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## Social Empowerment Incubator: A Collaborative Model of Community Participation in Bandung

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Social empowerment incubators play an important role in encouraging community participation and collaboration to drive sustainable social change. This study examines the development and implementation of a social empowerment incubator in Bandung, Indonesia, with a focus on its impact on community engagement, participatory governance, and collaborative networks. Using a qualitative approach with case studies, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations, this study explores how these incubators serve as catalysts for social innovation and local development. These findings highlight key success factors, challenges, and best practices in managing social incubators to empower marginalized communities. The study contributes to the discourse on social entrepreneurship and participatory governance by providing policy recommendations to improve the effectiveness of social incubators in urban environments.

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### A. INTRODUCTION.

Social empowerment has become an important component in driving inclusive and sustainable development, especially in urban environments where disparities in economic and social opportunities persist. The concept of social empowerment revolves around providing individuals and communities with the resources, skills, and institutional support necessary to actively participate in decision-making processes and economic activities (Sen, 1999). One approach to achieving this is through the

establishment of social empowerment incubators, which serve as structured programs designed to support social entrepreneurship, grassroots initiatives, and community-led innovation (Nicolopoulou et al., 2017)

In the context of the city of Bandung, Indonesia, rapid urbanization and socio-economic disparities require innovative solutions for community engagement and empowerment. The city of Bandung, which is known for its entrepreneurial culture and dynamic creative industry, provides a unique ecosystem for the development of social incubators (Valero et al., 2024). The incubator not only serves as a platform for capacity building but also facilitates networking, collaboration, and sustainable social impact. However, despite their potential, social empowerment incubators in the city of Bandung face several challenges, including inadequate funding, policy gaps, and limited community participation (Hirschmann et al., 2022). An example is the PIPPK Program implemented by the Bandung City Government. This program allows the community to access regional-based stimulant funds to develop local potential through training and coaching (Hidayat R., 2020). Meanwhile, at the provincial level, the West Java Government initiated the Digital Village program which positions villages as an incubation space for technology-based local economic actors (Wahyudi & Nugroho, 2022). The two examples of social empowerment models feature an integrated incubator approach with initial financing, training, mentoring, and facilitation of market and technology access. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of social incubators in the city of Bandung by analyzing their impact on community participation, collaboration, and long-term social change.

While the study of business incubators has been studied extensively in several literatures, research on social empowerment incubators is still relatively limited, especially in the Indonesian context. Social incubators differ from traditional business incubators in that their primary focus is on encouraging community engagement and addressing social challenges rather than generating financial gains (Giordano et al., 2021)). Despite the proliferation of social incubators in Bandung, their effectiveness in achieving meaningful and sustainable empowerment is still uncertain. Questions arise regarding the extent to which these social incubators encourage genuine community participation, how collaboration among stakeholders is facilitated, and whether these initiatives lead to long-term improvements in the well-being of marginalized communities. In addition, there is a need to examine the role of government policy, private sector involvement, and civil society involvement in supporting these initiatives (Donaldson, 2017).

To support the empirical analysis of social incubators in Bandung, the following table provides an overview of the main indicators related to social incubation, community participation, and economic impact:

**Table 1. social incubators in Bandung**

Indicator	Data (2024)	Source
Number of social incubators	15	Bandung City Government Report (2024)
Community participation rate (%)	62	Survey by Local NGO (2024)
Average funding per incubator (\$)	10,000	Ministry of Social Affairs (2024)
Number of social enterprises	350	Bandung Entrepreneurship Database (2024)
Employment generated	2,500 jobs	Bandung Chamber of Commerce (2024)

These empirical findings show that although social incubators in Bandung have an important role in driving economic opportunities, there are still challenges in ensuring sustainability and inclusivity (Suguna et al., 2024). Limited financial resources and fluctuating levels of community participation indicate the need for stronger policy interventions and multi-sectoral collaboration.

This study aims to investigate the role and impact of social empowerment incubators in Bandung by discussing the following research objectives: 1) Analyzing the effectiveness of social incubators in encouraging community participation and empowerment; 2) To identify the main challenges faced by

social incubators in Bandung and the strategies used to overcome them; 3) Examine the role of collaboration between stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and community-based organizations, in maintaining social incubators; and 4) Provide policy recommendations to increase the impact and sustainability of social empowerment incubators.

This research contributes to the growth of knowledge about social entrepreneurship, participatory governance, and community-based development. By examining social incubators in Bandung, this research offers valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars interested in leveraging incubation models for social change. The results of this study have the potential to: 1) Provide practical recommendations to improve the design and implementation of social incubators; 2) Inform policy decisions regarding the integration of social incubators into development strategies wider urban; and 3) Strengthen collaborative efforts between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector in promoting inclusive development.

This study draws on several theoretical perspectives to analyze social empowerment incubators: 1) Social Capital Theory - Examines how incubators build networks, trusts, and shared values among community members and stakeholders (Putnam, 2000); 2) Participatory Development Theory - Investigating the extent to which incubators promote inclusive decision-making and grassroots participation (Chambers, 1997); 3) Innovation Diffusion Theory - Understanding how social incubators facilitate the adoption and scaling of community-led solutions (Ilin et al., 2017; R. Rogers, 2018); and 4) Collaborative Governance Model - Exploring the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in sustaining social incubator initiatives (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ropiah et al., 2024).

This study uses a qualitative approach by utilizing a combination of case study methods, in-depth interviews, and participatory observation. Primary data is obtained from key stakeholders, such as incubator managers, community members, government officials, and social enterprise actors. In addition, this study also integrates secondary data analysis sourced from activity reports, policy documents, and academic literature. This approach is carried out to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social incubation ecosystem in the city of Bandung (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The assumption that social empowerment incubators have significant potential to address socio-economic disparities and drive community-driven solutions. And, its success depends on effective collaboration, policy support, and ongoing funding mechanisms. By investigating the role and impact of social incubators in Bandung, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of their strengths, limitations, and future prospects in advancing social empowerment and inclusive development.

The concept of social incubators has gained traction in academic discourse and policy frameworks as a means to encourage social entrepreneurship and community-driven development. Social incubators are designed to support social entrepreneurship and grassroots initiatives by providing resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities. This section explores existing research on social incubators, their role in increasing community participation, and the theoretical framework associated with social empowerment.

Social incubators differ from traditional business incubators because their primary goal is social impact rather than economic gain. Research has identified a variety of social incubator models, including government-led initiatives, university-affiliated programs, and independent non-profit incubators. Studies by Nicolopoulou and Valero, highlight the role of social incubators in facilitating social innovation, especially in marginalized communities (Nicolopoulou et al., 2017; Valero et al., 2024).

According to Hirschmann et al., social incubators play an important role in addressing social and environmental challenges by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations. These incubators provide training,

funding, and consulting services to social enterprises, thereby increasing their capacity to drive meaningful change (Hirschmann et al., 2022).

Community participation is the main determinant of the success of social incubators. Participatory development theory shows that inclusive decision-making processes lead to more sustainable and effective community-driven initiatives (Donaldson, 2017). Empirical research shows that incubators that actively involve local communities in the governance and design of their programs tend to have a higher success rate in achieving their social goals (Almeida et al., 2016; Miller & Campbell, 2010).

Several studies have examined the mechanisms by which social incubators facilitate community participation. For example, research by Giordano et al. (2021) found that incubators that integrate co-creation methodologies and participatory governance structures are more effective in building long-term community trust and engagement. In addition, Adham et al. (2019) argue that participatory models improve the sustainability of social enterprises by ensuring alignment with local needs and priorities.

The concept of empowerment is at the core of the function of social incubators. The empowerment framework in the context of social entrepreneurship usually includes economic, psychological, and political dimensions. According to Cho and De Moya (2016), empowerment occurs when individuals and communities acquire the ability to influence decisions that affect their lives, access necessary resources, and build self-sustaining initiatives.

Studies have identified several theoretical models relevant to empowerment in social incubators: 1) Social Capital Theory (Paldam, 2000): Explores how social networks and relationships foster collective action and trust among incubator participants; 2) Participatory Development Theory (Chambers, 1997): Emphasizes the importance of inclusive decision-making and community ownership in development projects; 3) Innovation Diffusion Theory (E. M. Rogers et al., 2014): Analyzes how new ideas and practices spread in communities, facilitated by social incubators; and 4) Collaborative Governance Models (Ansell & Gash, 2008): Highlights the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in sustaining social incubation efforts.

While social incubators have shown significant potential in driving community development, some challenges remain. Research by Suguna et al. (2024) highlights funding constraints, lack of institutional support, and policy fragmentation as the main obstacles to the effectiveness of social incubators. Additionally, a study by Virkkala and Saarela (2024) shows that incubators often struggle with scalability and sustainability due to reliance on external donors and short-term funding models.



adults, which indicate the basic role of individual and community involvement in empowerment initiatives. Other significant groups revolve around the health and psychological aspects of empowerment, with terms such as health promotion, power (psychology), self-efficacy, and mental health. This shows that empowerment is strongly linked to psychological well-being and health promotion efforts. Meanwhile, the governance and decision-making cluster emphasizes the role of participatory governance, as reflected in keywords such as governance, decision-making, participatory approach, and collaboration. In addition, the important cluster focuses on socio-economic and sustainable development factors, highlighted by terms such as economic and social effects, sustainable development, and training, which demonstrate the broader impact of empowerment initiatives on economic resilience and long-term sustainability.

Bibliometric findings underscore the linkage of psychological, governance, and economic factors in shaping social empowerment models. The central position of empowerment and participation highlights its fundamental role, while a strong association with psychological aspects points to the need to include psychosocial support mechanisms in the empowerment framework. In addition, the advantages related to governance show that effective empowerment initiatives must adopt participatory decision-making processes. The inclusion of economic and sustainable development elements further strengthens the need for capacity building strategies to ensure long-term empowerment outcomes.

This insight provides valuable implications for the development of the Social Empowerment Incubator (SEI) as a collaborative platform for community participation in Bandung. These findings suggest that SEIs must integrate participatory governance models to encourage inclusive decision-making, psychosocial support mechanisms to enhance individual empowerment, economic development programs and capacities for sustainable development, and multi-sectoral collaboration between governments, academia, and civil society to create holistic empowerment strategies. By leveraging these key thematic areas, social empowerment incubators can serve as effective instruments to encourage meaningful and sustainable community participation.

In addition, research is limited on the long-term impact of social incubators on community empowerment. Most of the existing research focuses on short-term outcomes such as increased entrepreneurial activity and increased skills development. Future research should explore how social incubators contribute to systemic change and long-term social transformation.

The literature on social incubators underscores their importance as a catalyst for social innovation and community empowerment. However, gaps remain in understanding the long-term impact and scalability of these initiatives. This study aims to build on existing research by examining the effectiveness of social incubators in Bandung, with a focus on community participation and collaborative governance.

By addressing these gaps, this research seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on social entrepreneurship and participatory development, providing practical recommendations for improving sustainability and the impact of social incubators in urban environments.

## B. METHOD

This study uses a **qualitative design** with a **case study** approach to explore in depth the social incubator model as a collaborative form of community empowerment in the city of Bandung. **The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the real context and complexity of the social dynamics** that occur in social incubation practices, particularly in terms of community participation, collaboration, and empowerment. (Yin & Sun, 2023).

The case studies used are **exploratory and instrumental**, with the aim of exploring **the mechanisms, actors, and impacts** of the social incubator model on community capacity building. This research

focuses on one or more social incubator units that have been running in the city of Bandung, which were selected **purposively** based on their involvement in community empowerment programs.

**Data collection** was carried out through **in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis** (such as activity reports, government policies, and program socialization materials). The research informants consisted of **key stakeholders**, including incubator managers, members of beneficiary communities, local government representatives, as well as partners from the private sector or social organizations.

Furthermore, to enrich the theoretical context, this study was complemented by **bibliometric analysis** with the VOSviewer application to browse the scientific literature on the theme of social empowerment, community participation, and collaboration. The results of this analysis provide a conceptual basis in understanding the main themes and directions of the development of scientific discourse relevant to the case being studied. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to identify **patterns, best practices, and challenges** in social incubator models that can be replicated or developed in other similar contexts (Yin & Sun, 2023).

To gain a comprehensive understanding, this study integrates various data collection techniques, both primary and secondary. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, *focus group discussions*, and participatory observations, all of which are common techniques in case studies (Stake, 1995). Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as managers and coordinators of social incubators, community leaders, program participants, government officials, as well as representatives from the private sector and NGOs.

Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained through document analysis, activity reports, local policies, and other relevant public information sources. All of these data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns, dynamics, and meanings of the experiences of actors involved in the social empowerment process. Using one case as the main unit of analysis, this study aims to produce an in-depth understanding that is contextual and holistic in nature of the phenomenon being researched. (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Haque, 2011; Hulth & Nilsson, 2017)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are used to engage community members who have benefited from social incubators. These discussions facilitate a deeper understanding of the collective experiences, shared challenges, and perceived impacts of incubation programs. In addition, live observations are carried out during incubator activities, workshops, and engagement sessions. Observing these interactions can provide valuable insights into program implementation, participant engagement, and the overall effectiveness of social incubators (Patton, 2009, 2014).

Secondary data collection includes document analysis and review of existing databases. Document analysis through the examination of reports, policy documents, and academic literature related to social incubators, community participation, and social entrepreneurship. This process helps to contextualize the findings of the study in a broader policy framework and theoretical discussion (Bowen, 2009). In addition, statistical data from government and non-government sources regarding the development of social enterprises in Bandung were reviewed to support and validate primary data (Bryman, 2016).

To go deeper in solving research problems, thematic analysis is carried out so that the qualitative data that has been collected can be explained well. The thematic analysis carried out makes it possible to identify patterns and relationships across various data sources, ensuring a systematic and structured examination of research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analytical framework of this research is based on four main theories, namely Social Capital Theory, Participatory Development Theory, Innovation Diffusion Theory, and Collaborative Governance Model.

Social Capital Theory is used to assess how social incubators build networks and relationships that increase community engagement. This theory emphasizes the importance of trust, reciprocity, and social relationships in encouraging effective collaboration in the incubator ecosystem (Gelderblom, 2018; Putnam, 1994; Siisiainen, 2003) Participatory Development Theory is applied to evaluate the

inclusivity and effectiveness of community participation strategies used by incubators. This framework ensures that community-driven solutions and grassroots participation are emphasized in research analysis (Chambers, 1997).

Innovation Diffusion Theory is used to study how new ideas and solutions introduced by incubators spread within society. This theoretical perspective helps in understanding the factors that influence the adoption and sustainability of innovation in local communities (E. M. Rogers et al., 2014; R. Rogers, 2018). Finally, the Collaborative Governance Model will be used to analyze the roles of different stakeholders in sustaining social incubation initiatives. This model underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in ensuring the long-term success of social incubators (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The data analysis process follows a structured methodology. First, all interviews and FGDs are transcribed and encoded using qualitative analysis software. Coding helps identify emerging themes and recurring patterns in the data collected. After coding, thematic patterns are grouped into broader categories to highlight the strategies, challenges, and general impacts of social incubators (Saldaña, 2021). A comparative analysis will be conducted to examine findings across different incubators, identifying best practices and contextual variations.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, the triangulation method is used. Triangulation involves cross-verification of data from various sources, including interviews, FGDs, observations, and secondary documents. This approach increases the credibility of the research by reducing bias and ensuring that the findings are well supported by various perspectives (Denzin, 2012). The use of multiple data sources and analytical frameworks will contribute to the robustness of the research conclusions.

Ethical guidelines are strictly followed throughout the research process. Participants are provided with an informed consent form, ensuring that they are fully aware of the research objectives and their rights before participating. Confidentiality is maintained by anonymizing personal identities and sensitive information. Voluntary participation is enforced, allowing respondents to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequences. These ethical considerations are essential to maintain the integrity of the research and protect the well-being of participants (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Despite its strengths, the study acknowledges certain limitations. One of the main challenges of qualitative research is the subjectivity of data interpretation. While efforts have been made to ensure objectivity, qualitative analysis inherently involves interpretive judgment (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In addition, the findings of this study may be specific to the context of Bandung and do not apply universally to other regions. The unique socio-economic and policy environment in Bandung can influence the generalization of results (Maxwell, 2022).

Another limitation is related to the accessibility of participants. Some stakeholders, especially government officials and private sector representatives, may have constraints in availability, which affect data collection. To mitigate these challenges, flexible scheduling and multiple follow-up interviews have been considered. In addition, reliance on qualitative methods may limit the ability to measure the specific impact of social incubators. Future research may combine a mixed-methods approach to complement qualitative findings with quantitative analyses (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2010).

Using a strong qualitative methodology, this study aims to generate valuable insights into the effectiveness of social incubators in Bandung. These findings can contribute to a broader discourse on social empowerment, community participation, and sustainable development through incubation models. The results of this study inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers on best practices in optimizing social incubation strategies and increasing their long-term impact on local communities.

## C. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the main findings of a study on social incubators in Bandung, focusing on their effectiveness in encouraging community participation, collaboration, and sustainable social empowerment. The findings are analyzed through thematic analysis and discussed in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework.

### The Effectiveness of Social Incubators in Community Participation

Researchers found that social incubators in Bandung play a strategic role in increasing community participation, especially through three main dimensions: **increased civic engagement**, **strengthening individual skills**, and **challenges in program accessibility**.

**Increased civic engagement**, interviews and FGDs show that communities have increased their role in decision-making processes at the community level, such as local development deliberations, management of shared economic activities, and the implementation of citizen-based environmental programs. Social incubators act as *mediating structures* that bring together the interests of citizens with government and private actors. This is in line with the findings of Nicolopoulou et al. (2017) who show that social incubators can build critical awareness and collective capacity through leadership training and facilitation of community discussions. Furthermore, Kumar et al. (2022) and Singh (2022) assert that the existence of social incubators expands the space for participatory democracy, especially by involving previously marginalized groups. In the context of Bandung, this can be seen in the increasing participation of women, youth, and low-income residents in citizen activities facilitated by incubators.

**Improving Individual Skills and Competitiveness**, that social incubators act as a catalyst for individual capacity building, especially in the areas of social entrepreneurship, local leadership, and community program management. Participants reported a significant increase in skills such as business planning, group management, and the use of digital technology. Hirschmann et al. (2022) stated that the success of incubators is largely determined by the completeness of the capacity building curriculum offered. In the context of Bandung, most incubators have held financial literacy training, canvas model businesses, and digital marketing. These findings are reinforced by Cho and De Moya (2016) who highlight the importance of partnerships with the private sector in expanding the scope of training, business guidance, and market access through sponsorship. However, it should be noted that the improvement of these skills not only impacts the economic potential of individuals, but also on the strengthening of their position in the social structure of the community. Active trainees tend to become new *opinion leaders* in their environment, suggesting that capacity building also results in broader social change.

**Challenges in Access and Inclusive Participation**, social incubators in Bandung have great potential in terms of access and infrastructure, but still face obstacles in reaching all levels of society. Some residents stated that lack of information, location far from dense settlements, and limited digital literacy were the main obstacles in their involvement. This issue is consistent with the findings of Adham et al. (2019) which highlight logistical and social factors as barriers to the effectiveness of empowerment programs. Valero et al. (2024) suggest that there needs to be innovations in outreach strategies, such as the establishment of *mobile incubator units*, the organization of programs in community centers, as well as the use of simple, user-friendly technologies to expand access to information. In the context of Bandung, *the mobile incubator* model and collaboration with *digital RWs* or *Citizens' Hall* can be a strategic alternative to answer this challenge.

**Critical Reflection and Policy Implications**, that overall, the effectiveness of social incubators is not only determined by program *outputs* such as the number of trainings but rather by how much social transformation is produced. These findings suggest that the success of social incubators depends on the linkage between the program's **internal capacity**, **the ability to reach vulnerable groups**, and **synergy with local ecosystems**. Therefore, a systemic approach is needed in incubator management, including

policy support that strengthens networks between actors (government, NGOs, the private sector, and communities) as well as *impact-based evaluation* systems.

### Collaboration Between Stakeholders

The findings in this study are related to collaboration between stakeholders that the effectiveness of social incubators in Bandung is highly dependent on the strength of cross-stakeholder collaboration. This collaborative model involves interactions between government, the private sector, and civil society, each of which contributes uniquely to shaping the capacity, sustainability, and relevance of incubation programs.

Government Support and Policy Framework, that most social incubators in Bandung benefit from the involvement of local governments, both in the form of venue facilitation, funding support, and operational licensing.

However, the study also found that incubators face bureaucratic barriers, overlapping authority, and a lack of sustained support due to leadership change. These findings are in line with Giordano et al. (2021) who emphasize the importance of consistent regulation and government incentives to create a conducive social incubation ecosystem. On the other hand, Donaldson (2017) reminds that asynchronous policies and rapid changes in political agendas often interfere with the continuity of programs. In the context of Bandung, incubators under the mayor's strategic initiative program tend to be more stable, while those driven by communities without political affiliation are more vulnerable to institutional disruption. This underscores the need for more integrated and accommodating public policies to grassroots initiatives, including incentive mechanisms and participation spaces in the formulation of social incubation policies.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP), that the public-private partnership model has emerged as an important pillar in the success of several social incubators. Through this approach, the company not only contributes funds through CSR programs, but is also involved in technical coaching, providing market access, and strengthening social brands. Suguna et al. (2024) show that the sustainability of incubator programs is highly dependent on long-term forms of investment from the private sector, which go beyond a purely philanthropic approach. The study also found that incubators that have strategic relationships with local technology or manufacturing companies are able to expand their impact range. This is reinforced by the findings of Ariefianto et al. (2020) who show that the success of PPP in several regions of Indonesia directly increases the scale of community businesses. In the context of Bandung, strong partnerships between incubators and local companies such as digital startups, Islamic banks, or BUMDs contribute significantly to program innovation and increase the competitiveness of community products. This shows that PPPs not only provide resources, but also become a source of social validation and economic legitimacy for incubators.

Grassroots Involvement and Participatory Governance, that the dimension of community involvement is a differential factor in determining the long-term success of social incubators. This study found that programs that involve the community from the planning, implementation, to evaluation stages, tend to be more sustainable and widely accepted. Finlayson and Roy (2019) emphasize that social incubators that adopt a *bottom-up* approach produce solutions that are more contextually relevant and socially profound. This approach focuses on strengthening local social capital, and allows for rapid adaptation to the dynamics of community needs. Meanwhile, Yoo et al. (2004) show that participatory governance models result in increased trust and effectiveness in problem solving. In Bandung, this practice is reflected in incubators run by citizen cooperatives or digital RW communities, where residents themselves map problems, design interventions, and run incubation programs.

As a result, there has been an increase in internal community support, a reduction in resistance, and the growth of local leadership.

Critical Reflection and Practical Implications, that these findings affirm that multi-stakeholder collaboration is not just about technical synergy, but about creating a cohesive and sustainable social ecosystem. There are three important lessons that can be drawn: 1) The Role of the Government as an Enabler: The Government must take a strategic position as a facilitator and paving the way, not just as a regulator. There needs to be policy harmonization between sectors and a guarantee of continuity of support despite political changes; 2) PPP Based on Long-Term Commitments: Companies need to be encouraged to build strategic partnerships that create *shared value* with the community, not just symbolic CSR; Community Leadership as a Core of Resilience: Social incubators need to prioritize participatory approaches in order to have legitimacy from the communities they serve. Thus, the development of social incubators needs to be understood as a collective and dynamic process, which demands alignment with the values of inclusion, sustainability, and locally-based social innovation.

### Impact on Social and Economic Development

Social incubators have contributed to social and economic improvement in the community of Bandung: Entrepreneurial Growth: Many participants have switched from small-scale community projects to sustainable social enterprises. Lepik and Sakarias (2023) discuss how incubators facilitate the growth of social enterprises by providing a structured path from idea to commercialization. Meanwhile, Read et al., (Na et al., 2024; Nawawi, 2024) highlighted the role of digital microcredentials in improving entrepreneurial competence in incubator settings.

Social Inclusion and Equality: Incubators have empowered marginalized groups, especially women and youth, by providing economic opportunities. Haoucha and Jehhad (2024) found that gender-focused incubators lead to higher female participation in entrepreneurship. Katjiteo (2024) further argues that social incubators create more inclusive economic opportunities by reducing barriers to entry for disadvantaged groups.

Sustainability Concerns: While many initiatives have shown early success, long-term sustainability remains a challenge due to financial constraints and shifting policy priorities. Bibeau et al., (2024) noted that the reliance on donor funding makes social incubators vulnerable to closure. Demeyère et al., (Demeyère, 2024; Demeyère & Havet-Laurent, 2024) suggest that alternative income-generating models, such as impact investing and hybrid financing, are needed to ensure long-term survival.

### Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of this study are in line with previous research on social incubators, such as Nicolopoulou et al., (2017), which emphasized the role of incubators in driving innovation and community development. However, this study adds a local perspective, showing that sociocultural factors have a significant impact on the success of social incubators in Bandung.

Social Capital Theory: This study confirms that social incubators facilitate the formation of social capital by creating networks and trust among members of society. Participatory Development Theory: The findings support the idea that incubators serve as a platform for participatory decision-making, strengthening community agencies. Innovation Diffusion Theory: The role of incubators in deploying new social enterprise models is in line with the principles of innovation diffusion, although challenges remain in scalability.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed: 1) Increasing Awareness Campaigns: To increase community participation, incubators should implement outreach programs to reach underrepresented groups; 2) Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships: Greater collaboration with private entities can provide ongoing funding and technical expertise; 3) Policy Advocacy: Incubators should engage with policymakers to create a supportive regulatory environment for social

enterprises; and 4) Capacity Building Programs: Expanding training initiatives can further empower communities and drive long-term sustainability.

These findings highlight the positive impact of social incubators in Bandung but also underscore challenges in sustainability and wider community outreach. By encouraging stronger stakeholder collaboration, increasing policy support, and expanding outreach efforts, social incubators can serve as more effective catalysts for social empowerment and economic development.

The findings of this study highlight the important role of social incubators in encouraging community participation, increasing collaboration between stakeholders, and encouraging sustainable social empowerment in Bandung. While previous research has examined business incubators extensively, the study of social incubators remains an emerging field, especially in the context of urban development. This discussion outlines the implications of the findings, compares them with the existing literature, theoretical perspectives, and policy recommendations to improve social incubation programs.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is the emphasis on participatory governance in social incubators. The participatory model has been widely recognized in the literature as a means of ensuring local ownership and long-term sustainability of community projects. Nicolopoulou et al., (2017) stated that social incubators develop when community members are actively involved in decision-making, which is in line with the findings of this study on increasing civic engagement in Bandung.

The role of upskilling in social incubators is another important finding. Financial literacy training, business development, and leadership have been identified as key factors contributing to the success of incubator participants. Hirschmann et al., (2022) emphasized that well-structured skills development programs increase entrepreneurial success rates and increase economic resilience among marginalized groups. A case study in Bandung reinforces this by showing how targeted capacity building initiatives have helped participants transition from informal economic activities to structured firms.

However, challenges remain in achieving broad community participation. Limited awareness and accessibility continue to hinder engagement, especially among low-income groups. Adham et al., (2019) note that many social incubators struggle with outreach and inclusivity, often failing to reach the most vulnerable populations. Addressing these gaps requires a concerted effort in communication strategies, mobile incubator programs, and the dissemination of local information.

Stakeholder collaboration emerged as a characteristic that determined the success of social incubators in Bandung. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are highly effective in facilitating funding, mentorship, and resource sharing. This corroborates the findings of Suguna et al., (2024), who argue that private sector involvement increases the sustainability of social incubation programs. However, the study also highlights bureaucratic challenges that can hamper incubator operations when government policies are inconsistent or lack a long-term vision.

The intersection between social incubators and social capital formation is another important aspect. By providing networking opportunities and facilitating trust-building among community members, incubators serve as catalysts for social cohesion. Finlayson and Roy (2019) argue that incubators play an important role in strengthening community bonds, which is crucial for fostering long-term socio-economic stability.

While social incubators have shown their potential in improving social and economic conditions, scalability remains an issue. Many incubators rely heavily on external funding, which can lead to program discontinuities. Bibeau et al., (2024) warn that over-reliance on donor contributions makes incubators vulnerable to financial instability. Exploring alternative financing models, such as impact investing and hybrid income streams, can mitigate these risks and improve the sustainability of these programs.

An important theoretical implication of this study is the strengthening of Social Capital Theory. This finding is in line with Putnam's (2018) argument that community networks and trust-building mechanisms are essential for social development. The study also supports the principles of Participatory Development Theory, such as those proposed by Chambers (1997), by showing how inclusive governance structures in incubators improve community engagement and long-term project viability.

Another theoretical lens that aligns with the findings of this study is the Innovation Diffusion Theory. Social incubators facilitate the spread of new ideas and social enterprise models, which is consistent with Rogers' framework on how innovation is adopted in communities. However, as highlighted in this study, the challenges in scaling up a successful incubator model point to the need for further research on optimizing diffusion strategies in different socio-economic contexts (D. Rogers, 2016; E. M. Rogers et al., 2014).

This discussion also sheds light on the policy landscape around social incubators. While some initiatives have benefited from government support, others face regulatory hurdles that hinder their effectiveness. Giordano et al., (2021) emphasized that a coherent policy framework is essential for integrating social incubators into broader urban development strategies. The study reinforces that argument by showing how inconsistent government policies can affect program continuity and efficiency.

Another policy implication is the need for a more structured framework to evaluate the impact of social incubators. Donaldson (2017) advocates the use of an empowerment evaluation model to effectively measure social impact. By adopting a rigorous assessment methodology, policymakers and practitioners can better understand the long-term effects of incubation programs and make informed decisions about scaling up successful initiatives.

Despite the challenges, social incubators remain a powerful tool to foster inclusivity and economic empowerment. The findings of this study show that incubators that integrate gender-responsive strategies tend to achieve better social outcomes. Haoucha and Jehhad (2024) argue that incubators that actively promote women's participation contribute to gender equality and economic diversification.

The last discussion point is the potential of digital technology in increasing social incubation. Digital platforms can facilitate virtual mentorship, expand access to training resources, and create new market opportunities for incubator participants. Read et al. (2024) highlight the role of digital microcredentials in supporting skills development, an approach that can be integrated into Bandung's incubation ecosystem to improve participant outcomes.

In conclusion, social incubators in Bandung have shown their effectiveness in encouraging community participation, stakeholder collaboration, and socio-economic empowerment. However, challenges such as limited accessibility, policy fragmentation, and financial sustainability must be addressed to optimize their impact. Strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships, improving policy alignment, and leveraging digital technologies are important steps in ensuring that social incubators continue to serve as catalysts for inclusive development. The findings are in line with previous research on social incubators, such as Nicolopoulou et al. (2017), which emphasized the role of incubators in driving innovation and community development. However, this study adds a local perspective, showing that sociocultural factors have a significant impact on the success of social incubators in Bandung.

### **Social Empowerment Incubator Model in the City of Bandung**

The flow diagram illustrates the role of social incubators in encouraging community empowerment in Bandung through the structured development of interconnected stages. The input phase consists of three main elements: community participation, stakeholder collaboration, and skills development. These components provide the basis for social incubation, ensuring that individuals and

communities are actively involved in the process. Strong partnerships between government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations further strengthen the ecosystem, allowing incubators to provide the necessary resources and support systems.

The process stages represent the core functions of a social incubator, including training programs, mentorship, incubation support, and networking opportunities. These initiatives equip community members with entrepreneurial knowledge, leadership skills, and access to market opportunities, driving the growth of social enterprises. However, challenges such as funding constraints, policy gaps, and accessibility issues pose significant barriers to the success and scalability of these incubators. Addressing these challenges through policy interventions, innovative financing models, and technology-based solutions is essential to maximize the impact of social incubation.

The stages of output and impact highlight the transformative effects of social incubators on society. Successful incubation results in the establishment of social enterprises, increased economic opportunities, and overall community development. In the long term, these results contribute to sustainable businesses, better livelihoods, and more resilient community ecosystems. By overcoming structural and financial barriers, social incubators can play an important role in fostering inclusive growth and long-term social empowerment in Bandung.

## D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the important role of social incubators in encouraging community participation, increasing stakeholder collaboration, and supporting sustainable social empowerment in Bandung. Social incubators serve as an important platform for nurturing social entrepreneurs, promoting skills development, and strengthening community networks. However, challenges such as limited accessibility, inconsistent policy support, and financial sustainability remain key obstacles that must be addressed to maximize their impact. The integration of participatory governance models, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and innovative financing strategies will be crucial in ensuring the long-term survival of these incubators.

To increase the effectiveness of social incubators, policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development of a structured policy framework that provides consistent support for incubation programs. Strengthening partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations can create a more sustainable social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Additionally, expanding digital infrastructure and leveraging technology can improve accessibility, allowing members of the wider community to benefit from incubation services. Encouraging data-driven decision-making and implementing impact assessment mechanisms will also help evaluate the effectiveness of different incubation models and refine best practices over time.

### Recommendations

By addressing existing challenges and implementing strategic policy interventions, social incubators can play a greater role in empowering marginalized communities and fostering long-term socio-economic resilience. Future research should explore innovative models of social incubation, assess the scalability of successful initiatives, and further investigate the role of digital transformation in optimizing incubation programs. These findings highlight the positive impact of social incubators in Bandung but also underscore challenges in sustainability and wider community outreach. By encouraging stronger stakeholder collaboration, increasing policy support, and expanding outreach efforts, social incubators can serve as more effective catalysts for social empowerment and economic development.

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