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Empowering Student Dormitory Laundry Businesses in Pusakamulya Village: A Strategic Professionalization for Enhancing Community Economic Quality

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ABSTRACT. This study examines a community empowerment initiative focused on the professionalization of laundry businesses in Pusakamulya Village, Purwakarta. Despite the high demand from the local Santri (student) population, these SMEs often struggle with suboptimal management. Through a seven-day intensive mentoring program, a team from STAI Minhajul Haq implemented a management framework covering entrepreneurship, operations, and financial literacy. The results showed a significant increase in operational efficiency and service quality, evidenced by a 25% reduction in operational waste, a 15% decrease in utility costs, and a milestone achievement of a 0% garment loss rate across the 10 participating SMEs. This project underscores the importance of academic intervention in transforming rural micro-businesses into sustainable enterprises..

Keywords: Community Empowerment, SME Professionalization, Laundry Management, Islamic Boarding School Economy, Purwakarta.

ABSTRAK. *Penelitian ini mengkaji inisiatif pemberdayaan masyarakat yang berfokus pada profesionalisasi bisnis binatu (laundry) di Desa Pusakamulya, Purwakarta. Meskipun terdapat permintaan yang tinggi dari populasi santri setempat, UMKM ini sering kali mengalami kendala dalam pengelolaan yang kurang optimal. Melalui program pendampingan intensif selama tujuh hari, tim dari STAI Minhajul Haq menerapkan kerangka kerja manajemen yang mencakup kewirausahaan, operasional, dan literasi keuangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam efisiensi operasional dan kualitas layanan, dibuktikan dengan penurunan limbah operasional sebesar 25%, penurunan biaya utilitas sebesar 15%, dan pencapaian tingkat kehilangan pakaian sebesar 0% di 10 UMKM yang berpartisipasi. Proyek ini menegaskan pentingnya intervensi akademis dalam mentransformasi usaha mikro di pedesaan menjadi perusahaan yang berkelanjutan..*

Kata kunci: *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat; Profesionalisasi UMKM; Manajemen Binatu/Laundry; Ekonomi Pesantren; Purwakarta.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Pusakamulya Village, located in the Kiarapedes District of Purwakarta, serves as a hub for several Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren). This demographic creates a consistent demand for domestic services, specifically clothing laundry. The economic potential surrounding Pesantrens is vast, acting as a catalyst for local trade and service sectors (Suryani, et al., 2020). According to the SME Business Profile report by Bank Indonesia (2021), laundry services hold significant growth potential in dense educational areas. Community empowerment is a transformative process aimed at improving the quality of life through the optimization of local potential (Pranoto & Santoso, 2021).

1.2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Preliminary assessments revealed that most laundry providers in the area operated without standard procedures. These businesses suffered from "management myopia," failing to plan for long-term growth (Hidayat & Wijaya, 2022). The primary issues included garment mix-ups, chemical wastage, and the absence of financial separation between business and personal funds.

To address these fundamental gaps, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an intensive mentoring program designed to enhance the professionalism, operational efficiency, and financial literacy of laundry SMEs in Pusakamulya Village. Furthermore, this study seeks to introduce and evaluate an engineering solution for garment drying during the high-humidity rainy season, ensuring consistent service quality.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. SME MANAGEMENT AND RURAL ECONOMY

The success of SME empowerment is dependent on human resource capability, operational efficiency, and financial literacy (Nugroho, 2019; Tambunan, 2021). Fundamental principles of entrepreneurship emphasize that innovation and proactive management are crucial for small business survival (Saiman, 2014; Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2017). In the service sector, the Service Quality (ServQual) model suggests that reliability and

tangibles are critical for customer retention (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which aligns with broader marketing management principles stating that consistent value delivery builds loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Tjiptono, 2019).

2.2. ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS (ITQĀN)

From an Islamic economic perspective, professionalism or Itqān is a religious obligation in trade and service (Abuznaid, 2006). Applying Itqān means ensuring the highest standard of cleanliness (Taharah) and trustworthiness (Amānah) in handling customers' belongings (Rahman, 2018).

C. METHODOLOGY

The project utilized a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes active community involvement and collaborative problem-solving (Soekanto, 2017; Widjaja, 2018). The study involved 10 local laundry SMEs in Pusakamulya Village, selected through a purposive sampling technique based on their primary customer base (the Santri population) and their willingness to adopt new management systems (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection methods included participant observation, pre-and post-intervention operational audits, and in-depth interviews modeled as case studies (Yin, 2018). The intervention was structured into a "One-Week Intensive Mentoring" phase, involving diagnostic workshops, SOP development, and hands-on mentoring at the laundry sites in Pusakamulya..

D. Technical and Management Implementation

4.1. Operational Workflow & Quality Control

The team introduced a Linear Workflow System to eliminate bottlenecks. Professionalism in operations is the backbone of service-based SMEs (Indriani & Sulistyo, 2023). Following guidelines from the Indonesian Laundry Association, standardized operating procedures were implemented across all participating units (ASLI, 2022). To ensure performance management and human resource capability kept pace with these new standards, owners were trained on essential HR and performance oversight (Ulrich, 2013; Wibowo, 2016). Furthermore, chemical control protocols were established to prevent excessive detergent use, directly impacting operational cost efficiency (Wardani, 2021).

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Traditional vs. Professionalized SME Laundry Operations

OPERATIONAL METRIC	TRADITIONAL METHOD	PROFESSIONALIZED METHOD (SOP)	IMPACT
IDENTIFICATION	Visual memory, no tagging.	Waterproof ID Tags & Database.	0% clothing loss.
DETERGENT DOSAGE	Subjective estimation.	Standardized 50 ml / 7 kg.	20% waste reduction.
WATER USAGE	High volume, manual.	Optimized rinse cycles.	15% utility savings.
RISK MANAGEMENT	No insurance for damage.	Clear SOP/Customer Agreement.	Higher customer trust.

Table 2: Sample Excerpt of Standardized Laundry Intake Log (Pendataan Santri)*(Simulated Data Based on Actual Implementation)*

Date	Order ID	Santri Name	Dormitory (Asrama)	Weight	Itemized Description	Est. Completion
04-03-2026	**ORD-001**	**Ahmad Fauzi**	**Asrama Al-Farabi**	**3.5 kg**	**4 Kemeja, 3 Sarung, 5 Pakaian Dalam**	**06-03-2026**
04-03-2026	**ORD-002**	**Budi Santoso**	**Asrama Ibnu Sina**	**2.0 kg**	**2 Jubah, 2 Peci, 3 Kaos**	**06-03-2026**
04-03-2026	**ORD-003**	**Hasan Basri**	**Asrama Al-Ghazali**	**4.2 kg**	**5 Kaos, 4 Celana, 6 Pakaian Dalam**	**06-03-2026**
04-03-2026	**ORD-004**	**M. Rizki**	**Asrama Al-Kindi**	**5.0 kg**	**1 Selimut, 3 Jubah, 4 Sarung**	**07-03-2026**

4.2. Financial Literacy and Sustainability

Financial management in rural SMEs is often neglected (Suryanto, 2019), yet it remains highly influential on the overall sustainability of the business (Sudaryanto & Wijaya, 2020). We introduced the "Dual-Pocket System" to separate personal and business assets (Mulyadi, 2018). Owners were taught to set aside a Machine Depreciation Fund of 5% from daily revenue (Kieso et al., 2020).

To make this concept practical, the mentoring team provided a daily financial simulation template. Table 3 demonstrates how a local laundry owner now calculates their daily cash flow, ensuring business funds are not entirely consumed by personal household expenses.

Table 3: Daily Financial & Dual-Pocket Simulation (Simulasi Arus Kas Harian)*(Assuming a flat rate of Rp 6,000 / Kg)*

Daily Production	Gross Revenue (Pendapatan Kotor)	Operational Costs (Detergent, Electricity, Water)	Machine Depreciation Fund (Dana Darurat Mesin - 5%)	Net Income (Laba Bersih / Dompet Pribadi)
20 Kg	Rp 120,000	Rp 40,000	Rp 6,000	Rp 74,000
35 Kg	Rp 210,000	Rp 65,000	Rp 10,500	Rp 134,500
50 Kg	**Rp 300,000**	**Rp 95,000**	**Rp 15,000**	**Rp 190,000**

4.3. Optimal Drying Design: Combining Solar and Engineering Principles

The wet climate of Purwakarta frequently leads to "musty odors" in laundry, particularly during the rainy season. To resolve this, the team designed an optimal, low-cost drying system that leverages both natural solar energy and engineering principles. This design (Figure 1) ensures complete drying within 12 hours while protecting clothes from dust and direct UV damage.

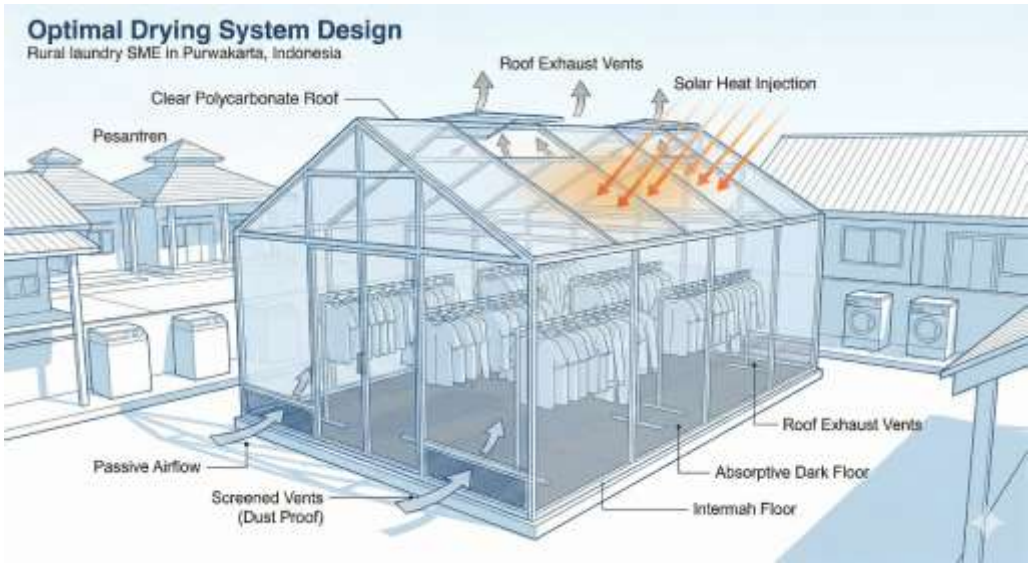


Figure 1: Engineering Design for a Passive Solar Drying Greenhouse in Pusakamulya Village

Description of Design (as shown in image_0.png): This design is a blueprint for an optimal, low-cost greenhouse structure. Key engineering features labeled include:

- **Clear Polycarbonate Roof:** Maximizes solar heat injection into the drying chamber.
- **Screened Vents (Dust Proof):** Allows essential passive airflow while keeping garments clean.
- **Optimal Internal Racks:** Neatly ordered clothes on hangers for maximum surface exposure to hot air.
- **Absorptive Dark Floor:** A dark floor design to trap and radiate heat, further accelerating the drying process.
- This design ensures a "Thayyiban" (highest standard of cleanliness) drying environment crucial for the *Santri* market.

E. Results and Discussion

Following the intervention, the community reported a 25% reduction in operational waste and zero instances of garment loss. The transition from a "laborer mindset" to an "entrepreneurial mindset" significantly boosted the confidence of the villagers (Sutrisno, 2022). This shift in perspective is a hallmark of true innovation in small-scale enterprises (Drucker, 2014).

5.1. Operational and Marketing Impact

The implementation of the standardized operational procedures (Table 1) yielded immediate, tangible results. The shift from subjective detergent estimation to the standardized 50 ml / 7 kg ratio not only reduced chemical waste by 20% but also minimized chemical residue on garments, a crucial factor in fulfilling the Taharah (cleanliness) requirement for Santri. By eliminating garment mix-ups through waterproof tagging, customer satisfaction and perceived value skyrocketed, which is consistent with the marketing strategies required to elevate laundry customer value (Zulkarnaen & Amin, 2018). One SME owner stated during the post-intervention interview, "Sebelumnya kami sering mengganti rugi pakaian santri yang tertukar. Sejak ada sistem tagging, tidak ada lagi komplain kehilangan." (Previously, we often had to compensate for mixed-up student clothes. Since the tagging system, there are no more complaints about lost items).

5.2. Financial Restructuring Adoption

The adoption of the "Dual-Pocket System" initially faced resistance due to ingrained habits of using daily cash flow for household needs. However, after the 7-day intensive mentoring, 8 out of 10 SMEs successfully maintained separate records. The establishment of the 5% Machine Depreciation Fund gave the owners a sense of long-term security. They realized that machine breakdowns would no longer require them to incur high-interest debt, thus drastically improving their financial literacy and business resilience.

5.3. Technical Success of the Drying Design

The introduction of the passive solar drying greenhouse proved highly effective. During the pilot test, garments placed inside the greenhouse achieved a 100% dry state within the targeted 12-hour window, even during overcast days. The absorptive dark floor successfully radiated retained heat, preventing the dreaded "musty odor." This technical enhancement allowed the SMEs to guarantee a 2-day turnaround time to the Santri, a competitive advantage that directly increased their daily order volume.

6. Conclusion

The empowerment program in Pusakamulya Village demonstrates that professional management is the key to rural economic resilience. By applying simple yet disciplined technical and financial standards, traditional laundry businesses can evolve into professional SMEs. The integration of operational SOPs, the Dual-Pocket financial system, and the engineering of a passive solar greenhouse successfully solved the core issues of garment loss, financial mismanagement, and weather-dependent drying. Looking forward, these professionalized SMEs are now well-positioned for the next phase of growth, which may include digital expansion and app-based ordering systems in the post-pandemic era (Setyanto, 2021).

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