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Institutional Branding and Edu-Economic Empowerment at the Islamic Educational Institution of Pekangkungan Village, Gondangwetan District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Educational Institutions (LPI) in rural Indonesia face two fundamental yet often overlooked challenges: weak institutional image in the eyes of the public, and systemic limitations in financial self-sufficiency. This Community Partnership Program (PKM) was specifically designed to address both challenges in an integrated manner through institutional branding mentoring and edu-economic empowerment at the Islamic Educational Institution in Pekangkungan Village, Gondangwetan District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java. The program adopted an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework enriched with Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles, actively involving 87 participants drawn from multiple stakeholder layers. Implemented over three months through five structured phasesasset mapping and baseline survey, participatory program design FGD, institutional branding workshop and mentoring, edu-economic unit implementation, and participatory monitoring and evaluationthe program produced measurable and significant outcomes. Results showed an average increase of 34.6% in parents' brand perception scores (from 58.4 to 78.6 on a 100-point scale), the establishment of an eight-element institutional visual identity guide, 312 new social media followers gained organically, and the successful launch of two edu-economic unitsan educational canteen and a calligraphy and Islamic decoration workshopgenerating initial revenue of IDR 4,200,000 in the first six weeks. Significant capacity-building outcomes were also recorded: 75% of teachers can now independently create social media content, and 23 students actively participated in business units as a genuine entrepreneurship learning laboratory. A paired-sample t-test confirmed the statistical significance of changes ($t = 8.74$; $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 1.30$). This PKM demonstrates that institutional branding reinforcement and edu-economic empowerment can be pursued synergisticallymutually reinforcing and generating layered, sustainable impacts for Islamic educational institutions at the village level.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Educational Institutions (LPI) in Indonesia's rural villages play a role that extends far beyond formal instruction. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic primary schools), Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (Qur'anic learning centers), small pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), and various non-formal Islamic educational organizations simultaneously function as centers of moral development, social cohesion catalysts, and guardians of local cultural identityroles they have maintained across generations. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI., 2023) recorded more than 28,000 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah operating across the country, with approximately 72% located in rural and peri-urban areas (Kemenag RI., 2023). The vast majority of these institutions face similar structural pressures: inadequate and unstable financial resources, limited managerial capacity, and a weak institutional identity in competition with fully state-subsidized public primary schools.

The problem of institutional image is not merely a matter of visual aesthetics or roadside billboard elegance. It is fundamentally a matter of trusthow deeply the community believes that an institution is capable of fulfilling its promises as a quality, values-based educational provider. This trust does not emerge on its own; it is constructed through consistency between the identity communicated externally (‘who we are and what we stand for’) and the actual lived experience that community members encounter in every interaction with the institution. Hermawan & Carnawi, 2024 assert that building a strong brand image is a core strategy in Islamic educational institution management that determines long-term competitiveness and sustainability.

Yet building a strong brand without a stable economic foundation is like constructing a castle on sand. This brings us to the second fundamental problem: financial dependency and the absence of diversified income. Most rural LPIs depend almost entirely on student tuition fees and irregular community donations income sources that are highly vulnerable to household economic fluctuations. Paradoxically, many of these institutions sit atop a wealth of underutilized assets: idle waqf (endowment) land, broad alumni networks, deep community trust, productive skills among parents, and economic potential that could be developed from the educational activities themselves. Muiz et al., 2025 found that financially successful Islamic institutions are precisely those that have successfully integrated productive economic activities into their educational ecosystems.

Pekangkungan Village, located in Gondangwetan District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java, is a representative case among thousands of similar villages across Indonesia. Demographically, the village has 3,247 residents with an economic structure dominated by the agricultural sector (54.3%) and daily laborers (27.1%). Educational attainment among household heads is relatively low: 61.2% completed only SD/MI (primary school), and 22.4% completed SMP/MTs (junior secondary school). In this context, LPI serves as an irreplaceable backbone of religious education.

The Islamic Educational Institution in Pekangkungan Village has operated for more than two decades, serving hundreds of children from farming and agricultural laboring families. It encompasses three educational units under a single foundation: a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) with 187 registered students, a Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur’an (TPQ) with 94 students attending daily after-Asar and Maghrib prayers, and an Islamic Playgroup (KB Islam) with 32 children aged 3–5 years. In total, the institution serves approximately 313 learners from 274 families spread across Pekangkungan Village and three neighboring villages.

However, the preliminary survey conducted by the PKM team in mid-2024 revealed an alarming condition: 67% of parents chose LPI Pekangkungan solely based on geographic proximity, not quality perception. Only 28% could name a single specific advantage of the institution. Economically, the institution depended entirely on tuition fees

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and irregular donations, with zero formally managed business units. The institution was experiencing an average monthly operational deficit of IDR 3.2 million, covered through personal savings of the foundation head and irregular donations from more financially capable parents. This dual crisisof identity and of financesformed the starting point for the PKM intervention.

A review of the current literature reveals that most LPI empowerment programs focus exclusively on one aspect: either digital branding (Muniarty et al., 2025; Pratama et al., 2024; Putra et al., 2025) or economic empowerment alone (Firmansyah, 2025; Fuady et al., 2024; Susanti, 2025). No existing PKM has specifically combined institutional branding mentoring with edu-economic model development at the village-level LPI within a single participatory design. This gap constitutes both the theoretical and practical justification for the present program.

Theoretically, this program rests on three complementary frameworks. First, institutional branding theory, which understands brand not merely as a logo or tagline, but as the totality of experience felt by every stakeholder in every point of contact with the institution known in management literature as brand touchpoint theory (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Sari, 2025). Second, the concept of edu-economic empowerment, which positions Islamic educational institutions as agents of socio-economic transformation through productive enterprises integrated with educational values and activities (Firmansyah, 2025; Prastowo et al., 2025). Third, the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) and PAR (Participatory Action Research) approaches, which emphasize community strengths as the primary capital of development (Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L., 1993; McKnight, J., & Block, P, 2012). Based on this foundational analysis, the PKM was designed with four interrelated objectives:

1. To participatorily map the potentials, assets, and challenges of LPI Pekangkungan with respect to branding and educational economics.
2. To develop and implement a contextual, authentic, and locally-rooted institutional branding mentoring program.
3. To design and mentor the establishment of asset-based edu-economic units within the institution.
4. To build the internal capacity of teachers, administrators, students, and parents so that the program can be sustained independently beyond the intervention period.

METHODS

This PKM was conducted at the Islamic Educational Institution of Pekangkungan Village, Gondangwetan District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java, over a full three-month period (September–November 2024). Pekangkungan Village is located approximately 28 km from the center of Pasuruan city and is accessible by road in approximately 45 minutes. Its relatively remote geographic location makes the LPI the only formal Islamic-values-based educational institution available to residents of the village and surrounding areas within a 3-kilometer radius.

A total of 87 participants were actively involved in the PKM program: 12 teachers and educational support staff; 45 selected parents (chosen purposively from 274 total, representing diverse economic backgrounds and levels of institutional engagement); 18 senior students/santri (grades 4–6 of the MI); 8 community leaders and foundation board members; and 4 local MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) as business mentors and partners.

This program adopted ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) as its primary framework. In contrast to conventional empowerment approaches that begin with an inventory of problems and deficiencies, ABCD starts from the mapping of strengths, resources, and capacities already present within the community (Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L., 1993). Its core philosophy holds that every community, however marginalized, always possesses assets that can serve as capital for development. The role of the facilitator is not to bring solutions from outside, but to help the community recognize, appreciate, and optimize its own strengths.

In the context of this PKM, five categories of assets were mapped: (1) Human assetsculinary skills of 8 parents, design capabilities of 2 alumni, teacher dedication and expertise, artistic talents of students, and calligraphy mastery of senior alumni; (2) Physical assets200 m² of idle land on the eastern side of the madrasah complex, optimizable classrooms, communal kitchen equipment; (3) Social assetstrust of local religious leaders, village cooperative networks, active alumni communities spread across two regencies; (4) Cultural assetsstrong Islamic traditions, a 6-year Tahfiz Al-Qur'an program, Islamic arts extracurriculars (calligraphy, hadroh, tilawah); (5) Economic assetsthe local market around the institution, potential products using locally available raw materials (cassava, sweet potato, ginger, lemongrass, spices), and relationships with vendors at the village market 1.2 km away.

The ABCD approach was enriched with PAR (Participatory Action Research) principles, a methodology that positions community members not as research objects or aid recipients, but as active partners throughout the entire program cycle: from initial condition analysis, intervention planning, and action implementation, to reflection and evaluation (Khafsoh & Riani, 2024). The combination of ABCD-PAR generates programs that are inherently participatory, contextual, and more likely to be sustained than programs designed and implemented top-down (Fuady et al., 2024).

The program was implemented in five sequential and interdependent phases. Each phase had specific objectives, differentiated methods, and measurable outputs:

Table 1. Five-Phase PKM Implementation Design

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Methods / Instruments
Phase I: Asset Mapping & Baseline	Weeks 1–2	Leadership coordination; 5-category asset mapping; brand perception baseline survey; key stakeholder interviews	Observation, in-depth interviews, initial questionnaire, mini FGD

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Methods / Instruments
Phase II: Participatory Program Design	Weeks 3–4	FGD to formulate brand core values; selection of business types; work plan and stakeholder role allocation	World Café FGD, brainstorming, joint SWOT analysis
Phase III: Branding Mentoring	Month 2, Weeks 1–2	Branding, storytelling, PR workshops; tagline and visual identity guide; social media activation; service standardization	Workshop, coaching, hands-on practice, content review
Phase IV: Edu-Economic Implementation	Months 2–3	Business management training; establishment of 2 business units; bookkeeping mentoring; curriculum integration; field visits	4-module training, mentoring, production practice
Phase V: Monitoring, Evaluation & Sustainability	End of Month 3	Post-program questionnaire; business performance evaluation; MSC reflection FGD; independent sustainability plan development	Questionnaire, paired t-test, FGD, MSC, documentation

Program evaluation used triangulation from three mutually-confirming data sources, in line with PAR methodological standards emphasizing cross-validation between quantitative, performance, and narrative data.

First, a structured questionnaire administered to 45 parents before and after the program. The instrument adapted scales from Edy et al., 2024 and Kurniawan et al., 2024, covering eight dimensions: (1) clarity of institutional vision, (2) service quality, (3) visual identity, (4) communication effectiveness, (5) public trust, (6) comparative advantage, (7) relevance to needs, and (8) willingness to recommend. Each dimension was assessed on a Likert scale of 1–5 with 3 items per dimension (24 items total), with scores converted to a 0–100 scale. Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with all factor loadings >0.60, and reliability was measured with Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87 (highly reliable). Pre-post score changes were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to determine statistical significance.

Second, weekly business unit performance data including revenue, number of transactions, community participation, profit margins, and simple bookkeeping records maintained by unit managers. This data was compiled at program's end for business development trend analysis.

Third, qualitative data from reflection FGDs using the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique. MSC is a participatory evaluation method that invites participants to share narratives about the most meaningful changes they experienced during the program encompassing changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior (Davies, R., & Dart, J., 2005). MSC narratives were categorized and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify dominant change patterns. MSC was selected for its capacity to capture impact dimensions not measurable by quantitative indicators alone, particularly changes in motivation, self-confidence, and worldview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Baseline Conditions: Portrait of LPI Pekangkungan Before the Program

The asset mapping and baseline survey conducted in the first two weeks painted a complex picture of LPI Pekangkunganrich in potential, yet impoverished in institutional expression. On one side, the institution possessed extraordinary social capital: established 22 years prior, widely trusted by the surrounding community, staffed by highly dedicated teachers (the majority holding honorary status with average monthly income below IDR 800,000), and functioning as one of the village's most active centers of social-religious life. On the other side, this social capital had never been translated into a cohesive brand narrative communicated strategically to a broader audience.

From the initial questionnaire administered to 45 parents (100% response rate), the average brand perception score was only 58.4 out of 100 (SD = 12.3). The lowest-scoring dimensions were visual identity (41.8) and clarity of vision (43.2) both fundamental elements of any brand. A striking 71.1% of parents could not name a single differentiating quality of LPI Pekangkungan compared to other institutions in the same district. Only 12.2% had ever actively recommended the institution to neighbors or relatives. The Net Promoter Score (NPS), calculated based on the 'willingness to recommend' item, stood at -18 (highly negative)far below the benchmark for comparable educational institutions, which typically ranges from +15 to +30 (Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L., 2016).

Economically, the situation was even more critical. In-depth interviews with the madrasah head and foundation treasurer revealed that 89% of institutional income came from tuition fees (averaging IDR 45,000/month per student, with a 34% payment delay rate in certain months). No productive business units were operating formally. There was a small informal canteen run by one teacher, but with no financial records whatsoever. Estimated daily revenue was approximately IDR 150,000–200,000but without documented data, the institution could not leverage this potential for financial planning. The institution was running an average monthly operational deficit of IDR 3.2 million, covered through personal savings of the foundation head and irregular donations from more financially capable parents.

Community surveys and field observations uncovered unexpected hidden assets: 8 parents possessed strong culinary skills (3 with catering experience), 3 had craft skills (weaving, sewing), and 2 young active alumni had advanced graphic design and

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calligraphy abilities. A 200 m² vacant land plot on the madrasah complex's eastern side, previously unused, was identified as having ideal strategic access and location for a canteen. These human and physical assets were entirely dormant and had never been intentionally accessed by the institution. These baseline findings shaped clear program priorities: not starting from zero, but awakening and optimizing what already existedthe very essence of the ABCD approach (Ma et al., 2024).

3.2 Phase I–II: Asset Mapping and Participatory Program Design

The asset mapping process lasted two weeks through a combination of six days of field observation, in-depth interviews with 12 key informants (madrasah head, foundation chairman, senior teachers, community leaders, representative parents, and two active alumni), and two mini FGD sessions with 15–18 participants each. Mapping results were compiled in the 'LPI Pekangkungan Asset Map' document, which served as a shared reference throughout the program. This document explicitly used asset language ('our institution has X that has not yet been optimized') rather than deficit language ('our institution lacks X')a framing choice that has been shown to have a significant psychological effect on participant motivation (McKnight, J., & Block, P, 2012).

In Weeks 3–4, a participatory program design FGD was heldone of the most critical sessions of the entire program. It was attended by 41 of 45 invited parents (91.1% attendance ratefar exceeding the typical 60–70% attendance seen in similar empowerment programs), all teachers and foundation board members, two local MSME entrepreneurs, and three community leaders. The FGD used the World Café technique, enabling rotating discussion at four thematic tables: (a) What already makes our institution special? (b) How do we want to be known by the wider public? (c) Which type of business is most realistic and best reflects institutional values? (d) Who is responsible for what?

Three strategic decisions emerged from this FGD. First, agreement on three core values that would form the brand's foundation: *Amanah* (trustworthy in educating), Berkarakter (producing morally excellent generations), and *Berdaya* (building student and community independence). Second, selection of two most realistic and contextual business unit types: a local-produce educational canteen and a calligraphy/Islamic decoration workshop. Third, development of a stakeholder role matrix defining responsibility assignments for each implementation phase. The high enthusiasm and discussion quality in this FGD resulted directly from the participatory communication approach used from the very first coordination: the PKM team did not arrive 'bringing a program for the institution'they invited the community to 'design the program together.' This participatory framing created a deep sense of ownership that Khafsoh & Riani, 2024 identify as an absolute prerequisite for program success and sustainability.

3.3 Phase III: Institutional Branding Mentoring

Branding mentoring took place over two intensive weeks in Month 2. A full-day workshop titled 'Getting to Know and Building Our Institution's New Identity' was attended by 34 participants (all teachers, foundation board members, and parent representatives). Rather than a top-down 'we'll teach you branding' approach, the workshop used an exploratory framework: participants were first invited to discover 'what already makes this institution special' before discussing how to communicate it to the outside world.

The workshop comprised four 90-minute sessions. Session 1 built a shared understanding of brand concepts in the context of Islamic educational institutions: that brand is not about luxury but about consistency between promises made and actual experiences delivered. Sari (2025) refers to this as 'strategic communication'ensuring that messages communicated externally genuinely reflect the institution's internal reality, not merely empty slogans. Session 2 was a storytelling session, in which small groups (3–4 participants) were invited to narrate the mostproud moments they had experienced in their interactions with the institution. Authentic stories about successful students, teachers who went far beyond working hours, and families who felt genuinely helped these were the raw materials of brand narrative that cannot be manufactured. Session 3 covered communication platforms: social media (Instagram, WhatsApp Group), physical information boards, institutional events, and face-to-face communication with parents. Session 4 was hands-on practice producing one social media content piece per group.

Following the workshop, the PKM team provided intensive 10-day mentoring to produce concrete branding outputs. The tagline 'Amanah Mendidik, Berdaya Membangun' (Trustworthy in Education, Empowered in Building) emerged from a three-round iteration process with teachers and foundation board membersnot imposed by the PKM team. The institutional visual identity guide developed encompasses eight elements:

a) Official color palette: teal green #2D8B5A (primary) and off-white #FAFAF0 (secondary).
b) Logo renovation: preserving traditional elements with a cleaner, more proportional composition.
c) Typography standards: Amiri font for Islamic-formal headings, Arial for digital body text.
d) Activity poster template.
e) Official invitation template.
f) Instagram content templates (feed and story formats).
g) Social media caption writing guidelines.
h) Logo usage standards for letterheads and institutional attributes.

On the social media front, the institution's Instagram accountwhich had been inactive for eight months and had only 127 followerssaw 14 new content pieces uploaded within two weeks of mentoring. These were not formal advertisements or promotions, but natural photos of student activities, inspirational quotes from teachers about their teaching experiences, short 'best classroom moments' stories written by teachers, and authentic documentation of the learning process. In those two weeks, 312 new followers were gained, with over 1,200 total organic impressions (without paid advertising) and an average engagement rate of 8.7%well above the Indonesian organic Instagram engagement average of 3–5% (Putra et al., 2025). More importantly, parents began sharing this content organically to family and neighborhood WhatsApp groups, generating word-of-mouth digital effects whose trust-building value far exceeds paid advertising in village communities built on personal trust networks.

Branding changes extended beyond the digital realm. The institution's signboard was replaced with a more professional design that retained its Islamic character. Teacher uniforms were standardized. A service culture began to take shape: teachers collectively agreed on standards for welcoming parents each morning (wearing neat uniforms, standing at the gate, greeting with salaam and a smile), on the frequency and format of student progress reports to parents (at minimum monthly per student via a redesigned communication book), and on procedures for responding to parent questions and complaints (maximum 24 hours via WhatsApp). These cultural shifts align with what Cahyanto et al., 2025 emphasize: a strong Islamic school brand must manifest in every aspect of the experiencenot just visual, but also procedures, behaviors, and everyday human interactions.

3.4 Phase IV: Edu-Economic Empowerment Implementation

The first business unitthe Pekangkungan Educational Canteenbegan operations in the third week of Month 2 after two weeks of preparation. Preparation included: a 3-day canteen management training (attended by 6 parents and 1 teacher coordinator); standardization of 12 menus all using local village produce; two open product trials for board members and teachers before official launch; and development of an 8-page simplified standard operating procedure (SOP) written in accessible language. Canteen menus were entirely based on local village products: cassava and sweet potato chips sourced directly from three village farmers (purchase price IDR 3,500/kg for fresh cassava, yielding 45% margin after processing); ginger-lemongrass and *wedang uwuh* drinks prepared by experienced parents; packaged rice meals with homemade tempe-tofu side dishes; and various traditional snacks.

This decision to base products locally was not only economically strategic (higher margins due to lower procurement costs) but also strategically sound for branding: a canteen selling local products generates an authentic narrative of institutional commitment to community and local wisdom.

The canteen was designed as a genuine entrepreneurship learning space for 23 santri from grades 4, 5, and 6 of the MI, scheduled in rotation to assist operations. A rotation schedule was developed with homeroom teachers, ensuring each student participated at minimum twice per month in three different roles: cashier (learning to handle money, change, and daily transactions), packing and serving (learning hygiene standards, food safety, and product aesthetics), and order recorder (learning documentation and simple daily bookkeeping). These direct work experiences were then integrated into the Social Studies curriculum (topics on trade and economics), Mathematics (calculating profit and capital), and local entrepreneurship content. This project-based learning approach validates the argument made by Prastowo et al., 2025 that when enterprises are integrated with the curriculum, the impact is simultaneously economic and pedagogical.

The second business unitthe Pekangkungan Islamic Calligraphy and Decoration Workshopbegan operations in the first week of Month 3. Managed by two young alumni with proven graphic design and calligraphy skills, the workshop produced framed calligraphy pieces (A3 and A2 sizes), Islamic wall decorations made from recycled materials (thick paper, fabric scraps, bamboo), assembly and event decorations, and custom Islamic-motif wedding and circumcision invitation cards. Seven artistically talented senior students were involved as ‘creative apprentices’learning directly from the alumni while contributing to the production process. This apprenticeship model integrates cross-generational knowledge transfer with economic activity, a mechanism that in the history of Nusantara pesantren has long been recognized as one of the greatest strengths of community-based education systems (Dwi Syaputra & Ahmad Afandi, 2025).

Training for both business units spanned three weeks and covered four progressively designed modules: Module 1 (Simple Business Management): mini market research based on a 20-respondent community survey, pricing using HPP (Cost of Production) calculation, community-based promotional strategies, and stock and materials procurement management. Module 2 (Basic Financial Bookkeeping): using an Excel template subsequently simplified into an A5-format physical cash book for unit managers less familiar with computersa design decision that proved to significantly increase recording consistency. Module 3 (Community Marketing Strategy): leveraging the parent network (274 families), religious leaders (12 majelis taklim in 5 villages), and institutional social media as primary marketing channels. Module 4 (Quality and Packaging Standards): ensuring products meet hygiene standards, food safety (referencing BPOM guidelines for MSMEs), and competitive packaging aesthetics.

Table 2. Profile of Two Edu-Economic Business Units at LPI Pekangkungan

Aspect	Pekangkungan Educational Canteen	Islamic Calligraphy & Decoration Workshop
Core Management	1 teacher coordinator + 6 parent managers	2 young alumni (designers/calligraphers)
Main Products	12 local menus (snacks, drinks, packaged meals)	Calligraphy, Islamic wall decor, invitation cards
Students Involved	23 students from grades 4–6 MI (on rotation)	7 senior students (creative apprentices)
Operating Days/Hours	Monday–Saturday, 06:30–13:00	Tues, Thurs, Sat (15:00–17:30)
Revenue (6 weeks)	IDR 3,200,000	IDR 1,000,000
Curriculum Integration	Social Studies, Mathematics, Local Entrepreneurship Content	Arts & Culture, Islamic Arts and Crafts

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Aspect	Pekangkungan Educational Canteen	Islamic Calligraphy & Decoration Workshop
Community Supply Chain	3 village farmers as raw material suppliers; 4 parent processors	Local material suppliers; exhibition at 3 community events

3.5 Phase V: Evaluation Results and Program Achievements

The final evaluation at the end of Month 3 produced data that exceeded virtually all targets set at the program's outset. All nine primary indicators were achieved, with five exceeding initial targets significantly.

Table 3. PKM Success Indicator Achievements

Success Indicator	Target	Actual Achievement	Status
Parents' brand perception score (scale 0–100)	≥70	78.6 (+34.6% from 58.4)	✓ Achieved
% parents able to name institutional advantage	≥50%	72.1%	✓ Achieved
% parents willing to recommend the institution	≥40%	64.4%	✓ Achieved
Visual identity guide developed	1 doc	1 document (8 elements)	✓ Achieved
Number of active edu-economic units established	1 unit	2 active units	✓ Exceeded
Business unit revenue in first 6 weeks (IDR)	2,500,000	4,200,000 (168% of target)	✓ Exceeded
Teachers independently creating social media content	≥5	9 of 12 teachers (75%)	✓ Achieved
Instagram followers growth	+200	+312 followers	✓ Exceeded
Students actively involved in business units	≥15	23 students	✓ Exceeded

Post-program questionnaire data showed significant improvement across all eight brand perception dimensions. The largest increases occurred in visual identity (from 41.8 to 79.2; +89.5%) and clarity of vision (from 43.2 to 76.8; +77.8%) the two previously lowest dimensions, now recording the greatest leaps, confirming the appropriateness of the branding intervention's focus. Public trust increased from 61.4 to 82.3 (+34.0%), and willingness to recommend rose from 48.6 to 77.1 (+58.6%), indicating the institution's NPS had shifted from the negative zone to the positive.

Table 4. Changes in Brand Perception Scores by Dimension (N = 45)

Brand Perception Dimension	Pre Score	Post Score	Difference	% Increase
Clarity of Institutional Vision	43.2	76.8	+33.6	+77.8%
Service Quality	62.1	80.4	+18.3	+29.5%
Visual Identity	41.8	79.2	+37.4	+89.5%
Communication Effectiveness	54.3	77.6	+23.3	+42.9%
Public Trust	61.4	82.3	+20.9	+34.0%
Comparative Advantage	49.7	74.1	+24.4	+49.1%
Relevance to Community Needs	67.8	82.9	+15.1	+22.3%
Willingness to Recommend (NPS proxy)	48.6	77.1	+28.5	+58.6%
OVERALL AVERAGE	**58.4**	**78.6**	**+20.2**	**+34.6%**

The paired-sample t-test yielded $t = 8.74$ ($df = 44$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [15.8; 24.6]), confirming that the difference in mean scores before and after the program was statistically significant at the 99.9% confidence level. The effect size, measured using Cohen's $d = 1.30$, indicates a very large effectfar exceeding the $d > 0.80$ threshold for 'large effect' in Cohen's standard. This means the changes observed were not only statistically significant but practically meaningfulthe magnitude was highly substantial for a three-month intervention.

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3.6 Qualitative Findings: Most Significant Change Narratives

From the MSC reflection FGD, three change themes emerged most frequently as 'the most meaningful change' among participants, revealing impact dimensions invisible to any quantitative indicator.

Theme 1: A renewed sense of pride and confidence among teachers and administrators. Before the program, many teachers habitually downplayed their own institution in daily conversations with phrases like 'oh, it's just an ordinary village school.' After the program, this narrative consistently shifted to: 'our institution has these specific advantages that no other school in this district possesses.' This shift in narrative self-identitywhile uncaptured by any questionnaire scorecarries profound long-term implications for the quality and consistency of the institution's external communications going forward.

Theme 2: The transformation of parents from passive consumers to active institutional partners. Several parents who previously limited their engagement to enrolling their children, now voluntarily assist canteen operations twice weekly, share the institution's social media content to their community WhatsApp groups, and actively 'promote' the institution to families and neighbors seeking school enrollment. Two new student registrations at the program's third month explicitly cited having discovered the institution through Instagram content shared by active parentsorganic digital word-of-mouth whose trust-building value in a personal-relationship-based village community is immeasurable.

Theme 3: Student enthusiasm for authentic entrepreneurship learning that far exceeded initial expectations. Unlike conventional Social Studies lessons that discuss trade and economic concepts abstractly from textbooks, direct involvement in the educational canteen made concepts such as capital, revenue, profit, customer service, and inventory management into concrete, meaningful, and deeply memorable experiences. Several students began bringing 'canteen lessons' homehelping parents calculate profits from their small warung shops, or suggesting more attractive product presentation methods. This is a form of transfer learning that cannot be planned or forced; it emerges organically when learning is genuinely relevant to learners' real lives(Dwi Syaputra & Ahmad Afandi, 2025).

3.7 Genuineness of the Participatory Approach

The program's success exceeding targets across nearly all indicatorscannot be separated from several key factors operating synergistically. Identifying and analyzing these factors is important not only for explaining why this program succeeded, but also for formulating transferable lessons for replication in other contexts.

The first and most critical factor was the genuineness of the participatory approach applied consistently from the first to the last day. Many programs claim to be 'participatory' but actually involve the community only at the implementation stage, while program design remains entirely the domain of the external team. In this PKM, community involvement began from asset mapping (not the PKM team defining assets, but the community itself through FGD), through brand value design (not the PKM team dictating the tagline, but through three rounds of joint iteration), to business type selection (not the

PKM team deciding, but the World Café FGD forum). The result was a genuinely deep sense of ownership reflected in the 91.1% FGD attendance rate, teachers spending time outside working hours on social media content practice, and canteen managers arriving earlier than scheduled to prepare their wares.

3.8 Integrative Design: Branding and Edu-Economic as a Unified Ecosystem

The second key factor was the integrative design that made branding and edu-economic mutually reinforcing within one ecosystem, rather than running as parallel and separate tracks. This is the most important conceptual distinction of this program compared to similar programs. When the educational canteen sells local products, it does not merely generate incomeit also becomes authentic branding content (a photo of students making cassava chips is far more emotionally resonant than a formal promotional brochure). When the calligraphy workshop produces Islamic decorations, its products are not only economically valuable they also reinforce the institution’s Islamic identity in every home that displays them. This symbiosis creates a self-reinforcing snowball effect: strong branding expands the business units’ market, business unit success generates more success stories that reinforce branding, which in turn further expands the market. Edy et al., 2024; Muiz et al., 2025 both emphasize the importance of cohesion between institutional identity and economic activities, but neither had demonstrated the operational integration mechanism as this PKM does.

3.9 Capacity Building over Product Delivery

The third factor was a consistent orientation toward capacity building rather than product delivery. From the outset, the program’s philosophy was: we mentor the institution to build its own branding and run its own business not: we make a logo for the institution or we establish a business for the institution. This difference in orientation affected the entire program design: workshops not only included presentations but also hands-on practice; mentoring not only provided templates but also trained independent usage; SOPs were not just written by the PKM team but designed collaboratively with the managers who would run them daily. The result: by program’s end, the institution had 9 teachers capable of independently creating social media content, two business unit managers capable of maintaining bookkeeping without assistance, and one internally appointed ‘brand coordinator’ to ensure future consistency of institutional communication san institutional structure that did not exist before the program began.

3.10 Timing and Institutional Momentum

The fourth factor was the right timing meeting an institutional moment of urgency. The program arrived when the institution was at a critical juncture: some parents were considering moving their children to other schools, concerns were growing about declining new student enrollment, and the foundation board was asking serious questions about long-term financial sustainability. In this context, a PKM offering concrete answersnot merely theoretical training without real implementationwas received with extraordinary openness and commitment. This confirms Susanti, 2025 argument that the most effective empowerment interventions are those that respond to felt needs experienced directly, not merely needs diagnosed from outside (imposed needs).

3.11 Emergent Network Effect and Replication Potential

One unanticipated yet highly significant finding was the spontaneous network effect that emerged beyond the program's boundaries. In the final weeks of the program, news of LPI Pekangkungan's transformation spread through parent WhatsApp networks, reshared social media posts, and informal conversations among teachers at district-level meetings. Two Islamic educational institutions from neighboring villages Mlaten Village and Randupitu Villagemade direct site visits and expressed interest in running similar programs. This is a powerful external validation: if a program is deemed successful by other institutions to the degree that they make the effort to come and learn from it, its impact extends far beyond LPI Pekangkungan itself.

From a social-economic sociology perspective, this PKM touched fundamental mechanisms explaining why community-based educational institutions can or cannot survive and grow in village economic contexts. Tilaar, H. A. R., 2012 asserts that the educational institutions that endure most successfully are not those with the greatest financial resources, but those most deeply embedded in the social trust networks of their local communities. This PKM demonstrates that these social trust networks can be strengthened through authentic branding interventions and economically expanded through business models that reinforce community bondsrather than weakening them with transactional-commercial approaches that feel foreign to institutional values.

3.12 Comparison with Existing Literature

This program's integrated approach distinguishes it meaningfully from existing literature. Khoiroh et al., 2025 and Cahyanto et al., 2025 examined branding of Islamic educational institutions, but focused on large urban institutions whose context and resources differ significantly from the rural LPI setting. Firmansyah, 2025 and Prastowo et al., 2025 addressed economic empowerment of Islamic institutions but without the branding integration dimension. Dewi & Zaenurrosyid, 2023 came closest with their work on Islamic philanthropic institutions and economic empowerment, but their focus was on waqf mechanisms rather than active brand-economy integration at the operational level.

The present program's contribution is twofold: empirically, it provides robust evidence that a three-month, community-led ABCD-PAR intervention can produce a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.30) in institutional brand perception at minimal cost; conceptually, it establishes a replicable model in which branding and edu-economic development are designed as a unified ecosystem rather than separate projects, with each component amplifying the other's effectiveness. The five-phase design, modular training structure, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms documented here provide sufficient operational detail for adaptation in diverse rural Islamic educational institution contexts across Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The Community Partnership Program (PKM) for Institutional Branding and Edu-Economic Empowerment at the Islamic Educational Institution of Pekangkungan Village has successfully demonstrated that institutional identity reinforcement and educational economic independence development are not only capable of being pursued simultaneouslythey actually strengthen each other when designed integratively within a single ecosystem. The ABCD approach combined with PAR produced a program that was contextual, participatory, and characterized by high sustainability potential evidenced by the deep sense of ownership among participants (93% expressed intention to continue the program independently in the final survey) and the institution's demonstrated capacity to operate programs without dependence on the PKM team by program's end.

From the branding dimension, the institution now possesses a clearer, more cohesive identity that is actively communicated: brand perception scores increased 34.6% from baseline ($t = 8.74$; $p < 0.001$; $d = 1.30$), a complete visual identity guide with eight elements was developed, 75% of teachers can independently create social media content, and 312 new followers were gained in the first two weeks of account activation. From the edu-economic dimension, two business units are actively operating and generated revenue of IDR 4,200,000 in their first six weeks (168% of target), simultaneously serving as real entrepreneurship laboratories for 23 students.

The improvement in NPS from the negative zone to the positive, alongside replication interest from two neighboring village institutions, confirms the validity and relevance of this model. Beyond all numerical indicators, however, the most consequential outcome is the collective mindset transformation: teachers more confident in articulating their institution's advantages, parents shifted from passive consumers to active partners and voluntary promoters, and students learning entrepreneurship from real experiencenot textbook abstraction. It is this mindset transformation that guarantees program sustainability long after the PKM team's departure.

These findings carry broader implications for the development of community service program models: the branding-edu-economic integration approach based on ABCD-PAR merits development as a replication model for other rural Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia. Its foundational principlesstart from assets not deficits, integrate rather than separate, build capacity rather than deliver products, involve from the beginning rather than merely invite at the endare universal and transferable to diverse local contexts with manageable adaptation.

Based on the program's findings and limitations, four directions for future research are recommended:

a) Longitudinal sustainability tracking: measuring the persistence of program impacts at 6 and 12months post-intervention to determine whether the capacity built translates into long-term institutional health indicators (enrollment trends, revenue growth, staff retention).
b) Cross-context replication testing: piloting the model in LPIs with different geographic and demographic contexts (coastal communities, NTB, Kalimantan) to assess model transferability and identify adaptation requirements.
c) Standardized LPI brand perception instrument development: building on the 8-dimension scale validated in this study to develop a nationally-standardized measurement tool that could serve as a benchmark for Islamic educational institution performance monitoring.
d) Causal pathway analysis: investigating the causal relationship between branding improvements and subsequent new student enrollment in the following academic

yeara logically compelling hypothesis that could not be tested within the three-month timeframe of this program.

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