

High Entrepreneurial Readiness, Limited Business Capacity: Community Counseling to Strengthen the Home-Based Businesses of Housewives in a Minangkabau Village

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Abstract

Home-based businesses run by housewives can strengthen family economic resilience, yet in rural Indonesia many remain informal and confined to local buyers. This community engagement program aimed to strengthen the home-based businesses of housewives in Nagari Kinari, Solok Regency, West Sumatra, through community counseling based on local potential. Thirty-one housewives joined a program that combined classical-format community counseling on family resilience and communication with training on business legality and halal certification, packaging and digital marketing, and the use of local resources. Entrepreneurial readiness was measured with a 25-item scale before and after the main session (29 complete pairs). Readiness was already very high at baseline ($M = 109.89$ of 125) and rose only slightly afterwards ($M = 111.79$), a change that was not statistically significant. Motivation was therefore not the main barrier, and programs for rural women entrepreneurs should pair counseling with sustained technical and market-access support.

Keywords: Community counseling; home-based business; housewives; entrepreneurial readiness; family economic resilience



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Introduction

Families that depend on a single source of income are exposed to every fluctuation in crop prices, market demand and local employment. Household financial resilience, meaning the capacity to absorb such shocks and recover from them, is closely linked to how well families understand and manage their resources (Liu, Fan, Li, & Yue, 2024). Resilience is not only a financial matter, however. Research on family functioning shows that open communication and a shared positive outlook help parents and children cope with prolonged stress, while maladaptive coping in parents tends to spill over into children's emotional difficulties (Vladislav, Marc, Paica, & Pop, 2024). For counselors, this means that strengthening a family's economic base and strengthening its relational base are two sides of the same task.

In West Sumatra, women occupy a distinctive place in the household economy. Minangkabau matrilineal culture gives women a recognised role in managing family resources, and ethnographic work shows that many Minangkabau women now act as culinary entrepreneurs and, in a growing number of households, as the main earners, with husbands assisting in the business (Yuhendri, Wahjoedi, Djatmika, & Haryono, 2025). Nagari Kinari in Bukit Sundi District, Solok Regency, fits this

pattern. Its agricultural base supplies rice, coconut and palm sugar, and many housewives already make traditional snacks such as *kue sapik*, *kipang* (puffed rice cake), *galamai* and *pinyaram*. Preliminary discussions with the nagari government nonetheless indicated that these activities remain small, informal and sold mostly to neighbours, so they add little to household income.

The obstacles that keep such enterprises small are well documented. Rural women micro-entrepreneurs often lack access to support services, and the kind of support that helps varies by sector (Begum, Kusakabe, & Tsusaka, 2025). Women also face institutional hurdles and constraining factors such as limited finance, skills and networks, even when their personal drive is strong (Ebewo, Schultz, & Mmako, 2025; Karami, Karimi, Akbari, & Gnoth, 2024). In Indonesia, halal certification is a specific barrier for micro and small food enterprises, which struggle with its costs, regulatory complexity and low awareness of the procedure (Fathoni et al., 2025). Market access depends on presentation as well, since packaging features such as imagery, colour and typography shape consumers' purchase decisions for snack foods (Wang, Ab Gani, & Liu, 2023; Liu, Samsudin, & Zou, 2025), and social media marketing has a measurable effect on the performance of Indonesian micro, small and medium enterprises (Tatik & Setiawan, 2025). During the pandemic, low-cost platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram helped women entrepreneurs keep their customers (Rahayu, Masduki, & Ellyanawati, 2023).

Most empowerment programs address these technical gaps directly. Fewer attend to the psychological and relational side of running a household business, even though confidence, motivation and family support determine whether new knowledge is put into practice. Group-based approaches are well suited to this purpose, because collective participation in decisions has been shown to contribute to women's empowerment (Cheek & Corbett, 2024), and university-led social responsibility programs have strengthened the sustainability of rural women's entrepreneurship (Otiniano León, Arbulú Ballesteros, Ramos Farroñán, & Paredes Morales, 2025). Community counseling delivered in a classical (large-group) format offers a practical way to combine these elements, as it allows counselors to address family resilience, communication and business motivation with a whole community of participants at once.

Community programs in West Sumatra that integrate counseling with business training, and that evaluate participants' entrepreneurial readiness before and after the intervention, remain scarce. This article reports such a program. Its objectives were to describe how community counseling based on local potential was combined with business training for housewives in Nagari Kinari, and to examine whether participants' entrepreneurial readiness changed after the program. We expected readiness to increase, and we also sought to identify which aspects of readiness would respond most to the program.

Method

The program was a community engagement activity funded by the Universitas Negeri Padang Impact Community Service Program (PPUB) in 2026, and it was evaluated with a one-group pretest and posttest design. It took place in Nagari Kinari, Bukit Sundi District, Solok Regency, West Sumatra, with the nagari government as the partner institution. Participants were housewives who were running, or intended to start, a home-based business. They were recruited purposively with the help of the nagari secretary and local women's groups. Thirty-one housewives attended the main session.

The program followed five stages. The first was coordination and socialization, in which the team agreed on targets, schedule and venue with the head of the nagari and the nagari secretary, and invited the Cooperative and Small and Medium Enterprise Office of Solok Regency to take part. The second stage was the main session, held on 20 August 2026 at the nagari office hall and opened by the head of the nagari. It consisted of three classical-format community counseling sessions followed by three training sessions, summarised in Table 1. Each session combined a short presentation, group discussion and questions from participants. The third stage introduced simple digital tools, namely product

photography with a smartphone, WhatsApp Business catalogues and social media promotion, under the name “Lapau Kinari”, a reference to the Minangkabau *lapau* (village stall) as a meeting place for trade and conversation. The fourth and fifth stages consisted of follow-up communication with participants and the nagari government to monitor application of the material and to plan the formation of a housewives’ business group.

Table 1 Components of the Community Counseling and Business Training Program

No	Component	Main content
1	Community counseling: family resilience and household business	Factors that shape family resilience; strengthening communication, positive parenting, joint problem solving, social support and economic resources
2	Community counseling: family communication	Listening, expressing emotions safely and resolving conflict; routines such as device-free time and family meetings
3	Community counseling: household problems and emotion management	Internal and external sources of household conflict, including economic strain; managing emotions and appreciation between spouses
4	Training: business legality and halal certification	Business licensing for home-based food producers and the halal certification procedure, delivered by the regency Cooperative and SME Office
5	Training: packaging, digital marketing and service	Packaging as a “silent salesperson”, clear labelling, consistent social media content and empathic customer service, framed through consumer psychology
6	Training: using local potential	Identifying local raw materials and traditional products that can generate additional household income

Source: program documentation (2026).

Entrepreneurial readiness was measured with a 25-item scale developed by the team, organised into five dimensions of five items each (labelled D1 to D5, with the abbreviations PDK, P3L, EDB, KMMU and KTKEK used in the instrument). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, giving total scores from 25 to 125. Scores were classified as very low (25 to 41), low (42 to 58), moderate (59 to 75), high (76 to 92) or very high (93 and above). Internal consistency for the total scale was acceptable at pretest (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .77$) and high at posttest ($\alpha = .92$). Dimension-level coefficients ranged from .57 to .70 at pretest and from .75 to .92 at posttest, so dimension results should be read with caution.

The scale was administered before and after the main session. Thirty participants completed the pretest, and one of them did not return the posttest, leaving 29 complete pairs for analysis. A small number of items were left unanswered and had been recorded as zero during data entry. Because zero is not a valid response on the scale, these entries were treated as missing, and each participant’s score was computed as the mean of the answered items multiplied by 25 so that it remained on the 25 to 125 metric. Change was tested with a paired-samples t test, as the difference scores did not depart from normality (Shapiro–Wilk $W = .95$, $p = .235$), and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used as a robustness check. Effect size was expressed as Cohen’s d_z . Dimension-level changes were examined with Wilcoxon tests. The design had no comparison group and the posttest followed the program closely, so the results describe short-term change within the participating group rather than a causal effect.

Results and Discussion

All planned sessions of the main program were delivered, and 31 housewives took part in the full day. The partnership with the nagari government secured the venue and mobilised participants, while the presence of the regency Cooperative and SME Office gave participants a direct contact for licensing and halal certification. Discussion focused largely on practical questions about starting and formalising a business, which is consistent with the concerns raised during the preliminary coordination.

The most striking result is how ready participants already were before the program began. All 29 participants with complete data fell into the very high category at both pretest and posttest, and 97.7% of all pretest item responses were 4 or 5 on the five-point scale, with 41.3% at the maximum. Table 2 and Figure 1 summarise the change. The mean total score rose from 109.89 (SD = 4.96) to 111.79 (SD = 7.00), a difference of 1.90 points (95% CI [-1.69, 5.49]). This increase was not statistically significant, $t(28) = 1.08$, $p = .288$, $d_z = 0.20$, and the Wilcoxon test led to the same conclusion ($p = .32$). Individual trajectories were mixed: 14 participants improved, 13 declined and 2 did not change. At dimension level, the largest gain was in D4 (KMMU), from 4.39 to 4.59 ($p = .068$), whereas D5 (KTKEK), the highest-scoring dimension at pretest, fell slightly.

Table 2 Entrepreneurial Readiness Before and After the Program (n = 29)

Measure	Pretest	Posttest	Difference	p
D1 (PDK), item mean	4.29	4.39	+0.10	.200
D2 (P3L), item mean	4.16	4.25	+0.09	.301
D3 (EDB), item mean	4.43	4.50	+0.07	.524
D4 (KMMU), item mean	4.39	4.59	+0.20	.068
D5 (KTKEK), item mean	4.69	4.62	-0.07	.515
Total score (25–125), M (SD)	109.89 (4.96)	111.79 (7.00)	+1.90	.288
Very high category, n (%)	29 (100)	29 (100)		

Note. Dimension p values from Wilcoxon signed-rank tests; total score p value from the paired-samples t test.

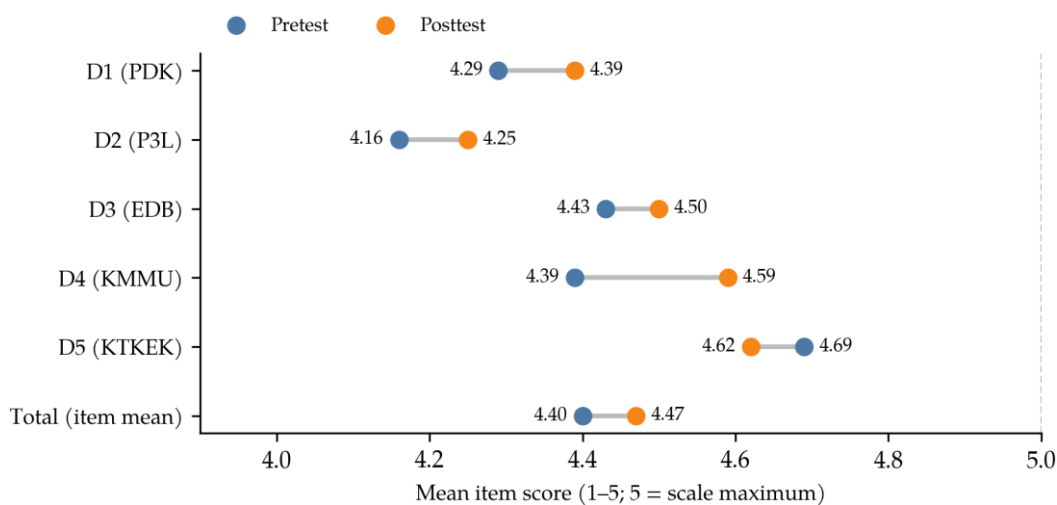


Figure 1. Mean Entrepreneurial Readiness by Dimension Before and After the Program

Figure by the authors, based on program evaluation data (2026).

The expectation that readiness would increase was therefore only weakly supported. The most plausible explanation is a ceiling effect. When most participants begin with scores close to the top of a scale, there is little room left to register improvement, and a program may appear ineffective even when participants have learned something (Staus, O'Connell, & Storksdieck, 2021). The pattern here matches that description closely. It also fits the cultural setting. If Minangkabau women already see economic activity, particularly culinary enterprise, as a normal and respected part of their role (Yuhendri et al., 2025), strong motivation to run a business is exactly what one would expect to find at baseline.

This finding changes how the problem should be framed. The housewives of Nagari Kinari were not held back by a lack of willingness or confidence. What limited their businesses were the structural and technical conditions described in the introduction: informal status, uncertainty about licensing and halal

certification, plain packaging and a market that ended at the edge of the village. This is consistent with evidence that women entrepreneurs are constrained more by institutional and resource barriers than by personal drive (Ebewo et al., 2025; Karami et al., 2024), and that support services must be matched to the concrete needs of each type of enterprise (Begum et al., 2025). For Indonesian food producers, the costs and procedures of halal certification are a clear example of such a barrier (Fathoni et al., 2025).

Two further observations point in the same direction. The largest gain appeared in D4, while D5 dipped slightly, and the spread of scores widened after the program. Reliability also rose markedly at posttest. One possible reading, which the present data cannot confirm, is that the sessions on legality, certification and marketing gave participants a clearer picture of what running a formal business demands, prompting some to rate themselves more cautiously and others more confidently. A more differentiated self-assessment of this kind would be a reasonable outcome of an educational program, even though it does not raise the group mean.

For counseling practice, the results suggest a shift in emphasis. Community counseling remains valuable, because family communication, emotional regulation and shared problem solving support families under economic pressure (Vladislav et al., 2024) and because group settings allow women to learn from and support one another (Cheek & Corbett, 2024). Yet when motivation is already high, the counselor's contribution may lie less in raising motivation and more in helping families work through practical decisions, such as sharing time and tasks within the household when a business grows, and in linking participants to the services that address their structural barriers. The involvement of the regency Cooperative and SME Office in this program illustrates that linking role. Training on packaging and digital marketing is also well founded, given the influence of visual packaging on snack purchases (Wang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025) and the demonstrated value of social media for small enterprises and women entrepreneurs (Tatik & Setiawan, 2025; Rahayu et al., 2023).

The evaluation has several limitations. There was no comparison group, the sample was small, and the posttest followed the program closely, so neither lasting change nor causal effects can be inferred. Readiness was self-reported, the scale showed a clear ceiling, and dimension reliability at pretest was modest. Future programs should use instruments with more room at the upper end, add behavioural indicators that can be verified, such as licenses and halal certificates obtained, business accounts created, product packaging redesigned and changes in sales, and follow participants for several months as the planned business group develops.

Conclusion

The housewives of Nagari Kinari came to this program already highly ready to run a business, and a single day of community counseling and training changed that readiness only slightly. The main lesson is that, in this Minangkabau village, motivation was not the missing ingredient. What participants needed was help with formal legality, halal certification, product presentation and access to wider markets, together with family support to sustain a growing enterprise. Community counseling programs for rural women entrepreneurs will serve families better when they treat counseling as a bridge to these technical and institutional resources rather than as a motivational end in itself, and when they judge success by concrete business outcomes followed over time.

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