



Analysis of Agropreneurship Potential in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kupang City

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Abstract

This study examines agropreneurship in Kupang City and adjacent areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. The author uses qualitative descriptive methodologies to observe, interview, and document ten local agropreneurs. Newspaper, social media, and YouTube data supplemented the investigation. The results demonstrate that agropreneurs have product quality, reliable output, experience and love of farming, natural resource potential, and commercial and agricultural infrastructure. Agropreneurs benefit from rising demand for fresh veggies, close marketing networks, and reliable business even in times of crisis. However, this sector faces several weaknesses and threats, including inadequate farming equipment, limited capital, a lack of guidance for agropreneurs, limited land, and limited market information, as well as a lack of supporting institutions, high costs, competition, and PSBB-induced market decline. This research helps agropreneurs during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic understand entrepreneurship in Kupang City and the surrounding area. Results may vary by location and circumstance.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; agropreneur; prospect; challenge

INTRODUCTION

This virus paralyzes various sectors that support people's lives, from social, economic to agricultural sectors. COVID-19 also gave a hard shock to Indonesia's national food supply. With reduced domestic supply and imports, food shortages and food price inflation are possible will occur.

Food scarcity and food inflation will add to the suffering of people who are classified as less prosperous. In addition, farmers also find it difficult to sell their agricultural products due to the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). This condition causes the agricultural sector to be in the spotlight because it has a close

relationship with national food security. Of course, during a difficult pandemic like today, food security is something that must be sought to avoid the food crisis that seems to be haunting Indonesia (Diwangkara, 2020). The agricultural sector must be strong in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, because it is directly related to the basic needs of mankind (Hartati & Susanto, 2020). The spread of COVID-19 is very dangerous and has a wide impact on various sectors (Ningsih, 2020). Farmers as the main pillar in the fulfillment of community food also feel the impact. Such as having to meet a fairly high demand, ensuring product quality, distribution channels, and many other things that require strategic adjustments so that the fulfillment of people's food needs and food security during the pandemic in Indonesia is guaranteed (Diwangkara, 2020). To maintain the distribution of food and the welfare of farmers, business actors move industrialization in the agricultural sector.

Agroindustry itself is an activity that utilizes agricultural products as raw materials, designs, and provides equipment and services for these activities. Mardiyanto (2020) stated that Agroindustry is an industry that utilizes agricultural or plantation raw materials to be processed into

products with higher added value through processing. So, it can be said that agro-industry is an industry that manages partian products to become consumer goods or become raw materials for other industries. The development of this agro-industry business not only increases the added value of agricultural products, but is also expected to create food self-sufficiency and spread development widely to every household so that it can overcome the turmoil caused by COVID-19. Besides not having to leave the house by cooking your own food, food safety is guaranteed and shopping for food needs can be controlled efficiently. This causes an increase in demand for food raw materials such as vegetables. This phenomenon is used as an opportunity for several entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, where the process of marketing and selling fresh vegetables is done online and provides their own delivery service. In addition to helping farmers and consumers, the activities of the agro-industry sector can be a sector that can benefit the workforce or give birth to new entrepreneurs in Indonesia. This shows that there is a good opportunity for agro-industry to develop during the pandemic. Agropreneur is a new term to define

entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

Based on this idea, this research aims to (1) Identify and explain the factors influencing Agropreneur interest; (2) Explore the Prospects and Challenges of Agropreneurs in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) Create an Agropreneur model in the context of the local community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial Management

Business financial management is an important aspect of entrepreneurship, particularly in the agro-industry. It involves the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of financial resources in a business venture. Financial management plays a critical role in the success of agropreneurship by providing the necessary resources to enable the business to grow and expand. The following literature review summarizes the key themes and findings of recent studies on business financial management in agropreneurship.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of financial management in agropreneurship. For instance, according to Agus and Firdaus (2020), effective financial management

practices can significantly improve the performance and profitability of agro-based enterprises. Similarly, Ilyas et al. (2021) found that agropreneurs who are knowledgeable in financial management tend to make better investment decisions and have higher levels of business success.

One of the key challenges facing agropreneurs is the lack of access to financing. Studies have shown that agropreneurs face significant difficulties in securing funding for their ventures, particularly in developing countries (Gockowski & Mbaz'o, 2017; Kareem et al., 2021). To overcome this challenge, agropreneurs need to adopt effective financial management practices, such as developing robust business plans, financial forecasting, and risk management strategies (Nugroho et al., 2020).

Another important aspect of financial management in agropreneurship is the need to manage cash flow effectively. According to Alqahtani et al. (2021), effective cash flow management is critical to the survival of agro-based enterprises, particularly during periods of financial stress. Effective cash flow management involves developing strategies for managing accounts receivables, accounts payables, and inventory, as well as

monitoring and forecasting cash flows (Kostova et al., 2019).

In conclusion, effective financial management is essential for the success of agropreneurship. Agropreneurs need to adopt best practices in financial management to secure financing, manage cash flow, and make sound investment decisions. The findings of recent studies suggest that agropreneurs who are knowledgeable in financial management tend to be more successful in their ventures. Therefore, it is essential to develop financial management skills and knowledge among agropreneurs to promote the growth and sustainability of agro-based enterprises.

Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is a person who has the ability to see and assess business opportunities by gathering the required resources and managing these resources efficiently and effectively to take advantage and take appropriate action to ensure the success of his business (Geoffrey, 1996). Borrowing the term Joseph A. Schumpeter (1951), an entrepreneur (entrepreneur) is a person who is willing and able to develop new ideas or inventions into successful innovations, while creating new products and business models that

contribute to the long-term growth of industrial and economic dynamism. Entrepreneurship can be interpreted as an activity by utilizing the resources of a person or organization with the aim of providing added value to these resources for sustainable economic value growth. Entrepreneurship refers to efforts to find, create, apply ways of working, apply technology and use new products. Entrepreneurship is an ability in terms of creating business activities and the ability to create it requires continuous creativity and innovation to find something different from what existed before, where creativity and innovation are ultimately able to contribute to society at large. Every thought, step, and action is a business; even an entrepreneur's dream is an idea to be creative in finding and creating new businesses.

Experts say that entrepreneurship is a factor that influences economic growth. Economic growth is defined as a method of creating wealth by involving human, financial, capital, physical, and natural resources to produce marketable goods or services (Al-Mubarak and Busler, 2013). Entrepreneurship is one of the aspects driving economic growth, productivity, innovation, and

employment. Other factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions are personal traits (Matthews, et al. 2009). These factors are property rights, ability or competence, and incentives, while the external factor is the environment. Interest in entrepreneurship is the desire to carry out activities related to running entrepreneurship based on love.

Agriculture Sector

The agricultural sector has a strategic role which includes (Saptana and Daryanto, 2013): (a) the formation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); (b) providing employment and business opportunities through production and distribution activities; (c) sources of foreign exchange, either through export activities or import substitution; (d) suppliers of foodstuffs to other economic sectors; (e) suppliers of raw materials for the agricultural product processing industry; (f) providing surplus to other economic sectors; and (g) producer of marketable surplus which can increase the demand of the rural population for the production of other economic sectors. Until now, the agricultural sector still has a strategic role as a supplier of food raw materials (food), feed (feed), and energy (bio-fuel) to meet the needs of food, feed and energy. The

development of agricultural commodities requires a different approach in today's era of disruptive innovation. The role of agricultural entrepreneurs, especially young farmers, is needed to accelerate technology adoption, increase production capacity, product downstreaming, and market penetration. The development of agricultural commodities has strategic value, but there are still many obstacles and challenges ahead that must be faced. The main problem of agricultural development in the era of disruptive innovation from the production aspect is the lack of variety, quantity, quality, and continuity of supply in accordance with the dynamics of market demand, market segments and consumer preferences. These problems are evident in agricultural commodities for the purpose of institutional consumer markets (hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and companies), modern markets and export markets. This paper is intended to discuss the role of agricultural entrepreneurship in facing the era of disruptive innovation in agriculture and food.

Entrepreneurship and Agriculture

Farmers who have an entrepreneurial character will use

their expertise to manage capital and land well, and are able to adapt to changes in nature and the surrounding environment (Mukti, Kusumo, Deliana, 2020). Entrepreneurship cannot be separated from agriculture, farmers and their farming activities. Farmers who have strong entrepreneurial characteristics will have good business performance as well. This will have an impact on the success of the farmer's farming. Business success according to Chittithaworn, et al (2011) can be measured from business survival, profit, sales growth, number of workers, feelings of happiness, other variables related to farming success. Success or success depends on our own efforts or efforts in the process leading to that success. Self-character is an important factor that can support the individual to achieve success in a business activity or business.

Agropreneur

An entrepreneur is an individual who, rather than working as an employee, is found and runs a small business, assuming all the risks and benefits of that venture. According to Timmons and Spinelli (2003), entrepreneurs are innovators or developers, who recognize and seize opportunities, convert these

opportunities into implementable or marketable ideas, add value through time, effort, money or skills, assume competitive market risks to implement ideas and realize the benefits of this effort. From a terminology point of view, agrotechnopreneurship is defined as the ability to manage a business in the agro-industrial sector through the use of technology and promoting innovation. Agropreneur is a new term to define entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. Brathwaite (2009) defines Agropreneurship as various efforts made by parties, especially entrepreneurs, in taking advantage of the opportunities of the agribusiness industry. Regarding the management aspect, there are two important elements that are the driving force of agrotechnopreneurship, namely creative management and innovative management.

METHOD

Based on the research objectives, this type of research falls into the category of field research because it is carried out systematically by collecting data in the field. The approach used in this research is qualitative descriptive. The author applies a factual and accurate case study model regarding phenomena in the community with

results in the form of words. The subjects in this research are individuals or groups who engage in agricultural entrepreneurship (Agropreneur) in Kupang City and other districts. This research uses secondary data obtained from newspapers, either online or print, as well as data explored on social media and YouTube that discuss the successes of Agropreneurs. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Additionally, this research also uses data obtained from observing individuals or groups who have been successful in the context of Agropreneurship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Field Finding Facts

In this study, there were several sources that came from their respective businesses. There are 10 businesses engaged in the field of Agropreneurs and all of them come from the Province of East Nusa Tenggara, Kupang City to be exact. The following is a brief description of each of these businesses.

1) Sayur Nusa

The Sayur Nusa business unit is a social entrepreneurship business unit that was founded in November 2019 by Mr. Dany Wetangterah and

his wife. The Sayur Nusa business unit is located in the residence of Mr. Dany himself, precisely behind the Keungan Building, Kupang City. Sayur Nusa itself is engaged in the sale of various types of vegetables such as mustard greens, sweet, spinach, broccoli, kale, and others. Not only vegetables, Sayur Nusa also provides a variety of spices and fruits. All products sold are the results of Mr. Dany's own garden and are marketed both by delivery and also in collaboration with supermarkets. Until now, Sayur Nusa is still managed by Mr. Dany and his wife assisted by an employee. Sayur Nusa is planned to become a cooperative in the future.

2) Horticultural Agriculture and Freshwater Fish Cultivation

The Horticultural Agriculture and Freshwater Fish Cultivation business unit is a business unit founded by Pastor Jefri Wattileo et al (along with several GMTI pastors). The year the Horticultural agriculture was founded is 2017 while for freshwater fish in Fatububut, South Central Timor since 2013. The location of his freshwater fishery and agriculture business is in his ministry's church in Fatububut, South Central Timor. For the Kupang city area, there is also a branch of his fostered farming

business, precisely in Oepoi, Kupang city and the garden is a model garden for training for farmers. The products produced include various kinds of vegetables and fruits that are produced from agricultural gardens which are located in oepoi such as chilies, tomatoes, eggplant, bitter melon, cucumbers, melons and tubers such as onions. For fisheries, such as tombro carp and tilapia located in Fatububut, South Central Timor. Meanwhile, the Kupang City area is trying to cultivate catfish but is studying the maintenance and marketing system.

3) Sesawi Farmer Group

This farmer group has been established since 1983. Mr. Darius Kalaki who died in the 1990s founded this farmer group. After Mr. Darius' death, the leadership of the farmer group was handed over to Mr. Yulius Baun. This farmer group produces a variety of vegetables including spinach, broccoli, kale and cauliflower. The location of this farmer group's vegetable business is located in RT 004/RW 001, Kayu Putih Village, Oebobo District, Kupang City. The products of this farmer group are still sold traditionally and brought to markets such as the Kasih Naikoten Market and the Oeba Market.

4) Sinar Pagi Farmer Group

Sinar Pagi Group is a vegetable farmer group that was founded in 1981. Unfortunately, this farmer group is no longer active because its members already have their own similar businesses. One of the members of this farmer group is Mr. Yulius Ennge Bulu who is currently still engaged in the vegetable plantation business. The business run by Mr. Yulius is located in the Village of Tuak Daun Merah (TDM), Oebobo District, Kupang City. The products offered by Mr. Yulius are various types of agricultural products such as mustard greens, kale, corn and rice. These agricultural products will be sold traditionally to traditional markets such as Naikoten and Oesapa markets.

5) Anugerah Farmer Group

This farmer group was founded in 2001. The farmers who are currently members of this farmer group founded the farmer group jointly. One of the members of this farmer group is Mr. Zadrak Benu. Mr. Zadrak himself owns a vegetable garden located in Bakunase Village RT 11/RW 004, Kupang City. Mr. Zadrak's garden produce is sweet vegetables, chicory, tomatoes, long beans and kale. The garden produce

is usually sold traditionally to Naikoten Market.

6) Wholesale Vegetable Seller Mrs. Nurince Puyk

Mrs. Nurince Puyk is a wholesale vegetable seller who runs her business in Oebufu Village RT 030/RW 007. Mrs. Nurince sells various types of vegetables such as spinach, white vegetables, and kale. The vegetables are usually sold to residents around their own village by going from house to house.

7) Wholesale Vegetable Farmer Mrs. Rebeca Omenafi

Mrs. Rebeca Omenafi is a farmer and vegetable seller located in Naikolan Village RT 016/ RW 006. Mrs. Rebeca runs this business by “borrowing” land belonging to other people because Mrs. Rebeca does not own her own land. The business run by Mrs. Rebeca has been running since 2014. The produce from her garden is a variety of vegetables such as kale, white vegetables, eggplant, Bangkok and spinach. The vegetables are sold directly in the garden or sold to Naikoten Market. To promote the vegetables, word of mouth was promoted through acquaintances, neighbors and relatives.

8) CV.Eden Jaya Noelsinas

This business unit was established in 2013 but only started operating in 2015. Mrs. Mince Irawati Kana founded CV Eden Jaya Noelsinas with her husband and sister. The location of this business is in Tunfeu Village, RT 012/ RW 026, Nekamese District. The business that is run produces recreational services such as swimming pools for adults and children, halls for gatherings such as social gatherings or gatherings, worship, holidays or picnics and also available home stays and canteens for tourists who want to order food or drinks and deer breeding. To introduce this recreation area, promotions are carried out through social media Facebook to word-of-mouth promotion through acquaintances or relatives.

9) Kyrie Manulai II Garden Agrotourism

Pastor Markus Yonatan Leunupun established Kyrie Manulai 2 Garden Agrotourism on July 1, 2020. The location of the Kyrie Garden Agrotourism is located at Jl. Teratai RT 19/RW 17, Old Village, Manulai 2 Village, Alak District, Kupang City. For the time being, this business unit only produces various kinds of flowers, various vegetables such as chilies, tomatoes, and long

beans and is currently planning to develop a flower garden again to beautify the garden. Until now, Kyrie Manulai 2 Agrotourism is still being handled by Pastor Markus with his wife and daughter.

10) Januari Hydroponics

Januari Hydroponics was established in and has only been running for two months. Januarto Imanuel Tefa who is still a student at the Kupang State Polytechnic College founded this business unit. The location of this hydroponic vegetable business is in the yard of Brother Januarto Imanuel Tefa's own house, which is precisely on TPU Liliba Street, Kupang City. The land used does not require a large area of land but is sufficient to carry out these business activities. The land used is in front of the house as a hydroponic garden with a plastic roof (to keep pests from entering) or an elongated paralon pipe connection (to be used as a medium for growing vegetables). The products produced are curly lettuce and pakcoy. The vegetables are marketed by being offered to neighbors and restaurants in Kupang City. In addition, promotions are carried out through social media such as Facebook and Instagram as well as word of mouth promotion.

SWOT Analysis

In this study, the researcher made a SWOT analysis with the aim of describing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that exist in the agropreneur field. The following are the results of the analysis processed from the data obtained from the sources.

1) Internal Factors

a) Strength

- Product quality

The products produced by agropreneurs are garden/farming products that are processed on their own land so that there is a guarantee that the products sold are garden/farm products whose quality is maintained. In addition, other results from agropreneurs are livestock such as several types of freshwater fish which are also maintained in quality.

- Stable Production

One of the strengths of the agropreneur business is the production that tends to be stable. In general, stable production is also accompanied by a stable level of sales. The new production level fluctuates at certain times while in ordinary times it is relatively constant.

- Experience and love of farming

Agropreneurs are basically people who have an agricultural

background or have an interest in the world of agriculture. As people who are familiar with the world of agriculture, agropreneurs have their own experience in farming. This experience is the knowledge base for agropreneurs to develop their business.

- Potential Natural Resources owned

In carrying out agricultural activities, natural resources are important. The basic elements of a business that come from nature such as water and adequate land. In addition, fertile soil also greatly affects the rate of activity of agropreneurs.

- Availability of business and agricultural facilities

The main means for agropreneurs is land for farming, raising livestock or other activities. The amount of vacant land that is still quite a lot and the existence of community land that has the potential to be developed is a driving force for the activities of agropreneurs to run their business.

b) Weakness

- Farming equipment is not sufficient

The agropreneurs still have difficulty in terms of equipment despite having sufficient land. The

ability of the agropreneurs is still not enough to buy agricultural equipment which is relatively quite expensive.

- Limited capital

Limited capital is also a weakness for agropreneurs. This is what makes agropreneurs unable to buy agricultural support equipment as described previously.

- Lack of coaching for agropreneurs

Based on the testimony of the informants, it is known that there is no institution that can fully support agropreneurs, both from the government and from other parties. Only a few agropreneurs have cooperation with other parties to achieve it.

- Limited land

Although the land owned is sufficient for some entrepreneurs, some agropreneurs have land limitations. So some of them think of other ideas to still be able to plant on a land that is not too large.

- Limited market information

Sales of agricultural products are still limited to the nearest business place or market. The agropreneurs themselves do not know much about market information, both in terms of segmentation and ongoing trends.

2) External Factors

a) Opportunity

- Increasing demand for fresh vegetables

During the pandemic, people are encouraged to consume healthy foods to maintain their immune system to avoid the Covid-19 virus. This encourages the demand for fresh vegetables, fruit and other foodstuffs to increase.

- Nearby Marketing Channels

Based on interviews with the informants, it can be seen that the crops they harvest are sold in nearby markets or sold to residents around the place of business. This shows that there are marketing channels close to the place of business.

- Availability of sufficient access

The intended access is transportation access and market access. Transportation access is needed in the context of product distribution activities to the community. Meanwhile, market access is needed as a place for buying and selling transactions between sellers and buyers.

- Availability of vacant land

The informants explained that their business started by utilizing the vacant land around their house. This shows that the availability of vacant

land is still sufficient to become agricultural land.

- There is a market opportunity

Agricultural products are basically staple foods that are always needed by the community so that the demand for agricultural products will always exist. Coupled with the increased demand during the pandemic, this is evidence of the promising agropreneur market opportunity.

- Business is relatively stable even in times of crisis

The agricultural sector is known to be the most stable sector during critical times, including during the pandemic. This makes the agropreneur sector a promising business field because it is resilient in dealing with times of crisis and continues to run when other sectors are hampered or even stopped.

b) Threat

- Lack of supporting institutions for agropreneurs

Based on the presentations from the speakers, it is known that many of them run the business independently. There are no specific institutions, both from the government and the private sector, that collaborate with agropreneurs. This causes the existing agropreneur

businesses to tend to be slow in development and not varied.

- High-cost requirement

To take care of the garden and the plants in it, adequate equipment is needed. Unfortunately, to have this equipment, it costs a lot so that many agropreneurs do not have adequate tools. In addition to this, the need for fertilizer, seeds, animal feed and maintenance costs are also needs that require quite high costs for farmers.

- There is competition

The products produced by agropreneurs are relatively the same, namely in the form of vegetables. Similar products such as vegetables are abundant in the market and form a perfectly competitive market so that any competition between businesses is unavoidable.

- Lower market activity due to PSBB

During the pandemic, the Large-Scale Social Restriction (PSBB) policy was implemented as an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. However, the PSBB had a negative impact on the economic sector. With the PSBB, market activity decreases and affects the level of sales in the market. The decline in sales leads to a decrease in income which puts agropreneurs at risk of loss.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND LIMITATION

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the agropreneur sector has the potential as a business, especially as a business during a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The strengths possessed by the agropreneur sector are Product Quality, Stable Production, Experience and love of farming, Natural Resources Potential, and Availability of business and agricultural facilities. Opportunities in the agropreneur sector are increasing demand for fresh vegetables, close marketing channels, availability of sufficient access, availability of vacant land, market opportunities and relatively stable business even in times of crisis. However, the agropreneur sector also has weaknesses and is under threat. Weaknesses are inadequate farming equipment, limited capital, lack of guidance for agropreneurs, limited land, and limited market information. While the threats that exist in the agropreneur sector are the lack of supporting institutions for agropreneurs, the need for high costs, the existence of competition and the decline in market activity due to PSBB.

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