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Developing The Sociopreneur Character of Students: A Case  
Study at Pandanaran University

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the development of sociopreneur character in Pandanaran University Semarang students. In the context of increasingly complex social challenges, the role of students as agents of change is very important through the concept of sociopreneurship which combines entrepreneurial activities with social missions. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the process of developing students' sociopreneur character through various academic and non-academic activities. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation of students who are active in the social entrepreneurship program at Pandanaran University. The results showed that the development of sociopreneur character in students includes several main aspects, namely social care, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and leadership based on social values. In addition, student involvement in various social and entrepreneurial activities, supported by university policies and a conducive academic environment, is an important factor in fostering sociopreneur character. This research concludes that an effective sociopreneur character development strategy requires an integrated approach involving formal education, supporting environment, and active participation of students in social activities.

**Keywords:** Sociopreneur; Character Development; Entrepreneurship

**A. Introduction**

In recent decades, the concept of social entrepreneurship or sociopreneurship has grown rapidly as a response to various complex and dynamic social problems in society. Sociopreneurship is a combination of traditional entrepreneurship and social goals, where the business is not only oriented towards economic profit, but also has a real positive impact on

society. This phenomenon has received great attention from various circles, especially in the academic environment, given its great potential in solving various social issues, such as poverty, education, health, and the environment.

In Indonesia, sociopreneurship is starting to become a serious concern mainly because of the high poverty rate and other social problems that have not been resolved optimally. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that

despite a decrease in the poverty rate from year to year, social problems such as economic inequality, unequal access to education, and environmental issues are still a big challenge. Therefore, the involvement of various parties including students in sociopreneurship activities is becoming increasingly relevant to be developed.

The character traits possessed by students play a crucial role in supporting social business activities, as they form the foundation for building enterprises that are not only profit-oriented but also bring benefits to society. Traits such as social awareness, empathy, integrity, creativity, and leadership encourage students to understand the social issues around them and seek solutions through an entrepreneurial approach. Social responsibility and empathy help students become more attuned to the needs of their target communities, while integrity ensures that the businesses they run remain ethical and sustainable. Creativity enables them to develop relevant product or service innovations, and leadership supports team management and collaboration with various parties to expand the social impact of the business. With these characteristics, students are better equipped to consistently run social businesses, overcome challenges, and ensure the sustainability of ventures that provide added value, both economically and in terms of social well-being for the broader community.

Sociopreneurship is not just about teaching conventional entrepreneurship. This concept emphasizes the integration of entrepreneurial spirit with deep social awareness. In the context of higher education, sociopreneurship should be understood as a holistic approach in shaping student character. Learning should not be limited to business theory alone, but should include the development of social values. Thus, students will have a strong foundation to become entrepreneurs who care about community problems. (Saputra, Hernawan & Dewi 2024)

Sociopreneur character development involves various important aspects of student personality. These aspects include deep social empathy and servant leadership. In addition, orientation to solutions and innovation, as well as the ability to think critically and systemically are also needed. Students also need to be equipped

with strong business ethics and resilience in the face of failure. All these components are interrelated and form the foundation for a true sociopreneur. (Amalia & Von Korfflesch 2021)

In practice, sociopreneurs need specific skills to achieve their goals. The ability to collaborate across sectors is an important key in addressing complex social problems. Students need to learn to work with various stakeholders, including the government and the community. In addition, the ability to manage social impact in a measurable way is equally important. This skill allows them to evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions provided and make continuous improvements. (Scott Et Al 2020 Study)

Sociopreneur character building cannot rely solely on classroom learning. This process requires a concrete experiential learning approach. Students must be given the opportunity to be directly involved in real social projects. Critical reflection after each experience is also important to deepen their understanding. Habituation through routine activities will help internalize sociopreneurship values. Thus, character transformation will occur naturally and sustainably. (Motta & Galina 2023)

Students as an integral part of the younger generation have great potential in contributing to social change through the various innovations they produce. Pandanaran University Semarang, as a higher education institution, has a strategic responsibility to prepare young people who are not only competent in academics, but also able to provide real solutions to various social problems through the sociopreneurship approach. This is in line with the vision of Pandanaran University in producing graduates who are not only intellectually competent but also have high social awareness.

Various literature shows that individual character plays an important role in determining the success of social businesses because it forms the basis of a sociopreneur's behavior and decision-making. According to Bornstein and Davis (2010), sociopreneurship is built on a foundation of strong social values, which include concern for society, a sense of responsibility, integrity, and high empathy for social issues. These characteristics motivate sociopreneurs to remain committed to developing sustainable solutions despite facing significant business risks

or resource constraints. A study by Nga and Shamuganathan (2010) found that personality values such as altruism, self-confidence, and innovation have a positive correlation with social entrepreneurship performance, both in terms of financial success and social impact. This shows that character not only influences a person's motivation to start a social enterprise but also plays a role in shaping strategies and relationships with various stakeholders.

Other literature emphasizes that the development of character traits such as resilience, transformative leadership, and creativity are key to the sustainability of social businesses. According to Seelos and Mair (2017), sociopreneurs with resilient character tend to be able to adapt to uncertainty and find innovative ways to overcome market challenges. Leadership based on a clear social vision enables the mobilization of teams, volunteers, and business partners toward a common goal that benefits the wider community. Creativity and critical thinking skills help sociopreneurs design relevant and impactful products or services that are also competitive in the market. Thus, the literature emphasizes that the success of social businesses is not only determined by technical aspects such as capital and marketing strategies but also heavily depends on the individual character of sociopreneurs who can maintain a balance between social objectives and the long-term sustainability of their ventures.

However, the development of sociopreneur character in students cannot happen instantly and requires systematic efforts involving various parties both internal and external to the campus. Sociopreneur character includes important values such as social empathy, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and social leadership. These values need to be consistently instilled through various academic and non-academic activities integrated in the college curriculum and in student activities outside the classroom.

The rapidly growing digital era provides great opportunities for students in developing sociopreneur characters. Easier access to information and communication allows students to be more creative and innovative in finding solutions to existing social problems. The utilization of digital platforms also opens opportunities for students to connect with

various resources such as mentors, sociopreneur networks, and investors who support the development of social entrepreneurship.

Pandanaran University Semarang has actively encouraged the development of sociopreneur characters through various programs that have been implemented, such as the social business incubator program, social entrepreneurship training, sociopreneurship-themed seminars, and sociopreneur-based community service activities. However, so far there has been no in-depth research that systematically explores how the sociopreneur character development process runs at Pandanaran University.

Through this research, it is hoped that various aspects that play a role in the process of developing sociopreneur character in students can be identified in depth. The focus of this research is not only on the effectiveness of existing programs, but also on the challenges and obstacles faced by students in developing sociopreneur character. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide concrete recommendations for the university in developing a more effective and sustainable sociopreneur character development strategy.

This research has high significance both academically and practically. Academically, this research will provide additional contributions to the scientific repertoire regarding social entrepreneurship in Indonesia, especially related to the formation of sociopreneur character in students. Practically, the results of this study can be used as an evaluation material and basis for decision making for Pandanaran University Semarang in designing more effective policies and programs to support the development of sociopreneurship among students.

Thus, this research becomes very relevant and important to do because it is able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how sociopreneur characters can be developed effectively among students. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the efforts of universities to play an active role in overcoming various social problems faced by society through the sociopreneurship approach.

### 1. Sociopreneurship

Sociopreneurship is an entrepreneurial concept that aims to solve social problems with an innovative and sustainable business approach. According to Bornstein and Davis (2010), sociopreneurship combines the entrepreneurial spirit with a social mission, which results in a positive impact on society as well as sustainable financial benefits.

### 2. Sociopreneur Characters

Sociopreneur characters include key values such as social empathy, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and social leadership. According to Mair and Marti (2006), these characters are very important in carrying out social entrepreneurship activities, because a sociopreneur is required not only to be able to identify business opportunities but also to have high sensitivity to social problems around him.

### 3. Character Development in College Students

Character development in college students is a systematic process of instilling positive values aimed at forming a socially and morally mature personality. According to Lickona (2004), character development involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, which need to be supported by a conducive educational environment, such as a campus.

### 4. Theory Used

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)

This theory is used to understand the process of developing sociopreneur character in students, especially in the context of interactions between personal factors, the environment, and student behavior. Bandura emphasizes the importance of the learning process through observation, imitation, and modeling in character development.

Character Education Theory (Lickona, 2004)

This theory is the basis for exploring how sociopreneur character can be developed in an integrated manner in formal and non-formal education at universities. According to this theory, character development requires a holistic approach involving knowledge, feelings and actions.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research refers to the interactive relationship between the university academic environment, social entrepreneurship activities, and students' active participation in activities that support the development of sociopreneur character. This framework is expected to be able to comprehensively explain the various factors that support or hinder the formation of sociopreneur character in Pandanaran University Semarang students.

Through this literature review and theory, it is hoped that the research will be able to provide in-depth and systematic insights into how sociopreneur character is effectively developed among students of Pandanaran University Semarang.

## B. Materials and Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the development of sociopreneur character in Pandanaran University Semarang students. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore comprehensively and deeply the phenomenon under study, especially in the context of social interaction and character building.

### 1. Location and Research Subjects

The location of this research is Pandanaran University Semarang, which has implemented various social entrepreneurship programs. The research subjects consisted of active students who were directly involved in sociopreneur character development activities through programs held by the university. Subject selection was carried out using purposive sampling technique, based on the criteria of active involvement in sociopreneurship activities.

### 2. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain information about the experiences, views, and perceptions of students regarding the development of sociopreneur characters. Observation was carried out to see firsthand the process of student interaction in

sociopreneurship activities, while documentation includes various supporting documents such as activity reports, photos of activities, and university program documents related to sociopreneurship.

### 3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative analysis with a thematic approach. The data analysis process includes the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting out relevant data according to the research objectives, then presented in the form of descriptive narratives. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from the data.

### 4. Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity of the research data, source and method triangulation techniques were used. Source triangulation was done by comparing information from various research subjects, while method triangulation was done by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to strengthen the validity of the research results.

Through this methodology, it is hoped that the research will be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process of developing sociopreneur characters in Pandanaran University Semarang students.

Data on student involvement in real social enterprises shows that most students at Pandanaran University have had initial experience in social entrepreneurship activities, either individually or in groups. Based on a preliminary survey of 100 student respondents, around 45% have been directly involved in social business projects such as managing local MSME products, digital-based environmental campaigns, or community empowerment programs around the campus. Some 30% of students are recorded as having participated in social business incubator programs or sociopreneurship competitions organized by the university or external institutions, while the remainder have participated in social activities with entrepreneurial elements but not yet structured as sustainable businesses. This data

indicates a significant potential for students to develop strong sociopreneurial characteristics, as direct involvement in social initiatives provides practical experience that can enhance their skills, social awareness, and entrepreneurial orientation for the future.

## C. Result and Discussion

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, data obtained that the sociopreneur character of Pandanaran University Semarang students has developed through various programs organized by the university. The main characters identified include social empathy, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and social leadership. Most students show high social empathy, as seen from their active involvement in various social activities, such as environmental action and community service.

Students' creativity and innovation are also developed through participation in social business incubator programs and sociopreneurship competitions. Students are able to develop innovative ideas that are oriented towards solving social problems. The character of teamwork and social leadership is clearly visible in the process of implementing sociopreneurship projects, where students work together in teams and take leadership roles in turn.

### 1. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis shows that a conducive campus environment and university policy support play a major role in developing students' sociopreneur character. Holistically integrated academic and non-academic activities provide students with space to explore and develop character in real terms. In addition, interactions with local communities and mentors from among sociopreneur practitioners provide students with practical insights and strengthen their motivation in working in the field of social entrepreneurship.

However, the research also found several obstacles faced by students in the process of developing sociopreneur character, such as limited funds, limited time due to tight academic schedules, and lack of access to professional networks. These challenges need to be a concern for universities in developing more effective

strategies to support the development of sociopreneur characters in a sustainable manner.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the development of sociopreneur character in Pandanaran University Semarang students is effective, but still requires further support to overcome various obstacles that exist so that the results are more optimal.

## 2. Discussion

This study shows that the sociopreneur character of Pandanaran University Semarang students develops effectively through various integrated academic and non-academic programs. The dominant characters that emerge are social empathy, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and social leadership. This finding is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive theory, which emphasizes the importance of interactions between environment, behavior, and personal factors in character formation. A conducive university environment, supportive policies, and interactions with the community and mentors play a significant role in this process.

However, the research also found some challenges, such as limited funding, busy academic schedules, and limited access to professional networks. These obstacles require special attention from the university so that the development of sociopreneur character can run more optimally. A deeper integration strategy between academic programs, more adequate funding, and increased network access were identified as important needs to strengthen students' sociopreneur character.

Leadership characteristics are closely related to the success of social businesses because a sociopreneur not only acts as a decision maker but also as a key motivator who can inspire and motivate teams, partners, and target communities to collaborate in achieving common goals. Effective leadership enables a sociopreneur to build a clear social vision, communicate business objectives convincingly, and allocate resources appropriately to achieve sustainable results. According to Northouse (2019), leaders with strong communication skills, empathy, and managerial abilities can enhance team trust and commitment, ultimately strengthening the performance and sustainability

of social enterprises. In the context of Pandanaran University students, leadership qualities are key to mobilizing group members, local SME partners, and other stakeholders to create broader social impact through the sociopreneurship projects they undertake.

In addition to leadership, innovative character also plays an important role in determining the success of social businesses because it encourages the creation of products, services, and business strategies that are relevant to the needs of society. Innovation enables sociopreneurs to provide creative solutions to social problems, utilize digital technology, and create added value that distinguishes their businesses from competitors. Drucker (2014) refers to innovation as a vital element of entrepreneurship that drives adaptation to market changes and external environments. In the context of student social businesses, innovation can be reflected through the use of digital platforms for marketing social products, developing eco-friendly packaging, or collaborative business models with local communities. This ability to innovate not only enhances the competitiveness of social enterprises in the market but also ensures that social objectives are achieved in a sustainable and impactful manner, thereby supporting the long-term success of sociopreneurship.

## D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the development of sociopreneur characters in Pandanaran University Semarang students has been running well through academic and non-academic programs supported by a conducive university environment and relevant policies. Characters such as social empathy, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and social leadership have been effectively developed. However, to improve more optimal results, solutions to various challenges are needed, especially in terms of funding, time management, and increased access to professional networks. Universities are advised to strengthen internal and external support to create an ecosystem that is more conducive to the sustainable growth of sociopreneur character.

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Individual character plays a fundamental role in supporting the sustainability of social businesses because it serves as the foundation that guides the behavior and decisions of a sociopreneur in the long term. Character traits such as integrity, social responsibility, and

empathy enable a social entrepreneur to maintain consistency in pursuing a vision and mission focused on community well-being. According to Bandura (2018), character rooted in strong moral values influences how individuals interact with stakeholders, build trust, and maintain business reputation. In the context of Pandanaran University students, developing these character traits helps them run social businesses that are not only focused on short-term profits but also ensure sustainable benefits for the communities they serve. With strong character, a social entrepreneur will be better equipped to face challenges, make ethical decisions, and maintain commitment to social goals even under market pressure or resource constraints.

In addition, characteristics such as leadership, innovation, and resilience are very influential in ensuring the growth and sustainability of social businesses amid environmental changes and the dynamics of community needs. Leadership helps a sociopreneur build a solid network of cooperation, motivate teams, and establish strategic partnerships that support business sustainability. Innovation enables them to adapt, create new solutions, and maintain the relevance of social businesses in the face of market competition. Meanwhile, mental resilience helps social entrepreneurs stay focused on their social goals despite facing failures or operational challenges. This reflection highlights that the sustainability of social businesses does not solely depend on external factors such as capital or technology but also on the individual character strengths of those running them. Therefore, developing the character of students as future social entrepreneurs is a crucial investment in creating sustainable social businesses that have a broad impact on society.

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