

The Role of Social Capital to Strengthen Market Segmentation Strategy (Study on Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business in Blitar)

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Abstract: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), especially in the snack industry sector, such as cassava crackers, play an important role in supporting the Indonesian economy through job creation and contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, MSMEs often face challenges in maintaining and expanding their market share amid increasingly fierce competition. This study aims to analyse the role of social capital in strengthening market segmentation strategies at Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business in Blitar Regency. The method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The informants in this study were five people, consisting of business owners, employees, regular customers, and local community leaders. The results show that social capital, which includes strong social networks, trust between businesses and consumers, and the application of local social norms such as gotong royong, contributes significantly to expanding the market and maintaining customer loyalty. The market segmentation strategy applied based on demographic, psychographic, and consumer behaviour factors proved effective in reaching various customer groups. These findings imply that the synergy between social capital and the right market segmentation strategy can improve the competitiveness of MSMEs in a competitive market and promote sustainable business growth.

Kata Kunci:

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Abstrak: Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM), khususnya di sektor industri makanan ringan seperti kerupuk singkong, memegang peran penting dalam mendukung perekonomian Indonesia melalui penciptaan lapangan kerja dan kontribusi terhadap Produk Domestik Bruto (PDB). Namun demikian, UMKM sering kali menghadapi tantangan dalam mempertahankan dan memperluas pangsa pasar di tengah persaingan yang semakin ketat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran modal sosial dalam memperkuat strategi segmentasi pasar pada Usaha Kerupuk Singkong Sadariyah di Kabupaten Blitar. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan dokumentasi. Informan dalam penelitian ini

berjumlah lima orang, terdiri dari pemilik usaha, karyawan, pelanggan tetap, serta tokoh masyarakat setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa modal sosial, yang mencakup jaringan sosial yang kuat, kepercayaan antara pelaku usaha dan konsumen, serta penerapan norma sosial lokal seperti gotong royong, memberikan kontribusi signifikan dalam memperluas pasar dan mempertahankan loyalitas pelanggan. Strategi segmentasi pasar yang diterapkan berdasarkan faktor demografis, psikografis, dan perilaku konsumen terbukti efektif dalam menjangkau berbagai kelompok pelanggan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa sinergi antara modal sosial dan strategi segmentasi pasar yang tepat mampu meningkatkan daya saing UMKM di pasar yang kompetitif, serta mendorong pertumbuhan usaha yang berkelanjutan.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role as the backbone of Indonesia's economy, particularly in rural areas, where they significantly contribute to employment and economic growth. According (Kementerian KUKM Republik Indonesia, 2019), MSMEs contribute more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provide approximately 97% of total employment in the country. One of the MSME sectors that has experienced rapid development is the snack food industry, including cassava crackers, which has a consistently stable market demand and great potential for growth in line with increasing public interest in affordable and high-quality local food products (Fiernaningsih et al., 2023).

In Blitar Regency, East Java, the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker MSME exemplifies how local snack food businesses can not only survive but thrive amid increasingly intense market competition. Despite being located in a rural area, this enterprise has successfully leveraged local resources such as abundant raw materials, skilled labor, and strong social ties with the surrounding community to support its resilience and business expansion. Through product innovation and market-oriented strategies, Sadariyah Cassava Crackers has extended its reach beyond the local market. However, despite its strong local foundation and market potential, the business still faces challenges, particularly in maintaining and expanding its market share in a competitive landscape.

One key strategy to address these challenges is market segmentation, the process of dividing a market into distinct consumer groups based on characteristics such as demographics, psychographics, and behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Effective segmentation enables MSMEs to tailor their marketing efforts, better meet consumer needs, and allocate resources more efficiently, thereby enhancing competitiveness (Istiqomah, 2023). However, many MSMEs, including those in rural areas, struggle with the implementation of segmentation strategies due to limited access to market data and analytical capacity.

In addition to market segmentation, social capital, defined as the network of social relationships, trust, and shared norms, plays a vital role in supporting MSME development (Effendy, 2018). In practice, social capital often bridges the gap between producers and consumers, enabling MSMEs to build loyalty, understand market preferences, and expand distribution through informal yet effective social networks (Subekti & Sjachro, 2024). Prior studies have demonstrated the general importance of social capital in MSME success; however, few have explicitly examined how social capital can reinforce market segmentation strategies (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023). This gap in the literature points to the need for a deeper investigation into how these two concepts interact.

To clarify this relationship, the present study integrates three core constructs, each explained briefly below. Social capital encompasses networks, trust, and social norms that foster collaboration among business owners, suppliers, distributors, and customers. Strong social networks, dense ties among entrepreneurs, community members, and business partners, facilitate the flow of information essential for effective marketing strategies (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Trust among business actors helps reduce uncertainty and strengthens long-term relationships throughout the value chain. In addition, social norms such as mutual aid and social responsibility contribute to maintaining a healthy local business environment. In the context of MSMEs in Asia, such norms have been shown to increase community engagement in business activities significantly (Utomo et al., 2022).

Market segmentation plays a vital role in helping businesses identify and prioritize the most relevant consumer groups. Demographic segmentation based on age, income, gender, and education helps identify the most promising target markets. Psychographic segmentation, which considers consumer lifestyles, values, and preferences, enables more personalized marketing approaches and enhances consumer engagement (Schiffman et al., 2021). Behavioral segmentation, which focuses on purchasing habits and product loyalty, allows businesses to target high-potential repeat-purchase segments more efficiently, thereby improving marketing effectiveness (Oke et al., 2016).

The competitiveness of MSMEs depends on their ability to survive and grow in competitive markets. Product innovation, especially in traditional food products, can significantly boost competitiveness both domestically and internationally (Asikhia, 2021). Consumer loyalty—fostered through emotional bonds created by social capital and accurate segmentation—is a key indicator of business competitiveness (Kyurova & Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, 2021). Additionally, market expansion, whether through geographic outreach or product diversification, serves as another critical marker of a business's competitive strength (Osamuyimen Eboigbe et al., 2023).

This study offers a novel approach by exploring the synergy between social capital and market segmentation as a means to enhance MSME competitiveness, particularly within rural contexts. While most MSMEs rely on social networks, they often do not incorporate these assets strategically into their market planning. Therefore, this research seeks to demonstrate how social capital can be utilized as a strategic resource to strengthen targeted marketing efforts.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for sustainable development strategies for MSMEs that integrate not only economic factors but also socio-cultural strengths. Its contribution is expected to provide practical insights for MSME actors to develop marketing strategies that are both adaptive and grounded in local realities. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the role of social capital in strengthening market segmentation strategies in the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker MSME in Blitar Regency, with the aim of enhancing business competitiveness and sustainability in a dynamic market environment.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the role of social capital in strengthening market segmentation strategies in the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker Business in Blitar Regency. This method was chosen to provide a deeper understanding of how social capital plays a role and interacts with market segmentation strategies in the context of MSMEs. This study is in the form of a case study, which focuses the analysis on one entity, namely the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker Business. The selection of the location in Blitar Regency is based on the social and economic relevance of the business, which has a wide social network and a significant contribution to the local market.

Data collection techniques in this study include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with business owners to explore their understanding of the implementation of market segmentation strategies and the role of social capital. Direct observation was conducted to study the dynamics of social interactions in production and distribution, while documentation involved analyzing sales data and marketing strategies.

The data obtained were analyzed using analysis techniques involving data collection, data reduction, presentation, and conclusion (Miles et al., 2014). These steps identify key themes related to social capital and market segmentation. The reduced data is compiled and presented in narrative form, and conclusions are drawn on how social capital and market segmentation strategies reinforce each other in supporting business development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals several important findings related to the role of social capital in strengthening market segmentation strategies in the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker Business in Blitar Regency. The study results are described in several main themes that reflect the relationship between social capital and market segmentation strategies and their impact on the competitiveness of MSMEs.

1. Social Capital

The application of social capital in the Sadariyah Cassava Cracker Business is one of the important factors supporting the business's continuity and growth. Social capital in this context covers economic aspects and involves social networks, trust, norms, and values held by business owners and parties involved in the business (Pantano et al., 2021). One element of social capital that is applied is social networks, where business owners have strong relationships with raw material suppliers, distributors, customers, and local communities. Relationships with local cassava farmers as the main suppliers are built through intensive communication and mutual trust so that business owners often get priority in the availability of raw materials, especially when there is a shortage in the market (Faizatul et al., 2023). On the other hand, the relationship with local distributors is also closely established through long-term, mutually beneficial cooperation, where distributors trust the quality of the product and are always ready to increase the amount of product they take (Prayitno et al., 2022). Business owners are also active in the local community. They are often involved in social activities such as social gatherings and religious studies, further strengthening their relationship with the surrounding community. This good relationship makes many loyal customers come from the local community and play a role in spreading product recommendations to their acquaintances (Pantano et al., 2021).

Trust is the second element in social capital that plays an important role in the stability and smoothness of the business. Consumer trust in Sadariyah cassava cracker products is built through a commitment to quality, honest information, and reasonable prices. Consumers feel safe with products made from natural ingredients and produced hygienically, so many of them become regular customers (Faizatul et al., 2023). In addition, trust is also built with suppliers and distributors through timely payments and transparency in running the business, which makes suppliers and distributors willing to continue working together without hesitation (Prayitno et al., 2022). On the social side, trust in the local community grows thanks to the active involvement of business owners in community activities. This approach strengthens community support for the business, both through product purchases and moral support (Pantano et al., 2021).

Local norms and values are also important pillars in building and strengthening the social capital of this business. The norms of family and cooperation that are highly respected in the rural community of Blitar are reflected in the business practices of the business owner, who involves the surrounding community as labor in the production process (Wang et al., 2023). The community also often helps selflessly when production must be increased to meet large orders. In addition, the business owner adopts the values of sustainability and concern for the environment by using raw materials from farmers who practice environmentally friendly agriculture and manage production waste well (Prayitno et al., 2022). This business also maintains its reputation, a norm that is highly valued in rural areas. The business owner ensures that the products sold are of the promised quality so that consumers are not disappointed and continue to support the business (Pantano et al., 2021). Thus, social capital through networks, trust, and the norms and values applied in this business becomes a strong foundation for maintaining the sustainability and success of the Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business.

2. Market segmentation strategy

The market segmentation strategy implemented by Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business has been carefully designed to meet the diverse needs of consumers based on demographics, psychographics, and behavior. In terms of demographic segmentation, this business divides the market based on characteristics such as age, income, and geographic location (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Cassava cracker products are targeted at all age groups, especially families who often consume snacks. For children, the main attraction is the savory and crunchy taste, while for adults,

this product can function as a complement to food or light snacks. In addition, this product is focused on middle- to low-income consumers, both in rural and urban areas. It has affordable prices so that it is easily accessible to various groups (Safira, 2018). Geographically, although based in Blitar Regency, this product is also marketed to other urban and rural areas, with an approach that is adjusted to local preferences.

In psychographic segmentation, Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business focuses on consumer lifestyle, interests, and values. This business targets consumers who like traditional snacks with authentic local flavors, offering cracker products made using traditional recipes and production methods (Burton et al., 2015). In addition, consumers who care about health are also an important segment because these crackers are made from natural ingredients without preservatives or artificial colors, which attracts families who prioritize healthy food. Another psychographic segment is consumers who care about and support local products. By promoting the image of local and traditional products, this business has succeeded in attracting consumers who are interested in supporting small businesses and improving the local economy.

In terms of behavioral segmentation, this business targets consumers based on their habits in consuming products. The main segment consists of consumers who routinely consume crackers as a complement to daily meals. Crackers are often considered an important part of the dining table in Indonesian households, especially in rural areas (Rozi et al., 2023). In addition to daily consumption, this product is also intended for special events, such as social gatherings or family events, where crackers are often served as snacks for guests. By providing larger packaging or bundling packages, this business meets the needs of this segment well (Rundh, 2013). Loyalty to local products is also an important factor, with many consumers proud to buy products from their region that are produced traditionally. This creates a loyal consumer base that prioritizes quality and has an emotional attachment to local products (Renaldi et al., 2024).

3. Business competitiveness

The competitiveness of Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business is an important aspect that determines its ability to survive and grow amidst increasingly tight market competition. To maintain and improve its competitiveness, this business implements several key strategies that include product innovation, quality excellence, production efficiency, competitive prices, and strong relationships with consumers and business partners. One of the main factors increasing Sadariyah Cassava Crackers' competitiveness is product innovation. Although based on traditional cassava crackers, this business continues to innovate in terms of flavor variants and packaging to attract a wider consumer base. This innovation keeps the product relevant in a dynamic market where consumers continue to look for variations in snack products. By offering a variety of attractive flavors and paying attention to more modern packaging, this business is able to compete with similar products in the market, both locally and regionally (Wang et al., 2023).

In addition, product quality is a significant differentiating factor. Sadariyah Cassava Crackers emphasizes the use of natural raw materials without preservatives, as well as a hygienic production process. Consistency in maintaining product quality gives consumers confidence, so they tend to choose this product over competitors. This quality advantage also helps in building consumer loyalty, where customers feel confident in the safety and authentic taste offered (Taufik et al., 2022). Production efficiency also plays an important role in maintaining competitiveness. With an efficient production process and using local resources, the business is able to keep production costs low. This allows Sadariyah Cassava Crackers to offer competitive prices without sacrificing product quality. Affordable prices are one of the main attractions for consumers in the lower middle segment, who are looking for quality snack products at prices that match their purchasing power (Awaad et al., 2024). This efficiency includes not only the production process but also distribution. A well-established distribution network allows products to reach the market faster and more effectively (Hartarini, 2023).

In addition to internal factors, good relationships with consumers, suppliers, and distributors also contribute to this business's competitiveness. Sadariyah Cassava Crackers has

strong relationships with local cassava suppliers, which ensures a stable supply of raw materials and competitive prices. This long-term relationship allows the business to secure raw materials even when the market has price fluctuations. In addition, partnerships with local distributors help expand market reach and increase product visibility in various regions (Hingley, 2010). Local community support is also one aspect that strengthens the competitiveness of this business. By involving the local community in the production process and being active in social activities, Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business gets moral support and loyalty from the community (Imanuella et al., 2025). Local consumers tend to be more supportive of products that positively impact the local economy, so this business benefits from consumers' sense of pride in local products (Purnomo, 2025). Overall, Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business's competitiveness lies in a combination of innovation, quality, efficiency, and strong social relationships. With the right strategy, this business is able to face the challenges of competition in the market and continue to grow.

This study is limited by its focus on a single MSME within a specific geographic region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or industries. Additionally, data were primarily collected through qualitative methods, which might introduce subjective bias. Further research with larger sample sizes and quantitative approaches is recommended to validate and expand upon these findings.

CONCLUSION

Sadariyah Cassava Crackers Business has successfully maintained its business sustainability by leveraging social capital, implementing an effective market segmentation strategy, and focusing on enhancing competitiveness. Strong social networks with suppliers, distributors, and the surrounding community have significantly contributed to the business's stability and continuity. These relationships are built on mutual trust and long-term cooperation, which positively impact the supply chain's efficiency and foster consumer loyalty. The market segmentation strategy, which incorporates demographic, psychographic, and behavioral aspects, has enabled the business to reach various consumer groups effectively. This approach not only improves targeting accuracy but also strengthens brand identity and emotional connection with customers. The company's competitiveness is reinforced by continuous product innovation, production process efficiency, and a strong commitment to quality. The combination of these three elements ensures that the product remains relevant across different market segments, both in rural and urban areas. This advantage demonstrates that small businesses can compete effectively when they are able to apply differentiation and cost-efficiency strategies simultaneously.

The success of this business illustrates that social capital and targeted marketing strategies play a critical role in supporting the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Trust-based relationships and collaborative networks with stakeholders help secure raw material supplies, enhance customer loyalty, and expand market reach. Meanwhile, innovation and production efficiency serve as practical examples of how local products can remain competitive in dynamic markets.

This study has several limitations. It was conducted on a single business unit within a specific regional and cultural context, so the findings may not be generalizable to all types of small enterprises. Additionally, the study employed a qualitative approach, which, while providing depth of understanding, has limitations in quantitatively measuring impact. Based on these limitations, future research should consider including more business units across various regions to yield more representative results. A quantitative or mixed-methods approach could also be used to produce more measurable and objective data. Furthermore, future studies may explore the role of digital technology, online marketing strategies, and government policy support in strengthening social capital and competitiveness among SMEs across different sectors.

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