the community-focused nature of the intervention, the pre- and post-assessment design functioned as an internal comparison to measure individual-level change.

The sample size of fifteen participants was determined based on program logistics and the intention to provide intensive, hands-on mentoring over an 8-month period. Although small, this cohort size allowed for in-depth engagement and personalized feedback. All 15 participants completed the full program with no attrition, enhancing the reliability of outcome assessments.

The intervention program was strategically designed to empower participants through a series of 8 months structured workshops. These workshops were divided into two main series, each tailored to address specific core competencies essential for sustaining and growing microbusinesses, particularly in the frozen food and pastry sector. The program emphasized a blend of practical skills, entrepreneurial knowledge, and digital marketing capabilities, ensuring a comprehensive approach to community-based economic development.

The first focus area centered on Frozen Food Preparation Techniques. Participants received hands-on training in preparing a variety of frozen food items, including different types of bread and patty burgers. These sessions not only emphasized culinary skills but also integrated key principles of food safety and sanitation, which are vital for maintaining product quality and consumer trust. Furthermore, cost-effective ingredient usage was highlighted to promote sustainable

production practices. One of the highlights of this series was the demonstration and hands-on practice in dough-making, specifically aimed at producing soft and long-lasting bread, an essential product for local microbusinesses.

The second area of focus involved Entrepreneurial Knowledge Transfer. This component was designed to equip participants with foundational business acumen necessary for operating and sustaining a small enterprise. The modules covered crucial topics such as the procedures for setting up a microbusiness and ensuring regulatory compliance. Practical tools such as budgeting techniques, cost calculation methods, and break-even analysis were introduced to help participants understand and manage financial aspects effectively. Additionally, strategic planning, customer targeting, and basic operations management were taught to support participants in developing and executing their business plans efficiently. The modules also addressed local market dynamics by discussing regional food pricing norms, customer preferences in the FELDA areas, and competitive strategies for pricing homemade products. Participants conducted informal market research through community interactions to help tailor their offerings to local demand.

The final component of the program concentrated on digital marketing skills, recognizing the growing importance of online presence for microentrepreneurs. Participants were trained in creating promotional content using mobile phones, enabling them to produce appealing and shareable material to market their products. The effective use of platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram was demonstrated, with a particular emphasis on improving business visibility and customer engagement. The workshops also introduced soft-selling techniques and strategies to build trust within the community, fostering long-term relationships with potential and existing customers.

Quantitative data was collected using a structured pre- and post-intervention questionnaire with 11 items measured on a Likert scale. The survey assessed the participants' knowledge, confidence, motivation, and entrepreneurial aspirations. Descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. In the analysis, "knowledge" referred to participants' understanding of business principles and skills, "confidence" indicated their self-belief in applying these skills, and "motivation" captured their willingness and readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Separate survey items were developed for each construct, and qualitative insights were used to triangulate their distinctions further. Meanwhile, qualitative data was gathered through participant observation, informal interviews, and documentation of interactions (Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger, 2020) in the program's WhatsApp group, which continued to serve as a platform for feedback, mutual encouragement, and business networking after the formal workshops concluded. This multi-method approach enabled the triangulation of findings and the capturing of both measurable outcomes and contextual insights.

Measurable outcomes are the quantifiable results obtained from the structured surveys, such as changes in knowledge levels, confidence, and motivation, often

represented through statistics (like mean scores or t-values). Contextual insights are the qualitative, narrative understandings gained from observations, interviews, and WhatsApp group discussions, things like participants' emotional responses, challenges they faced, and how they applied their new skills in daily life. Together, this means the study not only measured how much participants improved but also understood the personal and social dynamics behind those improvements.

In summary, the intervention program offered a holistic and practical approach to entrepreneurship development. By combining food production skills, business literacy, and digital marketing knowledge, it aimed to create a solid foundation for participants—particularly second-generation FELDA housewives—seeking to enhance their livelihoods through sustainable micro-enterprise development.

3. Findings

The program's findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how structured, community-based entrepreneurship knowledge transfer initiatives can lead to transformative outcomes for underrepresented groups particularly full-time homemakers. The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data revealed significant changes in participants' knowledge levels, technical competencies, confidence, and entrepreneurial motivation (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Pre and post analysis of the entrepreneurship knowledge transfer on economic empowerment among Second-Generation FELDA Housewives program.

<u>Pair</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Mean Std. Error</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>Sig. $p(\alpha)$</u>
Pre-survey	3.07	15	0.42	0.11	-7.24	0.00
Post-survey	4.33	15	0.45	0.12		

These outcomes reflected the effectiveness of the workshop modules in addressing knowledge gaps and promoting attitudinal shifts toward entrepreneurship. Based on the knowledge and skills acquisition, participants displayed an enhanced understanding of the technical aspects of frozen food production. Their ability to produce a variety of breads such as honeycomb bread, twisted buns, and burger rolls, demonstrated both skill development and confidence in their capabilities. The program's hands-on approach facilitated experiential learning, making complex techniques more accessible and memorable. While the study primarily focused on short-term outcomes, informal follow-up data was collected through the WhatsApp group and in-person updates for up to three months after program completion. Several participants reported sustained product sales and ongoing development of branding and packaging strategies, indicating preliminary evidence of sustainability.

Besides, their entrepreneurial confidence was changed. Initially, many participants expressed hesitation about launching a business due to perceived lack of skills, fear of failure, or limited access to startup capital. However, the program's

emphasis on small-scale, home-based entrepreneurship with examples of success stories and practical guidance shifted their perceptions. Post-workshop discussions revealed a notable increase in self-assurance. Several participants voiced intentions to register their businesses with local authorities and begin selling products within their neighborhoods.

On the other hand, the training on mobile-based advertisement creation proved to be a turning point for many. Participants learned how to use free tools and social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to promote their products. Most had never engaged in digital marketing before, yet post-training, they were able to design engaging promotional content, understand the timing of advertisements, and utilize persuasive communication techniques. As a result, some began receiving customer inquiries shortly after their first promotional posts.

One of the most profound impacts was on the participants' motivation. The program successfully cultivated an entrepreneurial mindset, encouraging participants to see entrepreneurship not just as a means of income generation, but as a source of personal fulfillment and empowerment. Some women discussed their plans to expand beyond frozen food into related areas such as homemade condiments, packed meals, or catering for local events.

Beyond the numeric data, qualitative feedback painted a rich picture of transformation include the peer learning and social support: The WhatsApp group established during the workshops became a vibrant space for continuous engagement. Participants shared photos of their creations, exchanged recipes, and provided encouragement. This informal peer support system sustained their motivation and reinforced the practical application of learned skills.

Participants demonstrated greater agency in making decisions about their time, household resources, and economic contributions. One participant noted that her children and spouse began assisting her with marketing efforts, thereby involving the whole family in a shared entrepreneurial vision. Some participants reported that neighbors and relatives expressed interest in joining similar programs. This ripple effect indicates the potential for community-wide transformation when even a small cohort is empowered.

For many, the workshops were their first formal educational experience outside the home since school. Several expressed pride in mastering new skills and being recognized by peers and instructors. This emotional empowerment is vital, especially in conservative or patriarchal environments where women's roles are traditionally confined to domestic responsibilities.

Sample of Participant Testimonials:

"I never thought I could make bread like this. Now my family prefers my home-made buns over store-bought ones!"

"I didn't know how to use my phone for anything other than calls. Now I'm promoting my business online!"

"The support from other women has made me brave enough to take the first step. We are planning to sell together at the next school fair."

Within two weeks of completing the workshop, several participants began selling their frozen bread and patties. They shared updates on customer responses, price points, and supply chain adjustments. Others developed new branding ideas, such as personalized packaging and promotional discounts, showcasing the program's success in nurturing practical entrepreneurial behavior.

Despite overall enthusiasm, some participants reported initial difficulties with time management and balancing domestic responsibilities with business activities. A few also encountered skepticism from family members about their business plans. However, these challenges were addressed during peer-sharing sessions and eventually diminished as visible progress emerged.

In sum, the program was successful in achieving its dual objectives: improving participants' entrepreneurial knowledge and fostering economic empowerment. The structured yet flexible format of the workshops which combined with real-time feedback and post-program support created a conducive environment for sustained learning. The success of the initiative can be attributed to the use of participatory and hands-on methods, relevance of content to participants' daily lives, integration of digital tools for marketing, continued social support through group communication and role modeling and mentoring by trainers. These findings are in line with existing literature emphasizing that effective entrepreneurship education must be contextually grounded and learner-centered (Viebig, 2022).

Moving forward, the program offers a model that can be scaled up or adapted for other FELDA settlements or similar rural communities. Ensuring sustainability will depend on follow-up mentoring, access to microcredit facilities, and regular skill-upgrading workshops. With these supports, participants are well-positioned to transition from informal sellers to formal micro-entrepreneurs, contributing not only to their households but to the local economy at large.

4. The Impact of the Entrepreneurship Knowledge Transfer Program

The findings from this study underscore the transformative potential of entrepreneurship knowledge transfer programs in improving the economic well-being of rural women, specifically second-generation housewives within the FELDA community. The program's impacts extended beyond technical skill acquisition, influencing participants' self-perception, household dynamics, and broader community engagement.

One of the most significant impacts of the program was its role in empowering the economic activities of participants' households. As traditionally full-time homemakers, most participants had limited opportunities to contribute financially. Through the skills acquired, these women were able to initiate small-scale income-generating activities. Even modest income streams from selling bread and patty burgers served as vital contributions to household finances. This economic input helped reduce dependency on a single income earner, enhancing family re-

silience to financial stressors such as inflation, emergencies, or fluctuating wages.

Moreover, the ability to produce and sell home-based food products gave participants increased control over family budgeting and expenditure. Participants began allocating earnings for household necessities, children's education, and re-investment into their microbusinesses. In this regard, the program not only offered entrepreneurship training but also served as a catalyst for enhanced financial literacy and resource management. Economic participation often leads to shifts in family dynamics, and this was evident among the workshop participants. The newfound entrepreneurial activities elevated their status within the household, leading to increased recognition and respect from spouses and children. Some participants reported that their families became more supportive of their endeavors, assisting with production, packaging, or delivery. This redefined gender roles within the home, challenging traditional notions of economic contribution and caregiving (Couva et al., 2024; Ridzwan et al., 2021; Brush et al., 2019). As the women gained confidence and independence, they also began to assume more decision-making power related to household expenditures and business planning, indicating a shift toward more equitable domestic partnerships.

Beyond the household level, the program contributed to building economic resilience at the community level. Several participants expressed interest in collaborating to scale their businesses, share resources (such as ovens or packaging materials), or co-organize pop-up stalls during local events. This community-based approach to entrepreneurship fosters solidarity and creates multiplier effects that benefit others within the settlement. When economically empowered women serve as role models, they can inspire others in their network to pursue similar ventures. The shared WhatsApp group became not only a platform for social bonding but also a tool for resource-sharing, business promotion, and collaborative learning. In rural areas where formal infrastructure is limited, such informal networks play a crucial role in sustaining entrepreneurial activities (Kamaruddin, 2018; Samson et al., 2017).

Digital skills development was a key innovation in this program, equipping participants with practical tools to market their products via social media and messaging platforms. In many rural communities, the digital divide is a significant barrier to economic advancement (Couva et al., 2024; Ridzwan et al., 2021). By teaching participants how to create compelling advertisements using smartphones and how to interact with customers online, the program significantly widened their business horizons. Participants were able to reach customers beyond their immediate neighborhood, tapping into demand from surrounding villages and urban fringe communities. This increased market access can lead to long-term business scalability, especially if supported by additional training in e-commerce platforms, digital payments, and inventory management systems.

The successful implementation of this project highlights the vital role that academic institutions can play in grassroots economic development. Universiti Putra Malaysia, through its University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC),

served not only as a knowledge provider but also as a bridge between higher education and real-world community needs. By leveraging university expertise and aligning it with the lived realities of rural communities, the program fostered a model of engaged scholarship that has practical, measurable outcomes. Such partnerships can inform national policy on community engagement and encourage other universities to replicate similar initiatives, contributing to Malaysia's broader development goals.

Cultural expectations regarding women's roles posed subtle barriers, especially in conservative households. A few participants initially faced resistance when allocating time for training or business. However, as their entrepreneurial activities demonstrated tangible benefits, familial support increased. The program fostered discussion around gender roles, subtly encouraging more equitable household dynamics.

To sustain the positive momentum generated by the program, several strategies can be adopted such as, follow-up support and mentoring, microfinance access and policy advocacy. Continued guidance through mentoring, advanced training, or business incubation initiatives can help participants maintain and grow their businesses (Santi & Septiarti, 2019; Samson et al., 2017). Besides, collaboration with financial institutions to provide microloans or grants would enable participants to purchase necessary equipment or scale production. Connecting participants with local retailers, government procurement programs, or online platforms could expand their market reach. Findings from the program should be shared with policymakers to support the formulation of rural entrepreneurship support programs targeting women.

This knowledge transfer program did more than teach business skills, it transformed lives. It empowered women to generate income, fostered household and community resilience, and laid the foundation for sustainable, inclusive rural development. With appropriate follow-up and policy support, this model can be scaled across other FELDA settlements and rural communities nationwide, contributing meaningfully to Malaysia's socioeconomic development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that entrepreneurship knowledge transfer programs have the potential to significantly uplift economically inactive populations, particularly rural women. By equipping second-generation FELDA housewives with the skills and confidence to pursue microenterprise ventures, the program not only facilitated personal growth but also fostered broader community development. The results of the program affirm that with the right training, support, and opportunities, women who have long remained economically sidelined can transform into active agents of change within their households and communities. Through hands-on training, exposure to entrepreneurship fundamentals, and digital marketing strategies, participants transitioned from passive homemakers to

empowered micro-entrepreneurs capable of contributing meaningfully to their household income (Setianingsih et al., 2023; Hung, 2023; Rangga et al., 2021). This has critical implications not only for economic empowerment but also for social cohesion, gender equity, and intergenerational change.

The program also highlighted the importance of community-based and contextually relevant approaches in entrepreneurship education. Tailoring the content to local needs, using accessible tools such as mobile phones, and building peer support structures created a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, the collaboration between Universiti Putra Malaysia and the FELDA community served as a successful model of engaged scholarship, linking academic knowledge with grassroots transformation. The observed impact, ranging from improved household financial stability to increased agency among women indicates the far-reaching potential of such interventions. Participants reported higher self-confidence, new business aspirations, and strengthened social ties. These outcomes are aligned with broader national goals of inclusive growth and community resilience. In terms of policy implications, this study underscores the need for sustained investment in rural entrepreneurship programs, particularly those targeting women. Policymakers and development agencies should consider integrating entrepreneurship training with digital literacy, financial access, and long-term mentoring to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives (Riandika & Mulyani, 2020; Acs et al., 2018). Establishing formal linkages with government support systems and microfinance institutions would further enhance outcomes.

Future efforts should consider longitudinal tracking of participant progress, expansion of training modules to include advanced financial management and e-commerce platforms, and replication of this model in other FELDA settlements or similar rural communities. Ultimately, this research reinforces that the empowerment of rural women through entrepreneurship is not only possible but also essential for sustainable community development. The success of the program in Felda Rentam serves as an inspiring example of how knowledge, when effectively transferred and contextualized, can become a catalyst for real and lasting change.

Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation to the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) for the continuous support and funding provided throughout the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Knowledge Transfer project. Special thanks are also due to the *Gerakan Persatuan Wanita* (GPW) Felda Rentam, Bera, Pahang, for their enthusiastic participation, cooperation, and commitment to empowering second-generation FELDA housewives. Their dedication and engagement have been instrumental in the success of this initiative. This project is also dedicated to the invaluable contributions of Dr. Rahimah, Dr. Jazihan, Dr. Shamsulariffin, and Dr. Riyan. Their expertise and unwavering commitment have played a pivotal role in shaping and driving the project towards achieving its goals.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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