

Distance Entrepreneurship Education as an Essential Strategy to Empower Indonesian Migrant Workers

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Abstract: *The purpose of the entrepreneurship training is to empower learners to be entrepreneurs and when this learning process is delivered by online learning it will create much more flexibility. The training can be delivered from the home country where there is no language barrier, it is cheaper than traditional face-to-face training, it can be accessed at any time, and the content is a homeland context. This study aims to explain the training process by distance learning which is administered by Ciputra University Entrepreneurship Centre at Hongkong. The training is then strengthened by ICT infrastructure, communication strategy and comprehensive learning strategy. The result shows that there is a significant change on the entrepreneurship skills of Indonesian workers, therefore the role of government is needed to support this significant result (the involvement, government policies, campaign of distance learning, and the comprehensive making of user friendly hardware and software).*

Keywords: *entrepreneurship, distance learning, migrant workers*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari pelatihan *entrepreneurship* ini adalah untuk membekali peserta pelatihan dengan *entrepreneurship* dengan jarak jauh untuk fleksibilitas penyampaian, tanpa halangan bahasa, biaya yang lebih rendah dapat diakses kapan saja dan memiliki konteks yang sesuai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan proses pelatihan dengan pembelajaran jarak jauh yang diselenggarakan Universitas Ciputra Entrepreneurship Centre di Hongkong. Pelatihan tersebut dengan diperkuat dengan infrastruktur ICT, strategi komunikasi dan strategi pembelajaran yang komprehensif. Hasilnya menyatakan bahwa terdapat perubahan yang signifikan pada kemampuan berwirausaha dari pekerja Indonesia, dan juga dibutuhkan peran pemerintah lebih mendasar pada hal ini (keterlibatan, kebijakan pemerintah, kampanye mengenai pembelajaran jarak jauh dan perlunya pengadaan *user friendly hardware* dan *software*).

Kata-kata kunci: *entrepreneurship, pembelajaran jarak jauh, pekerja migran*

According to Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (2011), for over the past three decades, the number of women among international migrants has increased dramatically. Approximately half of the estimated 200 million migrants worldwide are women and mostly work as domestic helpers and Asia is a large resource of international migrants working as domestics both within Asia and beyond. In the mid-2000s, about

6.3 million Asian migrants were legally working and residing out of their motherland. Three countries become the biggest resources; they are Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Women migrants mostly work as domestic helpers and they make up 60-80 per cent of registered migrants. On top of that number United Nations Population Fund (2006) predicted that there were about 1.2 million illegal migrants in the region and many of them

have been working as domestic helpers.

Mr Juhur Hidayat as the Chief of the National Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers or Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (BNP2TKI) stated in Kontan website (2010) the result of Indonesian women migrant workers also positively contributes to the Indonesian economy, "there were about 6 millions Indonesian Migrant Workers and in the year 2010 they could send US\$ 10 billion to their families in Indonesia".

There was a significant increase compared to the year of 2006. In 2006 they sent USD 5,6 billion, while in the year 2007, it was about USD 6,0 billion, then it reached USD 6,6 billion in the year 2008. The number of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers (IWMWs) is about 69% of Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) and the money they sent was contributed to 22% of Indonesian foreign exchanges. The 6 million of Indonesian Migrant Workers have created an important economic value for the government and their families but there is also a social cost.

The IWMWs usually come from poor families with limited education. The Indonesian monetary crisis in the year 1997 and 1998 had triggered more people leaving the country and working abroad. At that time the economic chaos had forced many people out of their jobs and at the same time there was a dramatic increase of USD exchange to Indonesia local currency (IDR). Before mid 1997 1 USD was about IDR 2,000 but in the mid 1998 it jumped to be above IDR 15,000. Suddenly the income in foreign currency was much higher than the local currency. Many women from poor families were forced to work abroad to support the financial needs of the family and they became the family breadwinners by working overseas. The people of Indonesia and the nation admitted the important role of IWMWs, the remittance sent to the family has supported the family education, family health service, housing, and household goods for the family. However, there is a big question of the sustainability of this

welfare. There are at least two problems which have been found out during observation. Firstly, most of the IWMWs, due to their lack of education on financial literacy, cannot manage their money well. One of my trainees ever shared to me that before the entrepreneurship training the habit of using the money had been: send (to the family), spend (for the necessity goods in the host country) and self (self enjoyment). There was no saving for the future. Secondly, they are really occupied by day-to-day household chores and they use the day-off just to rest and relax. As a result, most of them do not have a good plan for their own future. They do not know until when they have to work abroad and do the 3Ds Job (dirty, difficult, dangerous). On top of that, for those who are married, they have to leave the husband and their children in the homeland. As a result, at present millions of children in Indonesia are motherless kids.

The Handbook on Domestic Worker Rights across Asia, published by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (2010) wrote some important facts:

- Domestic work in Asia, as with the rest of the world, is an industry dominated by women.
- In fact, up to 90% of domestic helpers are female and domestic work is now the most common occupation for women in the region.
- Domestic work is also one of the largest drivers of female labour migration in the world.
- Women from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh are commonly employed in the wealthier Asian countries of Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan.
- Recent surveys have revealed that more than 90 percent of the 240,000 domestic workers in Malaysia are Indonesians.
- Between the year of 2000 and 2003, an average of 79 per cent of all migrants

leaving Indonesia to work abroad were women.

Eni Lestari, one of the writers of the handbook, a Domestic Worker and Domestic Worker Rights Activist, who is also the President of the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers Association in Hong Kong described her past experiences (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2010),

Seven simple words, yet they describe me. I am a domestic worker. Like many of my sisters and brothers, I was forced to leave my country and my family to engage in work that is widely considered as a “3D” job – dirty, dangerous and difficult. I have also been through the harrowing experience of getting victimized by overcharging, underpayment and denial of rest days. I have experienced the vulnerability brought about by being a live-in domestic worker; the insecurity perpetrated by policies that make domestic workers powerless and voiceless; the lack of services of governments to those in distress; and the deficient mechanisms that are supposed to protect the human, labour and gender rights of domestic workers.

Living abroad as domestic helpers is certainly not their dream job. As Djelantik (2011) stated that Indonesian women live in a poor condition, “Indonesian women migrant workers are mostly uneducated and have no option rather than working as domestic servant or other low income jobs (cleaning service, waiter, or in some cases, prostitutes) under poor working conditions”.

Similarly in Jember, East Java Province, about 50 cases or 25% of all divorce cases in a month are from the family of Indonesian Migrant Workers, which was explained by Ahmad Tahang as the vice chairman of Religious Court of Jember to Tempo website (Djunaidy, 2008),

Divorce cases happened in the families of

Indonesian migrant workers highly contributes to the high divorce rate at Jember Regency, East Java. The divorce cases of Indonesian migrant workers is about a quarter of the 200 up to 300 divorce cases that we handle in each month.

It can be then concluded from the explanation, that the economic solution by going abroad and leaving the family is not an ideal solution; it should be a temporary solution. There should be a way to make the job of these migrant workers as short as possible and after they do this service they must have a new capacity to gain a new and better life in the homeland. The answer is what Landes (1999) mentioned in his book of *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, that the most successful cures for poverty comes from within, it is about human empowerment, and education makes human empowerment possible.

UCEC was founded by Dr. (HC) Ir. Ciputra, a prominent Indonesian entrepreneur with a mission to promote and spread entrepreneurship spirit and skill to the whole nation as a remedy for our unemployment and poverty problem. UCEC (University of Ciputra Entrepreneurship Center) for the last 2,5 years has been providing entrepreneurship training for Indonesian Women Migrant Workers (IWMWs) in Singapore and Hong Kong. More than 1.800 IWMWs have attended the trainings and they all work as domestic helpers. As a trainer for this program I have discovered the enthusiasm of IWMWs in learning and anticipating a change in their future even when they can only have one-day off in a week. They can only attend the trainings on Saturdays (Hong Kong) or Sundays (Hong Kong and Singapore).

There are some facts conveyed during the face-to-face meeting with Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong. Firstly, they have to learn to create their life plan. During the training time, it had been discovered that most of IWMWs did not have a life plan, most of them had just a very basic education or

educated in a small town or even from remote villages and they never got a proper life skill training. Ideally, every IWMW should define their life plan before they go abroad. For women with the family, especially, they have to put working abroad as a temporary work and use the opportunity living abroad to enhance their skills and knowledge in order to create a new and better future. Secondly, we found that bringing our trainers to Hong Kong and renting a big hall for our trainings are expensive and time consuming. Thus, time and cost limitation have made us not able to deliver the trainings in a regular and consistent way. Thirdly, acquiring new skill and knowledge is an important strategy of economic development. However, as full time domestic helpers they have to live in the employer's house and practically work more than 40 hours a week. It is almost impossible for them to enrol into a conventional brick and mortar educational institutions.

This paper further discusses the experiences that UCEC have in administering a distance learning as a solution to promote entrepreneurship education and migrant workers' motivation in entrepreneurship. There is an intense discussion on how ICT can facilitate the distance learning, communication technology that are used, and instruction strategies that are implemented.

First, the progress of communication technology and the availability of distance education for IWMWs will certainly open a new door of opportunity for them to achieve a new level of economic development. Distance Education certainly can offer an important solution for IWMWs. According to US Journal Academic (2011), distance education features a number of advantages as follows:

- Accessibility for those living away from the training center
- No waste of time or other resources in transport, commuting to a central location for each class
- Flexibility to study in any convenient location with an Internet connection

- Self-paced learning:
 - Quickly browsed materials that have already mastered, and concentrate time and effort in areas containing new information and/or skills.
 - Study materials at a personal speed and intensity, without having to wait for slower pace of the average classroom
 - Flexibility to join conversations in the bulletin board discussion areas at any hour, and to review classmates' comments since the previous visit
- Just-in-time learning; more opportunities to study the most current material available
- Flexibility for those with irregular work schedules
- Accessibility for those with restricted mobility (e.g., handicapped, injured, elderly)
- Accessibility for those with family responsibilities (e.g., parents with young children at home)

Distance education has its own unique advantages and according to Moore and Kearsley (2005) and also the report of the UNESCO (2002) on Open And Distance Learning Trends, Policy And Strategy Considerations, that there are increase access and flexibility as well as the combination of work and education, providing opportunities for updating skills, improving the cost effectiveness of educational resources, delivering educational campaigns to this specific target audiences, providing emergency training for key target groups, and expanding the capacity for education in new subject areas, balancing inequalities of education between different socio economic group.

For the employers, distance education offers high quality and usually cost effective professional development in the workplace and allows upgrading of skills, increased productivity and development of a new learning culture. For our government, there are also several advantages in using distance learning, such are to increase the capacity and cost effectiveness of education and training system,

to reach target groups with limited access to conventional education and training, to support and enhance the quality and relevance of existing educational structures, to ensure the connection of educational institutions and curricula to the emerging networks and information resources, and to promote innovation and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Distance education as facilitated by technology can become one method of entrepreneurship education that can be applied in a training for Indonesian migrant workers. Fayolle (2006) stated that “entrepreneurship learning has a wide range of pedagogical methods, approaches and modalities. He stated that there is no universal pedagogical recipe to teach entrepreneurship, however, he agreed that ‘learning by doing’ or a real-life situations and learning methods directly in the field for new venture creation trainings should be preferred”. Professor Allan Gibb (Gibb, 2007) argued that the entrepreneurial approaches in the classroom would demand high levels of teacher competence. Gibb (2007) concluded that the challenge of entrepreneurship education was to allow young people to experience and feel the concept rather than just learn about it in the conventional sense. This leads to emphasis upon a pedagogy that encourages learning: by doing; by exchange; by copying (and learning from the experience); by experimentation; by risk taking and ‘positive’ mistake making; by creative problem solving; by feedback through

social interaction; by dramatization and role playing; by close exposure to role models; and, in particular, interaction with the outside/adult world.

To further support Gibb’s statement, Kuratko (2004) stated that technology can be utilized in an learning process as a learning media. Within the entrepreneurship learning process, the trainers should be able to involve academic technology as well as develop entrepreneurship teaching pedagogy by using innovative approach. The ability of technology to bring in real life geographic condition and trend will enrich the experiences of the learners. Cyberspace can be used to manipulate time and space factors in learning, to change theories into theory-based implementation, also to motivate the learners to be more active and have many sources of learning (Solomon & Fernald, 1991).

Therefore, internet technology in this context will help the learners to learn as facilitated by the vast innovation of communication products, such as mobile phone. These communication products have multifunction features to help the learners learn. In fact, the penetration of the mobiles has reached even people from poor family in less developed countries. The International Telecommunication Union had predicted that mobile phone subscriptions could reach 5 billion subscribers by the end of 2010 – it was an increase of 400 million more subscriptions compare to 2009. In the year 2009, 4.6 billion subscriptions were reported globally and it represented a 67% penetration rate.

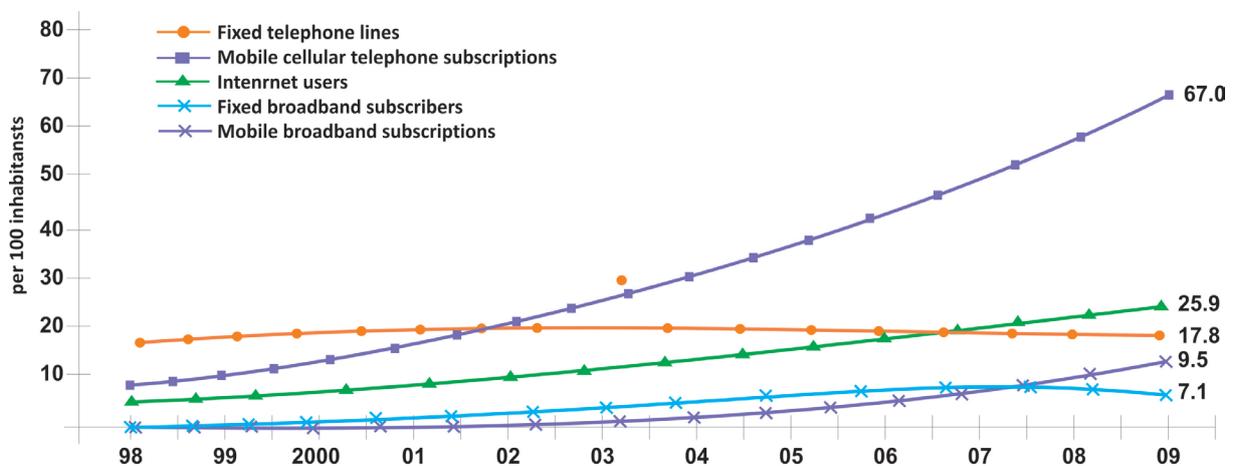


Diagram 1 Increase of Mobile Phone Users

Source: ITU World Telecommunication (<http://www.unwiredview.com>)

The significant increase of mobile phone users is supported by the excellence service of internet technology. Most part of the worlds nowadays are connected with this technology, as shown by the NRI table of 20 development country in technology utilization.

The Networked Readines Index 2009-2010

Country/ Ecoomy	Rank	Score	Rark within income group*	
Sweden	1	5.65	HI	1
Singapore	2	5.64	HI	2
Denmark	3	5.54	HI	3
Switzerland	4	5.48	HI	4
United States	5	5.46	HI	5
Finland	6	5.44	HI	6
Canada	7	5.36	HI	7
Hong Kong SAR	8	5.33	HI	8
Netherlands	9	5.32	HI	9
Norway	10	5.22	HI	10
Taiwan, China	11	5.20	HI	11
Iceland	12	5.20	HI	12
United Kingdom	13	5.17	HI	13
Germany	14	5.16	HI	14
Korea, Rep.	15	5.14	HI	15
Australia	16	5.06	HI	16
Luxemburg	17	5.02	HI	17
France	18	4.99	HI	18
New Zealand	19	4.94	HI	19

Diagram 2 The Network Readiness Index 2009-2010

Source: <http://www3.weforum.org>

METHOD

This research is an explorative survey which aims to explain the experience process of UCEC in administering distance education as a solution to promote entrepreneurship education and migrant workers' motivation

in entrepreneurship. The analysis unit in this research is the advantages of distance learning, learning strategies, communication technology that are used, and learners' responses. The participants in this research is amounted to 30 (thirty) Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong. The data is collected through survey, observation, and the analysis of learning programs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This three-objective training which is held by UCEC is benefited to serve the future of the IWMWs, which are: continuing education, employability and entrepreneurship. Firstly is continuing education. This is a formal education route as many of the IWMWs have not finished basic education and some of them want to finish higher education. The Continuing Education services provide a formal national education in a distance. By doing this they can earn a formal degree while working abroad.

Secondly is employability. It is a service to help the IWMWs to improve their skill and knowledge to enable them to do a better job in the future in their homeland or in the host country. It is more a vocational training as it can be closely related to their present daily work or the future work they want to have. For example, they can learn from a distance certificated training on early childhood education, office administration, elderly care, customer service, and teacher education. International Labour Organization (cited in Freedman, 2008), broadly defined "employability to encompass all of the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to obtain and retain a job, cope with change and enter the labour market more easily at different periods of the life cycle". This shows us that there are many training subjects needed by the market place. It is why 'Distance Education' will become increasingly more important in the 21st century because changes occur in a more tremendous speed.

Thirdly is in the area of entrepreneurship. It is a series of training to prepare them to be able to start their own businesses in their homeland. It should include the training of opportunity identification, marketing and selling skill, creativity and innovation and simple business plan. Distance Education on this subject will offer a great help for the IWMWs, because they do not have entrepreneur family background.

Starting June 2012 up to September 2012 UCEC conducted a try-out of Distance Education Program with a topic of introduction to entrepreneurial retail. This program was held in 14 weeks, followed by selected 30 women migrant workers. All participants had finished two face-to-face UCEC training modules. The program was led by one of the trainers of Ciputra University. The communication products used in this program were Facebook closed group, Edmodo, Email, Skype, and Yahoo Messenger. This distance learning program was free of charge.

In the Introduction to Entrepreneurial Retail program, UCEC practiced various Instructional Strategies, they were: Reading, Group Discussion and Report Paper, Reading and Quiz, Personal Report Paper, Project Base Learning: Selling Project, Creating Promotional Video and Commercial Blog, Final Test (written and chatting or skype-ing).

At the closing ceremony in Hong Kong on 7 October 2012, UCEC conducted a Student Satisfaction Survey and 26 students or 86% of the total who attended the Closing Ceremony filled up the survey forms. From their educational background 4% has an undergraduate degree, 58% high school degree, 31% junior high school degree and 8% only an elementary degree. 12% has worked as a domestic worker for more than 10 years, 62% of them has worked between 5-10 years and 26% less than 5 years.

At the same time, at about 77% participants stated that they were very satisfied with the program, 19% participants were satisfied, and 4% participants did not know as their response. 96% participants stated that they were willing to join the online learning program.

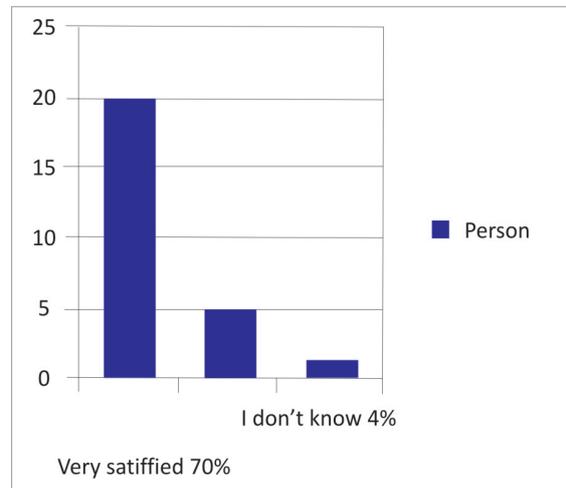


Diagram 3 UCEC Training Participants Satisfaction (left)

Source: Data analysis

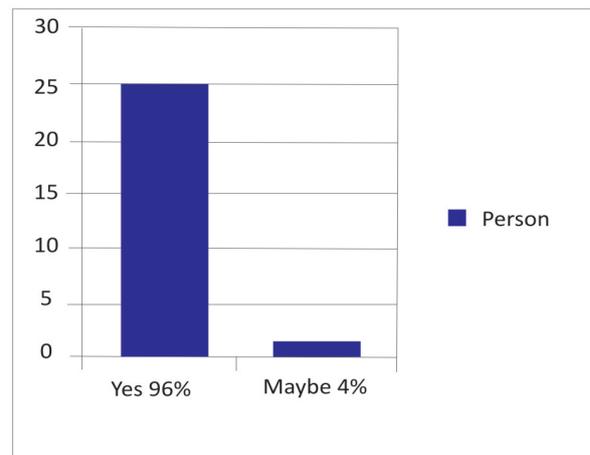


Diagram 4 Willingness to join the online training program

Source: Data analysis

All of the participants agreed to recommend this online learning program to friends and families. Furthermore, they were willing to pay for the training and 85% of them were willing to pay HK\$ 1.000 or about US\$ 115.

In this training, the use of ICT was very important to facilitate the distance education, since the face-to-face learning process had time and factor limitation for the migrant workers. The IWMWs have crucial time

limitations to continue their education. Firstly, they do not have the luxury of a full time student who can go to school on a daily basis. Secondly, they have a very short period of time to study every day. However, the progress of ICT has opened a new door of learning opportunity. The present smart mobile phone is capable of handling many things. It can send messages, perform video-conferencing, and get connected with people from almost anywhere in the world at anytime. Mobile users now have easy and trouble-free access to everything they would like to do in daily life. The smartphones even can take over the functions of computers and laptops. An access to learning is now in the hands of the IWMWs.

The following three facts on ICT actually offer advantages for the IWMWs compared to those living in their homeland (see Dutta & Irene, 2010). Firstly, they work in more developed countries than Indonesia and these countries usually have a high Networked Readiness Index (NRI). NRI is an important metric in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Network Report. It examines how prepared countries are to use ICT effectively on three dimensions: the general business, regulatory and infrastructure environment for ICT. It measures the readiness of the three key stakeholder groups (society individuals, businesses and governments) to use and benefit from ICT; and the actual usage of the latest information and communication technologies available. The IWMWs live and work in countries that provide an excellent infrastructure to connect with many learning resources and also provide them a great opportunity to learn in a distance. The second advantage of being IWMWs is that they live and work in countries that have lowest ICT price. It is also a good opportunity to get valuable information and to do distance education in a more efficient

way. Thirdly, they have a regular income that enables them to buy a smart phone or even a laptop. They also have a financial capacity to pay the monthly bill. To this context, smartphones and laptops are the appropriate choice as learning media.

Even though most of the IWMWs are from small towns and villages, all of them have mobile phones (see Nita, 2010). Most of these workers are accustomed to using Facebook accounts and they are connected to the Internet through mobile phones. Mobile phones have become the standard device of IWMWs. Mobile phones can be an important door for them to experience Distance Education for the first time. By connecting their mobile phone to learning resources, the IWMWs can utilize their time while in travelling or waiting the children at the schools or even while queuing in the supermarkets.

At the end of the course we asked them to write down their personal reflection and we found out that all of them experienced some sort of mindset change, it showed that a transformation has happened. About a month after the course we asked again how many of them were doing business. 15 students or 50% of them had started a business or did a business with friends. These small businesses are in Hong Kong and Indonesia, and most of them are in trading sector. Some of them had ever started a business before the course or had been operating a simple business and for those who had had business, experiences in the course have helped them in enlarging the business or created a faster growth.

CONCLUSION

There are five conclusions for this study. Firstly, distance education certainly can offer a significant change for the future of millions migrant workers all over the world, provided that the specific programs and approaches are available. Secondly, the involvement of the host governments is a must. A national regulation to allow migrant workers to have a day-off for

learning and training must be in place. Government of Hong Kong is a role model of a host country for the IWMWs. The government has a regulation that all migrant workers in Hong Kong must have one day off in a week.

Without this kind of regulation the IWMWs will not have a sufficient time to improve themselves for the improvement of their future. Thirdly, Indonesian government must do the campaign and promotion of the importance of learning to all the IWMWs. Many of them grow up in a family that do not appreciate good education. Fourthly, the introduction of user-friendly hardware and software or subsidized tablet PCs or laptops for those enrolling in the Distance learning must be considered by Indonesian government to encourage them to learn. Fifthly, the development of sound theory for Entrepreneurship Learning in a Distance is necessary. The theory is important since our world has more than 200 million of migrant workers and entrepreneurship education has its important role to empower this massive number of people.

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