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Utilizing Interpersonal Communication and MBTI Tests to Promote Self-Confidence in Out-of-School Youths

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Abstract

Dropping out of school is a phenomenon that no one wants. Especially in Indonesia, all citizens are entitled to a minimum of 12 years of education. This aims to help them have competitiveness that can support their welfare. Unfortunately, factors such as economic constraints and family problems have led to the dropout phenomenon. Children who drop out of school not only lose the opportunity to develop themselves, but they also become inferior. This phenomenon was captured by a French NGO called Life Project for Youth (LP4Y). LP4Y seeks to help out-of-school youth by providing informal education. In carrying out its mission, LP4Y realizes that they do not always have experts to teach the knowledge or skills needed by the youth, so it collaborates with Ciputra University Surabaya as a partner in developing fostered youth. Specifically, in this activity, the purpose of the community service is to strengthen the confidence of the fostered youth through interpersonal communication and psychological tests. The methods used are service learning, including one-on-one conversation based on interpersonal communication techniques, psychological testing using the MBTI test, and mentoring. The participants of this activity were 25 people. This activity increases participants' understanding of their problems and personality to have a more structured plan to solve their problems. Thus, they become more confident about developing themselves in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

Good quality human resources are certainly not formed out of thin air. Educational efforts are needed so that humans are able to adapt to change, keep up with technological developments, and have high productivity. This is encouraged by the Indonesian government through the 12-year Compulsory Education program (Hakim, 2020). The implementation of compulsory education starts from the elementary to the high school level. On one hand, this is a good thing, but on the other hand, this obligation also instills the idea that education will elevate humans and demean other humans; humans will be considered valuable if they have an education that is useful for others (Hasanah et al., 2019). It is this thinking that causes dropouts to have low self-esteem often. This inferiority makes them demotivated to develop themselves and become unproductive.

Most of these dropouts come from underprivileged families. They face economic problems, broken homes, and difficulty accessing educational institutions (Lestari et al., 2020). If they continue to live humbly, their future will surely be jeopardized. They will continue to be trapped in the same problems and may pass them on to the next generation.

The problem of out-of-school youth in Indonesia cannot be ignored. In August 2024, 4.6 million children dropped out of school. Most are at the secondary, Junior, and Senior High School levels (Decembria, 2024). Without formal education, out-of-school youth lack the required competitiveness and productivity, making it difficult to be absorbed by the labor market. One way to overcome this can be pursued by improving skills according to industry needs (Rufianty & Takarini, 2024). But without someone to motivate and facilitate, the possibility of the youth rising up and becoming more empowered also disappears.

This issue was captured by an alliance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), consultative members of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The NGO alliance is called Life Project for Youth (LP4Y), a federation of 17 organizations from 14 countries. The main objective of LP4Y is the development of innovative solutions for the comprehensive inclusion (professional and social) of young adults (18-24 years old) living in extreme poverty and suffering from exclusion (LP4Y, 2024). Jean-Marc Delaporte originally spearheaded the movement. Their vision is to empower capable young adults if someone gives them a smile, supportive words, space to grow, and trust. The LP4Y movement is currently spread across various countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines,Vietnam, India, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the United States (Tamban et al., 2020). LP4Y currently runs a development program for out-of-school youth in Surabaya. The main program they provide is informal education through training, in accordance with the needs of the labor market. However, they experience difficulties mobilizing participants, as many out-of-school youth lose motivation and confidence to join their long-term programs. Therefore, LP4Y collaborated with the Universitas Ciputra Surabaya (UC) team to help boost the motivation and confidence of the youth.

The UC team comprises lecturers and communication science and psychology students. The UC team was invited to work together because they have the knowledge and expertise to handle the problem. To increase the youth's self-confidence, the first thing that needs to be done is to enhance self-recognition. Self-recognition is a person's effort to see the strengths and weaknesses in oneself, to respond appropriately to demands that arise from within and outside. To know oneself, of course, requires various efforts that must be consciously carried out continuously on an ongoing basis. In accordance with the development of his life, a human being constantly grows and develops. Good self-knowledge will create a good and positive self-concept. This will result in strong self-esteem and high self-confidence. With high self-confidence, people can easily live and achieve what they aspire to. Even when facing obstacles, he will remain optimistic because of this self-confidence (Tirtawinata, 2013). The UC team will conduct this self-introduction through interpersonal communication and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test. Based on Jung's earlier test, the MBTI is a psychological test developed by Myers and Briggs. In this psychological test, a person will be assessed for their tendencies in terms of interest and attention to the environment (introvert/extrovert), perceiving information (sensation/intuition), organizing and judging experience (thinking/feeling), and ways of acting after receiving information (judging/perceiving). The results of this test will show a person's tendencies based on the dominant combination of the four dimensions (Zhao et al., 2020).

A study shows one can have higher self-esteem with better interpersonal communication skills. Self-esteem is an individual's assessment of themselves from their perception of their feelings of worth or worthlessness. Individuals with high self-esteem will view the world positively, as a good and conducive place to live, and assess themselves as individuals with a lot of potential and creativity to develop, so they are always stimulated to make changes and developments for the better. With every increase in effective interpersonal communication, individuals are able to convey their thoughts and feelings in the right way. They can make other individuals understand, agree, and even follow what they say. Due to the lack of misunderstandings that arise due to achieving the effectiveness of the communication that is built, one's self-confidence will continue to increase (Anggraeni et al., 2018).

A foundation on each participant's personality is needed to underpin the interpersonal communication training. Different personalities will lead to different communication styles. Therefore, a personality test needs to be conducted. Test results can provide valuable information about participants. The results can also be used to understand the condition of the participants, diagnose the distortions they experienced, and determine the type of activity that suits their needs. The personality test used in this community service activity is the MBTI. The MBTI test is a branch of personality tests in psychology created to provide an overview of a person's tendency to make decisions. This test assesses a person's personality, potential, and preferences.

There are four main dimensions to this test. The first dimension is energy, which measures the direction of one's energy. People who gain energy from interactions with others are considered extroverts (E). Conversely, they are considered introverts if they prefer to seek energy from alone time and reflection (I). The next dimension is information, which highlights how a person gathers information. People more likely to gather concrete facts and details tend to have sensory preferences (S). On the other hand, those who prefer focusing on abstract concepts and ideas are more likely to be intuitive (N). The third dimension is decision, which indicates how a person makes decisions. People who prefer to consider logic and objective facts are considered thinking inclined (T). They may be more likely to feel if they consider values and personal impact (F). The final dimension is lifestyle, which indicates a person's preference for dealing with the world around them. People with a judging preference (J) tend to be more structured and organized, while those more inclined to perceiving (P) tend to be more open and flexible. By combining these four dimensions, there are 16 MBTI personality types, such as INFJ (Introvert-Intuitive-Feeling-Judging), ESTP (Extrovert-Sense-Thinking-Perceiving), ENFP (Extrovert-Intuitive-Feeling-Perceiving), etc. Each type has a specific description that reflects how the person interacts with the world, makes decisions, and responds to information (Zubaidah et al., 2024).

The purpose of implementing this community service program is to equip participants with knowledge about their personality and strengthen interpersonal communication skills to increase self-confidence. Through this activity, the assisted youth can develop their potential without being limited by the fear of self-deficiency. Everyone may have different fates, but they can all strive for a better life. Hopefully, this training will encourage participants to be more confident in developing themselves so they can later get a decent job according to their potential.

METHODS

The method used in this community service is service learning. This method allows the implementers to integrate course learning with direct community practice. It provides space for lecturers and students to do experiential learning, applying the knowledge

gained in lectures to the community while interacting with society. As for the community, this method solves their problems with scientific thinking. The involvement of lecturers and students will provide new insights to approach issues from different perspectives (Afandi et al., 2022).

The implementation method of this community service activity was carried out in several ways. The first method is socialization by lecturers, with facilitators from LP4Y. Then, the implementation of the MBTI test was continued, and psychology lecturers explained the results. Afterward, the participants were trained to strengthen their interpersonal communication skills. This activity was also facilitated by partners, namely representatives of LP4Y based in Surabaya. LP4Y Surabaya is located at Jl. Tales III No.1, Jagir, Wonokromo sub-district, Surabaya, East Java. LP4Y Surabaya provides training within 6 months for out-of-school youths in Surabaya. During the training period, the youth will be equipped with job-seeking skills, including English, computers, job applications, job interviews, and other special skills such as interpersonal communication. Suppose the youths follow the activities until the end of the term and fulfill all the requirements. In that case, they will get a certificate from LP4Y and the training partners, such as Universitas Ciputra Surabaya. They can use this certificate as support to find a job, in addition to the skills they have learned.

In this term, 25 young people aged between 17 and 24 participated in this activity. Activities were carried out in two locations, Universitas Ciputra Surabaya and LP4Y Surabaya, on an ongoing basis as needed. The steps of implementing the activity began with a meeting between the facilitators at LP4Y Surabaya and the UC lecturer team. At this meeting, the facilitators and lecturers discussed the foster youth's needs in advance. After the discussion, the team of lecturers designed a continuous training program that runs for about 6 months, from August 2024 to January 2025. The training program begins with disseminating the program so that participants know what they will learn and do in this program. Afterward, the MBTI test process was conducted. The participants were asked to take the test individually, and then the strengths and weaknesses of each personality were explained. Then, the participants were given interpersonal communication training that included active listening, verbal and non-verbal communication, and empathy for communication adjustment. As a follow-up to the training, the participants were asked to put their knowledge into practice in their daily lives. Then, they got a mentoring opportunity to convey any obstacles they experienced and were given input to solve them.

An evaluation process is also conducted to measure whether the participants have obtained the expected training results. The evaluation process was completed by filling out a feedback questionnaire at the end of the mentoring. In addition to the participants, a questionnaire was also given to the facilitators from LP4Y regarding the entire program. This is to determine whether program management is appropriate and partners feel the benefits of working with UC. The UC lecturer team also held follow-up discussions with LP4Y representatives to get feedback for future community service activities when the program was over. Overall, Figure 1 shows the flowchart of the implementation steps that have been carried out. The chart shows the months of implementation of each activity step. The methods that have been implemented allow the participants to gain new knowledge and skills that can be applied and utilized in the future.

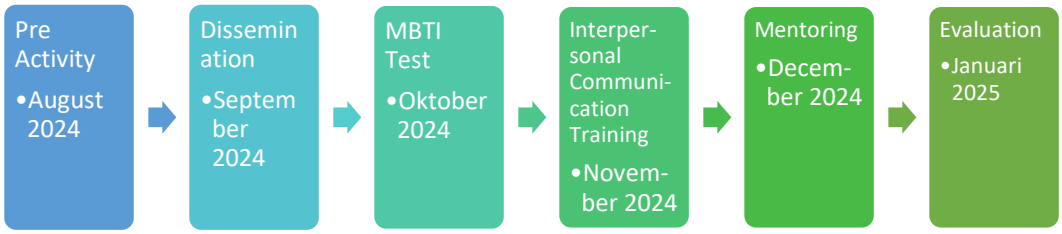


Figure 1 Activity implementation step chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the activities that have been carried out in community service entitled Utilizing Interpersonal Communication and MBTI Tests to Promote Self-Confidence in Out-of-School Youths, the following results can be described:

Program Dissemination

The program began with dissemination, where participants gathered at UC Surabaya, accompanied by several LP4Y representatives in person. The UC lecturer team then provided socialization about the program objectives, form of implementation, and timeline. The initial socialization process is necessary for the implementation of project-based programs. This type of program requires participants' interest and motivation to succeed. Through the initial socialization process, facilitators can brainstorm with participants about their basic skills and what they want to learn. This will help the facilitators design a program that ignites the participants' creativity (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Afterwards, the participants were invited to discuss in groups to get closer to the participants and the facilitators from UC. In this dissemination process, participants were also motivated to be able to follow the entire program from beginning to end because this program is sustainable. In addition, participants were also opened up to the importance of participating in this program for their future. Armed with good interpersonal communication skills, the participants can have more opportunities to earn a better income in the future. Interpersonal communication is a very practical art, useful in establishing relationships with business partners and co-workers, including at the managerial level. In practice, good interpersonal communication will lead to good employee performance, too, because the work environment is able to support work optimally (Pamungkas & Khotimah, 2022). Therefore, attending interpersonal communication training will equip them to face the professional world in the future.

MBTI Test

Participants were returned to UC Surabaya at the next stage to conduct the MBTI test. The activity began with the provision of material from the UC lecturer team regarding the importance of recognizing oneself. The idea of who we are, or what psychologists call our self-concept, is a major cognitive landmark from an evolutionary and developmental perspective. A person's success in recognizing their self-concept will help them to adapt to social norms, rules, and standards (Rochat et al., 2012).

Self-recognition is necessary because we are often biased against ourselves. We often get stuck thinking, ideally, I should be like this or like that, even though it is not a reflection of ourselves. This will lead to self-confusion, making it difficult for us to develop ourselves. Therefore, the first step is recognizing and accepting ourselves as we are, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Providing self-introduction material

Afterward, the participants were informed about the MBTI test. This test method distinguishes a person's personality based on four core dimensions. These core dimensions are measured through a questionnaire, thus indicating the combination that shows a person's personality. The dimensions measured include how a person expresses, perceives information, makes decisions, and orients to the outside world in their daily lives (Cerkez et al., 2021).

The MBTI test was chosen as an instrument to help with self-discovery because it is able to provide a clear enough depiction for a layperson, without the need for additional instruments or consultations to understand the results. Participants were told this test would reveal preferences regarding how they process information, make decisions, and interact with the world. They are also reminded that there are no good or bad personality types. All personalities are good, with their strengths and weaknesses. Participants should not compare themselves to others but focus on how they can improve themselves based on their personality. They will also be able to choose what fields of work are more suitable for them so that they can further develop their skills in that field.

After the explanation, participants were asked to take a personality test. The UC team has provided the test instrument. Participants were asked to answer around 93 directed-choice questions that included two statements in each question. Participants were asked to choose which statement best described themselves, not the ideal or what they felt was ideal. There was no time limit for the test. So that participants can work on it comfortably, without having to rush the time. However, participants were reminded to select statements quickly, immediately after reading the statement. Do not think too deeply, as it will tend to bring up idealized thoughts. The test was conducted online with equipment provided by the UC team, and the personality test was conducted as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 MBTI test implementation

Each person's test results were generated immediately after completing the questionnaire. The results immediately showed their personality type. The results also help to pinpoint certain behaviors or motivations of the participants, identify aspects that need attention and skills that need improvement, identify their traits and aptitudes to make appropriate career moves, and help understand their communication styles. This kind of test is able to measure an individual's personality traits to increase job satisfaction and reduce the amount of stress caused by a mismatch between personality and work (C et al., 2022).

Participants could also consult with a UC lecturer or a psychologist regarding their results. They were helped to understand, especially if anyone felt that the results did not match what they thought. In this case, some participants finally understood that all this time, their image of themselves was their expectations formed from the idealization applied by their family or environment. Even though he is not a person who fits the expectations of his environment. In the closing session, the participants were reminded to accept themselves first. There is nothing wrong with their personality, even if it does not match their expectations. But they can prove themselves to be much better.

Interpersonal Communication Training

In the next phase of the program, participants were given further training to develop their interpersonal communication skills. Interpersonal communication is the initial capital for humans to socialize with other humans. Humans will be able to perform social actions if they master interpersonal communication skills. By communicating, a person is only able to convey their intentions and get a reaction. Through interpersonal communication, a person will also be able to obtain cooperation from other parties. This makes interpersonal communication one of the basic survival skills (Carassa & Colombetti, 2015).

The development of interpersonal communication skills can be divided into two major parts. The first part is creating connections with others through the communication process. This needs to be honed until the communicator's actions are able to influence and be reflected in the actions of the communicant. The second part is the ability to adapt to the characteristics and circumstances of the other person. Everyone is unique, so communication styles cannot be the same. One can get the desired results with the ability to understand and adapt the interpersonal communication style to the interlocutor's needs (Solomon & Theiss, 2021).

These skills are important because no human being can live well without communicating with others. These skills are practiced for life since we are born, but in many cases, people can fail to develop these skills due to unfavorable situations. One of them is these young school dropouts. The environment in which they live does not give them enough space to be able to communicate well. Meanwhile, they also lost the opportunity to develop this skill in formal education because they had dropped out of school. As a result, they find it difficult to express their opinions, often experience miscommunication with others, and lose the confidence to interact with others. Therefore, they were re-equipped with tips on developing interpersonal communication on this occasion.

At the beginning of the training, the participants were given materials first. The material opened with an understanding of how effective interpersonal communication can improve their quality of life. For example, someone who wants to get a job will go through a job interview. This interview process requires good interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, they need to develop these skills. Then, they are given knowledge about active listening. Active listening must be done by giving full attention,

showing curiosity, and giving relevant responses. The participants were also given knowledge about verbal and non-verbal communication. These two types of communication are inseparable and complement each other. Skills that can be improved include the ability to convey messages clearly and the management of expressions, intonation, and gestures. In addition, participants are also provided with training on empathy. The ability to empathize with the conversation partner will be very useful in encouraging more effective communication. For example, when delivering bad news, choosing the right words and giving appropriate reactions becomes crucial. This requires empathy in communication. Figure 4 shows a photo taken during the delivery of the material.

Figure 4 Interpersonal communication material delivery

After the material was presented, the participants were invited to practice interpersonal communication directly. They were paired with their peers to try to convey several types of messages. There were simple messages and more complex ones, and there were messages that needed to involve empathy in their delivery. The pairs were changed several times during the session. Participants were asked to evaluate each other's communication patterns from this practice. Figure 5 shows a photo of the interpersonal communication practice.

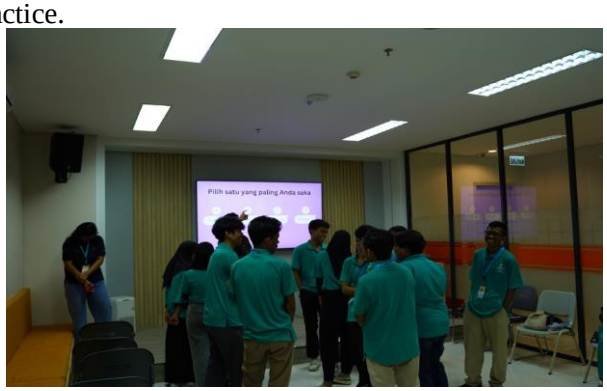


Figure 5 Interpersonal communication practice

The activity ended with an assignment for each participant. They were asked to keep a diary about their interpersonal communication for the next month. They must write down what interpersonal communication activities they do, what barriers they encounter, and how they try to overcome them. This would be the reflection material discussed in the mentoring session. These interpersonal communication skills are important to learn as they correlate with self-confidence. Self-confidence will increase as interpersonal communication skills improve (Utomo & Harmiyanto, 2016). Therefore, this training needs to be conducted long-term to impact the participants significantly.

Mentoring

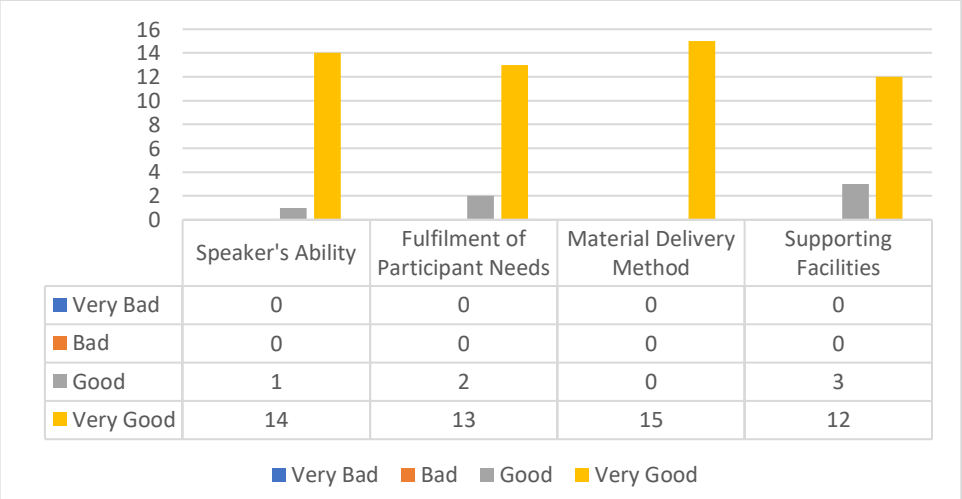
The last part of the program is mentoring. A study has shown that mentoring has a positive effect on at-risk youth. Assistance from people who care and have expertise in dealing with their problems can encourage youth experiencing problems to organize their lives better. This mentoring process can help at-risk youth develop psychological, social, and behavioral problems (Raposa et al., 2019).

Mentoring was held to open a discussion space for participants with a team of UC lecturers to learn their interpersonal communication skills. Mentoring is carried out individually in turn. Each participant was asked to show their diary and discuss how they had carried out interpersonal communication activities. From this mentoring, it can be seen that the participants have been much more positive in describing themselves. They could share their experiences and courage to express their opinions. Some participants were able to show empathy in the process of communicating with others. Based on this, the UC lecturers motivated them to continue improving their confidence and communication skills. At the end of the session, the participants received certificates as a form of success in completing the training and developing themselves.

From this mentoring activity, the participants also shared the impact of this program on their lives. They felt that they had not been given many opportunities to speak up. Many were forced to swallow their opinions because they thought they could not change the situation. In addition, it is not uncommon for them to become more emotional in expressing their views because they often feel unheard or misunderstood. But by learning that empathy is one of the keys to communication, they are more receptive to other people's messages. It also makes them more confident in expressing their feelings because they know everyone has feelings. Communicating effectively is key for those feelings to connect.

Evaluation

The UC team evaluated whether this community service activity had an impact according to the stated objectives. The first step of the evaluation involved giving questionnaires to all participants after completing the training. The questionnaire contained questions about how the material is delivered, the speaker's ability, facilities, and participant feedback. Figure 6 provides the responses obtained from the questionnaire.

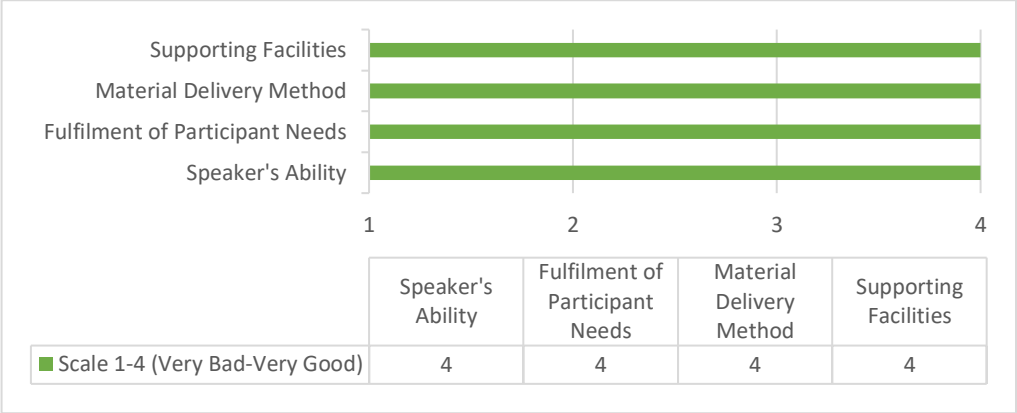


	Speaker's Ability	Fulfilment of Participant Needs	Material Delivery Method	Supporting Facilities
Very Bad	0	0	0	0
Bad	0	0	0	0
Good	1	2	0	3
Very Good	14	13	15	12

Figure 6 Participant questionnaire results

The participants gained new knowledge. They also liked the speaker's delivery and flexibility, especially the hands-on method, which made it easier for them to understand. In addition, they felt that the facilities provided were adequate and supported the training process.

In addition to the participants, the FIKOM UC team also requested an evaluation from the partner, LP4Y. Evaluation is given through partner satisfaction surveys and direct discussions with partners. Partner satisfaction surveys are sent systematically through the Ciputra Education Digital Experience (CedX) program. The lecturer responsible for this community service activity makes an activity report through CedX, then enters the contact information of the partner representative to be sent a satisfaction survey. Partners can fill out the survey through a link sent via e-mail. The responses obtained from the questionnaire filled out by partner representatives are given in Figure 7.



	Speaker's Ability	Fulfilment of Participant Needs	Material Delivery Method	Supporting Facilities
Scale 1-4 (Very Bad-Very Good)	4	4	4	4

Figure 7 Partner questionnaire results

In addition, the UC lecturer team also opened a discussion room with representatives of LP4Y Surabaya to understand the partner's point of view on this activity. The results of this survey and discussion found that partners were satisfied and helped by the program designed and run by UC. Partners feel that their fostered youth get real knowledge and experience, which is very useful for their future progress. In addition, they also feel that the UC team can work well together, facilitating coordination between partners and the team. Therefore, in the future, they still want to establish further cooperation with UC.

CONCLUSION

Community service activities have gone well. This activity began in August 2024 with pre-activity discussions between LP4Y Surabaya partners and the FIKOM UC team. Then, they continued implementing activities such as dissemination, MBTI tests, interpersonal communication training, and mentoring until December 2024. In January 2025, a final evaluation was held with LP4Y Surabaya.

This activity has answered the stated community service objectives, namely increasing participants' understanding of their personality and interpersonal communication skills, thus increasing their self-confidence. The participants received their personality test results, which they can use as a reference for developing themselves. They have also been able to overcome their fear of expressing their opinions. They can also apply empathy in their interpersonal communication. They also seem more confident and have a positive view of themselves. This shows the significant development of the participants. Seeing the success of this program, it is suggested that similar programs can also be provided to youth assisted by LP4Y in the future. Participants participating in this program can be

encouraged to develop other skills according to their personality. It is hoped that they will be able to become better in the future.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors contributed to the manuscript writing, with specific contributions from each author: Conceptualization, IDKA, and MT; methodology, BB and ZH; formal analysis, IDKA, MT, and KDR; and writing—preparation of the original draft, MT.

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