

Motives and work ethics of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the reasons for choosing, motives and work ethics as well as the impact of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village. This study used in-depth interview techniques, observation, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that: the reasons street vendors choose to trade include, because it does not require large capital, population density and strategic location. The motives of street vendors are the necessities of life and the Islamic work ethic of street vendors is evident from the attitude and understanding of religion in themselves. There are impacts of street vendors, namely providing employment for the community, reducing poverty levels, providing convenience in preparing kitchen spices and various kinds of food for housewives who do not want the hassle As well as convenience for lower-class people to meet their needs with their merchandise offered relatively cheap. As for the negative impact, the presence of street vendors creates noise during break time

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui alasan pemilihan, motif dan etos kerja serta dampak pedagang kaki lima di Desa Kaballokang Pakkabba. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: alasan pedagang kaki lima memilih berdagang antara lain, karena tidak membutuhkan modal besar, kepadatan penduduk dan lokasi yang strategis. Motif pedagang kaki lima adalah kebutuhan hidup dan etos kerja Islami pedagang kaki lima terlihat dari sikap dan pemahaman agama dalam diri mereka. Dampak pedagang kaki lima yaitu menyediakan lapangan pekerjaan bagi masyarakat, mengurangi tingkat kemiskinan, memberikan kemudahan dalam menyiapkan bumbu dapur dan berbagai macam makanan bagi ibu rumah tangga yang tidak mau repot. Serta kemudahan bagi masyarakat kelas bawah untuk memenuhi kebutuhannya dengan barang dagangan yang ditawarkan relatif murah. Adapun dampak negatifnya, keberadaan pedagang kaki lima menimbulkan kebisingan pada waktu istirahat.

Keywords

informal economy; street vendors; work ethic; kaballokang, pakkabba

1. Introduction

Humans are social creatures inseparable from interactions with both known and unknown people. Many things can happen in this interaction process, including discussions about fulfilling daily needs, such as work. Musa Asy'ari also explains this in Fitri Nur Annisa, stating that humans are working creatures (*homo faber*) (Asy'arie, 2005). Through work, humans can maintain their existence in society. Work is fundamental to humans, and therefore, it can be carried over to every stage of human development. Work, as a statement of human existence, is truly the embodiment of the unity of the self, involving all elements that make up the individual: soul, spirit, mind, energy, and physical body. In work, human existence is visible and its quality is measurable. Work is also something absolutely necessary for everyone. Almost all of life's needs are met through work (Suyanto, 2014). Because through work, a person can realize their responsibility for their own needs and the needs of their family.

In Indonesia, employment is divided into two categories: formal and informal. The formal sector in Indonesia includes state-owned enterprises (BUMN), private businesses, and cooperatives (Akbar et al., 2025). The informal sector, on the other hand, comprises businesses or economic activities carried out by one or more individuals, often underserved and lacking full government attention or official assistance and protection. These include street vendors, itinerant vendors, and hawkers (Prabowo, 2016).

In Indonesia, the informal economy dominates various urban activities, from employment to housing. Informality has become a crucial feature of urban character and development (Ahmadin et al., 2025). The informal economy's ability to adapt and respond to its surroundings makes it a reliable sector for meeting the needs of city residents. For example, in Makassar's elite office district, workers seeking affordable lunch options rely heavily on street vendors (PKL) and small food stalls near their offices to save money (Ramadhan et al., 2024). When looking for housing, for example, boarding houses in urban villages provide affordable housing for lower-middle-class workers (Astuti & Qalyubi, 2021).

The informal sector has long been a fundamental pillar of Indonesia's economic structure (Usman, 2024). This analysis shows that its existence is inseparable from the history of national development, which has been marked by less than ideal structural transformations. This sector serves as an effective "safety valve," absorbing millions of workers who cannot be accommodated by the formal sector, especially amidst economic instability (Habibi, 2021). According to the latest data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in August 2024, the number of informal workers reached 83.83 million people, representing 57.95% of the total workforce (Karimah et al., 2025).

However, this vital role comes with a series of significant challenges and vulnerabilities. Despite providing employment opportunities, the informal sector often fails to provide decent jobs with stable incomes, social protection, and adequate legal guarantees. This analysis identifies several key driving factors, including the phenomenon of early deindustrialization that led to the formal employment crisis, as well as individual worker characteristics such as low levels of education and skills (Nabila, 2023).

Policy challenges are becoming increasingly complex, with legislation such as Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning Job Creation deemed inadequate in providing legal protection for informal workers and even creating a regulatory vacuum. Participation in social security programs, such as the Social Security Agency (BPJS), remains very low due to challenges such as understanding, costs, and suboptimal implementation (Dwiyovita et al., 2024).

Given this complexity, this report formulates multidimensional strategic recommendations (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023).

The goal is not only to empower the informal sector to be more productive but also to gradually facilitate the transition to more formal and protected employment. Recommendations include inclusive regulatory reform, increased access to affordable social security, investment in skills development and digital literacy, and strengthening the role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as the backbone of the economy (Irawan & Sukiyono, 2021).

Economic activity is the primary driver of the rural economy. This can be traced to the informal economic activities widely practiced by the residents of Kaballokang Pakkabba Village. One such activity is street vendors, which utilize roadside areas or home porches. Street vendors (PKL) are often considered a vital pillar of the local economy, including in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village. They play a crucial role in providing goods and services to the community at affordable prices. Furthermore, street vendors contribute to improving employment and livelihoods for many individuals who may not otherwise have access to formal employment. Street vendors (PKL) play a vital role in the local rural economy, serving as a source of income for many individuals, particularly those from low-income groups (Anwar, 2024). They provide affordable goods and services, increase the purchasing power of the surrounding community, and contribute to poverty alleviation.

Based on the description of the background, the questions that can be asked are what is the background to the reasons for choosing, motives and work ethic, and the impact of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village.

2. Method

Qualitative research is a scientific tradition rooted in Edmund Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, which was later developed by Max Weber in his various sociological studies. This humanist school of thought orients its perspective on the assumption that humans are the primary subjects in social and cultural events. Therefore, Weberians consistently believe that the views and doctrines within the human mind determine behavior. Qualitative research is conducted in natural settings, and the data collected is generally qualitative in nature (Rahman, 2022). As a method grounded in phenomenological philosophy, this type of research prioritizes experience (*verstehen*). Therefore, it consistently seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of human interaction in a given situation from the researcher's perspective. Similarly, informants in qualitative research methods continually develop purposefully (*purposively*) until the collected data is deemed satisfactory (Ahmadin, 2013).

This research was conducted in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village, North Galesong District, Takalar Regency. The reason the researchers chose this location as the research informant center for the related research is because this village is a village where many residents have opened informal economic businesses, such as street vendors. Data were collected through observation and interviews. The collected data were then sorted based on the research problem and analyzed to ensure data validity. The results of the analysis were then presented in a descriptive narrative as a follow-up to the research (Ikbar, 2012).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Choice To Become A Street Vendor

Street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village have many reasons for becoming street vendors. Here are some of them.

3.1.1. Doesn't require a lot of capital

Capital is the first thing a trader thinks about when starting a business. Capital is essential for anyone who wants to start

a business. Capital can be obtained from loans from friends or relatives. Becoming a street vendor doesn't require a large amount of capital. This can be seen from the informant's statement above, which explains that the main reason street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village choose to trade is because it doesn't require a large amount of capital, making it easy for them to run this type of business. They can obtain capital from anywhere. Research shows that the majority of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village initially started their businesses by borrowing capital from friends, especially migrants from Papua.

The added benefit of trading is that it can also fulfill their daily needs. Needs that might otherwise have been unmet by becoming a street vendor can be met, as evidenced by several interviews with the informants mentioned above. Becoming a street vendor is certainly a great solution for those who want to make a living through trading that doesn't require a lot of capital. This means they don't have to dig deep into their pockets, as most of them initially obtained their capital by borrowing from friends.

3.1.2. Strategic location with a dense population

Besides the limited capital required, the location of the business is also a factor for street vendors. The profit margins vary depending on the location. If the location is popular with street food vendors, profits can be substantial. However, if the location is not strategic and attracts less customers, the chances of making a profit are slim. As the interview above reveals, street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village initially began their business by assessing the potential profits, considering the area's advantages. Kaballokang Pakkabba Village is also strategically located, with schools and tutoring centers nearby. The presence of schools and tutoring centers significantly increases the number of customers for these vendors. Furthermore, the wide roads in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village attract street vendors. This will certainly provide comfort to them, despite some people's assertions that street vendors only cause traffic jams.

3.1.3. More Profitable Than Their Previous Job

Being a street vendor is an easier and more rewarding job than their previous one. Furthermore, they possess a genuine entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for making money. They continually seek ways to earn money. If they realize their previous job offers little profit, they move on and seek ways to generate even greater profits. This is undeniable given the increasing demands of life, especially for those with irregular incomes. We can see their passion for trading over their previous job, as being a street vendor is sufficient to meet their living expenses. Most of them have no other source of income than being a street vendor. This proves that being a street vendor is more enjoyable and more profitable than their previous job.

3.2. Work Procedures For Street Vendors In Kaballokang Pakkabba Village

Human needs will continue to exist as long as humans live. Humans will always fulfill their needs in various ways. This is because humans are endowed with a more dynamic mind than animals. This dynamic way of thinking also applies to fulfilling needs. And each person chooses a different reason. These reasons for acting are called motives. For example, street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village choose to become street vendors for economic reasons. The motive for fulfilling their needs through trading is evident in the strong motivation behind street vendors' drive to fulfill their needs. The strong motivation that drives street vendors' enthusiasm for fulfilling their needs can also be seen in the fact that the majority of street vendors come from outside Kaballokang Pakkabba Village.

Street vendors come from various regions and then urbanize, moving from rural to urban areas. This migration is driven by several factors, one of which is the large population in cities compared to rural areas, thus increasing their

opportunities to earn substantial income. Makassar, for example, is the center of population density from west to east and from north to south of Indonesia. This is driven by high unemployment rates, a lack of government-provided jobs, and a growing population density. This leads to a population buildup in a city, coupled with the ever-increasing cost of living, forcing people to work and support informal sector activities.

McClelland's fundamental need for work as a means of fulfilling life's necessities was expressed in his theory of need for achievement, or the need for job satisfaction (Budiman, 1998). This is evident in street vendors. They are willing to trade during unusual hours, from early morning until late morning, in order to easily meet their needs. For them, becoming a street vendor is a way to survive amidst the increasingly fierce economic pressures.

A strong work ethic is essential for any trader who wants to start a business, and this is also true for street vendors. Research shows that the work ethic of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village can be seen in their attitudes and perspectives on work. Their work ethic is reflected, among other things, in their religious perspectives on their work. They understand that their work as a street vendor is closely linked to their religion. This is evident in the quality of their views and performance of their work.

The Islamic work ethic of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village, rooted in their religious understanding, also reflects their faith in the sustenance promised by Allah to His servants. The sheer number of street vendors does not diminish their enthusiasm for trading. They recognize and believe that, despite the abundance of street vendors, everyone's sustenance is certainly different. In fact, the proliferation of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village does not lead them to resort to methods that are not permitted by their religion to attract customers.

The ingraining of religious values within a person will indeed influence their attitudes and can even become a source of motivation in their daily lives (Hossain, 2023). Their passion is not merely enthusiasm, but a spirit built on religious values. Therefore, they undertake work not only for the sake of meeting their daily needs, nor for the sake of providing for their children's schooling, but because it is something that a religious person must do to gain the approval of Allah Swt. As explained by Ahmad Janan, religious belief is a source of motivation for a strong work ethic, as something normal and natural, to help gain a psychological understanding of the motives that play a role in the process of developing human behavior and work ethic (Afdhal et al., 2024). Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that religion is an ideal foundation for empowering street vendors to work even better (Ridha et al., 2024). For example, in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village, where the majority of street vendors have indirectly proven this. Although they do not fundamentally understand the theory, their religious foundation has made them street vendors with strong motivation and work ethic.

3.3. The Impact Of Street Vendors In Kaballokang Pakkabba Village

The presence of street vendors undoubtedly has an impact, both on the vendors themselves, the local community, and the government. The impacts of street vendors are both positive and negative. Below, we outline some of the impacts of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village.

3.3.1. Competition Between Vendors

Competition in the world of commerce is a natural occurrence. This is especially true for street vendors. They face fierce competition. However, this competition indirectly motivates them to be more creative. For example, they create new menu items for their snacks to entice customers to try them. In addition to creating new menu items, they also give them distinctive names, even if their products are similar.

They maintain their business through healthy competition. Violence between street vendors is rare, if not almost unheard

of. The close relationship between some vendors and others creates a unique attraction for the vendors in the Kaballokang Pakkabba Village. This familiarity allows them to share information about the prices of each other's goods.

3.3.2. Creating Job Opportunities for the Community

The presence of street vendors certainly has an impact on the community. It's easy for newcomers looking to start a business, and the presence of street vendors also provides benefits for the surrounding community. One such benefit is the creation of employment opportunities for both local residents and newcomers. This creates jobs for the surrounding community, as street vendors who want to start a business inevitably need space to sell. Therefore, the community can benefit by providing space fees to those who rent their land for trading.

3.3.3. Reducing Poverty

In times of economic crisis and skyrocketing prices of basic necessities, people are flocking to find other ways to survive. And one way they do so is through work. Work is essentially about earning material income to support themselves and their families. Poverty is prevalent in Indonesia due to a lack of government-provided jobs, while human needs continue to rise. This has led some people to become street vendors. On the other hand, they are unable to work in the formal sector.

Living as a street vendor certainly reaps rewards for those who were previously unemployed and unable to support themselves and their families. The poverty that initially threatened their survival can now provide relief when they realize that becoming a street vendor is a smart solution to finance their modern living expenses. Even becoming a street vendor doesn't require much out of pocket, as they can start this small business with capital borrowed from friends or family.

3.3.4. Providing Convenience in Preparing Kitchen Spices

Living in this modern era seems to make people want to constantly get what they need instantly. It's not uncommon to see people today preferring online options. They even resort to delivery, also known as "order delivery," to satisfy their hunger. Food can be delivered anywhere, and the tax on delivery orders doesn't burden some upper-class people, as they essentially want instant convenience, something that's hassle-free. This is especially true for working mothers with many children. Therefore, to feed their children and husbands, they seek instant options. They can also buy food from nearby stalls. They often even rely on street food vendors.

The positive impact of street vendors isn't limited to those seeking to start a business or make a living. It turns out that street vendors are also very helpful for housewives. They make it easier to prepare kitchen spices, and housewives sometimes rely on the snacks they offer for family meals.

3.3.5. Facilitating the Needs of Lower-Class Communities

Street vendors, characterized by their relatively low and affordable prices, are targeted by lower-class communities. The proliferation of large stores, restaurants, and supermarkets has not diminished the appeal of street vendors. We know that large stores, with their allure, attract many people to their shops. Air-conditioning, comfortable shopping, and guaranteed quality of goods make some people prefer to shop at stores or supermarkets. Whether it's the appeal of supermarkets like Alfa Mart that drives some people to shop there, or simply a sense of prestige, we sometimes find that some people choose places with better facilities simply for visual satisfaction or a desire to stand out from the crowd.

However, this is not the case for the people of Kaballokang Pakkabba Village. The presence of large stores and

supermarkets, such as Alfa Mart, along several roads along the Barombong and North Galesong main roads, has not eliminated street vendors but has instead created a competitive advantage. People are becoming more discerning in weighing the prices of both. For example, traders who sell various kitchen necessities or snacks.

3.3.6. Creating Noise at Night

The presence of street vendors has not only positive impacts but also negative ones. However, these negative impacts do not cause public anxiety because they are only felt by a small portion of the community. One negative impact of the proliferation of street vendors in Kaballokang Pakkabba Village is the disruption they cause to the community during rest time. The disturbance is felt by the noisy singing accompanied by musical instruments carried by the gathered teenage boys every night. The disturbance is not caused by the street vendors who sell until the early hours of the morning. Rather, the disturbance originates from the community or buyers who like to gather in front of the vendors' stalls or stalls.

The disturbance is caused by the presence of street vendors. However, the community does not blame the vendors but rather the teenage boys who consistently disrupt the community's rest time. This is especially true on certain nights when they like to gather, calling out to each other when friends arrive, making the noise even more noticeable as the night progresses.

4. Conclusion

There are several reasons why people in Kaballokang Pakkaba Village choose to become street vendors, but the most fundamental is that it doesn't require a large amount of capital, making it easy to start a business. This motivation is also supported by the need to meet their daily needs. Furthermore, their motivation is also supported by their Islamic work ethic.

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