

THE PRACTICE OF CIRCULAR SELLERS IN ATTRACTING THE BUYING POWER OF THE COMMUNITY IN MAKASSAR CITY. INDONESIA (Case Study of Tahu Tempe Sellers)

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<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2025.6308>

ABSTRACT

The results showed that tempe and tofu mobile sellers in Makassar City have an important role in fulfilling people's needs for cheap and nutritious sources of vegetable protein. To attract buyers, they apply various strategies such as building good communication with customers, providing friendly service, and offering flexible prices. By following changes in consumption patterns, such as highlighting the health benefits of tempeh and tofu and improving packaging, traders are able to compete and continue to attract consumers in the midst of intense market competition. Tempe and tofu sellers in Makassar City have marketing advantages, such as affordable prices, stable market demand, easily available raw materials, and a wide distribution network. However, they also face challenges such as short shelf life, fierce competition, dependence on soybean imports, and lack of innovation in packaging and digital marketing.

Keywords: Marketing, Business, Strategy, Sellers, Society

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the context of urban economies, the presence of mobile vendors plays an important role in fulfilling people's needs for everyday products. Makassar City is one of the largest economic centres in the eastern part of Indonesia and is a unique economic feature with various consumption patterns of people. One of the micro business fields that remain amidst the dynamics of economic change and development is the trade of food products such as Tempeh and Tofu, which are sold by travelling dealers.

The phenomenon of speed and tofu vendors in Makassar shows a dynamic economic pattern where business sustainability is highly dependent on direct interaction with consumers. Unlike modern retailers who keep digital marketing systems and networks, travel dealers rely on social relationships and communication skills to reach their customers. Consumption patterns in urban communities that tend to be practical and efficient have made the existence of travelling dealers a solution for many families who need fresh food without going to the market or store.

Mobile tempeh and tofu sellers are considered sociologically as business actors and members of microeconomic communities that form social networks in urban areas. In interactions between sellers and consumers, personal beliefs, habits and preferences often play a role in determining consumption choices. Some buyers may prefer to buy from sellers they have known for a long time or who provide payment flexibility. Therefore, the pattern of social interaction that occurs between sellers and buyers is crucial to the sustainability of this business.

In contrast, the problems faced by tempeh and tofu sellers are diverse. One of the factors that can affect the purchasing power of goods sold conventionally is the changing lifestyle of urban people who are increasingly modern and the tendency to shop through online platforms. In addition, the business of mobile vendors is affected by competition with other sellers in traditional markets and supermarkets. They remain despite such issues, but they remain thanks to customer loyalty and their ability to adjust to market changes.

From an economic point of view, tempe and tofu mobile businesses help provide employment for people who previously did not have access to formal employment. One can start this business with relatively small capital and generate enough income to make ends meet. In some cases, the business can even grow into a larger enterprise by expanding distribution networks and increasing the selection of goods sold. Price and quality factors also influence people's purchasing power for tempeh and tofu. Recognised as a cheap and nutritious source of plant-based protein, tofu and tempeh are still the top choices for many households, especially among the middle class. Therefore, the existence of mobile vendors offering these products at more affordable prices compared to modern stores is one of the competitive advantages that is still relevant in the market.

In addition to social and economic factors, cultural elements also contribute to the existence of tempeh and tofu vendors. The interaction between sellers and buyers in Makassar has strong social values in addition to its transactional nature. Compared to transactions in contemporary stores, customers often have a more intimate relationship with sellers as their presence becomes part of their daily lives. Familiarity builds relationships that help mobile vendors survive in the long run.

Adaptation is essential to sustain the tempeh and tofu business amidst rapid economic and technological developments. Traders in an increasingly competitive market have started using simple technologies, such as text messaging or social media, to reach a wider range of customers. They have also started using contemporary marketing strategies, such as delivery services or discounts for repeat customers. Tempe and tofu mobile vendors remain relevant in Makassar City's economic ecosystem, despite the challenges and opportunities. They are not only small businesses, but also part of the ever-changing social and economic dynamics. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of their roles and working patterns can help support the sustainability of micro businesses amidst ongoing economic changes.

B. Problem Formulation

- i. how the behaviour of tempeh and tofu sellers in attracting buyers in Makassar city
- ii. how the socio-economic approach strategies of tempeh and tofu sellers in attracting buyers in Makassar city

- iii. how the strengths and weaknesses of tempeh and tofu sellers in marketing business products in Makassar city

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Travelling Merchants

According to Damsar, an individual or organisation that buys, acquires, and provides an item to be traded, given, or given to another party, either in the form of the original item or in a different form is called a trader. Traders, according to Nuraedah, are people who work in the production and sale of goods to fulfil the needs of society in an informal setting. They take the rights of others on a regular basis to make money.

A peddler is a person who runs a business by producing goods or food with modest capital to fulfil the needs of the community. Most hawkers are self-employed, meaning they employ only one labour force. They use fixed capital, equipment, and labour. This shows that due to the uncertainty of income earned, few people are able to set aside the proceeds of their business.

Travelling merchants are one method of distribution that serves customers directly. However, some peddlers also act as producers, meaning that they make goods or services to sell themselves. In simple terms, a peddler is a business conducted in the informal sector by people to fulfil their needs. There are also those who say that wirakelana is another term for peddlers.

Peddlers are a form of business that belongs to the informal sector. They go around to sell various types of goods to the public. The main motivation of these peddlers is to earn an income, even if it is only enough to fulfil their daily needs. They trade regardless of the time of day, with the main objective of fulfilling the needs of the community, especially households in villages.

Travelling traders depend on their sales on the same day. In the informal sector, workers generally do not require formal education or specialised skills, but rather rely on long working experience. This limitation is mostly experienced by people in villages and the lower middle class. These constraints are caused by a lack of access to information, relatively low mastery of technology, and informal sources of information, so that opportunities for people to develop their businesses and improve their capabilities are very limited.

The informal sector group has several main characteristics, including working independently without the help of others, using non-permanent labour, and involving family members in business activities. Meanwhile, the formal sector does not have these characteristics. In the Minister of Industry and Trade Decree No. 23/MPP/Kep/1/1998 on Trade Business Institutions, Article 4 explains the following:

a. The informal trade sector includes: itinerant traders, street vendors, hawkers, grocery traders, shops, stalls, as well as repair or servicing services, carpentry services, and other services. **b.** In order for informal traders to fulfil the criteria set out, they must follow the following conditions: 1) Have a business capital, excluding the land and building where the

business is located, of no more than five million rupiah.2) Be managed by several people independently.3) The business activities carried out are usually irregular.

B. People's purchasing power

Purchasing power refers to the ability of an individual, family or community to acquire goods and services to fulfil their daily needs. It also reflects a consumer's intention to buy a product or behave in a certain way. The decision taken by people is usually a choice between two or more alternatives. Consumers' purchasing power is the result of a post-purchase evaluation, where they compare their perceived experience with their pre-existing expectations.

Purchasing power can be understood as a person's condition before taking an action, which is the basis for predicting the behaviour or action. In this case, purchasing power reflects a response to an object that indicates the customer's desire to shop. It is important to note that there is a difference between actual purchases made by consumers and purchasing power itself. Buying power is more of an inclination that shoppers have to make a purchase, which in turn helps maximise the accuracy of predicting actual purchase behaviour.

The description of purchasing power above can be concluded that purchasing power reflects the tendency of consumer buying behaviour towards a product or service within a certain period. This includes activism in liking and having a positive attitude towards a product or service, which is based on past purchasing experience. Customer purchasing power is also seen from the results felt after using a product or service, which is expected to match or even exceed their expectations.

When a consumer wants to make a decision, they need to have several alternative choices. There are three types of consumer decision making, namely: a. Extensive problem solving, b. Limited problem solving, and c. Routine response behaviour.

According to Kotler, there are five stages that consumers go through in the purchasing decision-making process, namely: 1. Problem Recognition, 2. Information Search, 3. Alternative Assessment, 4. Buying Decision, and 5. Post-Purchase Behaviour. From these stages, we can see that in making purchasing decisions, buyers go through several steps.

This process begins with problem recognition, where buyers realise their needs or wants. Next, they will search for information related to the problem or need, including searching for alternative options to fulfil the need. After collecting enough alternatives, buyers will assess which option is most suitable. Finally, after the purchase decision is made, the buyer shows a reaction in the form of post-purchase behaviour.

Here are some methods that can be used to measure consumer purchasing power: 1. Complaint and Suggestion System: Organisations that focus on customer satisfaction provide ample opportunity for them to submit suggestions or complaints. This can be done by providing various means, such as suggestion boxes, comment cards, and others. 2. Ghost Shopping: One way to get an idea of the level of customer satisfaction is to hire several people to act as potential buyers. They will report their findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the products offered by the company and competitors, based on their experience when shopping for these products.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research type through phenomenological approach

4.0 DISCUSSION

A. The behaviour of tempeh and tofu sellers in attracting buyers in Makassar city

Tempe and tofu vendors in Makassar City play a crucial role in fulfilling the community's need for affordable and nutritious sources of vegetable protein. Tempe and tofu have become an integral part of daily consumption, both as side dishes and as the main ingredient in various speciality dishes. However, in the midst of competition with other food products and changes in people's consumption patterns, tempeh and tofu sellers need to develop appropriate strategies and attitudes to attract buyers.

The behaviour of sellers in offering their products greatly influences their success in retaining customers as well as reaching new consumers. With the right approach-from good service, competitive pricing, to effective communication-tempe and tofu vendors can build customer loyalty and increase the appeal of their products.

One of the main strategies applied by tempeh and tofu sellers to attract buyers is to build good communication with customers. Most itinerant sellers have regular customers, especially in residential areas and traditional markets. By establishing close relationships, they are able to create a social closeness that encourages loyalty.

Friendly service, such as greeting customers warmly, chatting about product quality, or simply asking how they are doing, is a natural strategy adopted by sellers. These actions not only establish a deeper personal connection, but also build trust between sellers and buyers, which goes beyond economic transactions.

In addition, travelling sellers often provide additional information on the benefits of tempeh and tofu, proper processing methods, and recommend recipes to customers. This proactive attitude can increase people's interest in buying, because they feel they get more value from the products offered.

Pricing strategies also play an important role in attracting buyers' attention. Tempe and tofu sellers generally offer more flexible pricing compared to supermarkets or grocery stores. They often provide discounts for bulk purchases or provide easy payment systems for loyal customers, such as weekly payment options for regular customers.

This flexibility is attractive, especially for people who are economically challenged. With a more fluid price negotiation system, shoppers feel more comfortable and tend to prefer buying from mobile vendors over other places that charge fixed prices.

Mobility is one of the main advantages for tempeh and tofu mobile sellers in reaching a wider market. They are not tied to one location, but move from one area to another, adjusting to the time of day and people's activity patterns.

In the morning, they generally sell their products in traditional markets or around housing complexes. Meanwhile, in the afternoon and evening, they go around to more crowded places, such as around campuses, office areas, or on main roads. With this strategy, sellers can adjust their trading locations to the different potential buyers at each time.

In addition, some merchants utilise vehicles such as motorbikes or carts equipped with loudspeakers to inform customers of their presence in an area. This method has proven effective in attracting customers' attention and alerting potential buyers who may be looking for tempeh or tofu for cooking purposes.

On the other hand, maintaining the quality of tempeh and tofu is also a vital factor that determines the success of sellers in attracting buyers. Products that are fresh, clean, and free from excess preservatives are preferred by consumers. Therefore, many tempeh and tofu sellers in Makassar work directly with local tempeh producers or craftsmen to ensure that they get high-quality product stock.

Consistency in maintaining quality greatly affects customer trust. Buyers tend to favour traders who continuously provide products with the same quality standards over time. If there is a significant change in quality, such as tofu that is too mushy or tempeh that is less dense, customers may switch to other sellers.

The reputation of tempeh and tofu traders also develops through customer recommendations. Many consumers who are satisfied with the quality and service provided will recommend the trader to their friends, neighbours, or family. This word-of-mouth marketing strategy has proven to be very effective, as potential buyers usually trust recommendations from those closest to them.

Some merchants even provide small incentives for customers who successfully bring in new buyers, such as discounts or additional bonuses. This method not only increases sales, but also organically expands market reach.

Changes in people's lifestyles and consumption patterns also affect the way tempeh and tofu sellers attract buyers. Nowadays, more and more people are looking for healthy food products, so some merchants have started to adjust their marketing strategies by emphasising the health benefits of tempeh and tofu.

In addition, some retailers have started to come up with more attractive packaging for their products, such as using hygienic plastic or adding small labels containing nutritional information. These efforts aim to attract a wider market segment, especially young people who are increasingly concerned about healthy eating.

In Makassar City, the behaviour of tempeh and tofu sellers in attracting buyers is very diverse. They apply various approaches, ranging from friendly communication, flexibility in pricing, effective mobility strategies, to maintaining product quality and utilising customer recommendations. With these strategies, they are able to compete in the changing market and ensure that their products remain in demand.

B. The socio-economic approach strategy of tempeh and tofu sellers in attracting buyers in Makassar city

Tempeh and tofu are soya-based foods that have become an important part of the consumption patterns of the Indonesian people, including in Makassar City. These products are not only nutrient-rich, but also affordable for many people. In the face of increasing business competition, tempeh and tofu sellers need to apply the right socioeconomic engagement strategy to attract buyers' attention and maintain their business continuity.

Socioeconomic engagement strategies include various methods used by sellers to understand and adapt to the social and economic conditions of the community. With the right tools, they can build good relationships with customers, adjust prices to match purchasing power, and utilise social networks to increase sales.

One of the main strategies adopted by tempeh and tofu sellers is to establish close social relationships with customers. They do this through various means, such as personalised approach, friendly service, and active interaction with buyers. Sellers usually get to know their customers well, establish close communication, and create closeness. By greeting, chatting, and providing additional information about the product, they are able to create a warm atmosphere and increase customer loyalty. In addition, sellers also pay attention to customers' needs, such as adjusting the size of tempeh and tofu according to demand or providing advice on better processing methods.

In economic strategy, price adjustment is a crucial factor in attracting buyers. In Makassar City, tempeh and tofu sellers offer more flexible prices compared to modern stores or markets. With affordable prices, these products can still be enjoyed by various levels of society. Some sellers even apply flexible payment systems, such as weekly payments for regular customers who are economically challenged. In addition, discount strategies or bonuses, such as additional products for loyal customers, are often used to increase their appeal and strengthen their relationship with consumers.

Generally, tempeh and tofu sellers are mobile, moving from one location to another to reach more customers. They sell in areas with high buyer potential, such as traditional markets, housing complexes, or office areas. They also follow people's consumption patterns, selling in the morning in residential areas and in the afternoon or evening near food stalls or other crowded places. Some traders even utilise simple promotional tools such as loudspeakers or motorbike bells to attract attention while travelling around. This mobility allows them to reach more customers and increase sales opportunities.

Social networks are an important factor in the socioeconomic engagement strategy of tempeh and tofu sellers. Many sellers rely on recommendations from existing customers to attract new buyers. Good reputation and customer satisfaction are often the main factors in attracting other buyers. In addition, some sellers join communities of traders in traditional markets or microenterprise groups to share information and support with each other. Cooperation with food stalls or other traders is also an effective strategy to increase sales. By becoming a regular supplier to culinary businesses, tempeh and tofu sellers can gain more stable customers and a more secure income.

Another economic strategy is to improve product quality and service to keep customers loyal. Tempeh and tofu sellers strive to keep their products fresh by sourcing stock directly from local producers. Fresh, quality products are more desirable to customers, which in turn can increase competitiveness in the market. In addition, some traders have started offering product variations, such as tempeh with added peanuts or larger-sized tofu, to attract customers' attention. Hygiene in sales has also become an important focus, especially after the pandemic, where people are increasingly concerned about the hygiene of the food products they consume.

Changes in people's consumption patterns have also impacted on tempeh and tofu sellers' strategies in attracting customers. Now that more people are looking for healthy food, sellers have started to emphasise the health benefits of tempeh and tofu in their promotions. Some of them also use more attractive and hygienic packaging to increase product appeal. Some sellers have even started utilising social media to promote their products, albeit on a small scale. Adjusting to this trend helps them attract a wider segment of customers, including young people who are increasingly concerned with healthy eating.

The socio-economic approach strategy applied by tempeh and tofu sellers in Makassar City has a very important role in attracting buyers' interest and maintaining the sustainability of their business. By building good social relationships, adjusting prices to people's purchasing power, utilizing social networks, maintaining product quality, and following the latest trends, they are able to survive in the midst of increasingly fierce market competition. Success in implementing this strategy not only contributes to increased sales, but also plays a role in creating a more sustainable small business ecosystem, as well as providing broad economic benefits for many.

C. Advantages and disadvantages of tempeh and tofu sellers in marketing business products in the city of Makassar

Tempeh and tofu are two processed soybean products that are very popular in Indonesia, including in Makassar City. These two products have a wide market because they are part of people's daily consumption. In running a tempeh and tofu business, sellers have advantages and disadvantages in their marketing strategies. The following is an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of tempeh and tofu sellers in marketing their business products in Makassar City.

Advantages of Tempeh and Tofu Sellers in Marketing Products

1. Affordable Prices

One of the main advantages of tempeh and tofu is their affordable price when compared to other protein sources such as meat and fish. Because of this, these products are more accessible to various walks of life, including those with low purchasing power.

2. Stable Market Demand

The consumption of tempeh and tofu is quite stable because they are staple food ingredients that are often consumed by the people of Makassar. This product can be used in a wide variety of cuisines, so its demand tends to be consistent throughout the year.

3. Availability of Easily Available Raw Materials

Soybeans as the main raw material for tempeh and tofu are relatively easy to obtain from local and imported suppliers. This makes it easier for manufacturers to maintain the availability of their products without experiencing significant raw material constraints.

4. Relatively Easy Production Process

The production of tempeh and tofu does not require high technology, so small entrepreneurs can easily run this business. The simple manufacturing process also allows for small-to-large-scale production according to market demand.

5. Extensive Distribution Network

Tempeh and tofu sellers in Makassar City have many distribution channels, ranging from traditional markets, mobile traders, food stalls, to supermarkets. This diversity of distribution channels provides flexibility in product marketing.

6. Healthy and Nutritious Products

Tempeh and tofu are known to be a healthy source of plant-based protein and contain a variety of essential nutrients. With the increasing public awareness of healthy eating, this product is increasingly in demand.

7. Expandable to a Wide Variety of Products

Tempeh and tofu can be processed into various derivative products such as crispy tofu, tempeh mendoan, and various other preparations. This allows for product diversification that can increase its attractiveness in the market.

Disadvantages of Tempeh and Tofu Sellers in Marketing Products

1. Short Shelf Life

One of the main problems that tempeh sellers should be aware of is its relatively short shelf life. These products are easily damaged if not stored properly, so sellers must ensure prompt distribution to prevent losses.

2. Fierce Competition

Because there are many producers and sellers of tofu and tempeh in Makassar City, sellers must use more creative marketing strategies to stay competitive.

3. Dependence on Soybean Supply

Since most of the soybeans in Indonesia are still imported, the production costs of tempeh and tofu can be affected by changes in soybean prices in the global market, which can ultimately affect the selling price.

4. Lack of Branding and Attractive Packaging

Many tempeh sellers are aware that they still use conventional marketing strategies that use simple packaging. This product is not attractive compared to other processed food products because there is no innovation in branding and packaging.

5. Lack of Digital Marketing

Most tempeh and tofu sellers still rely on offline marketing, such as selling directly to the market or through mobile traders. The lack of utilization of digital platforms such as social media and marketplaces has caused a wider market opportunity that has not been utilized to the fullest.

6. Obstacles in Product Certification and Standardization

There may be some tofu and tempeh sellers in Makassar City who do not have a business license or food certification from BPOM or the Health Office. This can prevent them from selling their goods to a wider market, such as large food stores or supermarkets.

7. Lack of Innovation in Products

Many tempeh sellers continue to sell it conventionally without making changes to its taste, texture, or way of presentation. In fact, innovation can make products more attractive and make more money in a more competitive market.

Tofu and tempeh sellers in Makassar have many advantages in selling their goods, mainly due to their affordable prices, consistent market demand, and extensive distribution network. However, they also face issues such as short shelf life, fierce competition, and uninnovative marketing. To increase their competitiveness, tempeh and tofu sellers can use more sophisticated marketing strategies, such as using digital marketing, improving packaging quality, and creating more innovative products to attract customers. With this action, Makassar's tofu and tempeh business can continue to grow and have stronger competitiveness in the market.

CONCLUSION

Tempeh and tofu vendors in Makassar City play a very important role in meeting the community's needs for affordable and nutritious plant-based protein sources. To attract buyers' attention, they implement various strategies, such as building good communication with customers, providing friendly service, and offering flexible prices according to the community's capabilities. High mobility in reaching various locations is also an advantage for them in expanding the market.

In addition, maintaining product quality and utilizing recommendations from customers is a crucial factor in maintaining buyer loyalty. By following the development of consumption patterns, such as emphasizing the health benefits of tempeh and tofu and improving the quality of packaging, these traders are able to compete and still attract consumer interest even in the midst of fierce market competition.

In an effort to attract buyers' interest and maintain business sustainability, tempeh and tofu sellers in Makassar City also implement a socio-economic strategy. They build good relationships with customers through friendly service and active communication, and offer flexible prices that can be tailored to people's purchasing power. Their mobility in trading allows them to reach more customers, while support from social networks and customer recommendations contributes to increased sales.

In addition to focusing on product quality, they also adapt to healthier consumption trends by prioritizing hygienic packaging and simple promotion. Through these various strategies, they managed to survive in the midst of fierce competition and create a more sustainable business.

Tofu and tempeh sellers in Makassar have many advantages in marketing, such as low prices, stable market demand, easily accessible raw materials, and an extensive distribution network. However, they also face issues such as short shelf life, fierce competition, reliance on soybean imports, and a lack of innovation in digital marketing and packaging. To become more competitive, they must use modern strategies such as digital marketing, product innovation, and packaging quality improvement.

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