

The Existence of Women as a Pillar of Economic Resilience of Middle-Class Community Across Civilization

Case Study: Women Traders of Traditional Markets in Tambakboyo District

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the role of women traders of traditional markets in maintaining the economic resilience of families in the Tambakboyo sub-district as part of their active participation in keeping the economic resilience stable of society and the nation. Patriarchal culture places women in a marginal social construction, not least in the cultural area of Javanese society in various spheres of life. It determines women as an inferior group with some natures of inferiority. The social dynamics and realities that have emerged in the Pandemic of COVID-19 have triggered women to move outside the domestic door and maintain their existence in playing a significant role in the economic sphere. This practice resulted in several problem formulations. Those are (1) What is the meaning of the participation of women traders in traditional markets for the survival of the community life and economic resilience in the Tambakboyo sub-district during the Pandemic? (2) What is the form of capital owned by women traders in traditional markets in maintaining their existence in Pierre Bordieu's perspective? (3) What is the perception scheme of women traders in traditional markets in the economic realm in Pierre Bordieu's perspective? Apart from the reductionist concept that distorted women's humanity to body shape, women like men have the talent to participate in nation-building in the public sphere. Community in the sense of traditional meaning by a massive trend of digitalization and the regulations of social distancing in the pandemic era does not reduce the significance of women traders of traditional market role for economic resilience. The practice in the economic field of women traders in traditional markets in Tambakboyo District shows a new scheme for the solidity of the capital building of women from the lower middle class as a pillar of the nation's economic development across the civilization.

Keywords: *woman trader, traditional Market, Tambakboyo sub-district, capital, Pierre Bordieu.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Women in the social sphere of Javanese society, which incidentally have a patriarchal culture in the context of gender, get their disposition as domestic actors. They are constructed as the second type of human after men who hold the second position in the family and are not the key decision makers. As the saying goes "Swargo nunut neroko katut" is a representation of the position of women in Javanese culture. Women are not seen as functionally or structurally equal to men and are given inferiority attributes which are indirectly formed through

individual assumptions and then become collective perceptions, internalized and become worldviews. This disposition is also related to the role of determining the family's economic policy. The husband as the breadwinner who ensures the survival and resilience of the family for all the need from the moment he wakes up until he goes back to sleep, always requires facilities, equipment, logistics, which are bought not given.

The rise of capitalism since centuries ago has influenced how the world's people are competing to achieve prosperity with the economy as a priority. Various trading businesses on a large and small scale continue to emerge in order to get maximum profit.

Production activities increase which presents a new social situation. A new period in the 19th century, capitalism rolled out the free market. This leads to a situation where the orientation of people's lives in general shifts to the motive of money. Buying and selling activities are increasing, as are production and consumption activities. On a large scale, corporations or multinational companies dominate the market and continue to compete to develop and survive. The free market educates all parties, business people to look for marketing strategies and use various approaches to explore customer tastes and interests, so that the value of demand or consumption remains stable, even expected to be higher. A consumptive society grows, which in its turn is never separated from dependence on market products, all of which require money to obtain them. The situation seems to have an indirect effect on the emergence of a new socio-cultural discourse in the Tambakboyo community regarding gender roles. Women are no longer considered taboo in the public sphere for income and more and more parents are sending their children to school regardless of gender, in hopes of finding a decent paying job one. The involvement of women in economic activities, especially the lower middle class has been in the history of Tambakboyo. Tambakboyo Market is one of the many markets whose traders are dominated by female traders, 2/3 of the total number of traders. These women traders have historically continued to regenerate, since the 1960s even when the market fire in 2000 occurred.

Some research on women in traditional market areas have been carried out but what is different is that this research focuses more on the role of women traditional traders, especially in the Tambakboyo area, to keep the economic wheels of the middle to lower society in existence and a stable cycle in the midst of the Pandemic and the currents of change. direction of digitization by using Pierre Bordiue's Theory as an analytical knife. In the end, women's expertise in adapting to all conditions in the contestation in the economic realm becomes something that should be seen as a capital to build the nation's economy.

1.1. Literature Review

Several studies have been carried out regarding women traditional traders. Before going further into the research to be carried out, one of the efforts taken by the author in order to show originality and as a starting point to consider the importance of this research is to conduct a review of relevant works.

Research on women market traders has been conducted by [1] in the Harkat Journal article, entitled *Intellectuality of Entrepreneurship of Women Traders in Traditional Markets*. The results of this study indicate that the motivation for the role of women in the economy is driven by the desire to increase family

income which is quite low; these women have quite good skills in providing capital independently, financial management, and marketing management with the indirect role of other family members [1]. A similar study was also conducted by Musahwi, Stevany Afrizal, Sastra Juanda with the title *Social Network and Empowerment of Women Traders in the Rau Traditional Market, Serang City* in the Journal of the Department of Sociology Education, FKIP Untirta. This study found several things related to survival strategies that are supported by economic morality, namely not giving up, knowledge, cultural social networks and material capital, but in reality there are no structural social networks, associations, and the like that overshadow these women traders so that they often experience dissatisfaction. - social and economic justice and there is no empowerment program specifically made for women who open businesses in the market, even though their presence is very vital in the economy [2].

The role of women in the economic sphere in the public arena does not necessarily abandon their domestic role which has been so firmly constructed in Indonesian society which incidentally has a patriarchal culture. Women market traders carry out their dual roles quite consistently as can be seen through a study entitled *The Dual Role of Women Traders in the Mertha Nadi Legian Art Market, Bali*, conducted by [3]. The results showed that changes in non-employment income did not affect changes in women's leisure time consumption and allocation of working time in the public sector. If the intensity for customary activities is high, then their time to work will be reduced. The women traders at the Mertha Nadi Legian Art Market always have reasons to keep working regardless of the amount of domestic work they have to do [3].

In relation to the quality of women in the Human Capital Theory (The Human Capital Theory) frame, successful women traders from the Tambakboyo Traditional market with a stable and even increasing turnover, despite several underlying situations, both before the pandemic, until the pandemic was over, became one example of the results of the investment process of education she has had. Human capital refers to a person's stock of knowledge and productive skills. Education is one way in which individuals increase their human capital [4]. According to [5], Conventional measurement of human capital focuses on the monetary perspective of human capital, ignoring the importance of non-monetary aspects such as creativity and motivation, social networks, and others. The current measurement of human capital needs to put more emphasis on humans are approaches such as strengthening the role of knowledge creators and human relationship creators to increase overall human productivity compared to only software/hardware approaches. The results of the measurement of human

capital need to be analyzed within the social framework of society [4].

1.2. Theoretical Framework

The reason for choosing Pierre Bourdieu in looking at women traders in traditional markets instead of using other capital theories is that Pierre Bourdieu's capital theory is not a form of determinations but considers socio-cultural conditions in interpreting reading on humans. Just as the Human Capital Theory that education is an individual or agent investment in the acquisition of capital, Bourdieu also states the same thing that education, skills, or intellect are capital that can be exchanged for economic capital.

Capital in economic terms reaches as a resource in the form of money. Meanwhile, in terms of Human Capital, it distorts social and cultural backgrounds in its measurement. The researcher sees that financial ownership alone or higher education alone is not enough to be the only capital in competition in the Tambakboyo traditional trading arena when viewed from the traders who survive in this contestation, it is not absolute that they with the same commodity are mostly women. This is one of the relevant reasons for the author to use the term capital in Pierre Bourdieu's perspective in seeing the strength of capital owned by women traders with economic capital that increases every time long before the pandemic period and remains stable during the pandemic until it skyrockets again after the pandemic subsidies.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, capital is divided into four types, namely capital, social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. Economic capital is a means for production to take place as well as financially including money, material in the form of income and valuable objects, and means of production. This is the capital that is most easily exchanged among the other three capitals. However, Bourdieu does not see economic capital as the only type of capital that can make agents survive or win in every battle in all areas, even though the exchange is relatively easy and direct [6]. Cultural capital is a representation of intellectual abilities related to aspects of intelligence, ethics, and aesthetics, in the form of knowledge that is legitimized and produced through formal or family education that play a role in determining and reproducing social position. Like cultural capital, social capital is a type of resource that cannot be exchanged interchangeably direct. Ownership of one type of capital affects the dynamics of other capital. They can be exchanged and accumulated which the accumulation becomes very important in the fields [6].

The Field or arena is a particular social space or universe, where social agents compete for sources of capital, both material and symbolic. In the field of

contestation, it involves a structural struggle in which strategy is sustained and directed by those individually or collectively, to seek or secure their positions, and to apply appropriate hierarchical principles to their products. The field is a kind of competitive market in which various types of capital are used and exploited.[6]

The market is a trading arena where various transactions and competition take place. When interaction occurs, the meaning of a communication process is sent or received then perception is built. An individual's experience in interacting with other individuals and the environment will form an internalized pattern that includes various classification principles, whether it's: good-bad, healthy-sick, right-wrong, reasonable-unreasonable, forward-looking, behind-front, beautiful-ugly, useful-not-beneficial, etc. [7]. This perception then produces value constructions in society, including recognized individual and group identities, which turns into economic and cultural capital.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This type of study is descriptive qualitative research. The focus of the research was the role of women as pillars of the nation's economy from Pierre Bourdieu's perspective. The object of research is women traders in the traditional market, Tambakboyo district. The research was conducted from September to October 2021, located in Tambakboyo District, Tuban Regency, East Java. The criteria for research informants are women traders in traditional markets in the Tambakboyo sub-district, especially women traders who can survive and become dominant in the contestation of the trade field at Tambakboyo Market who can maintain a stable turnover and even develop after the pandemic.

The technique of determining informants in the population of women traders in traditional markets in the Tambakboyo sub-district is a random sampling technique. The survey was conducted by first visiting to ask for information about the situation and social background of the people of Tambakboyo District. The information obtained includes the number of women who are involved in trading economic activities at the Tambakboyo market and can survive until the pandemic subsidies. After obtaining this information, the researcher began to observe and interview several targets, from one informant to another until the data was saturated. The main research instrument in this research is the researcher. Data was obtained through passive participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. Researchers visited markets and informants' homes to make observations, record observations, and also conduct interviews. After conducting interviews and recording the results of interviews from several sources, data reduction was carried out.

Data from observations and interviews that were still rough and unsystematic were selected so that became relevant, focused, and directed data according to the research theme, namely the form of masculine domination which was then analyzed using the generative structuralism method. Generative structuralism is a model of dialectical thinking between objective structures and subjective structures that involve agents, habitus, and capital struggles in a Field. Furthermore, the results of the analysis are presented in the form of narrative text, presented in subchapters.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The market as a trading arena is a place of contestation that produces dominant figures. Women in the cultural realm of Tambakboyo community are constructed as a gender group that has the main obligation to settle domestic affairs which are related to child care, care for all family members, home and household care. Being regarded as not the center but subordinates, it does not seem to be an obstacle for these Tambakboyo traditional market women to choose a dual role, namely in the domestic and public spheres.

There are two types of traditional markets in the Tambakboyo sub-district, namely Morning Market and Tambakboyo Market. Morning markets are located in several villages, which have sprung up more and more since the Pandemic. There are 5 markets spread over 5 villages with the closest distance of 2 kilometers from the Tambakboyo market that operates from 5 to 8 am. Meanwhile, Tambakboyo Market is classified as a sub-district market, starting the operation from 8 to 13.00. Mostly, almost 2/3 of the traders in both markets are women. The results of random interviews with several respondents about why they choose to trade is because this job allows them to spend half of their time taking care of the household.

3.1. Woman Traditional Market Traders Of Tambakboyo In the Field of Production and consumption

The middle to the lower economic community, especially in rural areas, farmworkers and farmers, both with small and medium land cannot be denied as part of the nation's society that needs to live. Likewise, activities to fulfill daily needs related to trading, consumption, and production activities with various accompanying processes remain an important part regardless of their marginality in digital era. Agricultural commodities such as vegetables which are clearly a very important intake for the defense of individual body health during the pandemic, the Tambakboyo people can still get them at traditional markets, both in the main market of Tambakboyo sub-district, as well as in the morning market in Klutuk,

Ndasin, Tanjang, Greges villages. or Pule market. 100 percent of the vegetable traders in the main market in the Tambakboyo sub-district and in the Morning market are women. They not only meet people's consumption needs but also help farmers to keep their income when the economy is so difficult during the Pandemic.

Small farmers usually plant their small lands with vegetables around Tamakboyo sub-district, sell them to middlewomen who will trade the vegetables at the Tambakboyo market. It was from this Tambakboyo market that mobile vegetable traders were emerged who would fill their vegetable carts from small middlemen or big traders in Tambakboyo market. Meanwhile, the morning market vegetable traders get their wares from Tambakboyo Market or directly from farmers. You can imagine how the vegetables will rot when the vegetable traders who incidentally are women do not maintain their existence in carrying out trading activities in the market. Small vegetable farmers or vegetable traders in markets and traditional mobile traders in rural areas do not use vegetable preservatives with technology, a maximum of a refrigerator, which if their mental quality of trade is low, then the production and consumption needs of vegetables during the pandemic in Tambakboyo sub-district are not being met.

Besides vegetable traders, they are traders of basic commodities such as rice, sugar, cooking oil, kitchen spices, eggs, in traditional markets, both the Morning Market and Tambakboyo Market, most of whom are women, persisted even though the Pandemic covid-19 and the accompanying issues hit mentality of some people not to move towards the market. Their participation is undeniable in keeping the economy afloat and fulfilling personal or community needs. While these women are still sitting in the market, some women have a new breakthrough to trade basic necessities around the world. Not only permanent traders in the Tambakboyo sub-district market. During the pandemic, community restrictions and the effects of Covid 19 triggered the Tambakboyo community's reluctance to leave their homes, including going out to the District Market. Then what makes them able to meet their food needs is the opening of morning markets in several villages around the main market where most of the traders are women who get the stock from the Tambakboyo Market.

Tambakboyo market traders who have had the least impact from this pandemic are the traditional market traders for household furniture and appliances. The two best-selling and never-ending traders during the Pandemic with these products were two women traders. They can meet the needs of consumers and their turnover is maintained in a stable manner.

When mobility is limited, fathers who work in public areas are seriously affected economically, women traders in traditional markets in the Tambakboyo sub-

district are the guarantee of survival for their families and society in general. They can still meet household basic needs adequately, help small producers to keep producing, and meet people's demand for consumption needs. This can be seen as the superior quality of women in the National Economic Pillar.

3.2. Capital and Strategies of women traders in Traditional Market of Tambakboyo

Talking about the capital of women traders in Traditional Markets of Tambakboyo, the main capital that is clearly owned by every trader is the economic capital. However, in the process with the same amount of economic capital and the same number of product items, not all traders can survive of the battle in the arena. One of the woman traders in the Tambakboyo market who has been able to survive for more than 20 years in this market said the importance of friendliness and flexibility in dealing with customers, as well as a willingness to allow customers to owe. Some attitudes that are not friendly to consumers are potential to create negative values for these traders and result in reduced demand. In addition, price is also a consideration for consumers to choose where to shop the cheapest price even though it is only 500 ruphias cheaper than the general price.

After price, the extent of the relationship affects the number of customers because if there are many colleagues, relatives, friends, or neighbors, the sounding cheap price and friendliness become a magnet for consumers. Those are some of the old strategies needed to survive and win the competition. Such is the perception that is built up in the social construction of the Tambakboyo market community about the ideal identity of a trader. That is not only required economic capital in the form of large financial capital but intelligence in financial management as a result of the appreciation of experience is also needed to anticipate risks from debt habits of customers. In addition, the shrewdness to display a good attitude towards the consumer community, the flexibility to interact with customers or to become a player in the public arena so that they can give a good impression is one of the things that can be seen as cultural capital which from the process will produce symbolic capital in the form of a good name and social capital in the form of network breadth. With habitus produced unconsciously as an internalization process for the social construction of good merchant values in the context of the Tambakboyo Traditional Market including being flexible, friendly, and able to take risks on debt without an agreement, this is supported by a number of symbolic capital in the trading arena in the social space of the Tambakboyo Traditional Market. It strengthens consumer interest towards traders with these qualifications.

According to informants who are senior traders, the survival of trading businesses in this market has been able to become their main source of income and has even been invested in sending their children to college. Some of the children of female traders in the Tambakboyo Traditional market with higher education graduates followed in the footsteps of their parents to work in the same field, in the same space, namely the Tambakboyo market. One of the informants we chose was a successful female market trader who came from this group. Experience through the process of formal and informal education is clearly a cultural capital which in other terms is also known as human capital. Even though the labor market is not a company, their existence in trading management shrewdness and marketing strategy and the accumulation of cultural, symbolic, and social capital that is owned if accumulated is clearly a big asset for the economic progress of the Tambakboyo community, especially it can create jobs for the surrounding community.

In accordance with Bordieu's concept that although habitus is permanent, as the perception scheme changes as a result of the dialectic between subjective and objective values, habitus can change. The results of interviews and field observations found that the passage of time with all its dynamics resulted in a new habitus in the trading realm of the Tambakboyo Traditional Market. Informants shifted from senior traders to junior traders who started their business in 2007 decades adrift of the senior traders' trading period. Informants were selected based on their success in developing a business, even maintaining a stable turnover during the Pandemic and growing again after the Pandemic. A new habit was discovered by researchers that the disposition of professional traders in the Tambakboyo Traditional market no longer lies in the habit of making it easier for customers to owe. Friendliness, breadth, and all forms of attitude and intellect as cultural capital are fixed variables in increasing demand. The findings of the study indicate that these female traders rely on the experience and knowledge gained during the process of their education at the university, which coincidentally takes the major in economics. The first turnover of the initial period in one month is around 1 million rupiah and continues to increase to 20 million per month. The strategies taken include utilizing management skills and good capital calculations and strategies to provide a price difference, a few thousand rupiah cheaper at the usual price, then maintaining friendliness to buyers through polite attitude and language and also making it easier for buyers by opening good online services, ordering, payment transactions and delivery services.

This traditional market woman trader, call her Bu Ika, with her culture of intellectuality is open to some change. Digitalization is the right moment to start a new

breakthrough. So, since the initial pandemic, Mrs. Ika has used social media and online transaction services to support her trading business. This, according to the informant, is one of the most effective strategies in overcoming the risk or impact of the pandemic on the decline in sales caused by regulations and the reluctance of the public to be in public areas, especially the traditional Tambakboyo market which is often crowded and crowded. Testimonials from customers as well as pictures of certain items that are sold on the display in WhatsApp status, increase customer confidence in the professionalism of traders. The convenience offered to buyers is not for some owes but in terms of ordering, payment transactions, and delivery, becoming one of the new aspect in the structure of the public perception scheme during the Pandemic about professionalism in the trading field in the traditional market of Tambakboyo sub-district. These women traders have very complete capital, not only economic capital, cultural capital, but the most important is symbolic capital which is the accumulation of economic capital and a gift from cultural capital in the form of identity as a professional trader.

4. CONCLUSION

The active role of women traders in the Tambakboyo traditional market cannot be denied because they are the ones who actually support the community's economy even during the pandemic emergency. Referring to the term Human Capital, actually, these women traders have invested huge economic capital for the future, including sending their children to higher education levels. In addition, a strong enough cultural capital in the form of expertise formed in the educational process in the family as well as during the formal education process to be so flexible to play in public spaces, good communication and attitude towards customers as well as open-mindedness in utilizing digital media has a very large value to be exchanged with other people. symbolic capital in the form of the identity of women's traditional traders today. This greatly affects the increase in the number of customers, which means getting a significant exchange rate for capital.

Thus, the highest value for women traders in traditional markets in Tambakboyo is cultural capital that can form a collective perception scheme and influence how the identity of traders is recognized and widely known so that it affects consumer interest. Thus, traditional markets will not only become history in the nation's economic history in the future because there are still many female traders with a considerable cultural capital in the form of a good attitude, tenacity, and expertise, whether legitimized or not by the government that has the potential to adapt to changing times. If humans are interpreted as capital with education as its legitimacy, then digitalization becomes infrastructure for the effectiveness of achieving cultural and symbolic

capital which can ultimately increase ownership of economic capital. The traditional trading system supported by digital sophistication will be able to improve the economy not only for the market interests of the upper-middle class but also the lower-middle economy with women as the pillars.

This research study can be a consideration for the government to build the blended online shop that combine between traditional and online method in selling. To be attention for the government that traditional market is still the most important one for the middle-class community with the woman traders as the potential asset to be the pillars of the economic resilience of the nation in the context of traditional or digital community.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The title "AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS" should be in all caps.

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