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## Minangkabau Women's Socio-Economic Adaptation: Living Qur'an Study of Brick-Making Worker in West Sumatera

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to investigate the Minangkabau women's socio-economic adaptation as the worker of the brick-making in West Sumatera by employing Living Qur'an study approach. This is a qualitative-descriptive research. This research utilizes in-depth interview, observation, and documentation as the data collection techniques and places Minangkabau women who work in the brick-making industry as the research subjects. The research subjects were analyzed based on the social, education, and their economic condition. The research results show that Minangkabau women who work as the brick-making worker come from family with low levels of education and poor economic resources. In fact, the real condition of their job is actually very challenging, with long working hour, extremely hard physical condition, and very low wages. However, they consider this job as a form of devotion to the family and to the husband. They viewed this job is in line with the teaching of the Qur'an in which it is of vital importance for the wife to support her husband in earning a living for the family. The values found in Qur'an such as hard work, patience, and sincerity are implemented into their daily live in both working and personal life contexts. Even though they encountered the economic challenge like income fluctuations and limited access toward health service, they remain firm and try to carry out their role well. In brief, it can be concluded that Minangkabau traditional and religious values are not contradicted to one another and can get a long with the demand of modern economic. In addition, the role of women in informal sector is a form of devotion and responsibility toward family and this role is very well respected. Therefore, intervention of various parties is of needed in order to help improving the welfare of the women who work as the brick-making worker as well as to assure that they are actually working in a more decent and better condition.

**Keywords:** socio-economic adaptation; brick-making worker; Qur'an values; Minangkabau women; Living Qur'an study.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji adaptasi sosial-ekonomi perempuan Minangkabau yang bekerja sebagai buruh pencetak batu bata di Sumatera Barat, dengan pendekatan studi Living Quran. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif-deskriptif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian adalah perempuan Minangkabau yang bekerja di industri pencetakan batu bata, yang dianalisis berdasarkan latar belakang sosial, pendidikan, dan kondisi ekonomi mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan Minangkabau yang bekerja sebagai buruh pencetak batu bata berasal dari keluarga dengan pendidikan rendah dan sumber daya ekonomi terbatas. Kondisi pekerjaan mereka sangat menantang, dengan jam kerja panjang, kondisi fisik yang berat, dan upah

rendah. Namun, mereka memandang pekerjaan ini sebagai bentuk pengabdian kepada keluarga dan suami, sejalan dengan ajaran Al-Quran yang mengajarkan pentingnya istri mendukung suami dalam mencari nafkah. Nilai-nilai Al-Quran seperti kerja keras, kesabaran, dan ketulusan diterapkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka, baik dalam konteks pekerjaan maupun kehidupan pribadi. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan ekonomi seperti fluktuasi pendapatan dan akses yang terbatas ke layanan kesehatan, mereka tetap teguh dan berusaha menjalankan peran mereka dengan baik. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai adat dan agama Minangkabau dapat berjalan beriringan dengan tuntutan ekonomi modern, dan peran perempuan dalam sektor informal adalah bentuk pengabdian dan tanggung jawab terhadap keluarga yang sangat dihargai. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan intervensi dari berbagai pihak untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan buruh perempuan ini dan memastikan mereka dapat bekerja dalam kondisi yang lebih manusiawi.

**Kata Kunci:** adaptasi sosial-ekonomi; buruh pencetak batu bata; nilai-nilai Al-Quran; perempuan Minangkabau; studi Living Quran

## INTRODUCTION

Minangkabau women who are originated from West Sumatera Indonesia is actually living in a unique kinship matrilineal pattern in which the line of descent and inheritance are passing down through mother's side (Sanday, 2002). Women in Minangkabau have a very significant role for both in domestic and public contexts. In a fast-changing socio-economic context, Minangkabau women also get involved in the informal sector in which one of them is to work as a brick-making worker. The traditional brick industry has become one of the significant sectors, particularly in the village as the source of the income (Nasir et al., 2021).

In the midst of the modernization and globalization, Minangkabau women encounter complex challenges. These women need to keep the balance of their traditional role as the guardian of the custom as well as their responsibility in earning a living for the family that force them to work outside of the house (Helfi, 2015). The involvement of the women in informal job, in this case as the brick-making worker reflects adaptation toward the economic pressure and at the same time the demand to maintain the culture identity.

The understanding toward the role of religion especially the values of Qur'an has become very vital in this context. Living Qur'an refers to the way of implementation and internalization of Qur'an in daily live, including in making economic and social decisions. Hence, investigating the influence of these values on decision making and behaviour of Minangkabau women in the informal job is very relevant and significant. The values of Qur'an provide moral and ethics guidance that can help establishing their socio-economic adaptation. In short, this approach allows a new perspective to shed a light in understanding the dynamics of female worker's life.

Furthermore, numbers of the previous studies have been focusing on the role of Minangkabau women in family and community revenues, also how the matrilineal system influences their social dynamics (Ahmad et al., 2023; Fatimah, 2023; Irwan et al., 2022; Kato, 1982; Sanday, 2002; Valentina & Safitri, 2022; Alikhsan & Yenti, 2023). Generally, these studies emphasize the importance of women in the structure of social and custom of Minangkabau. In addition, there are also numerous research on informal worker and the challenge that they face (Sari & Yusuf, 2023; Advunansyah et al., 2021; Elfira, 2023; Fatmariza & Febriani, 2019; Moser, 1978; Dilova et al., 2022; Azwar, 2018; Farsalena, 2021). However, there are only few studies that associating the Living Qur'an approach into the research in order to unveil the implementation of religious values in the context of informal job of Minangkabau women.

Thus, this research offers a new contribution by combining Living Qur'an approach in analyzing Minangkabau women's socio-economic adaptation as the brick-making worker. Hence, this study is not only to enrich the literature on the role of women in informal economy, but also to provide a new understanding about the integration of religious values in their daily life. This approach allows a more holistic understanding about how the teachings of the Qur'an is being implemented in a specific socio-economic context.

It is expected that this research will provide an in-depth picture about the process of Minangkabau women's socio-economic adaptation in the brick-making industry. Moreover, it is also expected that this research would bring practical recommendation to improve the welfare of female worker in the informal sector, as well as to enrich academic discussion about the integration of religious values in the socio-economic context.

## **METHOD**

This is a qualitative research with a case study design to reveal Minangkabau women's socio-economic adaptation who work as brick-making worker. The Living Qur'an approach is utilized to analyze the implementation of Qur'an values in their life. The research took place in many different villages located in Agam, Lima Puluh Kota Regencies, and Payakumbuh City of West Sumatera. These areas were chosen due to the big population number of brick-making workers that are significant and are still very much colored by both Minangkabau and Islamic values. The research subjects are women aged 20-50 years old and have been working as the brick-making worker for minimum one year long.

The research data were collected through in-depth interview and participative observation. The interview was carried out in a semi-structured in order to reveal information about the background of socio-economic, working experience, and the implementation of Qur'an values in daily life (Rafiq, 2021). The participative observation is conducted in the working place and house environment to uncover the actual working condition and the social interaction of the female worker. Next, data were analyzed by using thematic analysis method which includes transcription and coding, theme identification, also triangulation to assure the validity of the research finding (Syamsuddin, 2007). The research validity is measured through triangulation method, member checking, peer debriefing, and trail audit.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Implementation of Living Qur'an in the Socio-Economic Context**

Living Quran is an approach focusing on the implementation and internalization of Qur'an teachings in daily life context (Afriani et al., 2023). This concept emphasizes that Qur'an is not merely as a holy book to be read and memorized, however it can be a practical guidance that can be implemented in many aspects in life, including in the social, economic, and culture contexts. This approach viewed Qur'an as the source of dynamic values and principles that are relevant in answering contemporary challenges in real life context (Aji et al., 2021).

Living Quran involves the process of internalizing Qur'an values through an in-depth understanding, reflection, application in the daily life context (Nurani et al., 2022). It

covers aspects such as honesty, hard work, patience, justice, and responsibility. In this research context, Living Qur'an is implemented to allow an understanding toward the values of Qur'an in influencing Minangkabau women's socio-economic adaptation who work as brick-making worker.

Moreover, Living Quran in this study hinges in on how Minangkabau women apply the values of Qur'an in facing the challenge of social and economic aspects. The values such as hard work and patience have become foundation for them in conducting the heavy work load as a worker of brick-making. In line with that, justice and responsibility also encourage them to keep the balance between their role as mother and worker not to mention to also provide appropriate education for their children.

In the context of economic, the values of Qur'an such as honesty and justice have influence women in Minangkabau in managing their income. Even though their earning is small, they keep trying to manage their financial in an honest and just ways. They assure that the basic needs of the family can be fulfilled. The simplicity taught by the Qur'an also reflected in their life style. It is simple and economical at the same time even under a heavy economic challenge.

Living Quran is not only covering the moral aspects and ethics; however, it is also offering holistic approach in understanding the daily life context (Godzińska, 2015). In line with that, it is all about how Qur'an is being applied in the social interaction, decision making, and conflict management (Nuraini et al., 2024). In this research, this approach helps to reveal on how Minangkabau women use the teaching of Qur'an in facing the challenge of in the working place as well as the challenge they encounter in personal life condition.

Next, Living Quran also play role as the source of motivation and spiritual support. Often, in facing the difficulties and pressure in the work place, Minangkabau women tend to rely on du'a and their faith to Allah the almighty as the source of their strength and peace. This indicates that the spiritual values and religious can provide significant psychological and emotional supports in dealing with the full demanding and challenging life condition.

Moreover, Living Quran approach offers a rich and in-depth perspectives in understanding the values of Qur'an being implemented in the daily life situation (Rafiq, 2014). In the context of this research, Living Qur'an helps in revealing Minangkabau women in internalizing and applying the teaching of the Qur'an in tackling the socio-economic challenge as the brick-making worker. Hence, it can be concluded that this approach is not only to enrich our understanding about the role of the religion in daily life context, but also provide a practical knowledge about how the values of Qur'an can be implemented in a specific socio-economic context.

### **Socio-Economic Profile of Minangkabau Female Worker**

Even though the women who work as brick-making worker in West Sumatera are coming from the community with a strong background of custom values, however they are forced to work in the informal sector due to various economic pressures. The social background check on them reveal that they are generally originated from the family with low level of education and poor economic resources. The matrilineal kinship system in Minangkabau has placed women on a strategic position in the inheritance of the traditional values also being responsible toward the economic of the family (Jadmiko et

al., 2023). According to the theory of Minangkabau custom, women are not only having role in the domestic business but also to take over the huge responsibility in maintaining the dignity of the family and the community (Putri et al., 2022).

The actual condition of the brick-making worker is very challenging. They work in a heavy-duty physical condition, with a long working hour and low wages. Nevertheless, most of Minangkabau women choose this type of job as a form of devotion toward the family and husband in accordance to the values of Qur'an particularly that teach the importance of a wife in supporting the husband in earning a living for the family. These women work not only for fulfilling the family economic demand, but also to maintain self-respect and dignity as Minangkabau women.

It is expected that Minangkabau women can act accordingly and appropriately in order to avoid the disgracing themselves, family, and the community (Pratama et al., 2024). However, working as a brick-making worker is considered as an act of honor since they work for the sake of the family. This is a manifestation of the hard-working spirit and independence that is being inherited in both custom and religious values. These women also refuse to stand idle. Thus, this indicates that they have strong characteristics and strong resiliency in facing the challenge of real-life situation.

Furthermore, the role of women in the family economy is not only motivated by the needs of the material, but also enhanced by the kinship system which provides space for women to take an active role in the economic activity. Even under compelling condition, the Minangkabau women stay active in supporting the economy of the family. These women may work as a farmer, trader, or unskilled worker. In short, they are not only having a role in the domestic field, but they actively contributed in a significant way in the economic field without necessarily neglecting their responsibility as a wife and a mother (Nasir et al., 2021).

Minangkabau women who work as brick-making worker is a real example of a strong socio-economic adaptation in a community with a strict system of custom and religious values. They indicate that the values of custom and religious can work hand in hand and not contradict to the demand of modern economy. To sum up, the role of these women in the informal sector is a form of devotion and responsibility toward family and it is considered as an act of honor in the culture of Minangkabau itself.

### **Work Dynamics and Economic Challenges**

The industry of brick-making in West Sumatera is dominated by the female worker, especially in the informal sector. The working condition experienced by the female worker is very hard and challenging. They have to work on the long hours and very demanding physical condition. The wages are very poor, the amount is very small comparing to the workload. According to Ms. Ana, one of female workers in Bukittinggi City, working in the brick-making industry is a choice that was forced to be made due to economic pressure. Even though this job is very physically demanding, but she needs to stick to it in order to help her husband in earning a living for the family.

The economic challenge faced by the female workers is very complex. The fluctuation of the income is one of the main challenges. The industry of brick-making is heavily influenced by uncertain demand of the market. Once the demand is getting down, the income of the workers also turning down drastically. This has caused the high uncertainty

of the economy for both workers and their family. Moreover, access toward health service also become a big problem, including worm infection and musculoskeletal problem as the effect of heavy-duty physical workload. However, these female workers have no appropriate access toward health service in relation with these types of health issues (Helfi, 2015).

Next, the education of the female workers is also very significant issue. As the result of unstable and low wage, most of the female workers having difficulty in finance their children's education. In fact, education is a very important key in breaking the chain of poverty circle as well as to improve the life quality of the future generation. The lack of support from the government in terms of funding education and scholarship for the children of the female workers has worsen this condition. Most of the children are forced to leave school and are demanding to work in the industry of brick-making to help the family earning more income.

This research found out that the condition of the female workers in the industry of brick-making as very worrying. They all work under a great economic pressure and extremely heavy workload. However, they keep working and refuse to stay idle in order to support the economy of the family. Their role is very significant even though their effort is not being highly appreciated. This condition shows that the government intervention and may related parties are urgently needed to improve the working and economic condition of female workers in this sector.

Among the interventions that can be implemented are the raise of the minimum wage in accordance to the workload, the availability of appropriate health service, and job skill program to improve the competitiveness of the female workers. In addition, the support for the education of their children also of vital importance. Next, scholarship program and educational assistance can help the children of the female workers to continue their education and in the future time it is expected to break the chain circle of their parents working in the industry of brick-making.

Furthermore, strict regulation is needed to protect the rights of the female workers. The entrepreneur is obliged to provide a safe and healthy working environment, also adequate social security. The government also need to be more active in surveying the working condition in the industry of brick-making and take firm action against violations of workers' rights. In short, the availability of a better regulation and surveillance, it is expected that the condition of the female workers can be improved into a better working state.

Overall, this research reveals the actual life condition of the female workers in the industry of brick-making which is full of challenge. However, despite all of the great challenges, these female workers show a great resilience in facing all the difficulties. These women play a very significant role in maintaining the stability of the economy of the family and has reflected their strength in combating the pressure of real-life condition. Therefore, bigger support and concern of many related parties are a must in allowing the improvement of the female workers' welfare and better life quality.

### **The Role of Quranic Values in Daily Life**

The values of Qur'an have significant impact on the daily life of the Minangkabau women who work as brick-making worker in West Sumatera. This study reveals that these women have internalized and applied the teachings of Qur'an into the context of the

working and their personal life. The female workers in the industry of brick-making considered their job as a part of the worships and also as form of devotion to the family. The principles of Qur'an such as hard work, patience, and sincerity have become foundations for them in conducting the daily activities. They believe that working hard is a real manifestation of their devotion to their husbands which is in line with the teaching of Qur'an in relation with the role of the good wife. One of the real examples of the implementations of these values is on how the Minangkabau women keep working in full patience and sincerity under a great pressure of the working condition. Ms. Ana, a female worker in Bukittinggi City revealed that she considered her job as an honored manifestation of her devotion toward her husband, even though the wage is very poor and the job itself is very exhausting. The other female worker, Ms. Siti, a young woman who is also working at the same place as Ms. Ana mentioned that even though she respected the values in the Qur'an and Minangkabau custom, however she also expecting that the government and related parties would be more concerned and take real actions in improving the condition of the female workers to allow them to have a better working chance in the future time (Jadmiko et al., 2023).

In the personal life, the values of the Qur'an such as simplicity, honesty, and responsibility also can be seen. The female workers always try to implement these values in their daily life. Even though their income is not high, they keep managing their finance in a thorough way and prioritize the basic needs of the family. This is in line with the teaching of the Qur'an which encourages the believers to have a simple and decent life. In addition, they are very responsible. They feel responsible not only for the welfare of the family, but also toward the education and the future of their children. Even though their income often inadequate, they keep trying hard to make sure that their children can get a decent education. They consider it as a long-term manifestation to finally break the chain of the poverty.

However, the implementation of the Qur'an cannot be separated from the challenge itself. The working condition that is heavy and very poor wage often cause most of the female workers having a great pressure both physically and mentally. These challenges are worsened by the lack of the access toward appropriate health service. The fluctuated income also become a bigger problem and this has caused the family economy instability (Irwan et al., 2022). This is also added more psychological burden since they always have to be ready in facing the instability of the economy (Moser, 1978). Nevertheless, the values of the Qur'an of patience and faith to the God help them to stay strong and keep trying their best even in the most difficult situation.

This research found out that there are differences of the point of view among older and younger generation in relation with values of work and devotion. The old generation, as stated by Mr. Suroso considered the job as the brick-making worker as a noble calling and as a high form of devotion. On the other side, the young generation tend to be more critical and is expecting for the improvement of the working condition as well as an increasement of the wage. In an interview, Ms. Siti revealed that even though she respected the values of Qur'an and Minangkabau custom, she actually also wanted a change that may improve her family welfare. It is a hope for her that the government and related parties would interfere in terms of improving a better working condition and

providing job skill training to allow them having a better chance and a more decent job in the future time.

This research signifies that the values of Qur'an play important role in the daily life of the female workers in the industry of brick-making in West Sumatera. The values such as hard work, simplicity, responsibility, patience, and faith in God are really helping them in facing great challenges in their life. However, the implementation of these values also comes up with numerous difficulties, particularly in relation with the inappropriate working condition and the uncertainty of the economy stability (Hervieu-Leger, 2000). Therefore, it of vital importance for the concerned and intervention of related parties to be manifested to assure that the female workers can play their role in a better state (Fatimah, 2023).

### **Socio-Economic Adaptation Strategy**

Minangkabau women who work as brick-making workers in West Sumatera are facing great challenges in their daily life. In order to survive and adapt to the hard working environment and uncertainty of the economy stability, they implement many unique and variative strategies of socio-economic adaptation (Advunansyah et al., 2021). One of the main strategies is the careful financial management. The female workers are often managing the family finance in a very careful way. They implement it through cost cutting the unnecessary needs and put forward the basic needs. For example, they tend to choose to purchase big amount of food ingredients since it is cheaper or decide to buy a cheaper but highly nutritious food. Moreover, they also use the extra income that they obtain from conducting side job such as being a food trader or merchant.

The female workers also utilize local resources around them to fulfil their daily needs. For example, they use the empty land to plant vegetables for personal and trading purposes. The use of this local resources helps reducing the needs of purchasing as well as help in cost cutting. Moreover, the social network such as family, neighbor, or community have become a very important source of support for the female workers. They often take turns in taking care of the children, money loan, or sharing information about job and business opportunity. This type of solidarities allow them to survive even in the difficult economic condition (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Some of the female workers try to improve their skill and education even though in a difficult and tough situation. They keep following the training or job course conducted by the local organization or NGO. The improvement of this skill has provided them a better chance to get a better job or to start a business. Next, diversification of income source also become the general strategies among the female workers. Instead of working as brick-making, they also run side jobs namely: farm laborers, domestic workers, or open small shop at home. Thus, this diversification has helped in reducing the risk of losing income as well as to improve the stability of the family economy.

The community and social supports play significant role in the adaptation process of socio-economic of female workers. The support of the community allows them to help each other and providing solution toward the problems that they encounter. The community in which they live provided significant emotional support for these female workers. They can shard their experience, story, and obtaining moral support from the member of the community. In addition, the community also tend to be the source of the material support such as basic food aid, interest free loans, or aid in the form of labor



when on an urgent condition. Next, social and religious organizations in West Sumatera also play role in helping these female workers. For example, recitation or *Majlis Ta'lim* (Islamic Forum) tend to be a place to obtain information, help, and spiritual support. The religious values being taught in this type of group provides strength and motivation for the female workers to keep trying and being adaptable to the current situation (Nasir et al., 2021).

In the working place, the solidarity of the female workers is very strong. They helped each other in finishing their job, sharing tips in improving productivity, and protecting each other in a danger working condition. This type of solidarity has created a better working condition which supports the adaptation toward the harsh condition of the working environment. Even though it is still very limited, however the support from the government and NGO also provide contribution in the adaptation process. The programs of women empowerment, job skill training, and business capital assistance conducted by the government or NGO have given opportunities for the female workers to raise the level of their life quality into a better state.

Overall, the strategy of socio-economic adaptation implemented by the female workers of brick-making in West Sumatera has shown their ability in surviving under great difficult situation by employing available resources and support from the surrounding community. The role of the community and social network have become the key toward this adaptation process which allows a better opportunity for the female workers to keep trying and facing the economy challenge in a better state (Elfira, 2023).

### **Integration of Culture and Religion in Economic Adaptation**

The integration of culture and religion in the strategy of economy adaptation of Minangkabau women is one of important aspects that show the role of traditional and religious values role in helping them facing the economy challenge. Minangkabau women play a very strategic role in their matrilineal custom structure. This allow them to have a crucial position as the keeper of custom's values and the inheritance of family welfare through family education. Even though, traditionally these women are expected to focus on domestic works, in fact most of them are working outside the house to support the economy of the family (Kato, 1982).

The value of culture and religion held by Minangkabau women has influenced the way they adapt to a difficult economy situation. The philosophy of Minangkabau custom "*Adat Basandi Syara', Syara' Basandi Kitabullah*" which means Custom Relies on Religion, Religion Relies on Qur'an" has provide a foundation for them to run their daily life by associating the teaching of the religion into each aspects of their life, including in the economic field. These values taught them to work hard, to be honest, and have dedication in every job they perform both at home and outside of their home (Sanday, 2002).

The concrete example of the implementation of these values can be seen from a story of a brick-making worker named Ms. Ana. Ms. Ana has been working so hard in the industry of brick-making, even though this job is exhausting and have a risk toward her health. However, she decides to perform her job in sincere and genuine ways because she has faith that by working hard, she can contribute positively toward her family and supporting her husband who is also working in the same field. In this type of condition, Ms. Ana is not only leaning on her physical strength but also toward her spiritual

condition by always praying and implementing the teaching of Qur'an in every step of her life.

The role of the community and also social support also very important in this adaptation process (Graham, 1993). The Minangkabau people are well-known for their strong communal system, in which every individual in the community help and support each other. For example, in the economy activity such as farming and brick-making, the collective working system are often implemented. This allows them to share their workload and the result of their hard work in order to ease the burdens. The support from the big families and community provides sense of safety and comfortability for Minangkabau women, so that they can work more effectively and efficiently (Helfi, 2015).

Moreover, religious education which took place since childhood also help Minangkabau women to have a strong mental and spiritual resilience. They were taught to always being thankful on everything they had, stay patience in facing difficulties, and keep trying their best in every situation. These values have made them stronger in facing economy problem as well as remain harmonious in family and social life.

Take as an example of a case study, Ms. Fitri, a housewife who is also working as a brick-making worker, she shows the integration of the culture values and religion in providing her the strength in facing economy difficulty. Even though her husband has an uncertain income, Ms. Fitri remains working in order to be able to fulfill the needs of the family. Ms. Fitri keeps active in social and religious activity in her village. By following the routine Islamic Forum activity and also actively engage in the community activity, Ms. Fitri not only obtain a deeper religious knowledge but also widen her social network to help her in an emergency situation.

In short, the integration of culture and religion in the economic adaptation of Minangkabau women is a very effective strategy in facing the challenge of the economy (Moser, 1978). The values of custom and religion held by these female workers have become a strong foundation of moral and spiritual that help them to stay strong and fully dedicated in every aspect of their life (Fatimah, 2023). Next, the support from family and community also play significant and important role in this adaptation process, particularly in creating supportive and dynamic life surrounding. Both individual case study of Ms. Ana and Ms. Fitri shows that by integrating the values of religion and culture, Minangkabau women can actually tackle various challenge of economy in a more effective and dignified ways.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

This research found out some important findings with practical implications toward the policy and program that support the female worker in the informal sector. First, the hard-working condition and fluctuated income have caused these workers of brick-making in West Sumatera reluctant toward numbers of social and economic challenges. Therefore, a more inclusive and specific regulations are needed to support their welfare. For example, job skill training program that can help improving their skill and their competitiveness of female workers. In addition, access toward health service needs to be improved due to large numbers of these female workers having health condition issues as the effect of working in the tough condition and un hygienic working environment.

The other policy that need to be considered is the providing of affordable and good quality child care service close to the working place, so that these women can work in an

ease with necessarily over worried about the welfare of their children. Moreover, the economic empowerment program such as cooperatives or joint business group can be solutions to improve the earning as well as to provide a better economic protection. The local government also demanded to be active in facilitating a safe and healthy working environment by conducting routine inspection and educating people on the practice of safe and hygienic working practice.

For a further research recommendation, it is importance to conduct a deeper study about social and psychological dynamics of female workers in facing the pressure of economy and social. This research can dig deeper on how factors such as family, community and religious supports play role in the adaptation process as well as the resilience of the female workers. Moreover, a study with the focus on the existed evaluation of the effectivity of empowerment program may actually provide a valuable insight in order to improve the programs in the future time.

The other intervention that can be conducted is the program of financial literacy and access toward banking service programs. These might help the female workers in managing their finance in a better way, reducing the loan, and improving their ability in saving up and investing. On the other side, the collaboration among the government, private sector, and NGO (Non-Government Organization) are of vital importance in creating comprehensive and sustainable programs. For example, the company can be participated in the company social responsibility program (CSR) which focuses on the empowerment of female workers in the informal sector.

Finally, this research focus on the urgent needs to create a more friendly policy toward female workers and an effective empowerment program for the female workers in the informal sector. Through a holistic and collaborative approaches, it is expected that the welfare of the female workers can be improved, so that they are not only able to survive but also able to grow and improve in a challenging economic situation.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the value of Qur'an plays an important role in the daily life of brick-making female worker in West Sumatera. The values such as hard work, simplicity, responsibility, patience, and faith to the god are really helping these women in facing significant challenges in life. These female workers consider their job as a form of worship and devotion toward the family by referring to the Qur'an as the foundation of their daily life activity. Even though the working condition is hard and the wages is low, but these values help them to stay resilient and keep up with the good work. However, the implementation of these values also facing a lot of challenges, particularly in relation with inappropriate working condition and uncertainty of economy condition. The female workers are very reluctant to encounter significant physical and mental pressures due to the demand in the work place as well as the lack of health service. Next, the income fluctuation also adds more to the psychological burden to these women since they always have to be ready in facing the uncertainty of the economy.

In addition, there are also gap in perspective among generation in relation with the values of working and dedication. The previous generation tend to consider the job as brick-making as an honored act of honor and as a high form of devotion. In contrast, the younger generation is more critical and is expecting for a better working condition and a

better wage. Therefore, attention and intervention from different parties are of vital importance in improving the welfare of the female worker as well as to assure that they can play their role in better and a more decent way. The interventions are including improving access toward health service, skill training, and improving both working condition and wage. In short, it is expected that in the future time things will be much better for these workers in terms of better and descent job.

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