



ENGAGEMENT SOCIAL INTERACTION AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF TRADITIONAL MARKET TRADERS IN ADDRESSING MODERN MARKET COMPETITORS

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses survival strategies and the influence of social interaction on traders at the Pasar Traditional Sukaramai, Medan. Using the qualitative method of descriptive analysis, the data collection technique in this research is interviews and observations carried out directly in the field. This research focuses on basic food traders in Pasar Sukaramai Medan and also consumers who are making transactions there. The results of this research show several survival strategies used by traders in traditional markets, including reducing prices and establishing good relationships with buyers. Social interactions also influence traders' survival strategies significantly.

Keywords: *Survival Strategy, Social Interaction, Traditional Market*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional markets, such as Pasar Sukaramai, play an important role in the local and national economy, providing basic needs for the community as well as a space for social interaction between traders and buyers. However, in recent years, traditional markets have faced various challenges that threaten their sustainability, one of which is competition from modern markets such as supermarkets or malls that offer convenience and competitive prices. On the other hand, traditional market traders often have to face

problems related to inadequate infrastructure, as well as changes in consumer behavior that prefer more practical shopping.

Today, modern markets, such as minimarkets, hypermarkets, and shopping centers (malls), have grown rapidly in recent decades. The existence of these modern markets not only affects the consumption patterns of people who tend to prefer comfort, cleanliness, and convenience in shopping, but also puts traditional markets in an increasingly squeezed position. Modern markets offer many advantages when compared to traditional markets, including cleaner and more comfortable shopping spaces, more complete products with more competitive prices, and more adequate customer service. Ease of transactions, more sophisticated payment systems, attractive promotions make consumers increasingly turn to modern markets.

This has resulted in traditional markets such as Pasar Sukaramai experiencing a decline in the number of buyers, which has a direct impact on the income of traders. Many consumers prefer to shop in modern markets for reasons of convenience, availability of goods that are more organized, and relatively more transparent prices. Meanwhile, traders in traditional markets are often hampered by limited infrastructure, hygiene issues, and inconvenience in shopping that does not match the preferences of today's consumers.

In the face of these challenges, traditional market vendors tend to develop various strategies to survive and maintain the existence of their markets. One aspect that becomes an important concern in this survival strategy is the social interaction between traders, consumers, and other parties involved in the market ecosystem. These social interactions include not only the relationship between traders and buyers, but also the relationship between fellow traders, as well as interactions with market managers and the government.

Social interaction depends on several inseparable requirements. The conditions for social interaction according to Soekanto cited in (Panggabean, 2017) are if it fulfills 2 conditions, namely social contact and social communication. Social contact refers to efforts to establish physical and spiritual relationships between individuals. Social contact can be primary, namely face-to-face meetings, or secondary, through media or intermediaries. The type of social contact can be positive such as cooperation, negative such as conflict, or even produce no social interaction at all. Meanwhile, communication refers to the effort to convey information to others. Without communication, social interaction will not occur. In the communication process, there are often various interpretations of the meaning of a person's behavior due to differences in social context. The use of simple gestures is one of the basic and important forms in the communication process (Merliya & Ikhwan, 2019). The forms of social interaction can be divided into two forms, namely associative and dissociative. Associative consists of 4 forms. The 4 forms are: Cooperation, accommodation, assimilation and acculturation. While dissociative is divided into 3 forms, namely: competition, contravention, and conflict (Muslim, 2013).

Positive social interactions in traditional markets can strengthen social networks that support traders' economic activities. For example, through information sharing, mutually supportive trade practices, and the formation of family ties between traders and buyers. Conversely, poor or hindered interactions can demotivate merchants and reduce service quality, ultimately impacting the competitiveness of traditional markets.

(Parise, Guinan, & Kafka, 2016) emphasized that the ability of sellers to explain the products they offer comprehensively and interact effectively is very important. The goal is for consumers to feel connected to the products offered without feeling forced, and to feel cognitively and emotionally compatible with their needs. This, of course, can only happen if there is good interaction between sellers and buyers. The quality of good social interaction has a very significant role in the buyer's decision to purchase an item.

Given the importance of social interaction in supporting the sustainability of traditional markets, this research aims to examine more deeply the role of social interaction in the survival strategies applied by Pasar Sukaramai traders. This research will highlight the various forms of social interactions that occur in the market, their impact on traders' survival strategies, and the factors that influence the dynamics of these interactions. The results of this study are expected to provide greater insight into how traditional markets can adapt to changing times, while strengthening social relationships that can support their sustainability in the long term.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

When conducting research using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is social science research that uses interview and observation methods. The location of this research is Pasar Sukaramai in West Medan, Medan City. The reference in conducting this research is that staple retailers and fixed retailers whose sales are taxed are generally taxed.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Data analysis is based on the opinion of Noeng Muhadjir (1998: 104) and is systematically drawn from interviews, observations, and others so that researchers can understand the case under study and present it for future insights. This is an effort to find and replace data. The process of data reduction and data presentation by paying attention to the results of the data collected, followed by drawing conclusions and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1992: 18).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Location

Pasar sukaramai is a traditional market that focuses on selling basic necessities and food ingredients for daily needs, this market is located at Jl. Arief Rahman Hakim, Sukaramai II, Kec. Medan Barat, North Sumatra. Pasar Sukaramai was established in 2014 with 475 stalls, 285 stands, 3 floors, 2630 m² land area, and 4715 m² building area.

Pasar traditional Sukaramai Medan was rebuilt by the government after the fire. The government did so with various programs to deal with common problems faced by traditional markets by conducting revitalization to increase the value of the market both physically, economically, and socially. Developers to revitalize the Pasar Traditional Sukaramai with the aim of creating a clean market and packaged in a neat, bright, airy and cool layout so that consumers are more comfortable and still choose to shop at traditional markets.

Survival Strategy of Pasar Traditional Sukaramai Traders

Nowadays, many modern markets have sprung up that compete with traditional markets such as this pasar . The condition of the place that often makes buyers feel uncomfortable, makes them switch from traditional markets to modern markets, this is because the services and convenience of places in modern markets are more attractive to buyers. With this competition, of course, traditional traders must prepare a survival strategy so that their consumers do not switch to modern markets, because this will greatly impact the opinions of traders.

Based on interviews conducted by the author with several traders in the Sukaramai tax, they said that each of them certainly has their own strategy in dealing with the modern market which is currently increasingly rampant in the city. One of the interviews conducted by the author was with Mrs. Wati as a chili and onion trader in the Pasar Sukaramai, from the interview she said "For me, a chili and onion trader, the existence of this modern market does not really affect the number of my consumers because in the modern market they do not always provide chili or onions and even if there are, the quality is almost similar to my merchandise, but the price is much more expensive. This certainly makes consumers feel reluctant to spend money on products of the same quality as traditional markets, therefore my consumers are still stable even though modern markets are increasingly rampant in the city of Medan. "

"But even so, I still have a survival strategy for my business, namely by providing a reasonable price according to the quality of my goods. For example, the chili that I sell is a little bad or broken, then I will give a slightly cheaper price because the quality of the chili is no longer fresh, besides that sometimes I also often give additional weights so that consumers feel happy and continue to come to my table. "

In addition, the author also conducted an interview with Mrs. Hikmah who is a vegetable trader at the Pasar Sukaramai, from the interview the trader said, "For me personally, the presence of this modern market does have a little influence. Some of my buyers often compare the quality of the vegetables I sell with the vegetables in the modern market. For that I made a strategy by focusing more on interaction with buyers, I always say yes of course the quality is different because in the modern market, the vegetables are grade A and sold at high prices. While the vegetables in my place are ordinary quality vegetables, so you don't need to spend a lot of money to get them. Some buyers also agree with that. "

"In addition to that interaction, I also have another strategy, namely giving additional when consumers buy my merchandise. For example, if someone buys a bunch of water spinach, I will give them two bunches for the price of one bunch. This can provide a special pleasure for consumers and they will continue to shop at my place."

After interviewing traders at the Pasar Sukaramai, the author also conducted interviews with buyers at the Pasar Sukaramai, one of whom was Mrs. Indah, who is a regular visitor to the Pasar Sukaramai. From the interview, the buyer said, "Personally, I don't only shop at traditional markets, sometimes I also shop at modern markets because I want to look for high-quality vegetables or fruits. But if I just want to buy chilies or fish, I always go to this market, because the quality of the chilies here is also good, and the fish are also fresh. Sometimes what makes me want to come here is because the traders here are friendly and kind, unlike modern markets which seem more rigid. But when it rains, I

don't feel like coming to this market, because the market will be muddy and smelly, making it uncomfortable to shop."

From the interviews conducted by 2 traders and 1 buyer, it can be concluded that each trader has their own survival strategy, although the presence of modern markets does not have much impact on the trader. Each trader still has a survival strategy to avoid a reduction in the number of consumers due to the presence of modern markets.

Some strategies used by traders to maintain their business are:

- 1) Giving discounts to buyers
- 2) Giving prices that match the quality of the product, so that buyers do not feel disappointed with the goods they get
- 3) Giving more to buyers at a low price
- 4) Establishing good interaction between traders and buyers, this can provide comfort to buyers considering the location of the market which often disturbs buyers, so with good interaction, buyers have added value to return to the market.

Social Interaction Affects Traders' Survival Strategies

Social interaction in the market will certainly affect a trader's survival strategy, because in the interaction process, information will certainly be obtained that can add to or reduce the trader's survival strategy. In the Pasar Sukaramai, social interaction occurs quite well between traders and buyers, as well as traders and traders.

Based on the results of observations made by the author at the Pasar Sukaramai in Medan, the author saw that the interaction between traders and buyers was going well and pleasantly. Many traders and buyers looked familiar, even the interaction between the two was not just an interaction in the market, even outside the market they still interacted well.

Like the results of interviews conducted by the author with Mrs. Wati as a trader and Mrs. Sri as a buyer. They said "the interaction between traders and buyers in the Pasar Sukaramai is indeed very good. Because on average the buyers here are regulars, so we already know each other. Sometimes new buyers also come here, we as traders continue to interact well with them because that is one of our strategies to attract consumers,"

"I am also a buyer who is happy with the interaction of traders here, because they are very friendly and can always lighten the atmosphere. Unconsciously, it is true that the good interaction made me want to keep coming to this market, because the traders are friendly and kind." Said Mrs. Sri as a regular buyer at the Pasar Sukaramai.

However, this interaction does not only occur between traders and buyers, fellow traders also have very good social interactions. This can be proven from observations made by the author directly for several days at the Pasar Sukaramai, the interaction between traders from the first day and the second day looked very intense. It is not uncommon for traders to help each other when one trader is not there, they also exchange information to maintain their business.

Like the interview conducted on the second day with Bang Anto as a cooking spice trader in Sukaramai, he said. "Here the interaction between fellow traders is indeed well established, especially for us who are on the first floor because we have known each other for a long time. Sometimes we often help look after or sell our friends' merchandise when they are not there, and that is something we naturally do here. Several times we also

exchanged our sales strategies, especially when the price of goods is expensive so we change our strategies here to benefit each other.

"For example, I am a spice trader when a buyer is looking for an item and it is not available at my place, then I will immediately ask another spice trader next to me and when he is available at his place then I will sell the item to the buyer, after which we divide the profit in two. Indeed, the profit is not much, but at least our goods are sold and do not go stale." He said. From several interviews and observations conducted by the author, it can be concluded that the social interaction that occurs in the Pasar Sukaramai certainly influences their survival strategy in a positive direction. Because with this social interaction, traders can help each other and exchange information to maintain their business. Sometimes from this interaction, new strategies are added for other traders to continue to develop their business, because the information obtained from person to person provides updates to the mindset of traders so that it provides positive results to develop their business.

Discussion

Traditional Market Traders' Survival Strategy

Based on the results of observations regarding survival strategies in traditional markets, it shows several strategies carried out by traditional traders to face competition, including providing good service to consumers, providing discounts, maintaining product quality, maintaining good relationships with consumers, and increasing operating hours. (Sitepu, 2024)

Basically, every trader certainly has their own problems to face, but they solve them by creating new strategies that are relatively easy to do and not detrimental, such as taking advantage of prices, maintaining cleanliness around the business to attract consumers, and maintaining good relationships with consumers. (Sihombing, 2018)

With good interactions in the market, it can provide benefits and attract consumers to continue making transactions in the market. The social interactions that occur are not just transactions between traders and traders, or traders and buyers, but these interactions play an important role in forming broader social relationships. (Risma Anindia, 2024)

From several findings, it shows that there is a correlation and similarity in each survival strategy carried out by traders, the strategy is not much different between one trader and another, but in its implementation it certainly gives different results. Through the strategies implemented, it can certainly support the development of traders' businesses periodically and continuously.

Social Interaction Affects Traders' Survival Strategies

Based on the researcher's view after conducting direct observations in the field, each trader certainly has their own survival strategy to continue to support the sustainability of their business. However, it is undeniable that the strategies carried out by traders in the market are more or less similar, as seen in the strategy of implementing prices, social interactions, and the comfort provided to consumers.

However, apart from the similarities, these strategies certainly have different impacts on each trader. Some have a good impact on the sustainability of their business, some do not get a significant impact, or even some have a bad impact on their business. Therefore,

good social interaction is needed in the market, because with the interaction can support business sustainability.

Through good interaction provides its own gaps in the business world to continue to develop their business with new strategies obtained from previous social interactions.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews and observations that have been made, it can be concluded that the strategies carried out by traders in the Pasar Sukaramai include Providing discounts to attract consumers, Providing good service to consumers, Establish good social interactions with fellow traders and buyers, and Helping each other between traders in order to create a good market, thus providing comfort for consumers.

Social interactions in the market have a positive impact on traders and buyers, for traders themselves social interactions can provide information that more or less benefits the traders, and in the view of buyers with well-established social interactions provide more value to them and attract consumers to continue making transactions in the market.

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