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The Tri-N Model of Ki Hajar Dewantara in Life Skills Education for Women's Empowerment

Monica Widyaswari[1]*, Dedi Kuswandi[2], Agus Wedi[2], Dyah Permata Sari[3], Agustin Hanivia Cindy[4], Adjie Pradana Wibowo[5]
[1]*Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*
[2]*Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia*
[3]*Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Serang, Indonesia*
[4]*Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia*
[5]*Monash University, Melbourne, Australia*

ABSTRACT

The Tri-N Model of Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasizes a progressive learning process that moves beyond imitation toward creativity and productivity in life skills education. However, its application in women's empowerment contexts requires further examination to ensure that students can critically process and transform the knowledge they acquire. This study aims to analyze the relevance and implementation of the Tri-N Model in life skills education for women's empowerment. A qualitative approach was employed in this study, conducted in Kediren Village, Magetan, East Java. Informants were selected purposively, consisting of facilitators and women students. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings indicate that the Tri-N Model is implemented through three stages—*niteni* (observing), *nirokke* (imitating), and *nambahi* (modifying)—which support both skill acquisition and creative development. In batik-making activities, the model enhances technical competence, strengthens cultural understanding, and contributes to women's empowerment by increasing self-confidence, independence, and economic capacity. This study suggests that the Tri-N Model is a relevant, culturally grounded pedagogical approach for life skills education, with the potential to support sustainable empowerment, though further research is needed to examine its long-term impact.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:
life skills education; the Tri-N model of ki hajar dewantara; women's empowerment

Correspondent Author:
Monica Widyaswari

Email:
monicawidyaswari@unesa.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in shaping character and developing individual skills, particularly in enabling individuals to respond to real-life social and economic challenges. Through education, individuals not only acquire knowledge but also develop their critical thinking, social skills, and moral values that support collaboration across various aspects of life. In the context of life skills education, these competencies are especially crucial for women, who often face structural limitations in accessing education, skills, and economic opportunities. Education received from an early age is considered ideal because individuals are more easily able to accept, internalize, and sustain values that will serve as the foundation for their personal and social life. However, many life skills education programs for women still predominantly emphasize technical skill acquisition rather than transformative learning processes that foster creativity, innovation, and long-term independence. As a result, learning outcomes often remain limited to short-term vocational competence and have not

fully contributed to sustainable economic empowerment. This condition indicates the need for a learning approach that not only transfers practical skills but also strengthens women's agency, adaptability, and capacity for innovation within community life.

Indonesia is entering the 21st century, a period characterized by rapid change, global competition, and growing demand for high-quality human resources. Human resources are a key factor in national development and a source of knowledge and technology (Almubaroq, 2023; Kianto et al., 2017). In this context, strengthening women's capacity through relevant life skills education is a strategic effort to improve human resource quality and reduce socioeconomic disparities. Efforts to improve human resource quality should focus not only on physical aspects but also on non-physical ones, particularly education, skills, and productivity, which are closely related to individuals' ability to adapt and compete in modern society. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education has a significant impact on humans, enabling them not only to survive but also to coexist harmoniously with others, thereby facilitating the fulfillment of their basic needs (Ardhyantama, 2020; Harini et al., 2023; Siswadi & Murtiningsih, 2024). One of the pedagogical concepts derived from his philosophy is the Tri-N model, consisting of *niteni* (observing), *nirokke* (imitating), and *nambahi* (modifying), which represents a progressive learning process from understanding to creativity. This model highlights that learning should not stop at imitation but must lead to innovation and personal transformation. More importantly, the Tri-N model is not merely a procedural learning approach but also a transformative framework that shifts learning from passive imitation to creative production and innovation.

Conceptually, the Tri-N model can also be linked to contemporary empowerment perspectives. The niteni stage reflects critical awareness through observation and understanding of social realities, nirokke represents situated and participatory learning through guided practice, while nambahi emphasizes agency and transformative capacity through innovation and modification. Through these stages, learning moves beyond technical reproduction toward creative and adaptive empowerment, enabling individuals to respond to socioeconomic challenges more independently. In the context of women's empowerment, life skills education plays a crucial role in enhancing individuals' capacity to meet their needs and improve their quality of life. However, in many implementations, life skills education tends to focus on acquiring technical skills without adequately fostering creativity and innovation, which are essential components of sustainable empowerment. As a result, learning outcomes often remain limited to short-term skill mastery and have not fully contributed to long-term independence and economic resilience.

According to Prajapati et al. (2016), life skills education for women's empowerment has strategic objectives in addressing socioeconomic inequalities, particularly among women who experience limited access to education, economic resources, and training opportunities. Through life skills education, women are expected to acquire practical competencies that are relevant to labor market demands or to develop independent businesses. Women's empowerment in education is a process that strengthens individuals' ability to recognize challenges, identify opportunities, and take strategic action to improve their conditions (Widiyanti et al., 2018; Mandal, 2013; Wei et al., 2021). This process is closely related to the development of self-awareness, confidence, and the ability to make informed decisions. Nevertheless, without a transformative learning approach, these competencies may not optimally develop into creative and innovative capacities that support empowerment.

This issue is evident in Kediren Village, Magetan, East Java, where approximately 60% of women work abroad as migrant workers. After returning, many of them lack sustainable skills and tend to return to low-income occupations such as farming. This condition is supported by field data and observations indicating limited access to structured skill development programs and the absence of innovation-oriented learning approaches among returnee women. This condition indicates a gap

between the potential of life skills education and its actual impact on women's economic empowerment. Limited access to skill development and the absence of structured learning approaches contribute to their vulnerability to long-term economic instability. These findings are further strengthened by a preliminary study conducted in the research setting, which revealed that existing life skills programs are predominantly technical and have not yet integrated creativity and innovation as core components of empowerment. This condition underscores the urgency of developing a more transformative learning approach to bridge the gap between skill acquisition and sustainable economic empowerment.

Based on this condition, there is a need for a learning model that not only facilitates skill acquisition but also fosters creativity and innovation as part of the empowerment process. The Tri-N model of Ki Hajar Dewantara is considered relevant for addressing this gap, as it integrates observing *(niteni)*, imitating *(nirokke)*, and modifying *(nambahi) with*in a continuous learning process. Through these stages, students are expected to develop not only technical skills but also the ability to adapt, innovate, and create value from their knowledge and experience. In practice, the Tri-N model can be applied in life skills education activities, such as batik-making, which can support women's economic empowerment. Through *niteni*, students develop observational and analytical abilities; through *nirokke*, they acquire practical skills through guided practice; and through *nambahi*, they are encouraged to innovate and produce creative outputs. This process enables learning to move beyond imitation toward meaningful and productive outcomes that contribute to individual and community welfare. Previous studies have primarily examined the Tri-N model within formal educational contexts, such as textbook development and creative writing; its application in community-based women's empowerment programs, however, remains limited. In addition, existing studies rarely position the Tri-N model as a transformative empowerment framework that integrates technical skill development with creativity and innovation in addressing socioeconomic challenges. This gap highlights the limited exploration of local pedagogical philosophy within contemporary empowerment discourse and underscores the need to examine how the Tri-N model can support sustainable women's empowerment beyond technical training alone.

Previous studies have shown that the Tri-N model can enhance creativity and learning outcomes in formal educational contexts, such as textbook development and creative writing (Damayanti & Rochmiyati, 2019). However, its application in community-based life skills education for women's empowerment remains limited, particularly in addressing real socioeconomic challenges. This gap underscores the need for a transformative pedagogical approach that integrates skill development with creativity and innovation in empowerment programs. Thus, the Tri-N model is not only relevant as a learning method but also offers a conceptual contribution as a transformative framework for integrating creativity, innovation, and empowerment in life skills education. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relevance and implementation of the Tri-N model of Ki Hajar Dewantara in life skills education for women's empowerment, with a particular focus on how the model facilitates the development of creativity, independence, and economic capacity among women through batik-making activities.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of the Tri-N Model of Ki Hajar Dewantara in life skills education for women's empowerment. A qualitative approach enables researchers to understand social phenomena in depth by examining experiences, behaviors, and interactions within their natural context (Biber, 2016). Meanwhile, the case study method allows for an in-depth exploration of specific activities and events occurring within a bounded system (Yin, 2017). Through this approach, the researcher investigated the dynamics of interaction

between facilitators and women students during the implementation of life skills education. The researcher also functioned as the primary instrument in collecting and interpreting data, supported by a strong theoretical understanding of the research context. To minimize researcher bias, reflective field notes and continuous data verification were conducted throughout the research process.

This research was conducted in Kediren Village, Magetan, East Java, Indonesia, as a representative setting for community-based life skills education practices. The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure data richness and triangulation. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with selected informants who were actively involved in the learning process. In contrast, secondary data were collected through observations and documentation, including records and supporting materials related to the implementation of the Tri-N Model. Informants were selected purposively based on the following criteria: a) residents of Kediren Village; b) facilitators actively involved in life skills education programs based on the Tri-N Model; and c) women participants engaged in empowerment activities. The relatively limited number of informants was determined by the depth of information required in qualitative inquiry and by the principle of data saturation, in which no substantially new information emerged from subsequent interviews. Data saturation was achieved after repeated patterns and consistent themes regarding the implementation of the Tri-N Model and women's empowerment experiences were identified across participants. This selection ensured that the data reflected diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to the research objectives, thereby strengthening the credibility and depth of the findings.

Table 1. List of Research Informants

Role	Age
Facilitators	52 years old
	49 years old
	47 years old
Students	56 years old
	42 years old
	48 years old
	55 years old
	44 years old

Qualitative research aims to describe social situations based on findings from multiple data sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, data were collected through several techniques to ensure depth and comprehensiveness. In-depth interviews were conducted with facilitators and women participants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and involvement in the learning process. In addition, participatory observation was conducted through direct engagement in community activities and interactions, guided by structured observation protocols. A documentation study was also used to complement primary data, including records, photographs, and written materials related to life skills education activities for women's empowerment. The instruments used included interview guides, observation sheets, audio recorders, and field notes to support accurate, systematic data collection.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, this study applied several validation strategies, including source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from facilitators and women students, while technique triangulation involved cross-checking findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by confirming interview interpretations and preliminary findings with several participants to ensure the accuracy of meaning

and representation of participants' experiences. In addition, prolonged field engagement and continuous data comparison across sources were conducted to strengthen the consistency and reliability of the findings. The data analysis for this research utilized the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2018), encompassing the core phases of data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. During the reduction phase, raw field data were meticulously organized, filtered, and simplified before being sorted into key thematic categories. These themes explored Ki Hajar Dewantara's Tri-N Model, its application in life skills education for empowering women, its integration within the educational process, and the ultimate results of these empowerment initiatives. Any extraneous information was discarded to ensure a clear and focused analytical process. Subsequently, the refined data were laid out in a narrative format to help discern underlying patterns, thematic connections, and relationships. In the final phase, conclusions were drawn and verified by cross-referencing information from various sources to pinpoint consistencies and variations regarding women's life skill enhancement and empowerment achievements guided by the Tri-N framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some Indonesians are aware that the educational concept they follow is based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas, which is why he is often referred to as the "Father of National Education" for his contributions to society. His educational philosophy was rooted in progressive, transformative ideas that emphasized education not merely as knowledge transmission but as a means of empowering individuals and transforming social structures. His thoughts were grounded in the belief that education functions as a tool for liberation, enabling individuals to develop independence, critical awareness, and social responsibility within the broader educational system. The educational goals outlined by Ki Hajar Dewantara aim to liberate life and society. Essentially, education is an effort to eradicate ignorance within society by revealing its true humanistic essence. This perspective positions education as a process of humanization, guiding individuals to recognize their potential, dignity, and role in society. This has been emphasized in the 1945 Constitution, which states that the formation of the unified state is intended to educate the nation. Thus, education is not only an individual endeavor but also a national mandate that contributes to social transformation and collective progress.

The educational goals outlined by Ki Hajar Dewantara aim to liberate life and society. Essentially, education is an effort to eradicate ignorance within society by revealing its true essence (humanistic). This has been emphasized in the 1945 Constitution, which states that the formation of the unified state is intended to educate the nation (Marzuki & Khanifah, 2016; Grajcevci & Shala, 2016). Thus, education is not only an individual endeavor but also a national mandate that contributes to social transformation and collective progress. These principles reinforce the idea that education should foster independence, creativity, and adaptability to changing social conditions, rather than merely producing individuals who follow predetermined patterns. Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas are grounded in values that respect an individual's ability to address problems through free and critical thinking. This philosophical foundation is highly relevant to the development of creativity in contemporary society, particularly within life skills education that emphasizes practical competence and adaptability. Many of Ki Hajar Dewantara's concepts have been inherited and implemented in various educational contexts, including: *Panca Dharma (the principles of nature, freedom, culture, nationality, and humanity); Tri-Nga (ngerti, ngrasa, nglakoni); Tri Sakti Jiwa (creation, feeling, and experience); Tri Sentra (family, school, and society); Trisilas (silih asih, silih asah, and silih asuh); Trihayu (to nurture the self, the nation, and the world);* and *Tri-N (niteni, nirokke, nambahi)* (Wijayanti et al., 2022; Kuswandi et al., 2024; Nafi'a et al., 2022). Among these concepts, Tri-N is particularly relevant because it emphasizes a progressive learning process that moves students from observation toward

creativity and innovation. This framework also aligns with constructivist and experiential learning perspectives that emphasize participation, reflection, and adaptive learning processes.

The Tri-N Model of Ki Hajar Dewantara encourages individuals to be creative and productive in the learning process. This model reflects a progressive learning trajectory that moves students from observation to imitation and ultimately toward innovation. Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of knowledge, the Tri-N process facilitates the transformation of knowledge into meaningful action and creative development. This approach to learning needs to be developed so that individuals do not merely imitate but can process or modify the knowledge they have acquired (Istiqomah et al., 2021; Supena et al., 2021; Williamson et al., 2010). *Niteni* is a cognitive process stemming from human thought derived from the word *"titen,"* which refers to the ability to recognize and capture observations by engaging all the senses. At this stage, students actively construct understanding by observing patterns, techniques, and contextual meanings embedded in the learning process. Conceptually, *niteni* can also be interpreted as the development of critical awareness, in which individuals begin to recognize situations, patterns, and knowledge relevant to their surroundings. This stage emphasizes reflective observation as the foundation for developing understanding and adaptive learning processes.

Next is *nirokke*, which means actively imitating or modeling what has been observed *(niteni)*. In this process, the individual's whole being is involved, from observation and understanding to concrete action based on examples. *Nirokke* represents a crucial transitional phase in which students begin to internalize knowledge through practice, enabling them to transform abstract understanding into tangible skills. It is important to note that *nirokke* is not plagiarism. The process of imitation here is not just copying; it involves adopting the methods or ways of thinking of a facilitator in processing works, making them easier to understand and more functional. Thus, imitation in this context serves as a scaffold that supports deeper comprehension and skill mastery. The goal is to understand the essence of the method and its thinking so that it can be practiced or developed in the individual's context and with their creativity. Within this perspective, *nirokke* represents a situated learning process in which individuals develop understanding and practical competence through guided participation, repetition, and social interaction.

The final stage, *nambahi*, is the peak of the learning process, where individuals focus on innovation and adding value. This stage represents the transformation of knowledge into creative outputs, where students demonstrate autonomy, originality, and the ability to generate new ideas. At this stage, individuals do not merely imitate; they can create something unique by utilizing the understanding and experience gained in earlier stages. Thus, *nambahi* involves creative development that engages deep thinking to add, reduce, or improve, resulting in something truly new and self-expressive. It also integrates cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions, enabling students to produce works that are not only functional but also meaningful and culturally relevant. It also involves aesthetic and emotional elements drawn from the heart, mind, and conscience so that the result is not only technical innovation but also an aesthetic experience that touches others. Therefore, innovation at this stage is not merely technical refinement but also a reflection of personal identity and cultural values, making learning outcomes more authentic and impactful. *Nambahi* also reflects the development of creativity and transformative capacity because students are encouraged to modify knowledge and generate new ideas based on prior understanding and experience. In this sense, learning outcomes are not limited to technical competence but also include originality, adaptability, and innovation.

In efforts to enhance the quality of human resources, two essential aspects must be considered holistically, namely physical and non-physical development. However, within the context of this study, the emphasis is placed on non-physical development, particularly on education, skills, and empowerment processes that directly influence women's capacity to improve their socioeconomic conditions. The findings indicate that women in Kediren Village require not only technical training but also learning processes that support independence, confidence, and creativity. In this context, life skills education through batik-making activities functions not merely as vocational training but also as a participatory learning process that enables women to engage more actively in social and economic activities. Education promotes economic welfare by expanding access to poverty-alleviation programs and providing avenues for employment aligned with societal needs (Cornwall, 2016). Additionally, education fosters independence and a balanced life, equipping individuals to manage their lives and make decisions that yield positive outcomes. In this study, life skills education is operationalized through batik-making activities that serve not only as skill training but also as a medium for empowerment and economic participation among women.

Implementing life skills education within communities enhances human resource quality. Life skills education is skills-based, preparing individuals to face challenges by developing emotional, social, and intellectual competencies for effective adaptation to various situations (Boeren, 2016). The findings demonstrate that integrating the Tri-N model into life skills education provides a structured learning pathway that facilitates gradual skill development and creativity among women students. Compared with conventional vocational training, which often focuses solely on technical repetition, the Tri-N model encourages students to progress from observation to innovation, enabling them to become more adaptive and participatory in the learning process. This indicates that the Tri-N model functions not only as a pedagogical approach but also as a transformative learning framework that strengthens women's agency and self-confidence.

This study discusses life skills education through a batik-making program in Magetan, East Java, led by women. This program also promotes women's empowerment. In conducting life skills education here, the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Tri-N are applied. It begins with the first "N," *niteni* (observing), which involves using all senses to understand basic skills through observation. The findings indicate that the niteni stage functions as a foundational process for developing reflective understanding, as students actively identify tools, materials, techniques, and work procedures before engaging in practice. This approach is supported by interview data as follows:

> *"In the initial stages of the batik-making activity as a life skills program, the students observe each step from start to finish. For instance, they observe the process of creating motif designs using canting, color dyeing, and drying techniques. Thus, the women here directly observe and receive guidance from facilitators and more experienced batik makers. The purpose of niteni is to help these women understand every detail of the batik-making process and to familiarize themselves with the materials and tools used"* (Interview: Facilitator).

The interview data provided by the facilitator is also supported by documentation that highlights the application of the *niteni* concept in batik-making activities as follows:



Figure 1. *Niteni* Activities in Batik-Making Skills

Based on Figure 1, the *niteni* (observing) stage aims to cultivate students' comprehensive understanding and awareness of the materials explained by the facilitator. This process requires attentiveness and precision, as students engage their senses to observe, compare, and identify the characteristics of the object being learned. Through *niteni,* students develop a strong foundational understanding that prepares them to progress to the subsequent stages with greater confidence. The findings indicate that *niteni* is not limited to passive observation; rather, it involves active cognitive engagement through processes of comparison, interpretation, and internalization of knowledge. This stage strengthens students' readiness before entering practical activities and helps reduce hesitation among participants who initially lacked confidence in learning new skills. Therefore, reflective observation in the *niteni* stage serves as an essential foundation for fostering participation, confidence, and learning motivation.

Following observation, the next stage is *nirokke* (imitating), where women are encouraged to replicate the skills they have learned. The *nirokke* stage involves hands-on practice to build self-efficacy through repeated exercises. Within the context of life skills education, *nirokke* helps individuals refine their skills and develop familiarity with tasks, preparing them to face challenges. Interview data illustrate this process: *"After gaining a basic understanding of batik-making, we were allowed to practice what we had learned, such as creating simple motifs and applying colors"* (Interview: Student). This statement is supported by observational data showing that students imitate actions they observe. However, the findings reveal that imitation in this context is not mechanical copying but a guided process of skill internalization, where students gradually gain confidence and control over their work. Unlike conventional vocational learning, which often emphasizes uniform results, the nirokke stage created a collaborative learning environment where students were allowed to make mistakes, repeat processes, and refine their techniques with facilitator guidance. This finding suggests that practical engagement and social interaction play important roles in strengthening women's participation and self-efficacy during the learning process. The *nirokke* process involves more than merely copying learned material; it entails replicating with deep understanding and applying what has been observed. The objective of *nirokke* is to produce functional work that allows students to internalize and effectively implement what they have studied. The following documentation further supports this aim:



Figure 2. The *Nirokke* Stage relates to the process of Dyeing and Creating Motifs

Based on Figure 2, *nirokke* refers to the stage in which students practice and imitate the batik-making techniques previously demonstrated by facilitators, particularly during the application of dye and the creation of motifs on fabric. In this stage, students begin translating observation into direct practice through repeated activities involving coloring, motif formation, and pattern adjustment. Rather than focusing solely on the technical procedures of batik production, the nirokke stage functions as a process of experiential learning through guided participation and continuous practice. The findings indicate that repeated practice enables students to internalize knowledge more deeply while gradually developing confidence and practical competence in batik-making. Through this process, students not only imitate existing techniques but also develop an understanding of how colors, motifs, and design elements are combined to produce meaningful and aesthetically appropriate batik products. This finding demonstrates that imitation within the Tri-N model serves as a bridge between observation and independent skill application, rather than merely reproducing identical outputs.

Batik motifs are often inspired by nature, culture, or folklore, and the *nirokke* process allows them to stand out in their full, colorful form. Depending on the region and the artisan, colors may be layered or blended in various ways to create the final, detailed design. The technique requires great precision and skill to ensure that the fabric is properly dyed and that the wax areas remain intact, preserving the desired patterns. This step is integral in distinguishing different types of batik, as the colors and motifs can vary widely between regions, contributing to the unique style and cultural heritage embedded in each piece. By carefully applying these dyes, artisans ensure that the batik design is both aesthetically pleasing and culturally meaningful, often reflecting local customs and traditions. Overall, *nirokke* is essential in shaping the look and feel of the batik product, giving it its characteristic beauty and identity, which are highly valued both locally and internationally.

The next principle in the Tri-N approach is *nambahi* (adding or innovating). After mastering basic skills, students are taught to develop further or enhance their work creatively. At this stage, students are encouraged to introduce innovations, such as creating new products tailored to market demands or adding distinctive features to existing creations. The *nambahi* stage allows students to evolve from merely following instructions to becoming innovators capable of competing in the market. This step transforms batik-making from a simple, practical skill into a framework for fostering critical and innovative thinking, empowering students to become more independent and self-confident. The following documentation further substantiates this explanation:



Figure 3. The *Nambahi* Stage is a Motif Innovation produced by Women Making Batik

Figure 3 shows that the *nambahi* stage involves motif innovation created by women in batik-making. This stage encourages participants to apply their creativity and develop new motif designs, allowing them to personalize and innovate within the batik tradition. By crafting unique patterns, they add value to their work and adapt traditional skills to meet contemporary tastes or market demands, transforming their creations into distinctive, marketable products that reflect both cultural heritage and modern appeal. The main motif we teach the women here is the PAJALE motif (*Padi, Jagung, Kedelai* or Rice, Corn, Soybean), representing the agricultural products of Kediren Village. By providing the *nambahi* opportunity within the Tri-N model for students, we facilitators enable them to modify the batik motif, creating new products. "*The goal of these new products is not only to add character but also to serve as an assessment of the students' abilities throughout the learning process*" (Interview: Facilitator). The findings indicate that innovation within the nambahi stage functions not only as a creative activity but also as an indicator of students' mastery and independence. The development of modified motifs demonstrates how students transformed acquired skills into contextually meaningful and potentially marketable products. Unlike previous studies that primarily position life skills education as vocational preparation, this study shows that the Tri-N model facilitates a gradual transformation from observation to innovation, enabling women to move beyond technical skill acquisition toward creative and economically adaptive participation.

By applying the Tri-N model in life skills education, students progress from observation to innovation. The study demonstrates that this progression supports not only skill acquisition but also the development of higher-order thinking and creativity, which are essential for sustainable empowerment. Based on field observations, life skills education is essential for women as it fosters independence and self-confidence. The findings show that many women initially had limited economic opportunities but, through participation in the program, developed confidence in producing and potentially marketing their work. According to Carr et al. (2018), life skills education enables women to acquire skills that can later be used to improve family economics, expand job opportunities, and reduce financial dependency. However, unlike previous studies that mainly position life skills education as vocational preparation, this study demonstrates that the Tri-N model also strengthens reflective understanding, participatory learning, and creative transformation among women students. The Tri-N model aligns closely with women's empowerment objectives. Specifically, *niteni* enhances awareness and understanding, *nirokke* develops practical competence, and *nambahi* fosters innovation and economic value creation. The interview supports this:

> *"Through life skills education, there is a goal of empowering women by strengthening each individual's capacity to achieve economic independence, have a positive impact on their families and communities, and attain sustainable well-being"* (Interview: Facilitator).

The alignment of *niteni* in women's empowerment helps women understand the situations and challenges around them. This stage is crucial for providing knowledge about relevant conditions and skill opportunities; *niteni* helps women become more attentive in identifying their potential and available resources, enabling them to take steps toward self-reliance. After the understanding and observation process, *nirokke* encourages women to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained, imitating the methods and practices taught by the facilitators. This stage enables women to learn from examples, practice relevant skills, and develop the competencies they have acquired. In the *nambahi* stage, creativity and innovation are involved, where women can create something new in line with their goals. The foundational knowledge gained is expanded into creative ideas or adapted methods to face challenges effectively. In the *nambahi* stage, women also leverage their abilities to develop businesses through innovative new products, thus increasing their contribution to family economic value. Overall, the findings indicate that the Tri-N model establishes a continuous, sustainable learning process that integrates knowledge, skills, and creativity, thereby strengthening women's roles as active agents of change in their communities. This process contributes not only to skill acquisition but also to the development of confidence, creativity, participatory capacity, and adaptive abilities among women students. Therefore, the study suggests that the Tri-N model provides a transformative learning framework that strengthens women's roles as active participants in community-based empowerment processes rather than merely as recipients of vocational training.

Life skills education can be defined as the abilities individuals possess to face challenges with confidence, proactively and creatively seeking and finding solutions to their problems. Life skills refer to a broad range of knowledge and competencies that enable individuals to perform effectively and avoid disruptions in their careers or daily lives. In this study, life skills education is conceptualized not only as a set of competencies but also as a practical, contextual learning process that directly addresses the socioeconomic challenges faced by women in Kediren Village (Prajapati et al., 2016). Life skills are competencies for living or practical experiences that require foundational abilities such as problem-solving, managing human resources, teamwork, and learning in the workplace, among others. The indicators within life skills education include a) self-awareness or personal ability; b) rational thinking ability; c) social skills; and d) vocational skills, which are specific to particular fields of work. The findings of this study indicate that these competencies are not developed in isolation but are integrated across the stages of the Tri-N model, forming a continuous and structured learning process. Rather than separating technical training from reflective learning, the Tri-N model integrates observation, guided practice, and innovation within a unified learning framework. This integration enables students not only to acquire technical competence but also to develop adaptive thinking, creativity, and participatory engagement throughout the learning process.

The life skills education offered by non-formal education aims to enhance students' skills, knowledge, and attitudes in specific occupational fields or enterprises that align with their talents, interests, and environmental potential. Thus, individuals acquire the capability to work independently, providing them with a foundation for improving their quality of life (Rahmi & Hidayati, 2019). In this study, the integration of the Tri-N model into life skills education demonstrates how learning processes are contextualized through local potential, particularly batik-making, which serves not only as a learning medium but also as an economic opportunity for women. Unlike conventional vocational programs that often focus on repetitive technical exercises, integrating the Tri-N model encourages students to transform practical experience into reflective understanding and creative innovation gradually. Skill enhancement in education implies developing individuals' existing competencies to an optimal level. Moreover, everyone possesses unique potential that can be cultivated for self-improvement. The findings show that the Tri-N model facilitates this development by encouraging students to actively engage in each stage of learning, from understanding to

innovation, thereby strengthening both cognitive and practical competencies. The rationale for implementing the *niteni, nirokke,* and *nambahi* stages in life skills education lies in their ability to enhance skills alongside cognitive abilities. Thus, the Tri-N model serves as a continuous learning framework that encompasses observation, application, and innovation. The following interview excerpt supports this approach:

> *"The batik-making activities in Kediren Village are expected to develop basic skills gradually, promote an understanding of meaning and function, and enhance innovation capabilities according to the knowledge and skills acquired. This skill enhancement can later be applied to meet personal needs or contribute to the community"* (Interview: Facilitator).

The findings reveal that the niteni stage plays an important role in strengthening students' awareness and cognitive readiness before entering practical activities. At this stage, students observed batik-making techniques, materials, motifs, and symbolic meanings as part of the learning process. Observation within the niteni stage therefore functions not merely as an introductory activity but as a reflective process that helps students understand patterns, techniques, and contextual meanings before engaging in direct practice. This stage also reduces students' uncertainty and strengthens their readiness to participate more actively in subsequent learning activities. The implementation of the *niteni* stage begins with women's ability to observe and understand batik-making skills as learning material. *Niteni* aims to serve as an introductory process for beginners, in which participants closely examine each step and the fabric's characteristics. The following interview excerpt supports this:

> *"Here, we initially conduct observations. Usually, the facilitator introduces us to different types of fabric, symbolic meanings in batik patterns, and so forth. After that, we observe the steps, techniques in batik making, and the full process from beginning to finishing"* (Interview: Student).

Once students grasp the basic skills, they proceed to the *nirokke* stage (imitating with understanding), where they practice the skills. In this stage, students do not simply mimic but reproduce the learned skills with comprehension and precision. The study found that *nirokke* serves as a skill internalization phase, in which students gradually gain confidence and technical mastery through repeated practice. Observational data showed that students became more capable of applying techniques independently as they refined their work under facilitator guidance. Unlike conventional vocational learning that often prioritizes standardized outcomes, the *nirokke* stage in this study provided a collaborative learning environment where students were encouraged to learn through repetition, interaction, and gradual improvement. This process strengthened both psychomotor competence and students' self-confidence in applying acquired skills. This is supported by observations showing that students imitate processes such as motif creation and fabric dyeing. However, the findings emphasize that imitation in this context is not mechanical copying but a guided learning process that strengthens both psychomotor skills and conceptual understanding.

The implementation of the *nambahi* (adding and innovating) stage signifies that students have achieved a level of proficiency and are ready to develop their creativity. After completing the foundational stages, students are encouraged to innovate and adapt their skills. The findings indicate that *nambahi* represents not only a creativity stage but also a transformation process in which students demonstrate independence, adaptability, and the ability to generate value-added products. In this stage, students experiment with techniques such as natural dyes or create new motifs aligned with market trends (Ermawati & Rochmiyati, 2020). This process allows students to produce original

batik designs with distinctive characteristics, increasing both aesthetic and economic value. Unlike previous studies that primarily position life skills education as technical-vocational preparation, this study demonstrates that integrating the Tri-N model simultaneously facilitates reflective understanding, participatory learning, and creative transformation. Consequently, women are positioned not merely as recipients of skills but as active students capable of innovation, adaptation, and community participation. By applying the Tri-N model in life skills education through batik-making, students gradually develop their skills, from understanding to innovation. The findings demonstrate that this integration not only enhances technical skills but also fosters adaptive thinking, problem-solving abilities, creativity, confidence, and entrepreneurial potential among women. This process enables students to become more competitive, participatory, and independent within their communities. Therefore, the Tri-N model provides a transformative learning framework that supports women's empowerment beyond conventional vocational training approaches.

Community empowerment is a process that can strengthen or optimize the empowerment of weak groups in society. Empowerment efforts always refer to the ability to access resources or services and are expected to improve the quality of life of individuals, groups, and communities broadly. In the context of this study, empowerment is not only understood as access to resources but also as a learning-based process that enables women to develop independence, decision-making capacity, and active participation in economic activities. In education, empowering the community involves inviting students to deepen their insights and acquire new knowledge by joining a learning organization that conducts learning activities together. Students during the learning process have gained new knowledge, improved skills, and adopted positive behaviors (Subburaj, 2014). The findings of this study indicate that life skills education in Kediren Village functions not merely as technical training but as a participatory learning environment, where women are not only passive recipients of knowledge but active participants who continuously develop their skills, confidence, and adaptive capacities through collaborative batik-making activities.

The empowerment program that facilitators and activity leaders have implemented as a learning resource for students is one strategy for increasing community independence. Empowerment involves individuals developing awareness and gaining control over social, economic, and political dynamics to enhance their standing within society (Wijayanto & Prasetyo, 2018; Green & Johnson, 2015). The study found that empowerment activities based on the Tri-N model encourage women to actively engage in learning processes that strengthen awareness, improve technical competence, and increase their control over economic opportunities. Unlike conventional vocational programs that mainly focus on technical mastery, the Tri-N model also facilitates reflective learning and creative transformation through continuous stages of observation, practice, and innovation. Empowerment is also considered a learning process that fosters a more participatory spirit of learning together. Empowerment is considered participation because it is an educational process that can foster community participation due to external stimuli.

The concept of empowerment has meaning for community development; specifically, empowerment can improve individuals' and groups' ability to exercise authority and perform tasks. Empowerment for women in Kediren Village aims to enable the community to become independent and improve the quality of human resources, thereby achieving a positive impact from the activities they participate in (Karwati, 2017; Mindarti & Nabil, 2019). The findings reveal that women participating in the batik-making program gradually demonstrate greater independence, both in applying skills and in initiating productive activities that contribute to their daily lives. Empowerment aimed at women in Kediren Village is economic empowerment (Suwana & Lily, 2017; Abidin et al., 2023; Holliday et al., 2019). This is intended to develop women's mindsets to become independent individuals and to know how to manage businesses they produce, which can benefit both themselves

and the surrounding environment. Through empowerment activities, women gain new skills and knowledge that help improve the economy and support the success of a village. The study found that women can generate new ideas, develop additional batik motifs, and collaborate with other participants to produce products with both aesthetic and economic value. This finding demonstrates that empowerment outcomes are not limited to technical production but also include collaborative participation and creative adaptation. The learning outcomes for women in Kediren Village include the ability to express ideas for additional motifs as a complement to Kediren Village batik; in addition, the learning outcomes indicate that collaboration can help participants develop new ideas and implement them in practice. The following interview results also support this:

> *"The activeness of women in Kediren Village in participating in the activities held can provide an attraction regarding the progress of the village. Not only that, their activeness so far has also attracted the human resources office to provide training for batik craftsmen, which is carried out intensively, such as providing facilitators who have competence in the field of traditional batik and assistance regarding the provision of complete batik tools to support the success of the activity"* (Interview: Facilitator).

This finding indicates that the active participation of women not only enhances individual capacity but also attracts institutional support, such as training programs and the provision of tools, which further strengthen the sustainability of the empowerment program. Empowerment that focuses on women increases positive feelings among individuals. In the Tri-N process *(niteni, nirokke, nambahi)* that is applied, it is hoped that it will be able to involve all aspects of the learning community, both physically and spiritually, to differences in changes in behavior that lead to better ones that can be seen through cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects (Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018; Damayanti & Rochmiyati, 2019). The study found that these three domains develop simultaneously across the Tri-N stages, resulting in observable behavioral changes, including increased confidence, improved technical skills, stronger motivation, and greater willingness to engage in productive activities.

The results of the Tri-N model's implications in women's empowerment programs generally emphasize its ability to foster understanding, imitation, and innovation in batik skills. Skills are the driving force behind innovation, achieved through the development of critical thinking patterns, increased creativity, and collaboration. Developing skills is the capital of human resource development, enabling the conduct of productive and creative activities. Individual productivity and creativity can be achieved through the involvement of all social elements, thereby enabling individuals to produce quality products (Dally et al., 2014). The findings indicate that the Tri-N model strengthens these aspects by providing a structured pathway for students to develop from reflective understanding toward creative production. Unlike previous studies that primarily position life skills education as vocational preparation, this study demonstrates that the Tri-N model also strengthens women's adaptive capacity, creativity, and participatory engagement within community empowerment processes.

The batik produced by the women of Kediren Village can help them earn income. The products produced are not only pleasing to the eye but also made of comfortable fabrics. Therefore, ordering batik cannot be done directly; it must go through a pre-order stage first, which takes approximately 2 to 3 weeks, and the number of orders is adjusted accordingly. This finding demonstrates that batik products have entered a market-based production system, indicating real economic value and sustainability of the skills acquired. The implication of the Tri-N *(niteni)* model for women's empowerment is that students are expected to master the batik process under the guidance of

facilitators or experienced artisans. Thus, these women better understand techniques, patterns, and motifs that align with current trends while maintaining local cultural identity. The study found that niteni also enables women to observe market preferences, allowing them to identify trends and adapt their products accordingly.

Furthermore, *nirokke* implies that it refers to women's ability to imitate or practice previously learned skills. In the *nirokke* concept, there are activities to imitate simple basic patterns or imitate popular batik styles. The findings indicate that this stage strengthens technical competence and builds students' confidence through repeated practice and guided application. After mastering *niteni, nirokke,* and *nambahi,* women are expected to create new motifs by combining local cultural identity with modern trends (Rani, 2021). Batik marketing is conducted both offline at Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) festivals and online via social media platforms. In-person events, such as local MSME festivals, showcase batik products directly to potential buyers. These festivals allow for face-to-face interaction, build stronger personal connections with customers, and enhance the authenticity of batik crafts. Instagram online marketing is used to promote batik products. Digital literacy plays a crucial role in supporting women's marketing activities. *Instagram* serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a platform for capturing learning moments that enhance buyer interest and engagement. The findings indicate that this dual marketing strategy expands market reach and strengthens women's economic participation.

In today's digital era, digital literacy is a vital skill, especially for women in rural areas who participate in economic empowerment programs through batik crafts. This literacy is not only technical but also a means of expanding market reach and improving economic well-being. For example, social media platforms such as *Instagram* and *Facebook*, as well as e-commerce sites, enable women in Kediren Village to introduce and market their batik products to a broader audience, unrestricted by geography. With digital marketing skills, these women can increase their income by accessing larger and more diverse markets (Suwana & Lily, 2017; Gerli & Whalley, 2022; Kumar et al., 2024). The study found that digital platforms such as Instagram enable women not only to promote products but also to understand consumer preferences, analyze market trends, and increase their income opportunities through broader market access. In addition, digital marketing enables women to understand market preferences and consumer trends. By analyzing social media interaction data, they can identify popular batik motifs, designs, colors, and patterns. This information enables them to adapt their products to consumer tastes, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of batik from Kediren Village. The Tri-N model in life skills education for women's empowerment supports economic independence and fosters innovation. Through digital marketing, batik products are recognized not only locally but also reach a wider consumer base. The findings demonstrate that integrating Tri-N learning processes with digital literacy transforms women from traditional artisans into more independent, adaptive, and participatory entrepreneurs. Unlike conventional empowerment approaches that mainly emphasize technical production, the Tri-N model strengthens reflective understanding, creativity, innovation, and women's capacity to respond adaptively to economic opportunities within their communities (Setiawati et al., 2023; Sujarwo et al., 2022).

Based on the findings, the implementation of the Tri-N model contributes not only to the development of technical skills but also to the strengthening of creativity, self-confidence, economic participation, and local cultural preservation among women students. The study demonstrates that the Tri-N learning process enables women to gradually progress from observation and guided practice toward innovation and independent participation in productive activities. Overall, the findings indicate that the Tri-N model functions as a transformative learning framework that strengthens women's roles as active contributors to community development and local economic activities. To clarify the relationships among the stages of the Tri-N model, the learning processes, and the resulting

empowerment outcomes, the findings are first synthesized in Table 2. The table demonstrates how each stage of the Tri-N model contributes to the development of cognitive, psychomotor, creative, and entrepreneurial capacities among women students.

Table 2. Synthesis of the Tri-N Model in Women's Empowerment through Life Skills Education

Tri-N Stage	Learning Activities in Batik-Making	Learning Process	Competencies Developed	Women's Empowerment Outcomes
Niteni (Observing)	Students observed facilitators and experienced artisans during motif creation, dyeing, waxing, and finishing processes. Participants also observed the symbolic meanings of batik motifs and examples of market-oriented products.	Reflective observation and contextual understanding through sensory and cognitive engagement. Students identified patterns, techniques, tools, and meanings before entering practical activities.	Cognitive awareness, reflective understanding, learning readiness, contextual knowledge, and market awareness.	Increased confidence, stronger motivation to learn, improved understanding of local cultural identity, and readiness to participate in productive activities.
Nirokke (Imitating)	Students practiced motif creation, dyeing, and coloring techniques under facilitator guidance through repeated exercises and collaborative activities.	Guided participation and experiential learning through repetition, interaction, and practice-based skill internalization.	Technical competence, psychomotor skills, collaborative skills, self-efficacy, and practical problem-solving abilities.	Improved skill mastery, stronger participation, increased confidence in applying skills independently, and greater involvement in community learning activities.
Nambahi (Modifying and Innovating)	Students developed and modified batik motifs, combined local cultural elements with contemporary trends, and created products adjusted to market preferences.	Creative transformation and innovation through adaptation, experimentation, and contextual product development.	Creativity, adaptive thinking, innovation capacity, entrepreneurial skills, and decision-making ability.	Economic participation, product innovation, increased independence, entrepreneurial development, and active contribution to community-based economic activities.

Furthermore, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the Tri-N model operates as an integrative and transformative learning framework in life skills education for women's empowerment, the findings are visualized in a conceptual model (Figure 4).

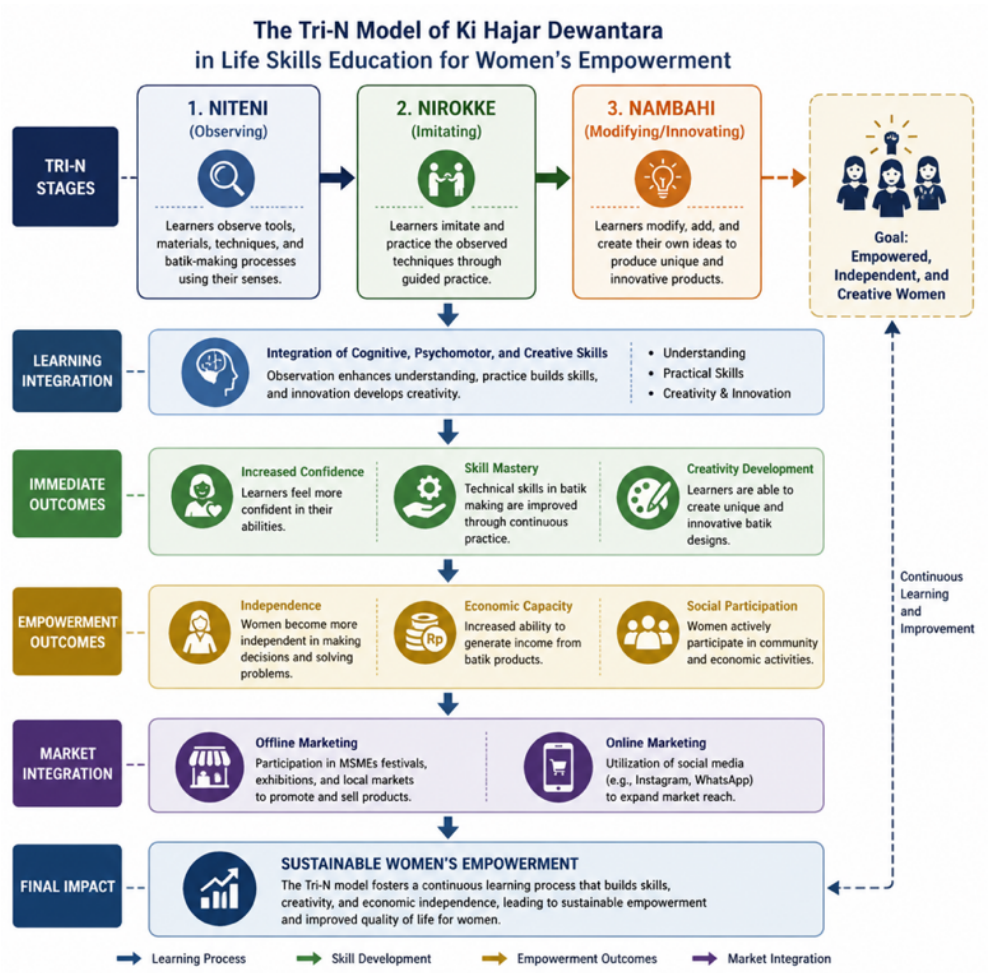


Figure 4. The Tri-N Model in Supporting Women's Empowerment through Life Skills Education

As illustrated in Figure 4, the Tri-N model represents a progressive, integrative learning process that begins with niteni (observing), then *nirokke* (imitating), and culminates in *nambahi* (modifying and innovating). These stages function as interconnected mechanisms that facilitate the development of cognitive, psychomotor, and creative capacities among women students. The model further demonstrates that integrating observation, guided practice, and innovation yields immediate outcomes, including increased confidence, skill mastery, and creativity, which subsequently contribute to broader empowerment outcomes such as independence, economic capacity, and active participation in community and market activities. Unlike conventional vocational training models that primarily emphasize technical skill acquisition, the Tri-N model highlights reflective understanding, participatory learning, and creative transformation as interconnected processes of empowerment. The integration of offline and online marketing further strengthens the sustainability of empowerment by expanding access to economic opportunities and market participation. Thus, the model emphasizes the transformative role of the Tri-N framework in connecting learning processes with sustainable women's empowerment and adaptive community development.

CONCLUSION

The Tri-N Model of Ki Hajar Dewantara effectively facilitates a learning progression from imitation to creativity within community-based life skills education. Through the structured stages of *niteni* (observing), *nirokke* (imitating), and *nambahi* (modifying), students are guided to actively process, adapt, and transform knowledge into original outputs. In the context of batik-making, this approach enables women students to move beyond basic skill acquisition to produce unique, meaningful creations while strengthening their cultural understanding and creative expression. The application of this model also contributes to the development of cognitive and creative capacities, as reflected in increased self-confidence, greater learning independence, and the emergence of economic opportunities, particularly in small-scale creative production. These results suggest that implementing the Tri-N model has a practical impact in supporting women's empowerment by fostering not only skills mastery but also creative agency and potential income-generating activities within community learning settings. However, as the findings are context-specific, further research is needed to validate its broader applicability and examine its long-term socioeconomic impact.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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