

## **Empowering Women Worker's Group Through Mentoring Management, Innovation, and Branding Product of Pants Convection**

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### **Abstract:**

*Pants convection is a home business from cloth in the village of Sukosono, Jepara. The community of mothers and teenagers are interested in entrepreneurship and work in the convection sector because they tend to be more flexible and can be done at home. A large number of workers and the production of the pants convection are not matched by management, product innovation, and marketing strategies. This resulted in a buildup of products, but reduced market demand. This service program aims to assist business management, as well as increase the creativity of workers in creating innovations, branding, and marketing methods so that confectionery products can compete in the market. Partners in this service are pants convection entrepreneurs in the village of Sukosono, Jepara. The method of this community service was Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), starting from the step of discovery, design, dream, define through a survey on the community. Then the step destiny through training, assistance with product brand design and marketing, then step reflection through monitoring and evaluation. The results of this assistance show that the community has an awareness of the importance of product innovation, branding, and improving the marketing system. In the product aspect, this assistance resulted in innovative pants made of woven materials, product brand logos with the name of clothing houses, and marketing through marketplaces.*

**Keywords:** *Innovation; branding; product; pants convection*

## **Introduction**

Convection is one of the micro, small and medium enterprises which has the opportunity and is in great demand by the community. One example of the result of some research from outside Java showed that clothing convections are more than 5000 businessmen. Meanwhile, the other businessmen are only dozens in total (Rosa & Abdilla, 2019). It shows community enthusiasm for convection.

Commonly, convection in Indonesia started from the home industry which is managed by individuals then it developed. Besides, some convections are managed by cooperation between groups of the community, or by a company that is currently widely developed so emerge some convection factories. It is also developed in Jepara. Jepara is well-known as one of regency that recognized because of its furniture, art, and culture (Najah & Malarsih, 2019), industry, and also there are many convections.

At first, convection in Jepara is managed by the community in Kalinyamatan district, even some villages become the center of convection. They are Sendang, Pulodarat, and other. The type of products from that clothing convection is various, starting from t-shirts, veils, gowns, pants, jackets, and others that are produced using variative materials. Start from plain fabric, designed fabric, and jeans. Along with the development of the era and business, some communities of other village start to build convection business. One of them is the community in Sukosono village, Kedung district Jepara.

The existence of the convection business affected to decrease in Jepara community enthusiasm to work on the wood are. Adult Community and teenager prefer to work on convection because it is more flexible, do not have high risk of pollution, and can be finished at home. So, the total of workers in the convection industry is increased. Both workers of home convection or workers of garment convection factory in Jepara. But, since the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of workers and products are unbalance with market demand. Besides, with the abundance of factory development and technology of industry, the

competition of product from home convection is getting tighter (Suwandi et al., 2017). Furthermore, the lack of management, innovations of products, and marketing strategy from home convection. Therefore, assistance in the management of home convection businesses is important, as well as empowering women's groups. Where the majority of it becomes the business of mothers.

Several studies related to marketing and branding have been carried out by several academics. Among them are studies that focus on online marketing, where people are getting used to online culture after going through the Covid 19 Pandemic (Harahap et al., 2021). So online sales are a system opportunity that entrepreneurs need to capture. Apart from that, there are also studies focusing on the UMKM group in the souvenir business where the existence of a product brand has added value (Susanti & Oskar, 2018). Furthermore, the study forms product brands in the agricultural sector, where the process of introducing products with broad marketing is an important part of entrepreneurship (Diartha et al., 2016).

Some of these previous studies focused on the study of souvenir entrepreneurs, agricultural products, and industrial product SMEs. The difference is that this study focuses on home-based businesses for groups of mothers and residents in the village. This community service program is aimed to accompany business management, as well as improve the creativity of workers in building innovation, branding, as well as marketing so that the product of pants convection can compete in market in one of home pants convection business.

## **Method**

The method of this community service program was Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), where this method is effective for empowering communities or people with a variety of assets owned (Al-Kautsari, 2019). It started from the step discovery, design, dream, define through survey on the community. Then the step destiny through training, mentoring, assistance with product brand design and marketing. Then step reflection through monitoring and evaluation, the

evaluation through filling out partner response questionnaires and focus group discussions with partners to see success and discuss program sustainability.

At the training stage, the service team conveyed the importance of product innovation. Then the next stage of training with tutorial methods and practice, from design to sewing techniques. Furthermore, the method of assisting product branding and marketing is by practicing making logos, creating accounts for online marketing through social media. The final stage of monitoring and evaluation, where partners are asked to fill out a questionnaire to measure partners' satisfaction with this service program. At the stage of measuring program sustainability, the service team engages partners in focus group discussion forums.

The partner in this community service is Mrs. Fajri'ah, owner of pants convection business in Sukosono village Jepara. The participants in the training and mentoring activities were Mrs. Fajri'ah's workers, a total of 10 people. Hopefully material from this training and mentoring can be shared to new workers later or community or other convection workers. So, there is follow up, and the importance of follow up from programs that have been implemented (Wijayanti et al., 2020).

## **Result and Discussion**

Convection is production business around fashion such as clothes, t-shirt, pants, veil, and other product which is made from fabric. Ideally, any kind of trade commodity products need to be updated as well as developed the product innovation, both through design improvement which according to result of research has positive implication to increase the selling power of a product (Sari et al., 2021).

Innovation of a product can be done through model breakthrough or the basic material of product. Besides, ideally a production or product of convection need to be managed with and adjustment following the characteristic of product (Gilal et al., 2022). As like the strategy of producer branding, retail branding, or geographical branding also can be implemented to similar products. Those branding have some functions, including being a product

differentiator, a market segment differentiator, and differentiator for consumer experience (Diartha et al., 2016).

One of branding forms is brand or logo. Where brand or logo needs to be designed so that it can represent identity and uniqueness of product. In the aspect of advantages, logo is able to attract the attention of consumers, community, as well as aesthetic or art value inside. Branding through logo also has positive effect, it can increase competitiveness with other competitors and it can increase the selling power of the product (Eko Valentino, 2018). Product will be more recognized by the market and the consumers, in local, national, even international.

Form of brand or logo of product has various characteristics owned by businessmen and be unique. Beside uniqueness branding through brand also can consider aspect of Islamic values such as halal brand, syar'I, using Islamic label. It can grow comfort, consumer interest which incidentally is the majority of Muslims (Adawiyah, 2021). But commonly businessmen does not understand the importance of branding, they focus on sales activity (Susanti & Oskar, 2018). So, the role of external parties as like academics or other institutions is to accompany businessmen in managing as well make branding of their product become important and effective to improve business (Purwaningsih et al., 2020).

Sukosono Village is one of the villages at the northern end of the Kedung District, Jepara Regency, Central Java Province. Geographically, Sukosono Village is bordered by Kerso Village and Rau Village. When viewed from the direction of Sukosono Village, it is located in the southern region of Jepara City, approximately 9 KM away (Anwar, 2021), with a distance of about 20 minutes to access the journey from the city.

Based on statistical data, the population of Sukosono Village is 5,560 people, consisting of 2,779 male and 2,781 female. The people of Sukosono Village work on average 48% work as farmers, 40% as carpenters, 12% work as laborers, employees, and entrepreneurs (Anwar, 2021). It shows that the majority of the people of Sukosono Village are farmers. In accordance with the large number of rice fields

in the middle of the Sukosono Village settlement. It is one of many villages with various professions. In industrial sector, there are 10 sawmills, 2 rice slips furniture craftsmen who handle it by himself and helped by employee, and also home business such as convection (Anwar, 2021). One of them is a shorts convection which managed by Mrs. Fajri'ah.

Mrs. Fajri'ah started her shorts convection business in 2019 in Sukosono Village Rt 09 Rw 03. Mrs. Fajri'ah started her shorts business from becoming reseller or third hand from shorts production in Kalinyamatan district. In the beginning, one week one short, but then more and more shorts enthusiasts are increasing. After 2 months becoming reseller, Mrs. Fajri'ah then decided to produce her own short. But because she hasn't have any experiences yet, she trapped in debt as business modal and the limitation in business management (Irwanto, 2021). It shows that Mrs. Fajri'ah's shorts convection business is potential that need to be developed and accompanied. Along with big opportunity of home business, and women empowerment through collaboration of businesses in the convection field as well as innovation of design of local product (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Hopefully, the business of partners can be developed and develop Sukosono village to be center village of convection.

Based on the result of observation, in the beginning of Mrs. Fajri'ah's shorts convection business there were some obstacles in production such as fabric selection for the short inner which was difficult because high price cannot be guarantee that it had high quality. Besides, the lack of human resources in the production process and the lack of innovation in design. It is cused by the lack of knowledge and skills of community about short and production process without special skill. Some short sailors do not have experiences in sewing or sewing course. It causes there are some shorts that the seams are not neat. So that it will enter the rejected goods and end in losses.

The instability of the price and turnover of this short convection influenced by some factors. Start form factor of material which is suitable with market demand. In procurement of materials with certain type, sometimes there is a constraint on the availability of limited

materials and the price is expensive. So it effected to the high of production cost. So, commonly short convection materials produced by Mrs. Fajri'ah are more likely to be simple for for the lower middle class segment community. As like plain or striped materials. Besides, so far the product branding management hasn't noticed and managed well. This can be seen from the fact that there is no brand or logo on the product, and there is no nameplate in the production area.

Based on the problem explanation above, priorty of problems faced by short convection partner can be classified in to two aspects which are aspect of human resources and management of product branding. As explained in table 1.

**Table 1.**

*the Problems of Partner*

No	Aspect	Problems of Partner
1	Human resources	The number of employee who has skill of designing pattern and cutting are limited Ability and sewing skill of employee in short convection are averagely poor, and they haven't attend sewing course before
2	Management of product branding	The management of product branding and marketing has not been laid out and paid attention to Shorts products do not have a production branding label yet The nameplate in production area is still unavailable

Pants convection business which becomes partner of community service is Mrs. Fajri'ah business. Pants convection business focuses on producing short. The process of production is started with analyzing the model of short product which is on the market. For example, such as printed motifs, so material that will be bought is fabric with printed

motifs. Some types of fabric materials which used in producing pants are baby canvas, chinos, java drills, and java twill.

After deciding materials, the next steps is designing, making pattern, and cutting as the pattern, then the grinding is done. Before sewing process, there is process of preparing pocket, string, elastic measuring  $\frac{1}{4}$  cm, rip width 14 cm with a length of 50-60 cm. After the process of sewing and become pant, the last step is packing (Irwanto, 2021). Then the product marketed offline to market traders and customer distributors.

Implementation of mentoring activity to the partner, Mrs. Fajri'ah pants convection, started from January 2021 in Sukosono village Kedung district Jepara regency. The first step implemented in the first week is partner's problems identification through observation partner's location and interview. Next, asking permission and coordination with partner, coordination with implementation team, arrangement of training material, and questionnaire to measure participant satisfaction during program evaluation.

The next training is training about design innovation and shorts materials cutting. The first step training used method of seminar and practice. Participants were given instructions to design a product, this training was done in two stages which were drawing design using writing tools, technique using design graphic application to make short pattern, and technique of good fabric cutting. After training, participants were also guided in design mentoring activity of and fabric for short cutting with innovation using fabric of troso woven. The use of Troso woven is one of efforts to take advantage local potential torso woven as woven of Jepara (Ramadhani & Subandi, 2015), it was notes as one of benefits of usage of local product as well as promote the characteristics, culture (Budi Setyaningrum, 2018), and economy of that area (Suyanto, 2019).

The second training was about technique of sewing in the form of workshop. Facilitator explained some theories and tutorial of good technique of sewing. Next, the participants were guided to sew individually. Training and mentoring used as provisions when the officials did not accompany, sailors had be able to do all the process sewing well and correct so the pants product will be neater.



The third step was mentoring of management of pants product branding. In this step was started with sharing motivation to partner about the urgency of product branding. Next is partner accompaniment to do management, and realization of branding label making for partner's product. Both brand label and logo on the product, or nameplate in production.

The last step is evaluation which was implemented using method of discussion and questionnaire. Discussion with partner and answering questionnaire by participants were aimed to measure response of participant toward program that had been implemented, also the success level of program, and also the sustainable of programme.

Result of this program is started with socialization which gets positive response from Mrs. Fajri'ah. Mrs. Fajri'ah also give good response and expect the realization of the training and mentoring. In the socialization activity between team and partner also has discussed about time, place, and other things that need to be prepared in implementation. The time of training is on February 2021. Next, the result of training that has been implemented gradually which are design training, fabric cutting, sewing technique, and mentoring of product branding and its marketing.

In the first training, team of community service prepared material about design or pattern making. Prevoiusly, workers immediately cut the material in fabric without making pattern when they want to make a product. So, sometimes there are some undeviating or aslant results (Irwanto, 2021). So, in this design training stage, participants were trained about designing a pattern using paper media. Participants followed by using drawing tools such as drawing book, pencils, ruler, and eraser. Participants were divided into 5 groups that consisted of 2 people. This grouping model was aimed to create an effective training and material absorbed optimally (Joyce et al., 2009). As like that, in this training participants could divide task in following the instructor well and practice of designing then cutting the fabric as like the Figure 1.

**Figure 1.**

*Participants tried to make design and cut fabric*



### **A. Training of Sewing Technique**

Training of sewing technique started from fabric cutting from material of training using designed pattern from previous training. Then participant tried to sew short mentoring by professional sailor. In the sewing training process, there were some other activities which were hemming. After hemming, participants were guided slowly to sew neatly so that produced good quality. As like the theory of process, skill or practice skill also needs knowledge and practice (Ernawati, 2015), as like sewing skill. In this training sewing technique, besides obtained theoretical material and practice of sewing process until participants were able to make 1 product of pant from woven fabric as like Figure 2.

**Figure 2.**

*Participants tried to sew woven fabric*



### **B. Training and Mentoring of Branding**

The next training is the importance of branding and innovation of product marketing. In this training, before the instructor explained his material, he invited participants to do ice breaking so that the participants could be more relax, checking focus, and ready to accept training material. After ice breaking, participants listened to material, from what is branding, the importance of branding, and how to make unique branding. Because based on the development of technology and market, branding of a product is important in a business (Diarta et al., 2016). Next about technique of marketing, participants were also introduced to some models and online media of marketing. Such as online social media which are common used by society and consumers, like *facebook*, *instagram*, *tictoc* (Kristia & Beli, 2021), etc. Then, the owner of Omah Sandang choose an officer staff that has an obligation to manage a social media of Omah Sandang for promotion of Omah Sandang's products.

### **C. Step of Evaluation**

In this step, community service team and all of training participant arrange discussion to discuss evaluation of program.

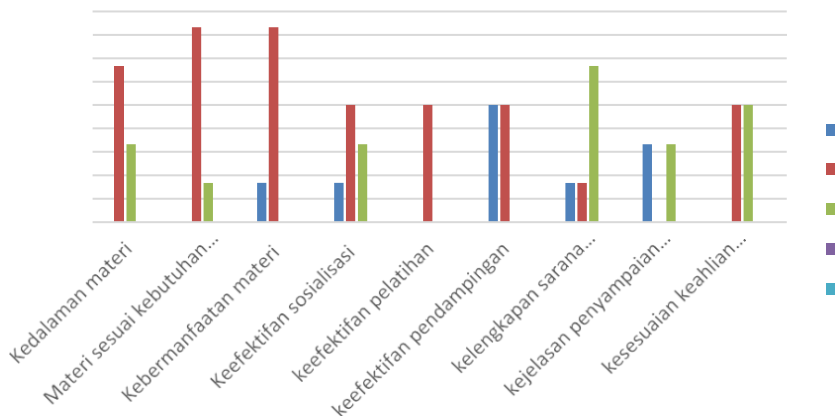
Evaluation was done in two steps which were according the number of groups so that the implementation could fulfill health protocol to prevent Covid-19.

In the aspect of human resources of partner, the result of this community service program showed the improvement of knowledge and skill of partner about design, fabric cutting, and sewing technique with percentage 70% from previous state. Meanwhile, in the aspect of product and brand were realization branding label of short product Omah Sandang with percentage 80%.

In the result of the responses of participants' satisfaction showed that participants gave good responses toward this activity. It can be seen from the high percentage of responses of participants which are good and participants commonly gave good and very good as response. Besides, there were no participants who gave bad or very bad as response. This is can be seen as like in the Figure 3.

**Figure 3.**

*Responses of Participants' Satisfaction*



Based on that Figure 3 showed that almost participants satisfied on those community service programmes. And it implicates to increasing and empowering the “Omah Sandang” workers especially

women worker's group to sustain the economic in their family. In addition, this program also increase the resilience of the families of Sukosono Village residents and job opportunities for teenagers, mothers, and the people of Jepara.

## **Conclusion**

Implementation of community service program that implemented in Sukosono village produces some improvements. First, in the aspect of human resources, community has awareness about the importance of product innovation, branding, and upgrading marketing system. Quantitatively, knowledge of partners about design product, fabric cutting, and sewing technique increase 70% from previous state. Second, in the aspect of product, this mentoring produces an innovation of pants from woven material, logo of brand product namely "omah sandang", and there is innovation of product marketing which is not only offline but also online through marketplace. Beside the realization the label of branding product Omah Sandang, it is also realized the nameplate in front of home production.

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