

The Strategies of Tofu and Fermented Soybean Cake Cooperation in Facing China-Asean Free Trade

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Abstract

This research was aimed to identify the internal and external factor for encountering free trade China-Asean and to find some strategic model alternative that can be applied by Primkopti Semarang to develop their business. The analysis methods used were descriptive analysis method and SWOT analysis. The result of this research showed that internal factors for cooperation's strength for encountering free trade including soybean distributor in form of cooperation in Semarang and experienced manager to carry out the business. The weakness one was the research and development of cooperation hasn't been optimal and the management of information system hasn't worked well. External factors for opportunity one including the soybean buyer or main customer was cooperation members having dual identity, as for the threat including no resistance for new competitor, increasing soybean import, soybean importer has strong bargain position. Compatible strategy for cooperation implementation in encountering free trade China-Asean was market penetration strategy and product development.

Keywords: free trade, cooperation of tofu and fermented soybean cake, swot

JEL Classification: F13, F14, M21

Strategi Koperasi Tahu dan Tempe Dalam Menghadapi Perdagangan Bebas China-Asean

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi faktor internal dan eksternal untuk menghadapi perdagangan bebas Cina-Asean dan menemukan beberapa model strategis alternatif yang dapat diterapkan oleh Primkopti Semarang guna mengembangkan bisnis. Metode analisis yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif dan analisis SWOT. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor internal untuk "kekuatan" koperasi dalam menghadapi perdagangan bebas adalah distributor kacang kedele dalam bentuk koperasi di Semarang dan manager yang berpengalaman dalam mengelola bisnis. "Kelemahan"-nya adalah bidang penelitian dan pengembangan koperasi tidak dilakukan secara optimal dan sistem informasi manajemen tidak bekerja dengan baik. Faktor faktor eksternal untuk "peluang" adalah pembeli kedelai atau pelanggan utama adalah anggota koperasi yang memiliki identitas ganda. Sedangkan untuk "ancaman", adalah tidak adanya penahan untuk pesaing baru yang dapat meningkatkan impor kedelai. Importir kedelai memiliki posisi tawar yang kuat. Strategi yang kompatibel untuk pelaksanaan koperasi dalam menghadapi perdagangan bebas Cina-Asean adalah strategi menembus pasar dan pengembangan produk.

Kata kunci: perdagangan bebas, koperasi tahu dan tempe, swot

Klasifikasi JEL: F13, F14, M21

1. Introduction

Free trade is now threatening many industries in Indonesia. Various international agreements,

relating to free trades, have been agreed upon by Indonesian Government without deeply considering the effects that might be elicited. Some

of these agreements are AFTA (Asean Free Trading Agreement), CEP (Indonesia-Japan FTA), CAFTA (China-Asean FTA) and Asean-Korea FTA. Meanwhile, Asean-India FTA, Asean-European Union FTA and Asean-Australia & New Zealand FTA are still in negotiating processes. Indonesia-USA and Indonesia-Switzerland, Norwegia, Ireland FTAs are still in pre-negotiating processes supported by joint study groups. The one which takes so much attention presently is CAFTA (the agreement on free trading areas between Asean Countries and China).

In relation to CAFTA, Indonesian Government had individually built an international agreement with China. The agreement had been agreed upon in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, on November, 16, 2001. The logic of such an agreement was none other than the attempts of industrialized countries to expand their market shares with the domestic the developing countries became the main victims.

Cooperative for tofu and fermented soybean cake producers in Semarang City (*Primkopti*) constitutes a community-level economic foundation for Semarang City. It has been able to provide economic added values and significant contribution for expanding job opportunities in Semarang City that it becomes an entity having an ability to increase economic welfare of the community. *Primkopti* supplied kedelai (raw materials for producing tofu and fermented soybean cake) to its members. Before being delivered to consumers, kedelai was processed in two types of treatments: (1) fermentation processes producing kecap, tauco, oncom and tempe and (2) non-fermentation processes producing kedelai milk, sere, rouge, tahu and kedelai flours. Most Indonesian love eating tofu and fermented soybean cake.

On the average, tahu and tempe producers, particularly in Semarang City, were small-scale entrepreneurs. They did not have adequate bargaining powers particularly in facing kedelai suppliers. Therefore, they really needed a cooperative that would fulfill their needs for raw materials. The cooperative was *Primkopti*, which was founded on December, 14, 1979. *Primkopti* competes with private suppliers for kedelai. With the agreement on free trading

areas between Indonesia and China, *Primkopti* should certainly take new strategic measures in order to survive and to have strong competitive power within the very heavy competition. The strategic measures should began with comprehensively identifying both internal and external environments. It is only when these comprehensive measures had been completed that *Primkopti* would be able to build adequate strategies for overcoming its own weaknesses, increasing its own strengths, seizing opportunities and dealing with various potential threats. Strong strategies for anticipating and facing the CAFTA are really necessary since *Primkopti* has not had a solid concept for developing appropriate measures that could appropriately respond the increasingly heavy competition. *Primkopti* is presently faced with both internal and external obstacles. Therefore, the problems in this research could be formulated as follow: (1) What internal factors constituted strengths and also weaknesses in *Primkopti* of Semarang City? (2) What external factors constituted opportunities and also threats for *Primkopti*? (3) What alternative strategies could be developed by *Primkopti* for developing its business?

Literature Reviews. Cooperatives are frequently characterized by a special characteristic not possessed by other business entities. This characteristic is called *dual identity* where the members of a cooperative are the owners who at the same time also customers to the cooperative. The dual function becomes the identity of the cooperative for its main objective is to increase the welfare of its members. Owners and at the same time also customers to the cooperative could very probably generate the following efficiencies: (1) Harmony between customers' preferences and the services provided by the cooperative. (2) Close relationship between a cooperative and its customers (who themselves are also the owners of the cooperative) would certainly result in relatively low transactional costs. Efficiencies are also related to togetherness within the cooperative, which is based on solidarity and cooperation. Such togetherness could also produce synergism accompanied by low costs for transactional deals.

The Law No. 25, 1992, on cooperatives states that a cooperative is founded based on

similar economic interests among the founders who are then able to do certain lawful conducts and willing to use the services provided by the cooperative and to fulfill the obligations as stated in Basic Codes of Conducts of the cooperative (Articles 19 and 20, the Law No. 25, 1992). Togetherness among cooperative members is actually related to rationally economic reasons. Members hope to get higher economic incentives and benefits that could not be obtained from individual endeavors in small scales (Wirasasmita, 2002). Through economical endeavors, the cooperative could provide its members with economic incentives. In turn, the members might then be willing to increase their participation on the forms of transactional deals with the cooperative. Such business characteristic indicates that a cooperative is based on integration between two substantial elements, namely member participation and business efficiencies.

With CAFTA had been agreed upon in 2010, the smuggling practices of Chinese consumer products to Indonesia have disappeared. The free trading agreement has shown very clearly what a great deal of quantities of smuggled consumer products had previously entered Indonesia from China. The present question is: what about Chinese agricultural products? In the context of this research, what are the effects of Chinese soybean on *Primkopti*?

During the last ten years, Indonesian demands on soybean kept increasing in quantities but domestic production for soybean could not meet them. Soybean should be imported in big quantities. Low prices of soybean, particularly from USA, caused the domestic trading activities for kedelai to be non-conductive. However, the prospects of development programs for soybean cultivation for minimizing imports are relatively good since there are large areas for soybean cultivation in Indonesia supported by suitable climates and considerable human resources.

In the present time, *Primkopti* of Semarang City faces several problems which began to arise when the trading practices for soybean changed from monopoly by *Bulog* to free markets. When soybean market was monopolized by *Bulog*, cooperatives (including *Primkopti*) got

economic advantages because they could buy soybean from *Bulog* in lower prices than the prices prevailing in open markets. In the present time, the trading practice for soybean depends heavily on imports that the price fluctuates very heavily. As a result, other problems also arise such as the lowering of members' loyalty to *Primkopti* because of economic reasons and the increasingly heavy competition among soybean distributors.

According to Chandler, strategy is a long term goal of a company and empowerment and allocation of all important resources of the company for reaching the goal (Rangkuti, 2007). Basically, a strategy is then related to policies, goals and methods in using the existing means for reaching the goals. Therefore, a strategy should be supported by necessary capabilities for anticipating every opportunities.

A study by Yusriansah M from the State University of Malang showed that due to increases in soybean prices, the revenues of local a chip industry in Malang, East Java, decreased significantly since this industry uses soybean as the main raw material. In 2007, there were 80 - 90 keripik producers but in 2010 the numbers decreased to only 65 (Disperindag, 2010). According National Cooperative for tofu and fermented soybean cake of Malang Region, however, there were several other obstacles for a chip industry in Malang. Not all a chip producers could launch promotion programs through printed media or electronic media or Internet. Long distance locations for marketing the products needed adequate transportation means, which meant higher operational costs. In addition, most of the local a chip producers lacked innovation and creativity in both producing and packaging their products.

On the average, a chip producer had 4 to 19 workers, total asset of not more than 200 million rupiah and annual revenue of not more than 1 billion rupiah. The keripik were produced in various flavors and marketed locally, regionally and also globally. Productivity was relatively high with total operational cost amounting to 500 thousands rupiah per month and revenue of 1 to 2 million rupiah

Research by Devin Setiawati on tempe producers in Sukorejo District, Kendal, Central

Java, showed that on the average, productivity was relatively stagnant. Because of the fluctuating nature of kedelai prices, the tempe producers could not increase their productivity. Working capitals and workers did not affect the products, but raw materials significantly affected them. The effect of the independent variables in the research amounted to 88.7%

Research by Oktaviana on Primkopti Bangkit Usaha Malang showed that the best strategy approach to develop cooperative institution according to SWOT matrix analysis there is develop product promotion to increase sales, improving member ability, improving store system management, applying information technology, Primkopti is on right track in implementing cooperative principle based on Undang-Undang Nomor 25 tahun 1992 such as member recruitment is voluntarily, democratic management, SHU distribution is fair according merit system, autonomous, cooperative education and partnership with other cooperative institution (Oktaviana, R.Vita, Agus S., Imam H., 2013)

Further, research by Hermawati (2012), showed that the socioeconomic factors that influence revenue are education, the supply of soybeans and soybean Primkopti, supply from outside the family, the amount of labor and income outside the business cannot be a good estimator. Simultaneously affect the socioeconomic aspects of operating revenues. Between the revenue with the participation of artisans cooperative members have close enough ties. Significantly affect the level of income artisans and craftsmen as a positive effect on participation of cooperative members

2. Research Method

This research used a quantitative approach. The researchers studied both internal and external variables which were defined as below.

- 1) Internal variables, related to measurements on managerial, development and information systems applied by *Primkopti* of Semarang City.
- 2) External variables, related to measurements on technological, political and social systems as well as on competition
- 3) Strategies, related to *Primkopti's* policies

which were based on its own weaknesses as well as on outside opportunities and threats

This research was conducted in Semarang City. The research object was *Primkopti*, which supplied soybean to tofu and fermented soybean cake producers. This research used primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by means of interviews and questionnaires. The secondary data were collected from written reports to Member Annual Meeting and from some other relevant documents.

The data were then analyzed using SWOT in the following steps:

- (1) Construct an Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix (IFE Matrix) for presenting and then evaluating *Primkopti's* internal strengths and weaknesses. This IFE matrix was developed in 4 phases: (a) presenting the relevant internal factors, (b) presenting the weights based on the effects of the factors on the business, (c) presenting the ratings and (d) multiplying the weights to the relevant rating in order to produce weighed values.
- (2) Construct External Factor Evaluation Matrix (EFE Matrix) for evaluating external opportunities and threats. This EFE matrix was developed in a similar manner as that for developing the IFE matrix.
- (3) Construct Internal-External Matrix (IE Matrix) based on the model previously applied by General Electric. This IE matrix was based on two key dimensions; weighed average totals of IFE as shown in X axis and weighed average totals of EFE as shown in Y axis in Figure 2. In the X axis of the I E matrix, weighed average totals of 1.0 to 1.99, 2.0 to 2.99 and 3.0 to 4.0 were considered as low, medium and high respectively.

3. Results and Discussion

Primkopti of Semarang City was established on May, 18, 1979. Based on the President Decree No. 19, 1988, *Bulog* (Indonesian National Logistics Body) could not any longer handle the imports on soybean. From then on, *Bulog* deals with free markets. Soybean began to be imported by importer association consisting of big corporations. USA supplied the largest quantities for these imports. The prices of soybean became very fluctuating and *Primkopti* should

face heavy competition.

Analyses on internal weaknesses of *Primkopti*

(1) Management. The organization was handled by a management team whereas the business affairs were managed by a manager who was appointed by the management and supervised by the board of directors. In order to fulfill the needs of its members for kedelai, *Primkopti* should buy from importers between 200 to 250 tons per month. There were always some members who bought soybean in open markets because the price of soybean from *Primkopti* was 150 rupiah higher than the market price. However, 100 out of the 150 rupiah price difference was actually returned back, at the end of the year, to the loyal members who kept buying kedelai only from *Primkopti*

(2) Marketing. With its special characteristic, *Primkopti* had its own strength for it had a clear market consisting of its own members

(3) Finance. In operating the business, *Primkopti* relied on active participation of its members. Every member should pay a fixed saving and then continuing (monthly) savings. As "customers to their own company", the members determined the business scale of their own cooperative and the scale of business would in turn determine the profits. Operational cost for managing a cooperative was higher than that prevailing in other establishments for a cooperative always has more complex management consisting member and business managements. The largest amount of cost in *Primkopti* was consumed by organizational costs consisting of costs for paying the salaries of the management team and the board of directors, costs for annual meetings and costs for some other operations.

(4) Operation. The allocation of soybean was based on a first in-first out procedure. The inventory of kedelai depended on members' needs, on the ability of *Primkopti* to stock in and on the ability of the management to manage

(5) Research & Development. Due to limited funds and human resources, *Primkopti* had not had research & development team that it did not have a data base on markets, prices, qualities, quantities and continuities of supplies.

Primkopti got information and technological aids only from the government and Universities or Colleges

(6) Managerial Systems. The managerial systems in *Primkopti* was still so conventional in nature, concerning only with such matters as agenda recordings, filings, communication among employees, communication between employees and the management team, information for decision making and some others.

Analyses on *Primkopti's* strengths showed the following results.

(1) The operational plans were drafted by the management and then submitted to the annual meeting where the drafts were discussed. These drafts concerned with projected revenues and expenses, working programs, general policies and other endeavors that should be attempted by the cooperative

(2) The buyers were also the members of the cooperative that the market was already very certain. In this context, services to the members became the first priority

(3) Supplies of soybean by the cooperative were more efficient, due to economics of scale, than when each member had to buy kedelai from other sellers

(4) The office and warehouse of *Primkopti* were in strategic points of locations easily accessible for its members to participate actively and to make use of the services

Analyses on external environments showed the following results:

(1) Economic condition. The fact showed that soybean imported by *Primkopti* is now increasing in their quantities because of the increases in tahu and tempe consumption, particularly in Semarang. On the one hand, such a condition constituted a good opportunity for *Primkopti* to develop its business. On the other hand, however, with the exchanging value of rupiah to USA dollar kept weakening, the prices of kedelai also kept fluctuating that *Primkopti* could not fully fulfill the needs of its members for soybean

(2) Social, cultural and environmental factors. With global trading liberalization on its way, it was quite an irony when most of Indonesian still lacked of attention or efficiency factors, of priority to work outcomes and of

discipline and had not been accustomed to competition

(3) Politics and Law. Cooperatives (including *Primkopti*) could become a pillar for Indonesian economy and for empowering micro and medium scale businesses. Related to legal aspect, *Primkopti* should also pay taxes to the government.

(4) Technology. Advanced technologies for cultivating soybean have been introduced but they were applied in inappropriate ways that the productivity and the quality of local kedelai were still so low. Low quantity, quality and continuity of supplies caused heavy dependence on imports.

The IFE matrix showed 10 internal strengths and 6 internal weaknesses of Prim-

kopti, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 showed that the three biggest strengths of *Primkopti* were distributor in the form of a cooperative (0.304), managerial function was operated by the management team (0.264) and management team had been experienced in operating the business (0.256). The lowest strength of *Primkopti* was inadequate working capital (0.092).

The three main internal weakness were sub optimum survey programs (0.186), non-existence of Research & Development program (0.172) and bad Information system for the management(0.158). In addition, *Primkopti* also had very limited human resources for managing information technology.

Table 1. IFE Matrix

No	Internal Factors	Weights	Ratings	Weighed Values
Strengths				
1	The management operated professionally	0.055	4	0.230
2	The managerial function was operated by the management team	0.066	4	0.246
3	The management team had been experienced in operating the business	0.064	4	0.256
4	As a kedelai distributor, <i>Primkopti</i> operated in the form of a cooperative	0.076	4	0.304
5	The office and warehouse were located in strategic points easily accessible by the members	0.053	4	0.212
6	Services to the members became the first priority	0.056	4	0.224
7	Inadequate working capital	0.046	2	0.092
8	The saving and lending unit developed in a speedy fashion	0.069	3	0.207
9	Adequate supporting facilities for the business were	0.042	3	0.126
10	<i>Primkopti</i> cooperated with other related institutions	0.042	3	0.126
	Total	0.569		2.031
Weaknesses				
11	Business costs were relatively high	0.070	2	0.140
12	Low participation from the members	0.068	1	0.068
13	Survey programs by <i>Primkopti</i> had not been optimum	0.062	3	0.186
14	<i>Primkopti</i> had not had Research & Development team and program	0.086	2	0.172
15	Management Information system had not worked well	0.079	2	0.158
16	Limited human resources for managing information technology	0.066	2	0.132
	Total	0.431		0.856
	Total IFE	1.00		2.887

Table 2. EFE Matrix

No	External Factors	Weights	Ratings	Weighed Values
Opportunities				
1	Economic growth went up steadily	0.066	3	0.198
2	National consumption on soybean products kept increasing in volumes	0.090	3	0.270
3	Tofu and farmented soybean cake consumption have become a habit of many individuals in Indonesia	0.058	2.8	0.162
4	Population growth	0.048	3	0.144
5	Governmental subsidies for kedelai	0.086	2.6	0.224
6	Guidance by the government for cooperatives and UMKMs	0.064	3	0.192
7	The main buyers of kedelai were members having dual identity	0.090	4	0.360
	Total	0.502		1.550
Threats				
8	Imports on soybean kept increasing in quantities	0.056	3	0.168
9	soybean prices fluctuated in an upward direction	0.058	2	2.116
10	Valuation by community on cooperative was not so satisfactory	0.046	1	0.046
11	Information and communication technologies developed so fast	0.044	2	0.088
12	Technology of information affected kedelai prices	0.054	1	0.054
13	Heavy competition among kedelai distributors	0.046	2	0.092
14	Price competition in the markets	0.085	1.2	0.102
15	Non existence of any barrier for the entrance of new competitors	0.063	3	0.189
16	soybean importers had very strong bargaining powers	0.046	3	0.138
	Total	0.498		8.993
	Total IFE	1.00		2.543

Based on Table 2, it can be shown that the best opportunities for *Primkopti* was that the main buyers of kedelai were members having dual identity (0.360), while the main weakness was the fact that there was no barrier at all for new competitors to enter the market (0.189)

Analyses on IE matrix were intended to describe what had really been done by *Primkopti* in the face of both internal and external conditions as shown in IFE and EFE matrix. The total average weighed value for internal factors was located in the X axis, while that for external factor was in the Y axis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows that the weighed average total of 2.887 for IFE of *Primkopti* was located in the range of 2.0 - 2.99 in quadrant II and the

weighed average total of 2.543 for EFE was located in the same range in quadrant IV. When the two weighed average totals are combined, it will be positioned in quadrant V, which means that *Primkopti* was in strong and stable position concentrating itself through horizontal integration. In such a strategy, the most common practice of many companies is to increase market shares through more active marketing programs. In this context, *Primkopti* should be more active in penetrating the markets and should also try to have its loyal members to keep buying soybean only from *Primkopti* itself. Developing and at the same improving the quality of its products and services would be a very good measure.

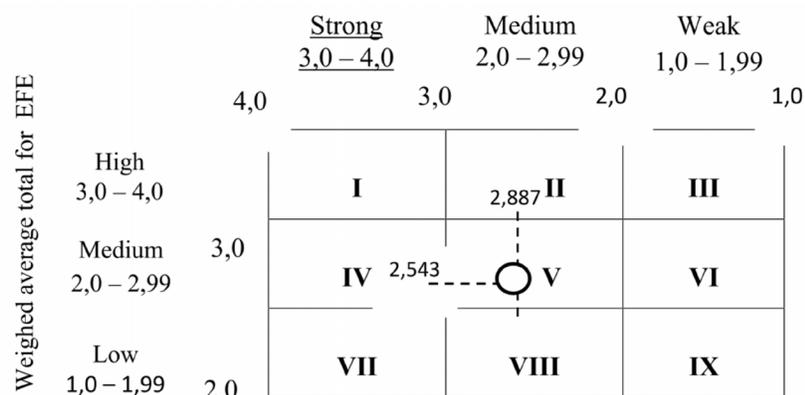


Figure 1. Internal and External Factor *Primkopti*

4. Conclusions

(1) In facing the CAFTA, *Primkopti* of Semarang City had several internal strengths; as soybean distributor in the form of a cooperative, the management team having had long experience in operating the business, prioritizing on services to its own members, professional management, strategic location easily accessible, speedy developing saving unit, the existence of facilities supporting the business, cooperation among members and strong capitalization. On the other hand, *Primkopti* also had several weaknesses such as sub optimum research & development program, inadequate information system, high operational costs, limited human resources for handling technologies of information and low participation from its members (2) *Primkopti* also had several opportunities such as the main buyers of kedelai were members having dual identity, increases in national consumption on kedelai products, governmental subsidies for kedelai, steady economic growth in Central Java, guidance by the government for cooperatives and UMKMs, the habit in consuming tahu and tempe and population growth. However, *Primkopti* also faced several threats such as non-existence of any barrier for the entrance of new competitors, increase in imports on kedelai, very strong bargaining powers by importers, kedelai prices fluctuating in an upward direction, price competition in the markets, the fact that *Primkopti* could not keep

abreast with the very fast development in information and communication technologies which affected kedelai prices and unsatisfactory valuation by community on cooperatives. (3) In facing the CAFTA, *Primkopti* of Semarang City should be more active in penetrating the markets and improve the quality of its services. *Primkopti* should also use SWOT matrix, improve the capabilities of its human resources, appropriately control the inventory of soybean and build integrative the system of management information

Recommendations. (1) *Primkopti* of Semarang City should sell the kedelai to its members in competitive prices and also should improve its performances in facing the CAFTA, (2) In order to reach the needed synergy, the stakeholders of *Primkopti* (the management, the board of directors and the members) should deeply understand the CAFTA, (3) All of the stakeholders of *Primkopti* should be consistent and have high commitment in order to survive in the face of CAFTA (4) The strategies should periodically be evaluated for their achievements and performances

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