



Vegetable Trader Social Network (Study in Panyula Village, East Tanete Riattang District Bone Regency, South Sulawesi Province)

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify social networks in supporting the sustainability of vegetable traders in Panyula Market, East Tanete Riattang District, as well as to identify strategies used by traders in maintaining these social networks. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. The research informants were selected by purposive sampling, namely 11 informants consisting of 8 vegetable traders, 2 vegetable suppliers, and 1 buyer. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that social networks play a major role in the sustainability of traders' businesses through access to information on prices and stocks of goods, informal financial support, and the creation of mutually beneficial cooperation between traders, suppliers, and customers. To maintain the network, traders carry out various strategies, including maintaining mutual relationships, maintaining trust, providing discounts or promos to customers, and showing mutual assistance with fellow traders. In conclusion, the sustainability of the vegetable traders' business in Panyula Market is greatly influenced by the strength of social networks, while the ability to maintain trust, reciprocity, promotion, and solidarity is the main strategy to maintain the network to continue to function in the face of economic challenges in the informal sector

INTRODUCTION

The traditional market is one of the economic and social spaces that still survives in the midst of modernization and modern market development. In addition to being a place for buying and selling transactions, traditional markets also function as an arena for social interaction that allows the formation of relationships of trust, cooperation, and solidarity among the actors. According to Fuad (in Ulviani, 2020), traditional markets are characterized by direct transactions through bargaining between sellers and buyers. Vegetable traders as one of the main actors in the traditional market depend not only on the ability to sell products, but also on the social networks they build with suppliers, fellow traders, and customers. Traders are those who do business acts (trade) as their daily work (Azari & Wirdanengsih, 2022).

There are many types of traders that can be seen from the type of trade. Vegetable traders are one of them, vegetable traders are people or individuals who carry out livelihood activities by selling and buying and selling various types of vegetables such as eggplant, kale, long beans, spinach, and other types of vegetables in traditional markets as a form of survival (Hera, 2019). Based on the scale of the business, traders vegetables are divided into large, medium, and small-scale traders, where the differences lie in the number of workers, distribution capacity, and the scope of the trade area (Soepeno et al., 2021).

In the market ecosystem, social networks serve as a negotiation tool and survival strategy. Through relationships with suppliers, traders can get the best prices. According to Lawang (2005) in (Hayati et al., 2023) a social network is a network where the bond that connects one point to another point in the network is a social relationship. Basically, social networks are formed because of mutual knowledge, informing each other, reminding each other, and helping each other in implementing or overcoming something. On the other hand, Fukuyama in (Fitriyani, 2015) emphasizes more on the effectiveness of cooperation on teams with high trust. If people work together in a company, for example, with a high level of trust and upholding shared ethical norms, then doing business costs little by innovating organizationally because it allows for the emergence of a wider variety of social relationships.

Social networks according to Mitchell (1969) in (Haryono, 2017) are a collection of special or specific relationships formed between a group of people. According to William & Durrance (2008) in (Pranaya, 2023), social networks are relationships between individuals and society that are formed from a collection of relationships or bonds between actors. In other words, a social network is a structure consisting of special relationships that connect one individual to another individual in society.

In the context of traditional markets, social networks are an important form of social capital because they are able to provide access to price and supply information, informal financial support, and mutually beneficial cooperation mechanisms. In the theory of Marc Granovetter emphasizes that "the strength of weak ties" has a significant role in expanding access to information and opportunities that cannot be obtained from strong social ties alone. Social networks play an important role in economic transactions (Kaplalet al., 2022).

Agustin's research (2018) also found that the social network between farmers and vegetable traders is formed on the basis of common economic interests, which are supported by the practice of debts and receivables and trust in transactions. These findings show that business continuity in the informal sector is closely related to the social networks that are built.

However, most studies still focus on aspects of the distribution of agricultural products or networks between farmers and traders, while the socio-economic dimensions of vegetable traders in local traditional markets have not been widely explored. Rifky (2018), for example, researched the social networks of traders at the Cibadak night market, while Muzdalifah (2021) examined the social networks of used clothing traders in Banjarmasin. The study shows the importance of social networks in supporting economic activity, but has not specifically discussed vegetable traders in small traditional markets such as Pamula Market.

Panyula Market, located in East Tanete Riattang District, Bone Regency, is one of the traditional markets that is still active and has become the center of economic activities of the local community. Vegetable traders in this market face various challenges, ranging from price competition with the modern market, supply fluctuations, to changes in people's consumption patterns. As stated by Sitania et al. (2023), trust between traders and suppliers often allows transactions with tempo payment systems, which provides flexibility for small traders in managing capital. This shows how social networks play a role in supporting the sustainability of traders' businesses in the informal sector.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine how social networks support the sustainability of vegetable traders in Panyula Market and identify strategies used by traders in maintaining these social networks. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the study of the sociology of economics and social capital, as well as practical benefits for strengthening micro enterprises in the informal sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional markets play a crucial role in local economies, particularly in developing regions, where they function not only as centers of economic exchange but also as social spaces that sustain community interaction. Ulviani (2020) emphasizes that traditional markets are characterized by direct transactions and bargaining processes that foster close relationships between sellers and buyers. Within this environment, traders depend heavily on social relationships to maintain business continuity amid competition from modern markets.

Vegetable traders represent an important group within traditional markets due to their reliance on perishable goods and unstable supply chains. Hera (2019) describes vegetable traders as individuals whose livelihoods depend on buying and selling various agricultural products, making them highly vulnerable to price fluctuations and market uncertainty. Based on business scale, vegetable traders range from small to large operators, with differences in labor capacity,

distribution reach, and capital availability (Soepeno et al., 2021). These conditions make social networks a vital survival mechanism.

Social network theory provides a key framework for understanding how traders maintain business sustainability. Lawang (2005, cited in Hayati et al., 2023) defines social networks as social relationships built on mutual assistance, information exchange, and shared understanding. Mitchell (1969, cited in Haryono, 2017) further explains social networks as specific patterns of relationships connecting individuals within a social structure. Similarly, William and Durrance (2008, cited in Pranaya, 2023) describe social networks as interconnected relationships that enable individuals to access resources embedded within society.

In economic sociology, social networks are closely linked to the concept of social capital. Fukuyama (cited in Fitriyani, 2015) argues that trust is a fundamental component of social capital, as high levels of trust reduce transaction costs and enhance cooperation. Granovetter's theory of the "strength of weak ties" further highlights that loosely connected relationships play a critical role in expanding access to information and economic opportunities beyond close social circles (Ritzer, 2012). In traditional markets, weak ties with suppliers and external actors often provide traders with crucial market information.

Empirical studies confirm the importance of social networks in informal economic activities. Agustin (2018) found that networks between farmers and vegetable traders are built on trust, shared economic interests, and debt-based transactions, enabling stable supply chains. Kaplale et al. (2022) also demonstrate that producer-trader networks facilitate cooperation and reduce uncertainty in agricultural trade. Studies by Rifky (2018) and Muzdalifah et al. (2021) show that trader networks provide access to information, financial flexibility, and emotional support, strengthening business resilience.

Trust-based relationships also allow for flexible financial arrangements. Sitania et al. (2023) highlight that payment delay systems between traders and suppliers are possible due to strong social trust, offering crucial capital flexibility for small traders. Azari and Wirdanengsih (2022) further note that mutual assistance among traders becomes especially important during economic crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite extensive research on social networks in agricultural trade, most studies focus on large markets or specific commodities. Limited attention has been given to vegetable traders in smaller traditional markets. This gap underscores the importance of localized studies, such as research in Panyula Market, to deepen understanding of how social networks function as social capital and survival strategies in informal market settings.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the research location in Panyula Market, Panyilla Village, East Tanete Riattang District, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. Informants were determined through purposive sampling techniques with a total of 11 people, consisting of 8 vegetable traders

as the main actors, 2 suppliers, and 1 buyer as supporting informants. Research data was obtained from two sources, namely primary data through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and secondary data in the form of literature, reports, and documents relevant to informal sector trade.

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiono, 2016) which included three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and withdrawal conclusion. Data reduction is carried out by sorting and simplifying field data, data presentation is carried out in the form of narratives that describe social relationship patterns, and conclusions are drawn continuously by verifying findings until valid and in-depth research results are obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Social Network in Supporting the Business Sustainability of Vegetable Traders in Panyula Market

a. Access to Information

The social network of vegetable traders in the Panyula Market has proven to be an important means of obtaining and disseminating information relevant to their trading activities. The most frequently exchanged information is about the price of vegetables in other markets, the availability of stock of goods, and consumer demand trends. For small traders, this kind of information is invaluable because it can help them adjust prices to stay competitive while avoiding losses due to market fluctuations.

The exchange of information takes place through direct interaction in the market and informal communication outside the market. Relationships with suppliers, especially from outside the region, allow traders to gain more information about different market conditions. This information is then used to set up trading strategies, for example by increasing stocks when prices tend to rise or reducing purchases when there is an excess supply.

In the perspective of Granovetter's theory, this kind of relationship shows the importance of weak ties. The weak ties established between traders and suppliers from outside the region allow them to obtain new information that cannot be obtained from the nearest social circle. Thus, access to information through social networks not only supports business sustainability, but also increases traders' adaptability to market changes.

b. Financial Support and Cooperation

In addition to access to information, the social network of vegetable traders in the Panyula Market also functions as a financial support mechanism. The capital that traders have is generally limited, so the relationship with suppliers is very important. Through trust that is built, traders can obtain goods with a tempo payment system. This allows traders to continue selling even though their cash capital is limited, while providing flexibility in managing their business finances.

Not only from suppliers, financial support also often comes from fellow traders. It can be in the form of a cash loan for urgent needs or assistance in the form of merchandise. This practice shows that traders support each other to ensure the smooth running of their respective businesses. This kind of

cooperation strengthens social solidarity in the market and creates a sense of security among traders.

In addition to the financial form, cooperation can also be seen from the use of market facilities. Traders who have limited stalls or equipment are often assisted by other traders. For example, there are merchants who lend scales or share a place to store merchandise. The collaboration emphasizes that traders' social networks function as social capital that goes beyond mere economic transactions, but also builds a collective support system that strengthens the merchant community.

c. Moral Support and Solidarity

The relationship between vegetable traders in Panyula Market is not only economic, but also full of moral values and solidarity. Although formally they are competitors, in practice many traders show a mutually helpful attitude. For example, traders who are unable to attend will entrust their goods to other colleagues, or traders who are short of stock can borrow goods from other traders. This shows that a sense of togetherness is still the main foundation in their interactions.

Moral support is also manifested in the form of social empathy. Traders who experience economic difficulties, get sick, or are hit by disasters often get attention from other traders. They do not hesitate to provide assistance, both in the form of material and non-material, in order to maintain the sustainability of the business of fellow traders. This solidarity shows that the social bonds between traders are stronger than just competitive relationships.

This condition also has implications for the creation of a more harmonious market atmosphere. With solidarity, competition between traders becomes healthier because each tries to maintain a balance between personal interests and collective interests. This moral support and solidarity can be seen as a manifestation of strong ties that function to strengthen social cohesion in the merchant community.

2. Traders' Strategies in Maintaining Social Networks

a. Maintaining Reciprocity (Reciprocal Relationships)

Reciprocity or reciprocity is one of the main foundations in the social network of vegetable traders in the Panyilla Market. Any assistance provided by a trader, whether in the form of goods, information, or financial support, will be repaid by other traders in the form of similar assistance at different times. This pattern is not just a transaction, but a social norm that fosters trust and strengthens relationships between individuals.

The practice of reciprocity is evident in everyday life. For example, when a merchant lends money or vegetables to another merchant, he is sure that the help will return in another form. Similarly, in the exchange of information, traders who first know about price changes in other markets will share it with other traders, in the hope that one day they will also get important information in return. This reciprocal cycle creates social stability and ensures that the continuity of the network is maintained.

Reciprocity is also a mechanism for controlling conflicts among traders. Since there is a moral obligation to help each other, the relationship between traders is not easily damaged even if they are in a competitive situation. Thus,

reciprocity serves as an instrument that maintains a balance between individual interests and collective interests, while strengthening the solidarity of merchant communities in traditional markets.

b. Maintaining Reputation and Trust

Trust is the most important social capital for vegetable traders in Panyula Market. Traders who are known to be honest, friendly, and consistent in maintaining the quality of their goods will. It is easier to gain loyalty from customers and trust from suppliers. A good reputation makes traders have a stable position, both in social networks and in market competition.

Customers in traditional markets not only buy goods based on price and quality, but also because of an emotional connection with the trader. Merchants who are able to maintain trust by not cheating in the scales or the quality of goods will build long-term bonds with customers. This makes customers more loyal even though there are other merchants who offer lower prices. In other words, reputation serves as an instrument that guarantees the continuity of the relationship between the trader and the customer.

In addition to the customer, trust is also important in the trader's relationship with the supplier. Merchants who have a good reputation usually find it easier to acquire goods with a tempo payment system. Instead, traders who violate trust will lose access to sources of supply as well as support from their social networks. Therefore, maintaining reputation is not only an ethical issue, but a survival strategy in the traditional market ecosystem.

c. Promo or Discount Strategy

Vegetable vendors at Panyula Market also utilize simple promotional strategies to maintain a social network with customers. One of the common strategies is to give discounts or bonuses on purchases of a certain amount. Although the value is relatively small, these promos are effective in attracting customers' attention and strengthening long-term relationships.

Promos and discounts are not only seen as a trading strategy, but also as a form of reward for customer loyalty. Customers who frequently shop at the same merchant usually feel closer emotionally, so they are more likely to stick around even if there are other merchants offering lower prices. Thus, promos have a dual function, namely as a means of retaining customers while strengthening social ties between traders and buyers.

In the context of social networks, promos and discounts also show how traders combine economic strategies with social strategies. They focus not only on short-term gains, but also on the creation of broader and sustainable social relationships. This is in accordance with Granovetter's view that economic action is always inherent in the social structure, so that trade interactions cannot be separated from the underlying social values.

d. Showing a Mutually Helpful Attitude

Mutual help is a characteristic of the social network of vegetable traders in the Panyilla Market. Despite being in a competitive state, the traders still show concern for each other. They do not hesitate to lend each other merchandise, guard other traders' stalls, or help when someone is experiencing difficulties.

This practice reflects that social relations in traditional markets are more community-oriented than individualism.

This form of mutual help is not limited to the economic aspect, but also extends to the social and emotional realm. For example, when a trader faces personal difficulties, other traders also provide support, both in the form of manpower and material assistance. This solidarity makes traders feel like they have a strong community, so they don't feel alone in facing various challenges.

Mutual aid also serves as a collective strategy to reduce the risk of uncertainty in trading. With cooperation between traders, risks such as outstock, customer loss, or economic losses can be minimized. These findings show that traders' social networks are not only tools for individual survival, but also collective containers that strengthen the resilience of the market community as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research on the social network of vegetable traders in the Panyula Market, East Tanete Riattang District, Bone Regency, it can be concluded that social networks play a central role in supporting the sustainability of traders' businesses. Through the network formed between traders, suppliers, and customers, a flow of information, financial assistance, and moral support is created that allows traders to survive in the midst of the economic dynamics of the informal sector. This social network is not only an economic tool, but also serves as a social space where the values of trust, solidarity, and cooperation are maintained.

The success of vegetable traders in maintaining their business depends heavily on their ability to maintain the social relationships that have been built. Strategies that. Implemented, such as maintaining mutual relationships, maintaining reputation and trust, providing promos or discounts to customers, and showing mutual assistance with fellow traders, have proven to be effective in strengthening the network. With this strategy, traders are not only able to retain customers, but also build solidarity among fellow business actors who can be a support when facing economic difficulties and competitive challenges.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is needed regarding Vegetable Trader Social Network to perfect this research and increase insight for readers and writers.

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