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Empowering Women in Fishing Villages: The Impact of Community Guidance on Social Support, Resource Access, and Cultural Change

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of the Community Guidance Model on women's empowerment in the fishing village of Nelayan, Pangandaran Regency, Indonesia. It explores how this model promotes gender equality by enhancing social support, improving resource access, and driving cultural change. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research focuses on women participating in the community guidance program, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participant observations, and analysis of program documents. Thematic analysis revealed that the Community Guidance Model significantly strengthens social support networks, grants women greater access to economic and educational resources, and fosters a shift in cultural norms that traditionally limit women's roles. These changes enable women to take on active roles within their communities, enhancing both their welfare and social standing. The study concludes that the Community Guidance Model is an effective strategy for empowering women in fishing villages, offering a pathway to sustainable gender equity and social inclusion. These findings support the expansion of such programs to achieve lasting improvements in the well-being and agency of women across Indonesian coastal communities.

Key Words: Community Guidance Model; Women's Empowerment; Social Support Networks; Cultural Change; Gender Equality in Fishing Villages

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment has become the main focus of social, economic and political development in various parts of the world. In the 21st century, there are still many challenges faced by women in achieving gender equality and accessing the same opportunities as men. Various factors such as cultural norms, discriminatory policies, and structural inequality have become obstacles to women's empowerment (Gupta et al., 2019; Kosec et al., 2022). Therefore, research and interventions that focus on developing effective models to increase women's empowerment are very important. One approach that has proven effective in this context is the Community Mentoring Model. Community guidance is a process based on active community participation in determining and achieving relevant development goals (Arroyo, 2019; Aziz, 2020; Menon, 2020; Saha & Narayanan, 2022). In the context of women's empowerment, community guidance can help in building social support, increasing access to resources,

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and changing cultural norms that hinder women's progress (Gonzalez Parrao et al., 2021; Palinkas et al., 2016).

Women's empowerment in Indonesia faces complex dynamics as time goes strong cultural norms that reinforce traditional roles, there are also significant social changes that allow women to pursue a wider range of opportunities. However, challenges such as equal access to education, equal participation in the world of work, and efforts to promote health and well-being remain key issues. Apart from that, women's involvement in politics and decision making still requires further efforts to achieve the expected equality. In this context, the Community Guidance Model becomes increasingly relevant as an approach that enables women to overcome the obstacles they face and strengthen their role in Society (Fu, 2020; Ji, 2023; Liu, 2022). In the context of guidance and counseling, this model not only facilitates the empowerment of women but also aligns closely with the core principles of counseling services—namely, helping individuals to realize their potential, cope with challenges, and make informed decisions. Counseling plays a crucial role in creating a safe and supportive environment where women can express their concerns, gain emotional support, and receive practical guidance to overcome the socio-cultural barriers they encounter.

The urgency of embedding counseling services within the Community Guidance Model lies in its ability to address the psychological and emotional needs of women who may be marginalized or limited by traditional gender roles. Through structured counseling interventions, women are not only guided towards self-sufficiency but are also encouraged to challenge norms that suppress their participation in economic, educational, and social domains. By providing consistent counseling support, the Community Guidance Model fosters a holistic approach to empowerment, addressing both emotional well-being and practical skills development. This dual focus ensures that women can fully utilize the resources and opportunities presented to them through the program while navigating personal and community-level challenges with greater resilience and confidence.

Therefore, research on the effectiveness of the Community Guidance Model in the context of women's empowerment in Indonesia is not only important to understand the challenges faced, but also to identify effective solutions in achieving gender equality and prosperity for the entire community. By deeply understanding the dynamics of women's empowerment and the role of the Community Guidance Model in that context, we can develop more effective strategies in advancing the role of women in country development (Abou-Shouk, 2021; Bandiera, 2020; Doku, 2020; Gibbs, 2020; Karp, 2020).

This research aims to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of the Community Guidance Model in the context of developing women's empowerment. By understanding how this model can impact women's lives as a whole, it is hoped that it can provide valuable insight into efforts to improve gender equality and women's welfare more broadly. For a long time, women have faced various forms of discrimination and inequality in various aspects of life (Sabouri, 2020). They often have limited access to education, health, decent work, and participation in decision making (Baranov, 2020; Kassie, 2020; Tanima, 2020). Although there has been progress in some aspects, these challenges are still a reality for many women around the world.

In many societies, patriarchal cultural norms often reinforce power structures that support gender inequality. Women are often assigned traditional roles, such as caring for the household and children, while their access to economic and political resources is often limited (Laszlo, 2020; Sevelius, 2021). This not only harms individual women, but also hinders social progress and development as a whole. In facing the complexity of the challenges faced by women, a holistic approach based on community participation is becoming increasingly important. The Community Guidance Model offers a framework that fits this approach. By actively involving communities in the development process, this model can facilitate sustainable and far-reaching change. However, although there is a lot of research supporting the effectiveness of community mentoring in various contexts, there is still a need for more in-depth research into how this model can be used specifically to increase women's empowerment. Therefore, this research will try to fill this knowledge gap by conducting a comprehensive study on the Community Guidance Model for the Development of Women's Empowerment.

In this context, guidance and counseling are essential components of the model, as they provide women with the emotional and psychological support needed to navigate the deeply ingrained cultural norms and barriers that limit their roles. Counseling interventions focus on enhancing self-awareness, building confidence, and fostering decision-making skills, all of which are critical for women to break

free from traditional roles and take on more active, empowered roles within their communities. By actively involving communities in the development process, the Community Guidance Model, supplemented with counseling services, facilitates sustainable and far-reaching change not just at the individual level but also at the community and structural levels.

However, while there is substantial research supporting the effectiveness of community mentoring programs in various contexts, there is still a gap in understanding how the integration of counseling practices within this model specifically impacts women's empowerment. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining the role that guidance and counseling play in enhancing the effectiveness of the Community Guidance Model. Through this comprehensive study, we seek to demonstrate how counseling, as a transformative tool, can help women overcome personal and societal barriers to empowerment and contribute to broader social progress.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate and assess the efficacy of the Community Guidance Model in enhancing women's empowerment. This research aims to: (1) Comprehend the fundamental concepts and principles of the Community Guidance Model; (2) Evaluate the model's impact on women's lives within specific community contexts; (3) Identify factors that facilitate or obstruct the model's implementation and efficacy; (4) Offer recommendations for the development and application of this model across diverse community contexts. This project aims to significantly enhance our understanding of utilising community mentoring as a mechanism for advancing women's empowerment.

METHOD

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach with case studies serving as the primary method. The qualitative approach was selected for its ability to capture the deep, nuanced, and complex context of women's empowerment through the Community Guidance Model in Indonesia. This approach is particularly suited for exploring the social and cultural dynamics at play, as it allows for a rich, detailed understanding of participants' experiences and the multifaceted impacts of the intervention.

The case study design was chosen because it provides an in-depth examination of real-life examples of community mentoring programs within specific village contexts. This method enables the research to focus on particular cases that illustrate how the Community Guidance Model functions in practice, including the challenges faced, successes achieved, and the varying impacts on women in different social and economic environments. By examining these cases closely, the study can derive insights that are both specific and broadly applicable, offering a comprehensive view of how the model contributes to women's empowerment.

The rationale for choosing this design lies in its ability to generate rich, contextualized data. Case studies allow for detailed exploration of the interactions between women, their communities, and the guidance programs, revealing the unique factors that support or hinder empowerment efforts. This approach minimizes redundancy by focusing on distinct aspects of the model in each section—such as participant experiences, program implementation, and cultural impacts—while maintaining a coherent narrative across the research. Additionally, the case study approach provides the flexibility to incorporate multiple sources of data, including interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, all of which enrich the overall understanding of the program's effectiveness.

By using a case study method within a qualitative framework, this research is well-positioned to produce both in-depth and holistic findings, demonstrating how the Community Guidance Model operates and its broader implications for empowering women in similar contexts..

Participants

The research subjects were women involved in a community guidance program for women's empowerment in the fishing village of Pangandaran Regency, totaling 50 people. The sample for this study will be selected through a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that participants meet specific

inclusion criteria, including active participation in the Community Guidance Program and representation from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The primary characteristics of participants in this study include women aged between 25 and 55 years old, with varying occupations, such as small-scale entrepreneurs, homemakers, and community leaders. The participants are drawn from fishing villages in Pangandaran Regency, representing a wide range of educational levels and family structures. Many of these women face social and economic challenges, such as limited access to formal education and healthcare, which make their empowerment within the community particularly relevant.

The recruitment process involved collaboration with local community leaders and program facilitators to identify and approach women who are actively engaged in the Community Guidance Program. These women were invited to participate through a combination of direct outreach and community meetings. The recruitment process emphasized inclusivity by ensuring representation from different socioeconomic strata and cultural groups within the fishing village community. Recruitment was done voluntarily, and participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the research before agreeing to take part.

Equally important, we conducting this study come from backgrounds in community development and counseling, providing them with prior understanding of the phenomena being studied. Their experience in working with marginalized women in rural communities in Indonesia has equipped them with insights into the cultural and social dynamics at play. This prior knowledge has informed the design and implementation of the study, particularly in relation to the challenges faced by women in accessing resources and opportunities.

The relationships and interactions between we and participants were characterized by mutual respect and open communication. We adopted a participatory approach, ensuring that participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences and insights. However, it is important to acknowledge that the researchers' involvement in the community could potentially influence participant responses, particularly if participants viewed the researchers as authority figures or as representatives of the program. To mitigate this, the researchers maintained transparency, emphasizing that the study was independent and that participants' input would not affect their involvement in the program.

Incentives and compensation for participation were minimal, and primarily aimed at ensuring that participants were not burdened by their involvement in the study. Participants were provided with refreshments and reimbursement for transportation costs, but no financial incentives were offered to avoid undue influence on their participation. Ethical procedures were strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent from all participants. Before data collection began, participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's aims, methods, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, with all personal data anonymized to protect participants' identities.

Data Analysis

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants to gather detailed insights into their experiences with the Community Guidance Program. The interviews served as a primary data collection tool, allowing us to explore participants' perceptions, challenges, and the impact of the program on their empowerment. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, with a mean duration of approximately 60 minutes. The variability in interview length depended on the participant's availability and the depth of information shared during the conversation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, providing flexibility to adapt questions based on participant responses while maintaining consistency across key themes. The data-collection process took place over a period of six weeks, ensuring that each participant had sufficient time to reflect on their experiences without feeling rushed.

This careful timing facilitated a more thorough exploration of the issues being studied, allowing participants to discuss their experiences in depth, while also giving us time to build rapport and ensure a comfortable environment for open dialogue. Participant observation, and analysis of related documents. In-depth interviews will be used to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions and impact of community mentoring programs on women's empowerment. Participant observation will be conducted to gain a direct understanding of interactions and dynamics in the

community context. During these observations, we focus on understanding the social and cultural factors influencing women's empowerment in the community. Central questions guiding the observations include how women interact with each other and community leaders during the mentoring sessions, the observable changes in behavior or participation before and after involvement in the Community Guidance Program, and how cultural norms manifest in daily activities, influencing women's roles. These questions are open-ended to allow for capturing spontaneous interactions and social dynamics that may not be revealed through interviews alone. Field notes will be taken during each observation to document key interactions and noteworthy events. Where appropriate, audio or visual recordings will be made to supplement the field notes, with consent from the participants.

For the document analysis, we examine materials related to the program, such as training modules, meeting minutes, and outcome reports. The central questions include how the Community Guidance Model is structured and implemented, the stated goals and objectives of the program, and how the outcomes are documented and measured. These questions will guide the analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the program's design and its impact.

All interviews and observations will be audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy in data collection. The interviews will then be transcribed verbatim, while field notes will be expanded with reflections and contextual details soon after the observations. This process ensures that all relevant data is preserved, capturing participants' words and actions as authentically as possible.

The qualitative data obtained will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, ensuring that the claims made from the analysis are warranted and grounded in the data, thereby producing findings with methodological integrity. The analysis will follow a systematic procedure that begins with coding the data—a process where segments of text are assigned codes representing specific themes or patterns. These codes will then be grouped into broader key themes, which will emerge both from the data and through engagement with relevant theories and literature.

To ensure methodological integrity, several steps will be followed. First, the analysis will be conducted iteratively, meaning that the coding process will be revisited and refined as new insights emerge. This allows for a thorough exploration of the data and reduces the likelihood of premature conclusions. Triangulation will also be employed, wherein data from multiple sources—such as interviews, observations, and document analysis—will be compared to cross-check findings and ensure consistency. This triangulation enhances the credibility of the themes identified, as patterns are corroborated across different data sets.

We also engage in peer debriefing, where findings and interpretations are reviewed by fellow researchers to ensure that they accurately reflect the data and avoid bias. Member checking will be used to validate findings with participants, allowing them to confirm or clarify interpretations. Additionally, audit trails will be maintained, documenting each step of the analysis process, from initial coding to final thematic synthesis. This transparency ensures that the procedures are replicable and the conclusions are based on a logical and consistent analysis of the data. By combining data from various sources, comparing it with relevant theories, and employing rigorous procedures such as triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, and audit trails, this analysis will produce findings with methodological rigor, ensuring that the claims are well-supported and reflect the complexities of the phenomena studied.

RESULTS

This research explores the effectiveness of the Community Guidance Model in developing women's empowerment in fishing villages through in-depth data analysis. The results of the data analysis revealed a number of significant findings, which provide valuable insight into the impact and potential of community mentoring programs in this context. The results of data analysis from this research can be described as follows:

Establishment of Discussion Groups and Social Support

Data analysis highlights that one of the most prominent outcomes of community mentoring programs is the establishment of discussion groups and social activities at the community level.

Interviews and field observations show that through these groups, women in fishing villages feel supported, heard and appreciated by fellow community members. They have the opportunity to share experiences, find joint solutions to the problems they face, and provide emotional support to each other. This social support not only gives women confidence and motivation, but also strengthens social cohesion in the community, which is an important foundation in building women's empowerment.

Increased Access to Resources

Apart from that, the results of data analysis also show that the community guidance program has succeeded in increasing women's access to economic, social and educational resources. Program documentation and field observations reveal that women involved in this program have better access to skills training, business capital, health services and education. Skills training such as handicraft making, organic farming, or other business activities provide women with practical skills that enable them to create additional sources of income or even start independent businesses. In addition, improved access to health and education services also has a positive impact on the well-being of women and their families, by increasing awareness about health and improving access to information and knowledge.

Changes in Cultural Norms

Data analysis also revealed that community guidance programs play an important role in changing cultural norms in fishing villages. Through informal education activities, campaigns and outreach, communities are starting to recognize and appreciate women's contributions to village development and sustainability. Cultural norms that inhibit women's participation and empowerment are beginning to erode, and more and more people are supporting initiatives to provide equal opportunities for women in various aspects of village life. This creates a more inclusive and supportive environment for women, allowing them to take a more active role in decision-making and village development.

DISCUSSION

The results of research on increasing women's empowerment in fishing villages through the Community Guidance Model provide very important insights into how this intervention can have a positive impact on various aspects of women's lives. The results of this research have identified several main themes that can be described in detail to provide a deeper understanding.

First, the formation of discussion groups and social support is one of the main findings of this research. In these discussion groups, women have space to share experiences, problems and solutions with fellow community members. This not only increases their self-confidence but also creates strong social bonds among group members. This social support is important because it provides the emotional foundation necessary for women to face everyday challenges. Through interaction in these groups, women can develop the social and communication skills necessary to strengthen their support networks. Furthermore, these discussion groups also serve as platforms for advocating for broader social change in their communities, including encouraging women's participation in decision-making at the local level.

Second, increasing access to resources is another important aspect identified in this research. The community mentoring program has succeeded in opening up women's access to various economic, social and educational resources. The skills training provided through this program, such as handicraft making, organic farming, or other business skills, gives women the practical ability to create additional sources of income or even start an independent business. Access to business capital also allows women to be more economically independent, which in turn increases their status in their families and communities. In addition, increasing access to health and education services also has a positive impact on the welfare of women and their families. With increased awareness about health and better access to information and knowledge, women can be more proactive in looking after the health of themselves and their family members.

Third, changes in cultural norms that inhibit women's participation and empowerment are another significant result of this research. Community mentoring programs have played an important role in changing society's view of the role of women. Through various informal education activities, campaigns

and outreach, the community is starting to recognize and appreciate women's contributions to village development and sustainability. Cultural norms that previously restricted women are beginning to erode, allowing women to take a more active role in decision making and village development. These changes not only benefit individual women but also strengthen social cohesion within communities, which is an important prerequisite for sustainable development. Fourth, the social support provided by community mentoring programs not only improves women's emotional well-being but also provides a strong foundation for the development of sustainable empowerment. This social support includes various forms, ranging from emotional support, information, to instrumental support needed to face various challenges. For example, support in the form of information can help women understand their rights and how they can fight for those rights. Instrumental support, such as help in accessing health services or education, is also critical in improving the quality of life for women and their families.

Fifth, increasing access to economic, social and educational resources is an important step in strengthening women's independence and expanding their opportunities in various aspects of life. By having the skills necessary to create additional sources of income, women can become more economically independent, which in turn increases their status in their families and communities. In addition, access to better health and education services also has a positive impact on the well-being of women and their families. With increased awareness about health and better access to information and knowledge, women can be more proactive in looking after the health of themselves and their family members. Sixth, changing cultural norms is also an important step in ensuring that women have equal opportunities in decision making and village development. Community mentoring programs have played an important role in changing society's view of the role of women. Through various informal education activities, campaigns and outreach, the community is starting to recognize and appreciate women's contributions to village development and sustainability. Cultural norms that previously restricted women are beginning to erode, allowing women to take a more active role in decision making and village development.

However, there are several challenges that need to be overcome to increase the effectiveness of these community mentoring programs. First, it is important to understand and appreciate the unique cultural and social context of fishing villages. Each community has different dynamics, and the approach used must be adapted to the local context. Second, continued participation of community members in program planning, implementation, and evaluation is also critical. Without active participation from the community, this program may not be sustainable or have the desired long-term impact. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these community mentoring programs are designed and implemented with the active participation of community members. Third, community mentoring programs must continue to develop and adapt to emerging needs and challenges. This means that the program must be flexible and ready to make adjustments based on feedback from the community and the results of regular evaluations. In this way, the program can remain relevant and effective in facing new challenges that arise. Fourth, it is important to build strong partnerships with various stakeholders, including local governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. These partnerships can assist in securing necessary resources and provide ongoing support for community mentoring programs. In addition, this partnership can also help in advocating for policies that support women's empowerment and inclusive development. Fifth, community guidance programs must be supported by ongoing research to ensure that the interventions carried out are truly effective and have a positive impact. The research conducted must involve a variety of methods and approaches to obtain a comprehensive picture of the program's impact. Additionally, research results should be used to inform future program development and adjustments. In conclusion, this research confirms that the Community Guidance Model is an effective approach in increasing women's empowerment in fishing villages. Social support, increased access to resources, and changes in cultural norms are some of the important outcomes of this program. By strengthening social support, increasing access to resources, and changing cultural norms, community mentoring programs can make a significant contribution to women's well-being and overall village development. The implication of this research is the importance of continuing to encourage the development and implementation of community guidance programs that focus on women's empowerment. Thus, it is hoped that this effort will bring significant positive changes in improving gender equality and women's welfare in fishing villages as well as strengthening inclusive and sustainable development at the local and national levels.

These findings are further explored in relation to existing literature and theories of women's empowerment and social change. The results demonstrate that the Community Guidance Model successfully addresses multiple dimensions of empowerment, aligning with previous research that emphasizes the importance of social support, resource access, and cultural change in fostering empowerment. These findings contribute to broader discussions about the effectiveness of community-based interventions in rural settings, particularly in fishing villages where cultural and economic barriers to women's empowerment have historically been prominent.

The findings also highlight the need for tailored approaches that respect local contexts, as seen in how discussion groups and mentoring programs were adapted to the unique social dynamics of fishing villages. This reinforces the idea that community-specific interventions are essential for sustained empowerment and development outcomes. The implications for practice suggest that expanding community mentoring programs and continuing to address cultural barriers are critical steps in promoting gender equality and inclusive development in similar rural settings.

These findings offer important insights into the development of women's empowerment in fishing villages. The social support provided by community mentoring programs not only enhances women's emotional well-being but also creates a solid foundation for the sustainable development of empowerment (Annan, 2021; Kabeer, 2020; Yaya, 2020). Additionally, improving women's access to economic, social, and educational resources is a crucial step toward strengthening women's independence and expanding their opportunities in various aspects of life (Bonin, 2021; Huis, 2020; Tawfik, 2023). The transformation of cultural norms is also vital for ensuring that women are provided equal opportunities in decision-making processes and community development.

Furthermore, the study reveals that community mentoring programs have significantly increased women's access to economic, social, and educational resources. This directly addresses the research objective of increasing resource accessibility for women in fishing villages. The findings confirm the concept of women's empowerment, where improved access to these resources is a critical factor in enabling women to gain greater control over their lives, livelihoods, and decision-making capacities. The empowerment achieved through this access not only improves the quality of life for the women but also contributes to their overall personal and professional development.

However, this study acknowledges no explicit limitations, which could offer additional insights or considerations for future research. While the findings provide significant implications for developing sustainable community guidance programs, addressing possible challenges or contextual constraints could enrich the understanding of the broader application of these programs in varying environments. The focus on creating sustainable, empowerment-oriented community guidance programs remains a promising approach to fostering women's empowerment in fishing villages, contributing to inclusive and sustainable development goals.

In addition, the research highlights the program's ability to change cultural norms that traditionally limit women's participation and empowerment. This outcome is consistent with the research objective of overcoming barriers to women's empowerment. The shift in norms reflects theories of social change, showing that interventions at the community level can lead to broader societal transformations, particularly regarding gender roles and expectations. By addressing cultural barriers, the program has made it possible for women to become more active and visible in the social, economic, and political life of their communities.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the Community Guidance Model is highly effective in enhancing women's empowerment in fishing villages, thereby meeting the research objectives. Comprehensive data analysis reveals several significant conclusions. The establishment of discussion groups and social events within the community is essential for enhancing social support for women. This corresponds with ideas of social support, indicating that such relationships establish a vital basis for empowerment by cultivating a sense of belonging and reciprocal aid. To enhance the social dimension of empowerment, this aspect is crucial in fostering a supportive atmosphere for women's flourishing.

The study substantiates that the Community Guidance Model promotes women's empowerment and facilitates substantial social and cultural transformations in fishing villages. These findings underscore the necessity of sustaining and augmenting community-based initiatives aimed at women's empowerment, since they are essential for advancing gender equality and enhancing women's welfare. Moreover, by correlating these initiatives with relevant ideas, such programs can exert a significant and enduring influence on local and national development, fostering inclusive and sustainable advancement.

This research has elucidated how the Community Guidance Model can substantially enhance women's empowerment in fishing communities, positively affecting social cohesiveness, economic independence, and cultural transformation. The study validates the model's efficacy as a tool for advancing gender equality and enhancing women's roles in community development.

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