Soap-Making Training: Advancing Student’s Creativity and Economy in The New Normal

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ABSTRACT
Manba’ul Maarif Denanyar Islamic Boarding School started its learning activities in the new normal. Unfortunately, it had not been able to independently fulfill the needs for conducting hygiene and health protocols, for instance by providing soaps. This study aimed to describe the soap-making process and examine the students’ performance. This study was conducted during the community service empowered by Asset-based community development (ABCD) model. Results conveyed that FGD was undertaken during the preparation and planning stage of which the outcome included the consideration of making itchy, acne, beauty, liquid, and dishwashing soaps as well as hand sanitizer. At the action stage, training was conducted in two sessions with lecturing method, demonstration, guided practice, evaluation, and product branding strategies. Another result showed that the students’ performance was excellent in terms of product quality and packaging. Further, an assessment on the training implementation was conducted and the training program was followed up by giving assistance in opening a product business named SABUNA.

Keywords: Soap; packaging; marketing; Islamic boarding school

1. INTRODUCTION
Manba’ul Maarif Denanyar Islamic Boarding School was founded in 1917. Currently, it is under the lead of KH. Abdussalam. There are 1,000 male and 1,216 female students (Statistics Center of Jombang). Apart from providing educational services, this school also has a business unit that aims to fulfill the needs of its whole members as well as the surrounding community. The large number of students also has impacted on the fulfillment of logistical needs. When the New Normal starts, the students will begin their school’s daily activities, therefore, hygiene materials such as soaps and anti-septic needed. Due to Covid 19 pandemic, there must be an increase of demand on hygiene materials to prevent the virus transmission and maintain health protocols. Recently, the fulfillment of soaps are indeed dependent on the market product availability and distribution, therefore, independent soap production required as the emergency aids.

In reference to above necessity, Manba’ul Maarif Denayar Islamic Boarding School develops students’ entrepreneurship skills. In this case, the Community Service Team of Universitas Negeri Surabaya helps the school develop entrepreneurial activities. The assistance given by the university is essential since the school cannot manage its sources and potentials. Based on the initial discussion with the school caregivers and administrators, it is necessary to develop a soap business in which it can be produced by the school and can be sold at more affordable price than the one on the current market.

Regarding the problems faced by Manba’ul Maarif Denanyar Islamic Boarding School in increasing its income, the solution offered by the community service team is to provide entrepreneurship training along with the assistance to entrepreneurial product marketing. Soap making becomes the entrepreneur activity chosen due to some important issues considered. This product, apart from being indispensable for everyday life, is also a product that is easily sold or commercialized. The product marketing is mainly focused on students and the surrounding residents. Online marketing is also being taught to the training participants. The marketing progress will be monitored until the boarding school can independently carry out the entrepreneurial activities.
2. METHODS

This community service program (PKM) used Asset-based community development (ABCD) empowerment model (Kretzmann, 2010). This model focused on assets owned by partners as the main capital for program development. Partners were assumed to have a semi-raw capital, where the strengths, capacities, and assets of the community needed to be explored and developed as a strong foundation for business progress. This approach was chosen to foster a positive mentality, high self-confidence, and great enthusiasm to explore one’s potential.

PKM activities using ABCD model were conducted in four stages namely preparation, action planning, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring. In the preparation stage, assets and potential partners were identified both material and non-material and partnership coordination. The results of this identification converged on planning actions to conduct training. Afterwards, the action planning stage was focused on designing in the form of compiling training modules and other relevant materials. At the implementation stage, the team assisted the partners in realizing the designs that had been compiled at the planning stage. The training was attended by 20 participants with three instructors and two facilitators. Performance test was examined through the product quality encompassing aroma, texture, and color. The packaging was considered good based on the neatness aspect.

3. RESULTS

A. Preparation and Planning Stage (Planning)

In an effort to get a complete picture of the potential and opportunity for entrepreneurship development in Mamb'ul Maarif Denayar Islamic Boarding School, a Focus Group Discussion was held between PKM implementers and the school. In the forum, there were some data obtained, such as the fact that: (1) The school had never held a soap-making training; (2) The need for hygiene materials for students and the whole school members was fulfilled by buying the hygiene products on market; (3) During the pandemic, the students remained at the boarding school with strict health protocols; (4) The need for hygiene and health materials increased; (5) Important hygiene products included hand sanitizer to prevent the spread of the viruses as well as facial, liquid, and dishwashing soaps; (6) In order to be sustainable, it was necessary to establish a student business community in producing soap; (7) Some products that would be developed based on the FGD results covered: Hand Sanitizer, Facial soaps for health and beauty, Anti-acne soap, Itchy soap, Liquid soap, and Dishwashing soap.

B. Action / Implementation Stage

The formulation of training model and compiling handout was referred to the results of the school needs. The training was attended by twenty students who were divided into two groups. After carrying out the practice of making soap and hand sanitizer, each group received information from the instructors. All training participants could contribute in the training well and enthusiastically. The group assignments were given according to the instructors’ direction and assistance.

The solid soaps were produced as beauty, acne, and itchy soaps. The materials used were: 1 kg of chip soap; Perfume and dye; and additional ingredients (papaya, honey, milk, betel, noni, and others) a maximum of 50 gr / 50 ml.

The following steps showed how to make solid soaps: (1) Cut chip soap into pieces; (2) Heat the chip soap on low heat until all dissolved; (3) Left to lukewarm; (4) Add additives, perfume, and dye and mix well; (5) Put the dough into the mold provided; (6) After being cool and hard, remove the soap from the mold; and (6) Pack the soap.

In connection with the technical process for making additional ingredients, papaya or other fruits were mashed in a dry blender or grated. Likewise other types of additives, the additional ingredients were added depending on the type of soap that would be made. To produce a harsher soap, when melting the chip soap, a batch system could be used (such as making rice teams) on medium heat or it could be carried out as in the above steps with 50 ml alcohol.

To get the right dough, the participants needed to practice repeatedly. The texture of the soap from the aspects of solidness, color, and the number of additional ingredients added could be adjusted to what was expected.

Stages of Producing Hand Sanitizer, the following materials were used to make hand sanitizer: 1 liter of Alcohol 70%; 500 grams of aloe vera gel; 1 liter of water; and Perfume.

The following steps showed how to make hand sanitizer: (1) Put 500 grams of aloe vera gel in a container and add 70% alcohol gradually until all dissolved; (2) Put 10 ml of perfume or lime extract; (3) Give dye if necessary; (4) Pack the hand sanitizer; (5) Left the hand sanitizer for 6 hours; and (6) Hand sanitizer was ready to use.
Stages of Producing Dishwashing Soap, the following ingredients were used to make dishwashing soap: 1000 gr of Texaphone; 400 gr of NaCl salt; 200 gr of Sodium sulfate; 40 ml of Foam buster; 200 gr of Citric acid / citron; drops of Anti-bacterial (i.e. benzalkonium chloride / EDTA); 12-15 L of Water; and 25 ml of dye and perfume.

The following steps showed how to make dishwashing soap:
(1) Stir 1000 grams of Texaphone or 1 kg plus 200 grams of sodium sulfate plus 200 grams of citric acid until dissolved in 1000 ml of water; (2) Dissolve 400 grams of salt in 1000 ml or 1 liter of water; (3) Dissolve the salt gradually into the solution and stir it constantly. If it was thick, add a total of 8 liters of water; (4) To give foam, add 400 ml of foam booster, 5 drops of anti-bacterial (i.e. benzalkonium chloride), and 25 ml of perfume and dye (added it gradually until getting the desired color) and stir it until blended; (5) Added 4 liters of water (or according to the desired thickness); (6) Let it until the foam gone: and (7) Ready to pack.

C. Product Branding

The various hygiene and health products produced by the students were produced massively. Therefore, it required product branding and licensing. The brand chosen by the school was "SABUNA". This brand was used for all the products. The brands would be:
1. Sabuna: Dishwashing Liquid Soap
2. Sabuna: Body Wash
3. Sabuna: Hand Sanitizer
4. Sabuna: Acne Soap
5. Sabuna: Antiseptic / Itchy Soap
6. Sabuna: Beauty Soap

After the training was complete, a reflection and evaluation of the training results was carried out in the form of ready-to-pack and ready-to-distribute products. Some points that were significant to be evaluated included: (1) The sticker labels were less neat. To be more efficient, the labels should be cut off in the printing service; (2) The label quality needed to be improved; (3) The aroma of the soaps should be more varied, such as using floral perfume; (4) The product packaging could be more diverse to attract more consumers; and (5). There should be three solid soap packaging for acne, itchy, and beauty soaps respectively.

D. Evaluation and Monitoring Stage

Based on the results of the performance test on soap-making process, Figure 8 and Figure 9 show...
the performance test results on soap quality and packaging quality respectively.

Fig. 6. Performance Test Assessment Results Based on Soap Quality

The quality of the soaps was determined based on color, aroma, and texture aspects. Meanwhile, the product quality was determined from the neatness aspect of the packaging. Based on the results (Figure 1 and Figure 2), the lowest score was 4 (good category) and the highest score was 4.8 (very good category). Thus, the participants' mastery of the material presented had shown maximum attainments. Meanwhile, the lowest average score obtained in the packaging aspect was 3.6 (good category) and the highest score was 4.6 (very good category). The score of solid soap packaging was not optimal due to untidy packaging. The quality of the dishwashing liquid soap in group B got the maximum score because the product had a good lemon aroma, dark green color, and a good liquid texture.

Participants’ responses to the training process were obtained using questionnaire with eleven points: (1) This training is useful for developing soap production businesses, (2) This training needs to be held again at another time, (3) The training material is easy to understand, (4) The instructor’s explanation is easy to understand, (5) The instructor guides patiently, (6) The materials and tools provided are adequate to be applied, (7) The demonstration given by the instructor is easy to follow, (8) The training time is adequate; (9) The training venue was good, (10) The modules provided are very helpful in understanding the material, and (11) The number of instructors and trainees is ideal.

Participants gave a positive response except in the aspect of training time given. This was because the full day training time was divided into two sessions with six types of soaps being trained. Based on the results of the training skills, the following evaluation points were obtained. (1) Participants were skillful in preparing materials and equipment; (2) Participants were skillful in making itchy soap, beauty soap, acne soap, hand sanitizer, dishwashing liquid soap, and liquid soap according to the instructor's directions; (3) Participants could complete the soap production with the assistance of instructors; and (4) The packaging stage still needed further training process to produce better product packaging.

Based on the results of the training, the participants were ready to open a soap business named "SABUNA" with some supporting promotional media such as leaflets, banners, and social media. As a follow-up activity, mentoring was gradually carried out. Business assistance was carried out both online and offline. In an effort to improve product quality, PKM group submitted adequate materials and equipment to carry out independent training with online consultations. The finding during the online training and consultation was that, in producing Body Wash, the product was too liquid. The PKM members provided input by adding more NaCl.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation and discussion, this study concludes three following points.

1. In the planning stage, an FGD is carried out and results on the following draft: the urgent hygiene products include hand sanitizer to prevent the spread of the viruses as well as facial, liquid, and dishwashing soaps. In addition, it is formulated a relevant training model and handouts.

2. The training is held in two sessions. Each session emphasizes motivation to open a soap business, production training using lecturing mode, product demonstration, guided practice, evaluation, and product branding. The participant's performance shows excellent results in terms of product quality and packaging. Participants are skillful in preparing materials and equipment and making soap according to the instructor's direction. However, they still need
further training on packaging stage to produce better packaging. They also have a very good response/feedback to the training.

3. At the observing and reflection stages, observations and assessments are conducted of which the result conveys a follow-up program by providing assistance in opening SABUNA product business.

As an effort to follow up the program and improve the participants’ skills, some actions should be made to: (1) open networks for expanding marketing reach, (2) increase the cadres’ skills by providing further training so that the quality of SABUNA products can be improved, (3) open cooperation with the managers of Islamic boarding schools in East Java Province to expand the distribution of the products, (4) assist for product standardization, (5) get BPOM and SNI permits, and (6) add business capital so that the products are more diverse.

REFERENCES


