

Bottle Neck Point Rattan Industry Cluster Development in Palu City

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Abstract

Rattan industry has been designated as a core competency of regional industry (KIID) Palu City, which will be encouraged to become a commodity and product as a regional superior because of the availability of abundant rattan resources. Although Central Sulawesi Province is the largest supplier of rattan in Indonesia, rattan industry clusters actually grow and develop in various places outside Central Sulawesi. The purpose of this research is specifically to identify bottleneck points for the development of the Palu City rattan industry, because the development efforts of the Palu City rattan industry have not been optimal until now. The bottleneck point reflects the main problem that must be immediately resolved. The research paradigm is qualitative, with phenomenological analysis tools. For this reason, the researcher is the main instrument in this study. The number of key informants consisted of 9 key informants consisting of 4 business people, namely 2 rattan furniture and 2 rattan accessories, 3 government elements and 2 academics involved in rattan research. The results of this study indicate that the bottleneck point occurs in the sociohistorical aspects of product, industrialization, and sustainability in the development of the rattan industrial cluster in Palu City.

Keywords

Rattan; clusters; socio-history; industrialization; sustainability.



I. Introduction

One of the abundant local resources in Central Sulawesi is rattan. Rattan is one of the local resources in Central Sulawesi and a contributor to downstream industries spread across Java. (Asngadi & Mas'adah, 2018)

As a commodity that has a high economic value, Palu City has determined rattan as a superior product through the determination of Regional Core Industry Competencies (KIID). As KIID, rattan will be encouraged to become a product that has great added value and generates local economy.

Efforts to strengthen rattan to become a highly competitive product require strong collaboration between Academics, Business, and Government (ABG) in various roles. For this reason, the role of stakeholders will determine the success of rattan development. The specific roles in various forms are part of the technical response in industrial development (Irawati, 2006; Supeni, 2019; Yokakul & Zawdie, 2009). Development is a systematic and continuous effort made to realize something that is aspired. Development is a change towards improvement. Changes towards improvement require the mobilization of all human resources and reason to realize what is aspired. In addition, development is also very dependent on the availability of natural resource wealth. The availability of natural resources is one of the keys to economic growth in an area. (Shah, M. et al. 2020)

On the other hand, the rattan industry IKM as an object of development requires various touches to be able to be competitive in the long term. For this reason, efforts to develop SMEs in the rattan industry must be able to build their capabilities to be competitive in the long term. (Chang & Webster, 2019; Mate et al., 1995)

For this reason, the cluster approach is very important, so that its development is holistic and integrated. (Mahyarni, 2012; Singh et al., 2008). The development of SME clusters on a cluster basis has been widely carried out and has shown various successes. However, not a few have experienced failure. Success is seen in the rattan industry in Cirebon Regency, (Panggabean, 2010); Asngadi & Mas'adah, 2018), the IKM Mubel Jepara cluster (Eskak, 2016).

The success of the Cirebon rattan industrial cluster, for example, is determined by 3 main pillars, namely the existence of commodities that have a high historical value, the industrialization process and the development of sustainability (Asngadi & Mas'adah, 2018). goals of the bearer in the long term (Basukianto et al., 2017).

The competitiveness of SMEs must be built through strengthening their tangible and intangible assets. There are at least 3 basic strengths that are the key to the development of SMEs, namely Human capital, Organizational capital and Relational Capital (Husnah, 2013). The strengthening of these pillars will be able to create the competitiveness of the rattan industry, which in turn will increase the industrialization of rattan as an icon of Palu City which is manifested in the form of regional industrial core competencies (KID). The creation of IKM competitiveness by strengthening Human capital, organization capital and relational capital and strengthening its supporting stakeholders will be a key synergy in industrial development in Palu City. (Mahyarni, 2012; Singh et al., 2008)

In the theoretical realm, the actors as in the triple helix consist of academic, business, and government. All three have a big role in growing the industry on a wider scale. Historically, the interaction between academic-business, known as the double helix, was able to turn the industry on. In the next development of thought, the presence of government is very important in strengthening academic-business in business development. Based on this thought, the triple helix that involves elements of government synergies academic and business is believed to further strengthen the growth of a competitive industry. This is reinforced by research findings in China that the Chinese government's role is very important in stimulating business growth, not only as a regulator but also as part of managing upstream and downstream industries. The provision of technology and other business infrastructure is an effective catalyst for the growth of small and medium scale industries (Hongqiang et al. 2012). The above reality illustrates the importance of developing the rattan industry in Palu City with a more holistic approach, and this research is meaningful as a trigger for wider industrial development efforts. (Asngadi & Mas'adah, 2018)

The abundant rattan resources in Palu City should be a source of strength to grow a strong cluster. However, in fact, the Palu City rattan industry has not shown encouraging developments. In 2013, Central Sulawesi Province only had 37 rattan processing business units including polish, core, nitrite and furniture (Palu City, 2015) while Central Sulawesi Province was the producer of 60 percent of rattan raw materials in Indonesia (Sulteng Post, 8 December 2014) . After the 2018 earthquake and tsunami, the number of rattan SMIs actually decreased to 16, which shows that the obstacles to developing rattan clusters are getting bigger. Efforts to support the growth of clusters are also quite adequate with the existence of the National Rattan Innovation Center (PIRNAS), as an institution that provides support for the development of rattan SMEs in Palu City (Sulteng Post, 8 December 2014).

Various facts revealed indicate that there are interesting problems to be investigated so that they can find the meaning of problems in the development of rattan industrial clusters in Palu City.

II. Research Method

This research uses a non-mainstream approach by involving 9 key informants consisting of 4 rattan entrepreneurs, 3 government elements and 2 academics. There are several stages in qualitative data analysis, namely: data description, data horizontalization, textural description, description Structural, Meaning construction, Composite Description. The data processing is done using NVivo 12 Plus.

III. Result and Discussion

Qualitative data analysis begins with the manufacture of manuscripts, then data reduction and then grouping the data based on a group of meanings. For this process, *NVivo 12*, which produces a word *cloud* that describes a set of words that have meanings related to the development of a rattan cluster in Palu City. *wordcloud* can then be presented in the following image:

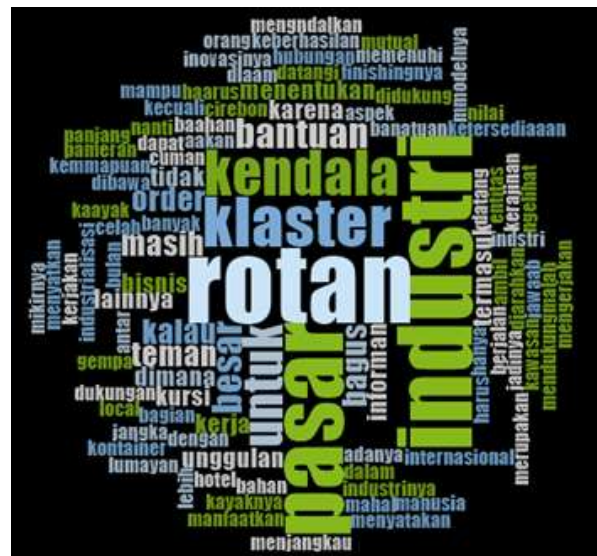


Figure 1. WordCloud Research Results

Based on *word cloud* above, it can be described matters relating to the problems of developing the Palu City rattan industrial cluster as follows:

3.1 Historically Valuable Products Derived

a. Activities

Cluster development in various regions is generally carried out over a long period of time. The Cirebon rattan industry cluster was started in the 1970s (Sriwarno & Djati, 2009) through collaboration with universities. Efforts to introduce various inventions from universities allow SMEs to change production methods from multitasking to specialization, which leads to the growth of SME clusters (Nangoy, 2011). Kusnaedi & Pramudita, 2013)

Field experience shows that most of the rattan woven products in Palu City are not done by indigenous people, but rather by residents outside Palu City who live in Palu City. This is as stated by the informant:

“No one here can really *weave* chairs. Even if it is only from out of town. There are almost none living in Palu, except for those in the mountains (SAR)
“...the one on Jl, Setia Budi is a Bugis person, then in Ujuna as well, there is the one in Layana from Java. There are also Untad alumni who now exist for handicrafts (SY)

The information above shows that there are still socio-cultural challenges if you want to develop an industrial cluster in Palu City. Industrial development, especially rattan, which is labor-intensive, will only grow in areas that have been passed down from generation to generation. Moreover, this industry is relatively marginalized in the midst of the transformation of the world of work towards digital (Muis et al., 2019)

b. Alternative Jobs

The more alternative jobs, the more competitive each IKM is to get an adequate workforce. The workforce has the freedom to determine the various jobs available. Therefore, jobs with low profits, difficult skills will tend to be avoided by business actors and workers. (Muis et al., 2019)

As an urban area, geographically Palu City is a city of business and trade. The character of the educated community tends to be dominant when compared to other districts. This challenge is not only faced by the rattan industry alone, but various manufacturing industries are also affected by changes in the labor structure and technological disruption. (Kutnjak et al., 2019; Müller et al., 2020)

c. Social Capital

Social capital is important for growing resilient clusters (...). Strong social capital will provide benefits when economically an activity is not encouraging. The economic approach alone cannot be the sole reference in cluster development (Darmasetiawan et al., 2013; Sabatini, 2005). This is in accordance with what was stated by the informant:

“When I was studying in Jepara, the head of the association told me that, during the collapse of Pak Harto, people were busy making furniture because teak was cheap, especially from looting. But over time, the loot runs out, so the stock returns to normal and business profits return to normal. Well, I did the impromptu business, it was closed and all that was left was the old businessman, who had already eaten sour and salt. So the social capital is strong enough to survive and the people are more creative and innovative, not just talkative about making big money (Y)

The above information justifies that social capital is very important to build a strong cluster, so the economic approach must complement each other from social capital existing ones (Demirci & özdemir, 2012; Kalnins & Chung, 2006) The social approach in cluster development is very important considering that in clusters, skills are communal (Cunningham & Higgs, 2009; Sriwarno & Djati, 2009) so that the design and model of a product is relatively similar with others.

3.2 Industrialization

a. Market

Gaps will determine business success, including the rattan IKM business. The ability to reach a wider market will determine the attractiveness of the industry, including the rattan industry in Palu City. The informant stated:

“Our market is pretty good, but there are a lot of friends who still can't take advantage of it. Then there are orders for school chairs, but most of the quality is not maintained (K)

Our market for handicrafts is still large. There's a hotel request that I'm currently fulfilling, if it's still difficult to rely on a chair, unless the innovation is good. (LS)

b. Supporting industry

The development of rattan industry clusters that are directed at the international market must be supported by aspects of the availability of raw materials and strong human resources. Without it, the industry will be unable to meet the market, which is growing in the long run. Industrialization is important to support the rattan IKM market development program in Palu City. A strong industrial cluster will only occur if there are other supporting entities in the region. (Darmasetiawan et al., 2013). In addition, the mutual benefit relationship between business actors is an "advantage" in an industrial area that is running well. (Porter, 2008; Smith, 2003). The informant stated,

“If it's like Cirebon, it's good, sir. If a friend gets an order, it will be divided later, who will do the frame, then someone else will do the finishing. So it's good to take large orders (Y)

I was once taken to an exhibition. Because the model is good *Caucasians* come, *take a look*,, then ask where the production is. I answered in Palu. Then he wants to come to us in Palu, and he wants to order 4 containers per month. I'm even afraid sir...ha..ha because I think where to find people who want to work (J)

The above information means that a large market is not always a blessing for SMEs, especially SMEs at the regional level. The large international market will require SMEs to behave professionally, namely timely orders, quality standardization and sustainability assurance (Astuti & Lutfi, 2020; Panggabean, 2010). At this level, SMEs that do not get support from entities in the cluster will experience problems. This is because SMEs in Palu City are generally still multitasking, so there has not been a business relationship in the form of *supply chain*.

c. Assistance

Efforts to strengthen the rattan UKM cluster in Palu City are mostly carried out through training assistance and equipment assistance that is distributed in groups. Each group will receive production equipment assistance after receiving technical training in weaving and making rattan chair frames. With the assistance, it is hoped that prospective business actors will acquire skills so that they are expected to be independent. However, in fact, the growth in the number of new entrepreneurs of rattan SMEs will not necessarily increase. This is as stated by the informant:

We have given a lot of help. Some participated in several group training sessions. Anyway, a complete set of tools. There is a staple gun, a sprayer, and a furnace. Anyway, complete. It's just that.. that's again, if we train 10, at least

2 will become. It's different if in Java there are 10 trained, at least 8 will be done. We're still having a hard time pushing this. In fact, they provide a lot of help. (SAR)

The information above provides reinforcement that the strengthening of skills and production techniques alone is felt to be unable to make prospective rattan IKM business actors able to be independent. SMIs still require strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit if they want to develop in the long term, especially in sectors that are economically small in value (Dewi et al., 2015). This illustrates that the rattan business actually has a high risk for potential new entrepreneurs. The high risk that is not accompanied by a return makes it difficult for the business to develop (Panggabean, 2010)

d. Manpower

The workforce in the rattan IKM sector is very limited. While this industry is labor intensive. Skills inherent in individuals are the key to the success of developing a rattan industrial cluster in Palu City.

Cluster strengthening through strengthening human resources is the key for business clusters, especially those with special characteristics (Raharjana & Putra, 2020). This means that government programs in the form of developing Rattan Vocational Schools in the past few years have met the qualifications for developing rattan SMEs clusters. The supply of local labor is expected to be able to support the sustainability of the rattan SME cluster through the availability of human resources.

However, the results so far have not been maximized, as the information conveyed by the informant is as follows:

We are actually happy that many went to school there first. It's just that many of them are children who go on to college instead of working in rattan. Even though the mayor at that time wanted Mr. Cudi, he wanted those who graduated from rattan vocational school to work in the rattan sector.

The information above means that the *link and match* between HR development programs through vocational schools still requires strengthening, especially with the business world. The integration of the business world with the world of education is believed to strengthen the development of human resources on the one hand and the fulfillment of manpower for business people (Hermanto, 2018). Business actors can provide internship and training opportunities for students which will later provide strengthening practical knowledge, so that prospective workers will have adequate skills (Muizu & Effendi, 2015)

e. Raw materials and auxiliary

Raw materials and auxiliary materials are important aspects for sustainability in the Rattan UKM cluster in Palu City. Currently, rattan products from the Palu City rattan cluster still rely on local rattan located in Central Sulawesi Province. Meanwhile, various products produced by other regional clusters are more complete. This is as revealed by a research informant as follows:

"We still use our own rattan here. Coat, tohiti, ronti and others. If it's like Cirebon, he has used the type of manau, there is one from Kalimantan specifically for weaving. So it's more varied. If we want to bring it, we will lose, because we have to send a large scale from there, while our orders are still limited. (J)

For auxiliary materials, they are also expensive. Like nails, all cloth from outside the area, especially Surabaya. Only 1 shop is selling it. So I can't

choose a cheaper price. If you want to buy it yourself, it's even more expensive, because of the shipping costs. So, yes, it is difficult, so if you calculate the production costs, they are indeed more expensive than the types of Cirebon or Malang or Solo (K). more aspects of TK and other costs brought in from outside. (SY)

Industry will develop if the product has high competitiveness in the market (Taçoğlu et al., 2019; Turyakira et al., 2014) and the component that forms it is HPP. For this reason, cluster development must be achieved if an "economy" is created so that HPP can be maintained fairly, with good design and reasonable prices, so that the product will be able to compete with its competitors (Chaminade & Vang, 2008; Perry & Tambunan, 2009) business/disaster

The viability of the rattan business in Palu City has changed a lot since the tsunami disaster in 2018. If before the disaster showed growth in the number of businesses, now some IKMs have started to close. This was stated by the informant as follows:

"...now many are closed, sir. Friends have a hard time finding energy. Most of the workforce returned to Java and did not want to go to Palu again, traumatized. (SY)

The above information justifies that the rattan IKM business is not risk free, including natural disaster risk and business risk (Reddy & Naik, 2011) This implies that the development of rattan industrial clusters in Palu City must be accompanied by long-term disaster risk mitigation efforts (Agustina, 2011; Zulfikar, 2014) Efforts to determine the disaster and tsunami red zone are believed to have an impact on the ownership of business locations. This is important considering the location selection is a long-term strategic decision for business operations.

3.3 Range of Raw Material Sources

Supported resources, especially rattan raw materials, are quite abundant in the forest, although their quality tends to decline. This decrease was caused by the relatively short harvesting period of rattan, due to the distance of old rattan from the forest area. On the other hand, the expansion of plantation areas and surrounding forests has caused the rattan population to be farther into the interior of the forest. The informant stated:

"Currently, there are many rattan farmers who process cocoa or corn, especially when the price of rattan fluctuates. Moreover, because currently rattan cannot be exported, farmers cannot cut all rattan. Well... usually only the emblem, stem, and tohiti types are generally taken. That's why farmers can only get a little per day compared to before when they were still able to export (SAR)

The above information justifies that the quality of raw materials is decreasing due to natural factors and affordability. Meanwhile, product quality is largely determined by the quality of raw materials (Lee et al., 2003), in addition to the quality of the production process., where customer perception will be built through the introduction of quality rattan products (Leonidou et al., 2011)

a. Branding

Efforts to develop rattan clusters are inseparable from market development or demand (Leonidou et al., 2011). The better the market perception of a product, the better the position of the product in competition. In this connection, rattan products in general are still weak in the eyes of the community, as informed by the informant as follows:

...if there is a new household, then you want to fill the furniture, you definitely don't choose rattan, sir. I guarantee that if it's researched. This is the problem with us. Rattan is only available in a few places, such as hotels. So, the number is limited. (J)

Yes, that was it, the name rattan is not popular in the country. In Europe there is a good name, but in our case, we are inferior to synthetic rattan (K).

From this information, it is clear that efforts to strengthen the Palu City rattan industrial cluster must be accompanied by efforts to *rebrand* rattan as a product that has value. *Rebranding* will give a "good" perception about the product, so that it will create *demand* for the product in the community (Rosenfeld, 2002). The introduction of products in public places will also strengthen product positioning, especially if a place is considered *prestigious* by the community.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the results of the data analysis described in the previous section, some of the essence of this research can be drawn as follows:

1. Efforts to develop rattan clusters are thematically determined by 3 major elements: sociohistorical value products, industrialization processes and sustainability efforts.
2. Bottle neck development of the Palu City rattan industrial cluster on each of these major themes.
3. development to still rely on workers from outside the City of Palu
4. IKM .
5. In the aspect of sustainability, affordability and availability of quality rattan raw materials are increasingly difficult to obtain, so that in the long-term rattan SMEs will face a gradation of product quality, if there is no invention of advanced material technology.

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