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STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING THE EMPOWERMENT AND WELL-BEING OF WOMEN SEAFOOD PROCESSORS THROUGH THE SYNERGY OF RELIGIOSITY AND SOCIAL FACTORS

STRATEGI PENGEMBANGAN PEMBERDAYAAN DAN KESEJAHTERAAN PEREMPUAN PENGOLAH HASIL LAUT MELALUI SINERGI RELIGIUSITAS DAN FAKTOR SOSIAL

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Abstract

Women engaged in marine product processing play a crucial role in the national fisheries value chain, yet this strategic contribution has not been matched with formal recognition, access to resources, or decent welfare levels. This study aims to analyze the influence of religiosity and social factors on the empowerment and welfare of marine product processing women at the National Fisheries Port (PPN) Karangantu, Serang City, Banten, as well as to formulate a development strategy based on the synergy of these two factors. This research employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative methods through PLS-SEM analysis on 235 respondents, and qualitative methods through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The results show that religiosity and social factors have a positive and significant effect on women's empowerment, which in turn impacts welfare improvement across economic, social, and psychological dimensions. Findings also reveal that religious values which currently focus mainly on ritual aspects, alongside patriarchal social norms, serve as key barriers; meanwhile, community support and the integration of religious values into economic activities act as major reinforcing factors. Based on SWOT analysis, this study proposes strategies for strengthening local value-based institutions, integrating empowerment programs with religious activities, and advocating for policies that support coastal women. This research contributes new insights by presenting an integrated model of religiosity and social dimensions in the empowerment of women in the fisheries sector, an area that has not been widely explored in previous studies.

Keywords : Women's Empowerment, Welfare, Religiosity, Social Factors, Marine Product Processing Women, PPN Karangantu.

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Abstrak

Perempuan yang terlibat dalam pengolahan hasil laut memegang peranan krusial dalam rantai nilai perikanan nasional; namun, kontribusi strategis ini belum diimbangi dengan pengakuan formal, akses terhadap sumber daya, maupun tingkat kesejahteraan yang layak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh religiusitas dan faktor sosial terhadap pemberdayaan serta kesejahteraan perempuan pengolah hasil laut di Pelabuhan Perikanan Nasional (PPN) Karangantu, Kota Serang, Banten, sekaligus merumuskan strategi pengembangan yang didasarkan pada sinergi kedua faktor tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran (mixed-methods) dengan desain sequential explanatory, yang memadukan metode kuantitatif melalui analisis PLS-SEM terhadap 235 responden serta metode kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam dan Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa religiusitas dan faktor sosial berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap pemberdayaan perempuan, yang pada gilirannya berdampak pada peningkatan kesejahteraan di dimensi ekonomi, sosial, dan psikologis. Temuan juga mengungkapkan bahwa nilai-nilai keagamaan yang saat ini lebih berfokus pada aspek ritual, serta norma sosial patriarkis, menjadi hambatan utama; sementara itu, dukungan komunitas dan integrasi nilai-nilai agama ke dalam kegiatan ekonomi berperan sebagai faktor pendorong yang kuat. Berdasarkan analisis SWOT, penelitian ini mengusulkan strategi untuk memperkuat kelembagaan berbasis nilai lokal, mengintegrasikan program pemberdayaan dengan kegiatan keagamaan, serta mengadvokasi kebijakan yang mendukung perempuan pesisir. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan baru dengan menyajikan model terintegrasi antara religiusitas dan dimensi sosial dalam pemberdayaan perempuan di sektor perikanan, sebuah ranah yang belum banyak dieksplorasi dalam studi-studi sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci : Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Kesejahteraan, Religiusitas, Faktor Sosial, Perempuan Pengolah Hasil Perikanan, PPN Karangantu.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective and well-directed organization of life is a fundamental principle that underpins human existence across all spheres of activity. This concept is reflected in the Quran, Surah As-Saff verse 4, which states that Allah loves those who stand in disciplined ranks as if they were a solid structure. This is further reinforced by the Prophet Muhammad's hadith, which emphasizes that any work undertaken should be performed with itqan—meaning thoroughly, precisely, and with clear purpose. These teachings affirm that management and planning are not modern concepts alone, but have long been inherent in Islamic guidance, serving as a framework for achieving efficiency, order, and shared benefit. Islam is understood not merely as a set of ritual obligations, but as a comprehensive way of life that guides relationships with the Creator, other people, and the natural world, including the duty to cooperate for the common good and to uphold justice as outlined in Surah At-Taubah verse 71.

Human resources remain the most critical element in any development effort, regardless of technological advancement. Management of Human Resources (MHR), including its Islamic perspective, centers on optimizing human potential through fair planning, capacity building, and protection of dignity. In Indonesia, religion holds a central place in social life; a 2016 survey by Alvara Research found that 95% of Muslim respondents regard religion as very important in their daily lives, creating a strong foundation of shared values and social cohesion. This potential aligns with national development goals set out in the 2005–2025 National Long-Term Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment as essential conditions for just and inclusive progress.

Based on data from Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, women make up 49.92% of the country's 278.69 million people. While the Gender Development Index reached 91.85 and the Gender Empowerment Index stood at 76.90, the female labor force participation rate was only 54.42%—far lower than the male rate of 83.98%. Approximately 26% of working women are

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employed in domestic work, and 89% hold low-to-medium skills, making them particularly vulnerable to economic instability. Among these groups, women engaged in marine product processing are among the most overlooked, despite the fact that they constitute 42% of the total workforce in the fisheries sector, according to the Union of Fisherfolk and Coastal Communities. Research by the People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA) notes that these women work up to 17 hours per day across pre-production, processing, and marketing stages, while also fulfilling domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers. Yet they are rarely recognized formally, and often excluded from social security schemes, fisherfolk insurance, and government support programs such as the Fisherfolk Business Card (KUSUKA). Their hardship has worsened as more than 114,000 fisher households across Indonesia have been affected by coastal reclamation and mining projects.

Banten Province possesses vast marine resources, with waters covering 54.4% of its territory and contributing 5.85% of the national fisheries output. However, its per capita income in 2024 was recorded at Rp66.147 million—below the national average of Rp74.964 million—while its Gender Empowerment Index of 69.87 also falls short of the national figure. Coastal areas such as Kasemen Subdistrict are among the poorest regions, with 12.5% of Indonesia's overall poverty concentrated in coastal communities. The National Fisheries Port (PPN) Karangantu, located in this subdistrict, contributes 28.13% of Banten's total fisheries production, valued at Rp55.236 billion in 2024. Yet this prosperity has not been equitably shared with the women processors based in Banten and Margaluyu villages, who number around 235 according to BPS data. Most earn less than Rp2 million per month, facing unstable fish prices, limited market access, emotional pressure, and social norms that restrict their role to the domestic sphere.

Although 99.8% of Kasemen's population is Muslim, religious values have not been fully utilized to advance women's empowerment; religious activities remain largely focused on ritual practice, while teachings on gender equity and economic ethics are rarely linked to livelihood support. Similarly, strong community solidarity has not been systematically transformed into collective economic strength. Against this backdrop, this study aims to formulate an empowerment strategy that integrates religious values and social resources to improve the capacity and well-being of women marine product processors at PPN Karangantu.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, following the framework proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). The sequential explanatory design was selected because the research objectives required not only measuring the magnitude and significance of the relationships among variables but also understanding the underlying mechanisms through which religiosity and social factors influence women's empowerment and welfare. In this design, the quantitative phase was conducted first to identify patterns, relationships, and statistical significance among variables, followed by the qualitative phase to explore, explain, and contextualize the quantitative findings within the lived experiences of the participants.

The rationale for adopting a mixed-methods design lies in the complexity of the research phenomenon. Women's empowerment and welfare in coastal communities are shaped by intersecting economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions that cannot be adequately captured through a single methodological lens. The quantitative component provided generalizable evidence regarding the direction and strength of variable relationships, while the qualitative component offered rich, contextualized explanations of why and how these relationships manifest in the daily lives of women marine product processors.

The research was conducted at the National Fisheries Port (Pelabuhan Perikanan Nusantara/PPN) Karangantu, located in Kasemen Subdistrict, Serang City, Banten Province, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected based on several considerations: (1) PPN Karangantu is a strategic national fisheries port contributing 28.13% of Banten Province's total fisheries production, valued at Rp55.236 billion in 2024; (2) the surrounding communities in Banten and Margaluyu

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villages host a significant concentration of women marine product processors; (3) Kasemen Subdistrict represents one of the poorest coastal areas in Banten, with per capita income below the national average; and (4) the population is 99.8% Muslim, providing a highly relevant context for examining the role of religiosity in community empowerment.

The population of this study comprised all women marine product processors operating within the PPN Karangantu area, including those residing in Banten Village and Margaluyu Village. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Banten Province, the total number of women marine product processors in the research area was approximately 235 individuals. Given the relatively defined and accessible population, a total population sampling (census) technique was employed, whereby all 235 women processors were included as respondents in the quantitative phase of the study. This approach was adopted to ensure comprehensive representation and to maximize statistical power, particularly given the heterogeneous nature of the processors' activities, which range from pre-production preparation and fish processing to marketing and distribution.

For the qualitative phase, informants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria: (1) active involvement in marine product processing for at least three years; (2) membership or participation in community organizations such as Joint Business Groups (Kelompok Usaha Bersama/KUB) or Islamic study circles (Majelis Taklim); (3) willingness to participate in in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD); and (4) diversity in terms of age, processing specialization, and economic status to ensure representational breadth. Key informants included women processors, community leaders, religious figures, and local government officials associated with fisheries development programs.

This study examined four primary variables arranged within a causal model. Religiosity (X_1) served as the first independent variable, operationally defined as the degree to which religious beliefs, practices, knowledge, experience, and consequences are integrated into the daily life and economic activities of women processors, measured using the multidimensional religiosity framework of Glock and Stark (1965), encompassing ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential dimensions. Social Factors (X_2) served as the second independent variable, operationally defined as the social capital, community networks, collective norms, trust, and institutional support systems available to women processors, measured through indicators of bonding and bridging social capital adapted from Putnam (2000).

Women's Empowerment (Y_1) was positioned as the mediating variable, operationally defined using Kabeer's (1999) empowerment framework encompassing three interrelated dimensions—resources (pre-conditions), agency (process), and achievements (outcomes)—including access to productive resources, participation in decision-making, control over income, and capacity for self-determination. Welfare (Y_2) served as the dependent variable, operationally defined as the multidimensional well-being of women processors covering economic welfare (income adequacy, asset ownership, financial stability), social welfare (social inclusion, community participation, recognition), and psychological welfare (life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of security).

Data collection was carried out through multiple techniques corresponding to both research phases. In the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire was administered to all 235 respondents. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and consisted of four sections corresponding to the research variables: religiosity, social factors, women's empowerment, and welfare. Items were developed based on established theoretical indicators and adapted to the local context of coastal women's livelihoods. Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent expert validation by scholars in the fields of Human Resource Management, Islamic studies, and gender studies. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents outside the main sample to assess reliability (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70) and validity (corrected item-total correlation > 0.30) of each item.

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In the qualitative phase, three primary data collection techniques were employed. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected informants to elicit detailed narratives about their experiences, perceptions, and the interplay between religious values, social dynamics, and livelihood strategies. The interviews followed a semi-structured protocol, allowing flexibility to probe emerging themes while maintaining focus on the core research questions. Second, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were organized with groups of 8–12 women processors to facilitate collective sense-making and to capture shared norms, beliefs, and community dynamics that individual interviews might not fully reveal. Third, direct observation was carried out at processing sites, fish markets, community gatherings, and religious events (pengajian) to triangulate verbal accounts with observed behaviors and social interactions. Secondary data were also gathered from government records, BPS statistics, port administration data, and relevant organizational reports.

Quantitative data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected over covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) for several reasons: (1) the research model involves both formative and reflective constructs; (2) PLS-SEM does not require the assumption of multivariate normality, which is advantageous when working with community-based respondents whose response patterns may not follow a normal distribution; and (3) PLS-SEM is particularly suited for predictive and theory-development research, which aligns with the exploratory nature of this study. The PLS-SEM analysis proceeded through two stages: (a) the measurement model (outer model) evaluation, which assessed construct validity (convergent and discriminant validity) and reliability (composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha); and (b) the structural model (inner model) evaluation, which examined path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, R^2 (coefficient of determination), f^2 (effect size), and Q^2 (predictive relevance) to test the research hypotheses.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes against the coded extracts and the full dataset; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the final report. The qualitative analysis was supported by data triangulation across multiple sources (interviews, FGD, observations, and documents) and method triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings to enhance the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research conclusions.

Additionally, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted to formulate strategic recommendations for women's empowerment. The SWOT matrix was constructed based on the integration of quantitative results and qualitative insights, positioning the business environment of women processors within the appropriate strategic quadrant to identify the most effective intervention strategies.

As the final stage of the sequential explanatory design, a meta-inference process was carried out to systematically integrate the findings from both research phases. Following the joint display approach recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), quantitative results and qualitative themes were compared, contrasted, and synthesized to generate overarching conclusions. The integration focused on three levels: (1) convergence, where qualitative findings confirmed and explained quantitative results; (2) complementarity, where qualitative data provided additional dimensions not captured by quantitative measures; and (3) divergence, where discrepancies between the two data sources prompted further analysis and theoretical reflection. This integrative approach ensured that the final research conclusions were robust, contextually grounded, and capable of informing both theoretical contributions and practical policy recommendations.

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3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

Triangulation of Research Findings

In this mixed-methods study, the **meta-inference** stage represents the culmination of the analytical process, where conclusions are drawn from the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. Based on statistical analysis (quantitative) and in-depth narratives from the participants (qualitative), a convergent pattern emerged, demonstrating mutually reinforcing evidence regarding the dynamics of women's empowerment among seafood processors at Karangantu Coastal Fishing Port (PPN Karangantu).

The quantitative findings confirmed that the **Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)** variable had a statistically significant path coefficient in influencing business performance. However, the qualitative findings explain **why** and **how** this relationship occurs. Informants such as Mrs. Siti and Mrs. Aminah emphasized that honesty in weighing products is not merely a commercial norm but also a form of spiritual risk mitigation, driven by the fear of committing sinful acts. This ethical commitment indirectly strengthens **brand equity** and enhances consumer trust in women-owned seafood processing businesses.

From a **Human Resource Management (HRM)** perspective, these findings indicate that the processors' **Spiritual Quotient (SQ)** functions as an effective **self-regulatory system**, surpassing the effectiveness of external supervision. When processors maintain product hygiene because they believe they are accountable before God, operational monitoring costs are substantially reduced, resulting in greater managerial efficiency.

2. Discussion from the Perspectives of Human Resource Management and Organizational Theory

a. Social Capital Analysis: From Bonding to Bridging Social Capital

The qualitative findings presented in Chapter IV reveal that social capital in Karangantu remains predominantly **bonding social capital,** characterized by strong internal cohesion through Joint Business Groups (Kelompok Usaha Bersama/KUB) and Islamic religious study groups (*pengajian*). Although quantitative analysis confirms that this form of social capital significantly enhances business resilience, the study also identifies limitations in **bridging social capital,** particularly regarding access to external networks such as government agencies and formal financial institutions.

Drawing upon Putnam's (2000) theory of social capital, sustainable long-term development requires a transition from neighborhood-based mutual support toward stronger institutional linkages. This explains the recurring issue of **limited financial capital** identified in both datasets. While women entrepreneurs demonstrate high levels of trust within their communities, they frequently encounter distrust and bureaucratic barriers when interacting with formal banking institutions. These findings underscore the necessity of intermediary strategies capable of transforming informal social capital into formal financial access.

b. The Double Burden Paradox and Time Management Efficiency

The findings concerning business constraints reveal a pronounced **role conflict** experienced by women entrepreneurs. According to the **Work–Family Conflict Theory** proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell, demands associated with household responsibilities often interfere with professional effectiveness.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, however, reveals a distinctive phenomenon. Rather than succumbing to the pressures of dual responsibilities, women in Karangantu have developed a strategy of **home-based production efficiency**, integrating domestic and production spaces. From a strategic HRM perspective, however, this practice limits professionalization and product standardization, particularly with respect to hygiene certification, because production activities remain embedded within household environments. Consequently, future empowerment strategies should prioritize centralized processing facilities while maintaining flexible working arrangements that accommodate women's domestic responsibilities.

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c. Product Innovation as a Resilience Strategy (Quadrant II SWOT Analysis)

The positioning of the business environment within **SWOT Quadrant II (Strengths–Threats Strategy)** indicates that although the external environment is characterized by significant threats—including unpredictable weather, price fluctuations, and increasing market competition—the women processors possess considerable internal strengths, particularly in terms of work ethics and technical skills.

The proposed diversification strategy, such as transforming salted fish into packaged chili paste or fish floss, represents the implementation of **Blue Ocean Strategy** at the micro-enterprise level. Through such innovation, women entrepreneurs engage in **value innovation,** shifting away from the highly competitive salted fish market characterized by thin profit margins and dependence on middlemen toward processed seafood products with substantially higher added value.

From a managerial perspective, this transformation requires enhancing human resource capabilities, enabling women to transition from traditional processing workers into **intrapreneurs** equipped with competencies in product packaging, branding, and digital marketing.

3. Novelty: A Spiritual–Social Human Resource Empowerment Model

Based on the integrated findings, this study proposes a new model for community-based human resource management in coastal societies. The model argues that women's empowerment cannot be achieved solely through financial capital interventions but should begin with strengthening religiously grounded work ethics while optimizing community social networks as the foundation of economic resilience.

a. Construction of the "Spiritual–Social Resilience" Model

The principal novelty of this dissertation lies in the development of an economic resilience model that is not primarily dependent on physical assets or financial capital but rather on the interaction between **Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)** and **Social Capital**.

Whereas conventional HRM research often treats religiosity as a purely private matter, this study demonstrates that within coastal communities, religiosity—represented by **Spiritual Quotient (SQ)—**functions as an **internal quality control mechanism**, effectively substituting for costly formal management supervision systems.

b. Redefining Social Capital as "Bridging Islamic Social Capital"

This dissertation introduces a new perspective on community-based religious social capital by demonstrating that religious organizations, such as **Majelis Taklim** (Islamic study circles) and community rotating savings groups (*arisan*), function as highly effective **knowledge-sharing mechanisms** for women with limited access to formal education.

Its originality lies in identifying these informal religious institutions as **business incubators** for coastal women entrepreneurs, an aspect that has received limited attention within mainstream Human Resource Management literature.

c. Developing a Diversification Strategy Based on Value-Based Innovation

This study contributes to strategic management theory, particularly within the context of **SWOT Quadrant II**, by integrating hygienic practices as manifestations of religious faith. Product innovation—for example, transforming salted fish into ready-to-eat products—is not merely a response to market demand but also reflects the implementation of the Islamic principle of **ṭayyib** (wholesome and high-quality products). This represents a novel conceptualization of innovation, whereby product development is motivated not only by profitability but also by spiritual commitment and religious values.

d. Strategic Solutions to the Double Burden Paradox in the Marine Sector

Another significant contribution of this study is its strategic framework for addressing women's dual responsibilities through the utilization of **digital champions**. The dissertation argues that digital technology should not merely be regarded as a marketing instrument but also as a **time-liberation mechanism.** Through digital marketing, women entrepreneurs can shorten distribution chains, reduce

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physically demanding marketing activities, and manage their dual domestic and business responsibilities more effectively without compromising business growth.

Overall, the novelty of this study lies in integrating **Islamic Work Ethics** as an instrument of **internal quality control** and **social capital** as a substitute for financial capital, thereby establishing a **Spiritual–Social Human Resource Empowerment Model**. This model offers a practical solution to the limited access to formal institutions and the double burden experienced by coastal women by facilitating their transformation from traditional producers into competitive intrapreneurs whose unique competitive advantage is rooted in local wisdom and religious values.

Alternatively, based on this integrated framework, the study proposes a new Human Resource Management model for coastal communities, namely the **Spiritual–Social Based Empowerment Model**. This model emphasizes that women's empowerment should not rely solely on financial capital interventions but should instead begin with strengthening religiously grounded work ethics while optimizing community social networks as the foundation for sustainable economic resilience.

4. CONCLUSION

First, the empowerment level of women marine product processors at PPN Karangantu remains low, especially regarding access to resources and participation in decision-making. While their social and psychological well-being is reasonably good, their economic welfare is still very poor.

Second, both religiosity and social factors have a positive and significant influence on women's empowerment and overall welfare. Social factors show the strongest effect on empowerment, and empowerment itself acts as a vital bridge that strengthens how both religiosity and social conditions improve their quality of life.

Third, effective development strategies must combine religious values and local social strengths. Key priorities include shifting restrictive gender views, strengthening collective women's institutions, and advocating for policies that directly support coastal women.

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