

A SWOT Analysis for Palm Sugar SME in Implementing E-Commerce: Case Study for Indonesia

Lutfi, Agus David Ramdansyah*

Economics and Business Faculty, University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Banten, Indonesia

Email address

agus.david@untirta.ac.id (A. D. Ramdansyah) *Corresponding author

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Abstract

Lebak Regency is known as one of the largest palm sugar producer area in Indonesia. This industry absorbs 5.406 workers through 2,982 business units. Production capacity per year reaches 2,249.4 tons spread in 44 production centers. Considering many sources of raw material for palm sugar in Lebak, the Local Government make palm sugar as the core competence of Lebak Regency Industry. However, in development of palm sugar industry, there are several obstacles including; production and technology constraints. This condition causes low competitiveness in the market. Thus, the objective of this study is to analyze and find business model for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) of palm sugar industry in implementing e-commerce by using SWOT analysis method. This method is carried out with the following steps; a) Identifying internal and external factors, b). Determining Internal Strategy Factor Matrix (IFAS), c) Determining External Strategy Factor Matrix (EFAS), d) Mapping SWOT matrix, e) Determining Grand Strategy Matrix and f) Decision Making Phase. This research may help SMEs and government in developing a business strategy on how the best result of business models by optimizing IT. The result of this study shows that opportunity factor is bigger than threat factor, and SMEs still using strength factors to cover up weakness factor. The managerial/practical implications of the result are; SME's should not only rely on traditional method. They must begin to establish their own strategy in order to reach competitive advantage by optimizing information technology. In addition, the local government must concern weaknesses factor in order to developing palm sugar SMEs. The originality of this paper is that this study is done in Lebak Regency of Banten, Indonesia with very limited SMEs adopted E-Commerce.

Keywords

E-Commerce, SME's, Palm Sugar, SWOT Analysis, Indonesia

1. Introduction

One of palm family that has high economic value is Sugar Palm (arrenga pinnata merr). It can thrive well in tropical regions such as Indonesia. It also can grow in all kinds of soil conditions, clay, calcareous and sandy soils. However, palm trees do not stand on too high acid soils. In Indonesia, palm trees can grow and produce optimally on land that has an altitude above 1,200 meters of sea level with an average air temperature of 250 Celsius, [1].

Sugar from palm sugar tree is obtained from tapping process of palm juice which is then reduced in water content

until it becomes solid. The forms of palm sugar product are printed sugar and ant palm sugar. Printed sugar is obtained by cooking palm juice until it becomes thick like a cotton candy then printing it in a semicircular mold. On the other hand, cooking process of palm sugar is longer that is until the palm sugar crystallizes, then dried until water content is below 3%. This latter type has advantage of being longer lasting and more practical in use.

Palm sugar has been an important source of livelihood for farmers in its production centers. One of centers of palm sugar production in Indonesia is in Lebak Regency, Banten Province. Lebak Regency is known as one of the largest palm sugar producing regions in Indonesia. Palm sugar industry in this regency absorbs 5,406 workers through 2,982 micro and small business units, excluding labor in its distribution channel and the annual production capacity reaches 2,249.4 tons spread in 44 production centers, [2].

This business is classified as a home industry type because it works individually in homes of each craftsman. Men usually doing tapping, then women doing process of cooking into a sugar or half-finished sugar. Process of producing palm sugar at farmer level is carried out with very simple equipment, namely using cauldrons, stirrers and firewood stoves. Palm sugar from production of craftsmen (farmers) is usually sold directly to the market or collectors who come on certain days. Besides having short durability, palm sugar also has a weakness in very volatile price level. During rainy season, when supply is abundant, its price can fall to the range between Rp. 4000, - and Rp. 6000, - per kg. But during dry season, supply is very limited and its price can rise from Rp. 12,000, - up to Rp. 14,000, - / kg, [2].

Craftsmen usually only produce semi-finished material to supply the industry, which still content above 5% water of palm sugar. That material is then collected to production center by collectors. Furthermore, half-finished palm sugar is mashed and dried again until the water content is below 3%. Drying process is carried out in two ways, solar heat and using an oven. Palm sugar business in Lebak are concentrated on production centers. That Products are then sold to markets and wholesalers in major cities such as Tangerang and Jakarta. Meanwhile, profits obtained are distributed among members (craftsmen and collectors) with a predetermined proportion.

Palm sugar business in Indonesia, especially in Lebak regency has promising prospects for development. This can be seen from high demand both domestically and abroad, especially for the type of sugar, which is often difficult to fulfill. Based on survey, a small industry in a month can get orders of 15-25 tons. That demands have not been able to be fulfilled due to limited supply and lack of capital. In relation to domestic demand, the biggest need for palm sugar comes from food and drug industries scattered around Tangerang. For local market the highest demand occurred during and before the fasting month of Ramadan. While for export demand, many come from Germany, Switzerland and Japan, and Singapore, [2]. The marketing path of palm sugar is quite long, this causes bargaining position of craftsmen to be quite low.

1.1. Palm Sugar Industry Profile in Lebak Regency

Palm Sugar Industry is a superior product in Lebak Regency. Raw materials for palm sugar in this regency are available in sufficient quantities. Group of SMEs are expected to be a driving force for industrial development. Potential raw material of palm sugar in Lebak Regency is presented at following table 1.

Table 1. Potential of Palm Sugar Raw Materials in Lebak Regency.

Types of Raw Material	Land area (Ha)	Plant Area Produces (Ha)	Location	Production / year
Palm juice	306,3	295	Sobang, Malingping, Cihara, Leuwidamar, Gunung Kencana, dan Cipanas, Lebak gedong, Sajira Cigemblong, Cijaku, Cibeber, Cilograng, Muncang, Cirinten, Wanasalam, Panggarangan	1,282,5 ton

Source: Trade and Investment Office of Lebak Regency Industry (2013)

Furthermore, Rangkasbitung the capital city of Lebak Regency, is a center of selling palm sugar products where all local products of palm sugar can be marketed there. Local government stated that palm sugar is as a superior product of Lebak Regency and it is projected to continue to grow. Market sales center provided to attract not only for businesses but also for tourists to visit Lebak Regency with the peculiarities of various palm sugar. Palm sugar production centers are scattered in several districts. The number of business units and palm sugar centers in each district are presented in the table 2.

Table 2. The number of palm sugar business units in Lebak Regency.

No	District	Number of Center	Total Business Units	
1.	Sobang	9	1430	
2.	Lebakgedong	4	333	
3.	Sajira	1	36	
4.	Gunungkencana	4	165	
5.	Cigemblong	7	751	
6.	Cijaku	4	376	
7.	Cibeber	7	897	
8.	Cilograng	2	239	
9.	Cihara	2	205	
10.	Muncang	2	256	
11.	Cirinten	5	505	
12.	Wanasalam	1	64	
13	Malingping	1	131	
14.	Panggarangan	5	681	

Source: Trade and Investment Office of Lebak Regency Industry (2013)

Considering the core industrial competencies in Lebak Regency are based on palm sugar industry with a focus on the ability to produce good quality palm sugar and product diversification, the government makes a target to achieve the long term goals, which are:

- (1) Produce and diversify of palm sugar products with good quality
- (2) Palm sugar and their diversification products can penetrate Local, National and International markets

1.2. Constraints in Developing of Palm Sugar Industry in Lebak Regency

In an effort to develop business, improve performance and competitiveness, SMEs still experience some problems;

(1) Production

Fluctuations in amount of palm sugar produced and prices are the constraints in business of making palm sugar. This fluctuation occurs due to influence of season. During rainy season, amount of production is increases but the price is decreases. While in dry season opposite occurs.

(2) Technology

- (a) Technology used to grind and smooth palm sugar of is still simple, only mechanical grinding machines are then sifted by several stages to get finer palm sugar products.
- (b) Not available drying oven machines yet. This tool is needed especially in rainy season, where amount of product is high but there is no solar heat as a dryer.
- (3) Marketing and Packaging
- (a) Lack of access to market information especially about prices. It cause craftsmen are highly dependent on the price which offered by collectors and it shows clearly that craftsman bargaining position very low.
- (b) Community in Lebak is still not aware that palm sugar can be used as a substitute for sugar cane sugar. So far they know that palm sugar is only used for industry and not for consumption. In fact, the market opportunities to fulfill sweetener needs in consumption market are relatively large.
- (c) Packaging for large volumes only uses sacks and for small volumes uses clear plastic with an easily torn adhesive.

2. Literature Review

The obstacles in developing palm sugar products are the lack of adequate marketing and infrastructure programs in the face of free market competition. Mastery of market share is one of prerequisites that must be a particular concern for palm sugar SMEs in facing a more open and more competitive free market. The use of internet-based technology can be used as an effort to expand market share throughout the world.

2.1. Definition of E-Commerce

Electronic commerce (EC) is a concept that describes the

process of buying, selling, or exchanging products, services, and information via computer networks, including the Internet, [3]. E-commerce is all business activity by utilizing internet technology. For small companies it can provide efficiency in marketing products to customers quickly and saving space and time.

In general, e-commerce refers to buying or ordering goods via the internet for a consumer's personal or household's consumption, regardless of whether the invoice for payment arrives later or the goods are paid immediately via electronic banking, credit card, and electronic payment or similar, [4]. Furthermore, business model talks about how the company makes money identifying its place on the chain value. There have been few attempts to formally define and classify Business models in e-commerce context, [5]. Business model in internet is a unique blend of three streams that are critical to the business. These include the value stream for the business partners and the buyers, the revenue stream, and the logistical stream. The value stream identifies the value proposition for the buyers, sellers, and the market makers and portals in an Internet context, [6]. The revenue stream is a plan for assuring revenue generation for the business. The logistical stream addresses various issues related to the design of the supply chain for the business.

However, the Internet users in Indonesia still have to undergo adjustment with the Internet boom of e commerce, [7]. In other words, prospective buyers still need online transactions education in order to be absolutely sure to spend their money online that presents ease and safe.

E-commerce is defined from the following perspectives, [8]:

- Communication perspective: e-commerce is the delivery of information, products / services, or payments via telephone lines, computer networks or other electronic means.
- (2) Business Process Perspective: e-commerce is a technology application towards transaction automation and company work flow.
- (3) Service perspective: e-commerce is one tool that fulfills the desires of companies, consumers and management in reducing service costs when improving the quality of goods and the speed of service.
- (4) Online Perspective: e-commerce is related to the buying and selling capacity of products and information on the internet and other online services.

Internet affects the way people communicate with each other, obtain information, learn, culture interact, and do online shopping or E-Commerce. Indonesia as one of developing country faces the challenges in harnessing the potential of E-Commerce, [9].

2.2. Traditional Commerce and Electronic Commerce

Traditional trade is basically the act of companies selling goods and / or services to generate income in the form of money, which in turn results in net income from the difference in income minus market prices plus operational costs. Transactions through e-commerce have many advantages, among others, can increase sales turnover because it can market products or services throughout the world without any geographical restrictions, can bring traders and buyers in cyberspace openly and freely, [10]. It can also

reduce operational costs such as promotion costs, marketing costs, and rental costs because of e-commerce flexibility. From the statement above, we can compare between traditional trade and electronic commerce as follows: (table 3).

Table 3.	Comparison	ot	^c traditional	and	electronic commerce
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Sales Cycle	Traditional Commerce	Electronic Commerce
Looking for information on goods / services needed	Magazines, catalogs, newspapers, Printed forms	Website
Check prices	Printed catalog	Online catalog
Maintain the availability of goods and prices	Telephone, fax	Website
Place an order	Letters, faxes and other printed forms	E-mail
Send order	Letter, fax	E-mail, web page
Sort orders	Manual	Database
Check items in the warehouse	Printed form, telephone, fax	Database, web
Schedule delivery	Printed form	E-mail, database
Make an invoice	Printed form	Database
Send order	Sender	Sender
Order confirmation	Letter, telephone, fax	E-mail
Send invoice and receive invoice	Letters	E-mail, EDI
payment schedule	Printed form	Database, EDI
Send and receive proof of payment	Letter	EDI, EFT

Source: Sholekan (2009)

3. Research Methods

Research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative by conducting direct observations, interviews and documentation. Descriptive method is a method that examines status of a group of people, objects, certain conditions, or a flash of current events. The purpose of descriptive research is to provide a history of research or to describe aspects that are relevant to the phenomenon of attention from one's perspective, organization, industry orientation and others, [11]. Qualitative data is obtained by interviewing people who might help understand the phenomenon at exploratory stage of the study. One of the methods is SWOT analysis. It is an analysis method used to evaluate the 'strengths', 'weaknesses', 'opportunities' and 'threats' involved in an organization, a plan, a project, a person or a business activity, [12].

3.1. External Strategic Factor Analysis

Analysis of external strategic factors is focused on existing conditions and trends that arise from outside, but can influence organizational performance. After knowing the external strategy factors, then arrange a table of External Strategic Factors Analysis (EFAS), with the following steps, [13]:

- (1) Develop opportunities and threats in column 1.
- (2) Give the weight of each factor in column 2, starting from 1.0 (very important) to 0.0 (not important). The weight of all strategic factors in the form of opportunities and threats must be 1.
- (3) Calculate the rating in (in column 3) for each factor by giving a scale ranging from 4 (very good / outstanding) to 1 (very bad / poor) based on the influence of these factors on the condition of the company. The rating criteria regarding rating are 4 rating (very good), rating 3 (good), rating 2 (not good) and rating 1 (very bad).
- (4) Multiply the factor weight in column 2 with the rating in column 3. The result is a weighting score for each factor.
- (5) Calculates the number of weighting scores. This value is to map the position of the organization on the SWOT analysis diagram.

External Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score (Weight X Rating)	
Opportunities/O				
1. Opportunity 1	Opportunity Weight 1	Opportunity Rating 1		
2. Opportunity 2	Opportunity Weight 2	Opportunity Rating 2		
Amount O	a		b	
Threats/T				
1. Threat 1	Threat Weight 1	Threat Rating 1		
2. Threat 2	Threat Weight 2	Threat Rating 2		
Amount T	c		d	
TOTAL	(a+c)=1		(b+d)	

Table 4. External Strategic Factors (External Strategic Analysis Summary / EFAS).

Source: Rangkuti, 2006.

3.2. Internal Strategic Factor Analysis

Internal strategic factor analysis is an analysis that assesses performance / performance which is a factor of strengths and weaknesses that exist to achieve organizational goals. As with the External Strategic Factor Analysis, then in the same way compile a table of Internal Strategic Factors Analysis (IFAS), [13]. The IFAS table form is shown in Table 3:

Table 5. Internal Strategic Factors	(Internal Strategic Factors	Analysis Summary / IFAS,
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Internal Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score (Weight X Rating)
Stregths/S			
1. Strength 1	Strength Weight 1	Strength Rating 1	
2. Strength 2	Strength Weight 2	Strength Rating 2	
Amount S	a		b
Weaknesses/W			
1. Weakness 1	Strength Weight 1	Strength Rating 1	
2. Weakness 2	Strength Weight 2	Strength Rating 2	
Amount W	с		d
TOTAL	(a+c)=1		(b+d)

Source: Rangkuti, 2006

4. Results

4.1. EFAS Matrix

EFAS matrix is used to determine and evaluate external factors of SMEs of palm sugar in Lebak Regency. Based on the result of observations and interviews, the assessment of external factors of SMEs palm sugar in Lebak Regency, as follows: (Table 6).

Table 6. EFAS matrix of SMEs palm sugar in Lebak Regency.

External strategic factors	Weight	Rating	Score (Weight x Rating)
	weight	Kating	Score (weight x Rating)
Opportunities (O)			
Many requests to become as business partners	0.156	4	0.624
Government support is available in the use of technology	0.199	3	0.597
Many opportunities to expand market coverage by using e-Commerce	0.190	4	0.760
Amount (O)	0.545		1.981
Threat (T)			
Products easily replicated by competitors	0.145	2	0.29
Emergence of similar products on the market	0.144	2	0.288
There is no comprehensive government regulation on e-commerce	0.166	2	0.332
Amount (T)	0.455		0.91
TOTAL	1.000		2.891

Source: Research Results

4.2. IFAS Matrix

IFAS matrix is used to determine and evaluate internal factors of SMEs of palm sugar, Lebak Regency. Based on the results of observations and interviews, the assessment of internal factors of SMEs of palm sugar Lebak Regency, as follows: (Table 7)

Table 7. IFAS matrix of SMEs palm sugar in Lebak Regency.

Internal strategic factors	Weight	Rating	Score (Weight x Rating)
Strength (S)	8	8	
Products have high competitiveness	0.188	4	0.752
SMEs have long experience	0.153	3	0.459
Experts in their fields	0.134	3	0.402
Amount (S)	0.475		1.613
Weakness (W)			
There are no conceptual long-term plans	0.111	2	0.222
Lack of human resources in technology	0.154	2	0.308
Awareness in improvement is still weak	0.115	2	0.23
Has not optimized the use of technology yet	0.145	2	0.29
Amount (W)	0.525		1.05
TOTAL	1.000		2.663

Source: Research Results

5. Discussion

From EFAS matrix on table 6 shows that the assessment of opportunity factor (O) gets a rating of 3 and 4, while Threats (T) factor gets a rating of 2. From calculation of EFAS matrix, opportunity factor gets total value of 1.981 total while value of threats factor is 0.91. This shows that opportunity factor of SMEs palm sugar in Lebak Regency is better than threats. Eventhough Threats factors are still very small at this time, but they are expected to be able to anticipate all threats that may come by utilizing well the Opportunity factor.

Based on EFAS matrix, Opportunity factors are many requests to become as business partners, Government support is available in the use of technology, many opportunities to expand market coverage by using e-Commerce. While Threats include; Products are easily replicated by competitors, similar businesses emerge in the market and there is no regulation from the Government regarding e-Commmerce comprehensively.

IFAS matrix on the table 7 shows that Strength (S) factors rating are 3 and 4, while weakness (W) factors gets a rating of 2. From calculation of IFAS matrix, Strengths factor gets a value of 1.613 while Weaknes factor gets a value of 1.05. This shows that Strength factors of SMEs palm sugar in

Lebak Regency is better than weakness factors. However, Lebak Regency Government should consider more in supervising and developing SMEs palm sugar. They are expected to be able to utilize Strength factors that is owned to overcome the Weakness Factors.

Based on the IFAS matrix, Strengths (S) factor are; Products have high competitiveness, SMEs have Long experience and they are expert in their fields. Whereas Weaknesses (W) factors, include: They do not have conceptual long-term plans in running business, Lack of human resources in technology to market their product, Weak in awareness in improvement and they have not optimized the use of technology yet.

From IFAS and EFAS matrices can be summarized in the SWOT Matrix by providing a formulation of alternative strategies that are suitable for SMEs palm sugar, Lebak Regency. Each strategy is a combination of SWOT factors developed in IFAS and EFAS matrices.

5.1. S-O Strategies Matrix

S-O Strategic matrix is a strategy developed by using all strenghts to seize opportunities. It develops through IFAS and EFAS is as follows:

Table 8. S-O Strategies Matrix.

	OPPORTUNITY		
External	Many requests to become as business partners	Government support is available in the use of technology	Many opportunities to expand market coverage by using e-Commerce
STRENGTH	Provide special programs for	business partners	
Products have high competitiveness	Increase product variation		
SMEs have Long experience and they are expert in their fields	Develop marketing programs by utilizing information technology		
Expert in their fields	Implement e-commerce in getting business partners and market development		

5.2. W-O Strategies Matrix

Strategic W-O matrix is a strategy that is prepared by minimizing weaknesses to take advantage of the opportunities that exist. The W-O Strategies Matrix developed through IFAS and EFAS are as follows:

Table 9. W-O Strategies Matrix.					
	OPPORTUNITY				
External	Many requests to become as business partners	Government support is available in the use of technology	Many opportunities to expand market coverage by using e-Commerce		
WEAKNESS	Develop the right business pl	an as a guideline for preparin	g work and budgets plans		
Do not have conceptual long-term plans in running business	Join various trainings related to e-commerce				
Lack of human resources in technology to market their product	Take action for internal improvements				
Weak in awareness in improvement	Improve optimization of in	nformation technology util	ization in capturing business		
Have not optimized the use of technology yet	partners and market developm	nent			

5.3. S-T Strategies Matrix

The Strategic S-T matrix is a strategy prepared by using all the strengths to overcome threats. The S-T Strategies Matrix developed through IFAS and EFAS are as follows:

Table 10. S-T Strategies Matrix.						
	THREAT					
External	Products are easily replicated by competitors	similar businesses emerge in the market	there is no regulation from the Government regarding e- Commmerce comprehensively			
STRENGTH	Improve product quality and	create more innovative j	products			
Products have high competitiveness	Providing more affordable an	d competitive prices				
SMEs have Long experience and they are expert in their fields	Maintain business ethics in running a company in conducting e-commerce transactions					
Expert in their fields	Make a patent from the produ	act produced				

5.4. W-T Strategies Matrix

The Strategic W-T matrix is a strategy that is structured by using minimizing weaknesses to avoid threats. The Strategic W-T Matrix developed through IFAS and EFAS are as follows:

Table	11.	Matrix	c W-T	'Strategies.
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	THREAT			
Externa	Products are easily replicated by competitors	similar businesses emerge in the	there is no regulation from the Government regarding e-	
		market	Commmerce comprehensively	
WEAKNESS	Improve business processes so that they can improve the work system			
Don't have a long-term plan	Maximizing the use of market technology to design new products			
Lack of human resources who master information technology				
Awareness in improvement is still weak	Maximizing e-commerce as a promotional medium to gain competitive advantage			
Information technology utilization has not been maximized				

6. Conclusion

Even though with limited resources in increasingly fierce competition, palm sugar SMEs in Lebak regency are able to maintain their business. They have innovative and creative ideas and this is an value added for them. However, most of them still carry out traditional method, have not optimize information technology in running and developing their business. From the EFAS Analysis, it is known that Opportunity factor gets total value of 1.981 while Threats factor gets 0.91, this shows that Opportunity factor is smaller than Threats factor. For this reason, SMEs palm sugar need to implement strategies, including; a) Provide special programs to business partners to develop market share, b) Make variations on product by conducting market research, so that items are more varied, c) Utilize information technology by implementing e commerce to market products and attract business partners and d) Conduct internal improvements by preparing a business plan as a guideline for work plans and budgets.

From IFAS analysis, it is known that the Strengths factor gets total value of 1.613 while Weakness factor gets 1.05, this shows that palm sugar SMEs still rely on their Strengths factor to cover their weakness factor. To minimize weakness factor, palm sugar SMEs need to make strategies including; a) Improve product quality and create more innovative products so that products are not easily replicated by the same business, b) Maintain business ethics in running business, especially when doing transactions through e-commerce, c) Register patents for all product, d) Improve business processes to improve working system and e) Use e-commerce as a promotional medium to gain competitive advantage. To provide wider and deeper suggestions in e-commerce adoption for palm sugar SMEs in Lebak Regency, further research can be developed through various fields of study by using application of other research methods.

7. Recommendation

Palm sugar SMEs are expected to begin to anticipate all possible threats that will come in the future by utilizing all their strength. Long-term business concept is important to be designed immediately. As a form of supporting to superior products development of this regency, the local governments and related parties can help them by facilitating institutional improvement, enhancing human resources, strengthening raw material networks and strengthening technology including the provision and improvement of facilities and infrastructure in order to optimize e-commerce applications for palm sugar SMEs as a core competence of Lebak Regency Industry.

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