

## The Impact of Brick Business on the Absorption of Local Labor in Sukodadi Village, Sukarami District, Palembang City from the Perspective of Hifzul Maal

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### ABSTRACT

Brick-making businesses are labor-intensive micro-enterprises that play an important role in absorbing local labor in Sukodadi Village, Sukarami District, Palembang City. These businesses provide employment opportunities for low-educated communities who have limited access to formal jobs. However, labor practices remain largely informal, with unclear wage standards and limited worker protection, which require evaluation from the Hifzul Mal perspective. This study aims to analyze the impact of brick-making businesses on local labor absorption, identify factors encouraging local residents to work in this sector, and assess labor management practices based on Hifzul Mal principles. The research adopts a qualitative field research approach. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with triangulation. The findings show that brick-making businesses have a positive impact on local labor absorption, particularly in manual production processes. Key factors include limited formal job opportunities, low education levels, and easy access to work. Nevertheless, from the Hifzul Mal perspective, labor management has not fully reflected principles of justice, worker protection, and sustainability, indicating the need for improved business governance.

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### Introduction

The brick-making business is one form of locally based micro-enterprise that has developed within society and plays an important role in supporting household economic activities. In Sukodadi Village, Sukarami District, Palembang City, the brick-making business has been carried out for generations and has become one of the primary sources of livelihood for the surrounding community. This business has grown due to the increasing demand for building materials, both for the construction of houses, public facilities, and infrastructure. In addition, the labor-intensive nature of the brick-making business enables

this sector to absorb local labor, particularly individuals with limited education, skills, and access to formal employment.

In the context of the local economy, the brick-making business functions not only as a production activity but also as a community economic space. The production process involves various stages, including soil excavation, raw material processing, molding, drying, firing, and distribution. These stages require a considerable amount of human labor, thereby creating employment opportunities for local communities. This is in line with the view that the brick industry in various regions contributes to community income and socio-economic life (Nurmina, Halim, & Ilham, 2022). Community involvement in production activities also demonstrates that the brick-making business plays a strategic role as an informal sector that helps reduce local unemployment.

However, despite its contribution to labor absorption, the brick-making business also faces various challenges. Most production processes are still carried out manually or semi-traditionally, requiring significant physical labor. Working conditions such as lifting heavy materials, working under direct sunlight, exposure to smoke from the firing process, and performing repetitive movements may cause physical complaints and health risks for workers. Agung and Anggrahini (2021) explained that work in the brick industry has the potential to cause physical complaints due to workload, working posture, and the frequency of strenuous activities. Similarly, Dewi (2024) emphasized that occupational safety education and training are essential for brick industry workers so that they can understand workplace risks and implement safer working methods.

Another issue that arises is the informal nature of labor practices within the brick-making industry. Employment relationships between business owners and workers are generally based on verbal agreements without written contracts, job security, clear wage standards, or adequate social protection. This condition may place workers in a vulnerable position, particularly during periods of declining production, unfavorable weather, workplace accidents, or unstable income. Sujianti, Wilson, and Ayub (2024) stated that the informal sector often becomes an employment option for communities due to limited access to the formal sector, especially for workers with low educational backgrounds. Thus, while the brick-making business functions as a source of employment absorption, it still leaves unresolved issues related to worker protection, welfare, and job sustainability.

From the perspective of Islamic Economics, business activities should not only be assessed based on economic profit but also on the values of justice, public benefit (*maslahah*), and the protection of wealth. The principle of *Hifzul Mal*, as part of *Maqashid al-Shariah*, emphasizes the importance of protecting, acquiring, managing, and utilizing wealth in a lawful, fair, productive manner that does not harm others. In the context of the brick-making business, *Hifzul Mal* is not only related to business owners in safeguarding capital and production outcomes, but also concerns the protection of workers' rights, wage justice, the sustainability of natural resources, and economic benefits for the wider community. Sanuri (2021) emphasized that *Hifzul Mal* can serve as an ethical and moral

foundation for reducing poverty because this principle positions wealth as an instrument of welfare rather than merely a tool for profit accumulation.

Previous studies have shown diverse findings regarding the role of the brick-making industry. Apriandi and Syahfitri (2023) found that the brick industry is capable of providing employment opportunities and improving the economic welfare of communities. Trisnawati, Suratha, and Suyadi (2022) also demonstrated that the brick industry contributes to household income. Furthermore, Kurniawan (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurship training can increase the income of red-brick-making families. Meanwhile, several other studies have highlighted the weaknesses of the brick-making business, including informal labor practices, wage issues, health risks, and environmental impacts (Muin, 2022; Prayoga, 2021; Fawaid et al., 2025). These differing findings indicate the existence of a research gap to further examine how the brick-making business affects local labor absorption, particularly within the context of Sukodadi Village.

Based on the explanation above, this research is important because the brick-making business in Sukodadi Village has two dimensions that need to be analyzed in a balanced manner. On the one hand, this business plays a positive role in creating employment opportunities and supporting household economies. On the other hand, labor management still faces challenges related to wage justice, labor protection, and business sustainability. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of the brick-making business on local labor absorption, identify the factors that encourage communities to work in the brick-making industry, and evaluate labor management practices in the brick-making business from the perspective of *Hifzul Mal*.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative field research method using an intrinsic case study approach. The research focuses on examining how the brick-making business in Sukodadi Village absorbs local labor, the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing employment absorption, and its conformity with the principles of *Hifzul Mal*, including wage justice, the prohibition of *ظلم* (oppression), public benefit (*maslahah*), and local empowerment. The qualitative approach is used because it produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words obtained directly from informants and field observations rather than numerical data. The research was conducted in Sukodadi Village, Sukarami District, Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, from August 2025 to January 2026, covering the stages of pre-field preparation, data collection, analysis, and validation of findings.

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents and informants through interviews, observations, and field investigations related to the brick-making business and labor absorption. Secondary data were collected from books, previous studies, journals, and online references relevant to the research topic. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews with business owners, workers, and surrounding communities, direct observation of business activities and

labor practices, as well as documentation in the form of written records, archives, and photographs as supporting evidence for the study. To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the researcher applied several verification techniques, including source, technique, and time triangulation, prolonged engagement in the research setting, persistent observation, peer debriefing, and member checking to confirm the accuracy of information obtained from informants.

The collected data were processed through several stages, beginning with data transcription, where interview recordings were converted into written form to facilitate analysis. The data were then classified according to specific themes such as labor absorption, recruitment systems, wages, socio-economic impacts, and compliance with sharia principles. Subsequently, unnecessary or repetitive information was simplified without reducing the core meaning of the data. The organized data were then arranged into narratives, tables, and simple matrices to facilitate further analysis. Data analysis in this study employed the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and simplifying raw field data, while data display aimed to organize information systematically in descriptive forms, tables, and matrices to identify patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusions were continuously drawn and verified throughout the research process to ensure that the findings remained open, flexible, and consistent with the realities found in the field.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. The Impact of the Brick-Making Business on Local Labor Absorption**

The results of this study indicate that the brick-making business in Sukodadi Village has a positive impact on local labor absorption. The labor-intensive characteristics of the brick-making industry cause the production process to require the involvement of many workers at every stage. In one business unit, the average number of workers involved ranges from 8 to 12 people, depending on market demand, production season, and the production capacity of the business owner. The workers generally come from the surrounding community, making this business one of the most accessible sources of employment for local residents.

Labor absorption occurs in several stages of production, including soil excavation, raw material mixing, molding, transportation, drying, firing, and distribution. Most of these stages are still carried out manually, requiring direct human labor. This condition demonstrates that the brick-making business has an important socio-economic function because it is capable of creating employment opportunities for people who are not absorbed into the formal employment sector. This finding is consistent with the study of Apriandi and Syahfitri (2023), which states that the brick industry can serve as a source of employment and income for surrounding communities.

The impact of labor absorption can also be observed through the ability of the brick-making business to help communities meet their daily economic needs. For workers, this

business becomes either the main or an additional source of income used to finance household expenses, children's education, and daily consumption. Although the income earned is not entirely stable, the existence of the brick-making business is still considered important because it provides jobs that do not require high levels of education or specialized skills. This demonstrates that the brick-making business possesses an inclusive nature because it can employ people from social groups with limited access to formal employment opportunities.

In addition to benefiting workers, the brick-making business also provides advantages for business owners and the surrounding community. Business owners gain income from production activities, while communities benefit from the availability of employment opportunities, the circulation of the local economy, and increased economic activity within the surrounding environment. The economic relationship between business owners, workers, buyers, and suppliers of supporting materials indicates that the brick-making business forms part of the local economic chain. Thus, the contribution of the brick-making business is not only individual in nature but also affects the socio-economic life of the people of Sukodadi Village.

Nevertheless, these positive impacts have not been fully accompanied by an ideal labor system. Employment relationships remain informal and are largely based on customary practices. There are still no clear wage standards, written employment contracts, health protection, or occupational safety guarantees. This condition represents one of the major weaknesses in labor management within the brick-making industry. In this context, although the brick-making business successfully absorbs labor, the quality of employment opportunities provided still needs improvement in order to become more decent, fair, and sustainable.

## **2. Factors Encouraging Communities to Work in the Brick-Making Business**

The primary factor encouraging people to work in the brick-making business is the limited availability of formal employment opportunities. Many residents of Sukodadi Village have relatively low educational backgrounds, making it difficult for them to compete in the formal sector, which generally requires academic qualifications, technical skills, and specific work experience. The brick-making business becomes an alternative choice because it is easier to enter, does not require complicated administrative requirements, and accepts workers based on physical ability and willingness to work.

The second factor is the proximity of the workplace to residential areas. For local communities, working in the brick-making business provides convenience because they do not need to spend large amounts of money on transportation and can remain close to their families. This proximity becomes an important consideration, especially for workers who have household responsibilities. By working within their local environment, they are able to earn income without having to migrate or seek employment outside the region.

The third factor is the economic needs of the family. Economic pressures and the increasing cost of living encourage people to work in any sector capable of providing

income. The brick-making business serves as an alternative because it offers opportunities to earn money relatively quickly, either through daily wages or contract-based payment systems. In the context of low-income communities, the availability of such employment opportunities is highly important for maintaining household economic sustainability. This finding is in line with the study of Basyir, Sabirin, and Srimulyani (2023), which explains that home industries can improve community welfare by creating employment opportunities and increasing family income.

The fourth factor is the social relationship between business owners and workers. Some workers choose to work in the brick-making business because of family ties, social closeness, or trust-based relationships with business owners. This type of working relationship makes the recruitment process simple and informal. Although it provides easier access to employment, a family-based system may also create weaknesses if it is not accompanied by clear rights and obligations. Therefore, strong social relationships should be complemented by clearer labor management practices in order to prevent inequality between business owners and workers.

### **3. The Perspective of Hifzul Mal in the Labor Management of the Brick-Making Business**

From the perspective of Hifzul Mal, the brick-making business in Sukodadi Village can be viewed as a form of productive wealth management. Clay, as a natural resource, is processed into products with economic value, and the resulting income is used to fulfill the living needs of business owners and workers. This activity is in line with Islamic principles that encourage people to work, manage resources productively, and acquire wealth through lawful means. Marhania et al. (2024) explained that Hifzul Mal is not only related to protecting wealth from loss, but also ensuring that wealth is utilized for beneficial, fair, and socially advantageous purposes.

However, the implementation of Hifzul Mal in the brick-making business has not yet been fully optimal. From the aspect of wage justice, the payment system still depends on customary practices and informal agreements. Wages are provided based on the amount of work completed or the number of working days, but there is still no standard guaranteeing decent worker income. From the perspective of Hifzul Mal, wages should be provided fairly, transparently, and proportionally according to the workload. Workers should not merely be positioned as tools of production, but rather as economic partners who possess the right to decent earnings.

From the aspect of labor protection, the brick-making business still faces several weaknesses. Workers are exposed to physical risks such as heat, smoke, heavy workloads, injuries, and muscular complaints. Patradhiani, Kurniawan, and Rosyidah (2022) stated that the brick production process has the potential for human error and workplace accidents. Nurfajri, Subakir, and Hapis (2021) also found that complaints of lower back pain among brick workers are influenced by workload, working hours, and working posture. From the

perspective of Hifzul Mal, labor protection is essential because workers are part of productive assets that must be safeguarded. Worker health and safety are not only related to Hifzul Mal, but are also connected to the protection of life, namely Hifz al-Nafs.

From the aspect of business sustainability, the use of clay as a raw material must be managed carefully. Excessive exploitation of land may result in environmental damage, declining land quality, and risks to future production sustainability. Zaini and Milawati (2025) explained that humans have a responsibility as khalifah (stewards) to preserve natural resources and prevent environmental destruction. Therefore, Hifzul Mal requires that the utilization of resources should not only generate short-term profits but also preserve sustainable benefits for future generations.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the brick-making business has provided economic benefits, although improvements are still needed in labor management and sustainability practices. Economically, this business absorbs local labor and helps communities earn income. Socially, it strengthens interaction and economic interdependence between business owners and workers. However, from a normative perspective, the implementation of Hifzul Mal values still needs to be strengthened through clearer wage systems, better labor protection, improved occupational safety, wise management of raw materials, and business guidance from local government authorities.

Thus, the brick-making business in Sukodadi Village has the potential to become a model of a sharia-based micro-enterprise if it is managed according to the principles of justice, transparency, public benefit (maslahah), and sustainability. The implementation of Hifzul Mal can serve as an ethical foundation for improving business governance so that it not only benefits capital owners but also provides protection and welfare for workers and surrounding communities.

## **Conclusion**

The brick-making business in Sukodadi Village, Sukarami District, Palembang City, has had a positive impact on the absorption of local labor. The labor-intensive nature of the business causes the production process to require a large amount of human labor, particularly in the stages of molding, drying, firing, and distribution. This business has become an alternative source of employment for people who have limited education, skills, and access to formal job opportunities.

The main factors encouraging people to work in the brick-making business are the limited availability of formal employment, the proximity of the workplace to residential areas, the economic needs of families, and the existence of social relationships between workers and business owners. Nevertheless, the employment system implemented is still largely informal and therefore has not fully guaranteed wage justice, labor protection, and occupational safety.

From the perspective of Hifzul Mal, the brick-making business possesses the value of public benefit (maslahah) because it is capable of transforming natural resources into

products with economic value and creating income opportunities for the community. However, the implementation of the principles of Hifzul Mal has not yet been optimal due to weaknesses in wage standards, worker protection, and the sustainability of natural resource utilization. Therefore, improvements in business governance are necessary through guidance and supervision, strengthening fair labor systems, enhancing occupational safety, and ensuring sustainable resource management so that the brick-making business can become a productive, humane, and Islamically aligned local economic sector.

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