



Enhancing Work Culture and Organizational Behavior at Kumau Laundry MSME in Lubuk Begalung, Padang

^{1*)}Selvia Mahelda, ²⁾Dea Ananda, ³⁾Oktrisa Pratiwi, ⁴⁾Vira Ardila ⁵⁾Vivi Nila Sari

^{1,2,3,4,5)} Department of Management, Universitas Putera Indonesia YPTK Padang, Padang, Indonesia

*Corresponding E-mail: maheldaselvia@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This community engagement initiative was designed to enhance organizational behavior and foster a productive work culture within Kumau Laundry, a household-scale MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) located in Lubuk Begalung, Padang. A participatory approach was employed through capacity-building workshops, the co-creation of shared organizational values, and the facilitation of internal communication mechanisms. Data were gathered through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and focused group discussions. The outcomes reveal notable improvements in internal communication effectiveness, the consolidation of a collaborative work culture, better discipline management practices, and enhanced customer service quality. The findings suggest that modest, behavior-focused interventions can yield significant positive impacts on the organizational dynamics of household-scale MSMEs. The practical implications underscore the importance of incorporating soft skills development into MSME empowerment models, beyond the conventional focus on technical and business capacities. Nonetheless, the initiative faced limitations, including a restricted number of respondents and a short implementation period, indicating the need for longitudinal evaluations to assess the sustainability of these initial changes.

Keywords: Internal Communication; MSMEs; Organizational Behavior; Organizational Culture; Work Discipline

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in supporting local economies, including in Padang City, West Sumatra. One of the MSMEs currently experiencing growth in this area is Kumau Laundry, established in 2023 by Mrs. Riva Amelia. Located in a densely populated residential area near a university campus, the business holds significant growth potential. According to Arifin et al. (2020), MSMEs are instrumental in advancing the economic objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly through job creation, ensuring decent working conditions, fostering business innovation, and adapting to the economic, social, and

environmental challenges that arise. This adaptation is critical for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

However, initial observations revealed several challenges in human resource management, particularly in terms of organizational behavior and work culture. Issues identified included ineffective communication between the owner and employees, insufficient job training, and the absence of shared values regarding work culture. Katyal and Xaviour (2012) highlight that, in addition to these challenges, MSMEs often face obstacles such as limited access to credit, difficulties in accessing markets, lack of technological knowledge, and inadequate infrastructure.

These issues have resulted in low productivity, frequent operational errors, and employee dissatisfaction. In line with this, Monteiro and Joseph (2023) explain that organizational culture significantly impacts employees' mental health and well-being. Unfavorable workplace cultures, characterized by unsupportive leadership, lack of social support, excessive job demands, and poor work-life balance, can negatively affect employees' mental health.

In the context of MSMEs like Kumau Laundry, organizational behavior and work culture are crucial elements for creating a harmonious work environment, strengthening employee loyalty, and supporting sustainable business growth. A study by Srisathan et al. (2020), which examined 300 MSMEs across Thailand and China, found that organizations need to implement strong and appropriate strategies to achieve sustainability and produce superior innovation outcomes. This research underlines the importance of interventions that are practical, solution-oriented, and empowering for the organizations involved. Similarly, Alarifi and Adam (2023) suggest that participative leadership plays a critical role in fostering innovative employee behavior, which in turn contributes to the resilience and sustainability of MSMEs.

This community service program is designed to assist Kumau Laundry in improving organizational behavior and establishing a productive and collaborative work culture. Sarinah (2020) emphasizes that the human element is the most significant and most challenging aspect of an organization, as it shapes organizational dynamics and influences the working relationships among employees. A positive organizational culture enables individuals to collaborate effectively, creating a work environment that is beneficial both for employees and the organization as a whole.

The interventions were carried out through training, the co-creation of shared work culture values, and the facilitation of more open internal communication. A participatory approach was applied to ensure that both employees and the owner were actively

involved in developing solutions suited to their local context.

Previous studies have indicated that addressing organizational aspects within MSMEs can significantly improve business performance (Putri & Saputra, 2020; Mulyani et al., 2018). As Nurhasanah (2024) highlights, training and management assistance are essential for the improvement and development of MSMEs, as these businesses constitute the largest segment of the economy. Strengthening MSME groups through training is particularly crucial given their widespread impact and the large number of employees involved.

However, there is still a lack of community service programs that specifically focus on organizational behavior and work culture within the home laundry sector, particularly in West Sumatra. This represents both a gap and the novelty of the initiative, which targets organizational soft skills within the informal sector—an area that has been largely overlooked in empowerment interventions.

While hard skills are often seen as more important, they are not sufficient on their own. Hard skills are essential for performing specific tasks, but organizations also place significant value on soft skills. These skills, unlike technical abilities, are more difficult to teach and require sustained development (Rasid, Tewal, & Kojo, 2018).

Rao (2018) underscores that soft skills are crucial for building employees' capacities and offer numerous benefits, both individually and within teams. These skills help strengthen workplace relationships and enable employees to adapt to change effectively.

Kumau Laundry was selected as a partner based on its readiness for change, the owner's commitment to internal improvements, and the urgency of the challenges faced. It is hoped that this program will not only benefit Kumau Laundry but also serve as a model for similar MSMEs.

METHODS

The methods applied in this community service program were designed to ensure effective partner engagement and relevance to the local context. The following subsections outline the specific approaches, stages, tools, and roles involved in the implementation.

1. Approach Used

This community service activity employs a participatory and collaborative approach, which actively involves both the owner and employees of the MSME "Kumau Laundry" throughout the entire process. This approach was chosen to ensure that the solutions designed are highly relevant to the needs and local context of the partner.

2. Activity Phases and Implementation Timeline

The activities were carried out from October to November 2023 at "Kumau Laundry" in the Lubuk Begalung Village, Padang. The implementation phases are as follows:

a. Problem Identification (1st Week of October)

The team conducted initial observations and interviews with the owner and employees to identify issues related to organizational behavior and work culture.

b. Information Collection (2nd-3rd Week of October)

This was carried out through in-depth interviews with the owner (Mrs. Riva Amelia) and one employee (Kak Risa), direct observations of work processes, and review of internal documents such as attendance records and simple financial statements.

c. Analysis and Solution Formulation (4th Week of October)

The collected data was analyzed qualitatively to identify work behavior patterns, communication barriers, and team dynamics. The results of the analysis formed the basis for developing interventions.

d. Intervention (November 2023)

Interventions were implemented through a brief training on work ethic and team

communication, the formulation of shared work culture values, and facilitating regular communication forums between employees and the owner.

e. Evaluation and Follow-up (End of November 2023)

A reflection session was held with the partner to evaluate the impact of the interventions and to develop a strategy for the independent continuation of the established practices.

3. Location and Target

The activities took place at "Kumau Laundry," a home-based laundry business located in the Lubuk Begalung Village, Padang, West Sumatra. The target of this activity includes the business owner and three permanent employees involved in the daily operations.

4. Techniques and Tools Used

The techniques used included participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The tools consisted of interview guides, field notes, and simple evaluation forms.

In participatory observation, the researcher engages with the daily activities of the observed individuals or data sources. While observing, the researcher also participates in the tasks being performed, experiencing both the joys and challenges of the work. According to Sejati (2019), participatory observation ensures that the obtained data is comprehensive, sharp, and provides insight into the deeper meaning of the observed behavior. The primary goal of in-depth interviews is to gather detailed and comprehensive qualitative information from participants, allowing researchers to understand their thoughts and feelings regarding the issue being studied (Hanipah, 2023). On the other hand, focus group discussions (FGD) are systematic and guided discussions about specific issues or problems. FGD is a process for gathering information on a specific issue through group discussion (Dewi & Sylvia, 2022).

5. Partners and Their Roles

The partners in this activity are the business owner (Mrs. Riva Amelia) and three employees. They played an active role in identifying problems, making decisions regarding interventions, and evaluating the results of the activities.

6. Activity Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted qualitatively through open reflection sessions with the partners, post-intervention observations, and assessments of changes in work interactions. The evaluation focused on the benefits of the intervention, the engagement of the partners, and the potential sustainability of the positive practices established. Muryadi (2017) explains that evaluation is a tool or procedure used to understand and measure something within a predefined environment, following set rules and procedures. Program evaluation is a systematic investigation of valuable and significant aspects of a given object. It is an ongoing process that explicitly focuses on the achievement of objectives, while implicitly comparing the program's outcomes with the expected standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents key findings from the interventions implemented at Kumau Laundry, focusing on improvements in internal communication, collaborative culture, discipline management, and customer service. The results are based on interviews, observations, and supporting data, and are discussed in relation to relevant literature to highlight their significance and implications.

1. Improvement of Internal Communication

Based on in-depth interviews with the owner and one employee, as well as observations of daily interactions at the workplace, it was found that the use of an online communication group and regular meetings had contributed to better communication effectiveness. Both the owner and the employees developed a clearer understanding of the business's goals and operational procedures. This change was evident from the reduction in

miscommunication during daily tasks, as noted in the observation log and confirmed through joint reflection.

Sihombing & Sugianti (2017) found that utilizing WhatsApp groups has a positive impact on improving employee performance. The group facilitates the exchange of information by ensuring that all colleagues are included, which makes communication more efficient. Similarly, Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2011) discovered that more productive team meetings correlate with higher team productivity. Teams that exhibited more functional interactions—such as problem-solving and planning—were notably more satisfied with their meetings. The process of team meetings, in turn, influences both team and organizational results.

2. Strengthening Collaborative Work Culture

The interventions, including training and the development of shared work culture values, successfully enhanced employees' sense of ownership and involvement in decision-making. This outcome was derived from a focus group discussion that revealed employees felt more valued and heard. Post-intervention observations noted improved collaboration in task execution, as well as the emergence of new initiatives from employees aimed at improving services. According to Canning et al. (2019), the organizational mindset is closely linked to a company's culture, specifically the norms of collaboration, innovation, and ethical behavior. These norms predict employees' trust in the organization and their commitment. Bajer (2016) emphasized that organizations focusing on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and open communication foster a better employee experience.

3. Improvement of Discipline Management

A review of attendance records and discussions with the partner revealed that attendance rates and adherence to work procedures improved after the implementation of a collaboratively developed discipline policy. Employees demonstrated a better understanding of the importance of punctuality and regular work habits, as reflected in the November 2023

attendance data, which showed a decline in tardiness.

Education for employees positively impacted their performance. Furthermore, it was found that employee training led to better performance outcomes. Employee work experience also played a key role in optimizing performance. Additionally, maintaining discipline helped to improve productivity (Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023). A disciplined approach reflects a person's responsibility towards the tasks assigned to them. With a high level of discipline, employees are more likely to successfully complete their tasks and responsibilities (Vanesa et al., 2019).

4. Improvement in Customer Response

Based on service observations and informal customer feedback gathered by the partner, there was a noticeable improvement in service speed and the timeliness of laundry completion. This strengthened long-term relationships with loyal customers, as noted by the business owner, who reported an increase in repeat orders. Vosloban (2012) suggested that personal motivation remains an interesting area for analysis in future studies. Moreover, performance is influenced by factors such as the work environment, benefits, opportunities for promotion, task clarity, communication quality, and customer relationships. Nabass and Abdallah (2018) added that improving employee communication and effectiveness allows companies to adjust internal processes to meet changes in customer needs.

Overall, the introduction of new operational management strategies at Kumau Laundry had a positive impact on the work culture and organizational effectiveness. These findings align with the research of Jones and Brown (2020), who emphasized the importance of effective communication and a positive organizational culture in improving small business performance. Warrick (2017) also noted that a critical factor in an organization's success is its culture. Organizational culture plays a significant role in influencing performance and effectiveness, employee

morale, productivity, and the organization's ability to attract, motivate, and retain talent.

Enhanced internal communication and employee engagement fostered team collaboration and service efficiency, as also emphasized by Smith et al. (2019), who stated that employees who feel involved in decision-making processes are likely to perform better. On the other hand, the discipline policy, which was developed collaboratively, demonstrated that a participative approach can strengthen individual integrity in work, in line with the principles of participative leadership outlined by Alarifi and Adam (2023).

The significance of these results lies in the fact that simple interventions in organizational behavior and work culture can lead to tangible changes, even in small household-scale MSMEs such as Kumau Laundry. This finding enriches community service practices, which have traditionally focused on technical and business aspects, by adding a dimension of strengthening organizational soft skills, as suggested by Rao (2018).

5. Limitations of the Activity

One limitation of this activity is the small number of respondents, which only involved the owner and three employees. As a result, the generalization of the findings should be done with caution. Additionally, the relatively short duration of the activity (two months) means that the long-term impact of the intervention has not been thoroughly evaluated. Future studies are needed to monitor the sustainability of the changes in work behavior over a longer period of time.

Conclusion

This community service initiative demonstrated that targeted interventions in organizational behavior and work culture can significantly enhance operational effectiveness and business growth in small-scale MSMEs such as Kumau Laundry. Through strengthening internal communication, fostering collaborative work values, and establishing participatory-based discipline policies, the project succeeded in

improving employee engagement, teamwork, and customer service quality. These findings highlight the critical role of soft skills development in MSME empowerment efforts, complementing traditional technical and business-oriented approaches. However, the study's limitations, including the small sample size and short intervention period, constrain the generalizability and the assessment of long-term impacts. Future research should involve larger participant groups and adopt longitudinal designs to evaluate the sustainability and scalability of organizational behavior improvements in similar MSME contexts.

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