

The Use of E-Commerce by State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the Meranti Islands as Sociopreneurs for the Optimization of Sago Potential Utilization.

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Abstract: The utilization of social networks in the formation of Social Chemistry by State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the Meranti Islands as Sociopreneurs is an innovation that enables the optimization of sago potential utilization. This study aims to explore the role of social networks in supporting the success of Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands in marketing sago products through E-Commerce. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews. The results of the study show that the role of social networks in the formation of social chemistry in the use of e-commerce by Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands as a sociopreneur for optimizing the utilization of sago potential demonstrates a significant synergy between digital technology and social dynamics. Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands has successfully leveraged social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to build close connections with various stakeholders, including sago farmers, artisans, local SMEs, and consumers, through special groups, pages, online discussions, webinars, and Q&A sessions. Active community participation is also encouraged through contests and challenges, which strengthen the sense of ownership among members. With this approach, Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands not only promotes sago products but also creates a dynamic and sustainable ecosystem, where the potential of sago can be optimized through community synergy and technology. This harmonious and constructive interaction reflects the principles of social chemistry, enhancing community cohesion and collective trust, as well as the effectiveness of collaboration and innovation.

Keywords: E-Commerce; Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands; Sago; Social Chemistry; Sociopreneur

Introduction

The development of e-commerce in Indonesia over the past few decades has been an interesting phenomenon to analyse from the perspective of social chemistry, which examines social interactions in the context of technological and economic change. Since the 1990s, pioneering e-commerce platforms such as Plasa.com and Tokopedia began to emerge, with a primary focus on the B2C (Business-to-Consumer) business model. This era marked the initial steps of digital trade in Indonesia, which then experienced a

significant surge in the 2010s. The explosion of internet and smartphone users during this period drove massive investments in the e-commerce industry. Platforms such as Lazada, Shopee, and Blibli entered the market, offering a wide range of products and services that increasingly made it easier for consumers to shop online. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, further accelerated e-commerce growth, as mobility restrictions prompted people to switch to online shopping. As a result, online transactions skyrocketed, opening new opportunities for SMEs and giving rise to innovative e-commerce startups.

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Supporting data shows that the market value of e-commerce in Indonesia reached IDR 320 trillion in 2022, with predictions to increase to IDR 820 trillion by 2025, according to Redseer. The number of users also grew from 170 million in 2022 to an estimated 234 million by 2025. E-commerce transactions totalled 825 million in 2022, with projections to reach 1.5 billion transactions by 2025. High internet penetration, which reached 77% of the population in 2023 according to Bank Indonesia, and the majority of users accessing through smartphones (We Are Social, 2024), are key driving factors. Furthermore, the growing middle class in Indonesia (McKinsey Global Institute, 2023) has contributed to increased purchasing power and interest in e-commerce products and services. (Afuah, 2001)

Changes in Indonesian lifestyles, with people increasingly accustomed to the convenience and comfort of online shopping, also play a significant role. (Benkler, 2006) Trends such as social commerce and live-stream shopping are becoming more popular, indicating society's adaptation to digital technology in everyday activities. The positive impact of e-commerce on the Indonesian economy is significant. (Bharadwaj A. S., 2000) Increased market access enables SMEs and local entrepreneurs to reach broader markets, while consumers gain access to a variety of products and services from across Indonesia. The e-commerce industry also drives the creation of new jobs in sectors such as logistics, warehousing, customer service, digital marketing, IT, and e-commerce management. The contribution of this sector to Indonesia's GDP continues to rise, making it one of the main drivers of digital economic growth. (Bharadwaj A. S., 1999)

However, challenges remain. The intense competition between e-commerce platforms forces businesses to continuously innovate and provide the best services to attract and retain customers. The logistics infrastructure, which needs to be expanded and improved in quality, is key to ensuring smooth distribution of goods. Collaboration between the government and business actors is crucial to address these challenges. Additionally, building consumer trust in the security and quality of e-commerce products and services remains a challenge that must be overcome. Efforts in consumer education and adequate regulations are needed to protect consumers and ensure the continued growth of the e-commerce industry in Indonesia. In social chemistry analysis, all of these dynamics reflect the complex interactions between individuals, technology, and the economic structure, which influence and shape the current e-commerce landscape in Indonesia.

Social chemistry is a term that carries deep meaning about how people connect, interact, and build relationships in various social contexts. As an

interdisciplinary discipline, social chemistry encompasses aspects of psychology, neuroscience, and network analysis, all of which interact to provide a comprehensive understanding of human relationship dynamics. In the context of psychology, social chemistry explores how factors such as personality, emotions, and motivation influence how individuals form and maintain interpersonal relationships. (Barnes, 2007) Social psychology, in particular, provides insight into how social norms, attitudes, and group perceptions can influence social interactions and connections between individuals. (Amit, 2001)

Furthermore, neuroscience plays an important role in social chemistry by uncovering the neurological mechanisms underlying social interactions. (Chaffey, 2015) Social neuroscience studies, for example, examine how the brain processes social information, such as reading facial expressions, understanding nonverbal cues, and responding to others' emotions. Through brain imaging techniques, such as fMRI and EEG, researchers can identify brain areas involved in empathy, social bonding, and decision-making in social contexts. This research helps explain how neural connections and neurochemicals, such as oxytocin and serotonin, influence social behaviour and emotional bonds between individuals. (Brynjolfsson, 2000)

Additionally, network analysis is a key component of social chemistry studies, allowing researchers to map and analyse the structure of social relationships within various groups and communities. (Chaudhury, 2002) Using network analysis tools, such as Social Network Analysis (SNA), researchers can identify connection patterns between individuals, understand the role of centrality, and measure the strength and depth of relationships within a social network. (DeLone, 2003) This analysis provides insights into how information, support, and influence spread through social networks, (Henderson, 1999) as well as how an individual's position within a network can affect their access to resources and opportunities. (Heeks, 2008)

Social chemistry also takes into account contextual factors that influence social interactions, including culture, physical environment, and technology. (Kotler, 2016) In the cultural context, values, norms, and cultural practices can shape how people interact and build relationships. (Kraemer, 2002) For example, a collectivist culture may emphasize the importance of group connections and loyalty, while an individualist culture may place more emphasis on autonomy and personal freedom. The physical environment also plays an important role in social chemistry, with factors such as physical space, architectural design, and infrastructure influencing opportunities for social interaction and the quality of relationships formed. (Laudon K. C., 2021)

Technology, in particular, has profoundly changed the landscape of social chemistry. Social media, digital communication platforms, and networking technologies have expanded the reach and scale of social connections, allowing individuals to form and maintain relationships across geographic and temporal boundaries. (Pavlou, 2006) However, technology also presents new challenges, such as the risk of social isolation, the spread of misinformation, and negative impacts on mental health. (Molla, 2005)

The Meranti Islands, an archipelago in the southern part of Riau Province, have long been known as the "National Sago Granary." With a sago forest area of 210,000 hectares, Meranti is the largest producer of sago in Indonesia, making a significant contribution to the national economy. In 2021, Meranti produced approximately 100,000 tons of sago flour, accounting for 30% of national production, solidifying its position as a leading sago producer. The sago forests in Meranti cover about 70% of the total land area, making it an extremely abundant and strategic natural resource.

This great potential is also supported by the existence of 13 varieties of sago, with the "Meranti Unggul" variety being the most popular due to its high quality and production levels. It is this quality that makes Meranti sago sought after not only in the domestic market but also internationally. The demand for sago continues to grow, both domestically and internationally, with sago being processed into various products such as sago flour, sago noodles, biscuits, and bioethanol. The economic opportunities are vast, ranging from the development of the sago processing industry to promising export markets. (Khosrow-Pour, 2006)

One of the biggest opportunities is the development of the downstream sago industry in Meranti, which is still largely traditional. There is great potential to develop downstream industries such as modified sago flour, bioplastics, and bioethanol. This development will not only add value to sago products but also create new jobs and improve the welfare of local communities. Furthermore, the demand for sago from Asian countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea continues to rise, opening up highly promising export opportunities for Meranti sago. This provides a significant opportunity for foreign exchange earnings and strengthens Meranti's position in international markets.

Agroecotourism also presents a highly attractive economic opportunity. The exotic natural beauty of the Meranti Islands, along with its unique sago processing culture, can serve as a major tourism draw. The development of sago agroecotourism can increase the income of local communities while simultaneously introducing Meranti sago to the international stage. (Porter, 2001) Tourists could learn directly about the

sago processing process from upstream to downstream, enjoy processed sago products, and experience the local natural beauty and culture.

However, the challenges faced are significant. One of the main challenges is the traditional sago processing technology. The inefficient process and considerable waste generated are issues that need to be addressed. The adoption of modern technology in sago processing could improve efficiency, product quality, and reduce waste. Additionally, limited access to capital for sago farmers remains a barrier. Easy and affordable access to capital would greatly help sago farmers increase their productivity and the quality of their sago.

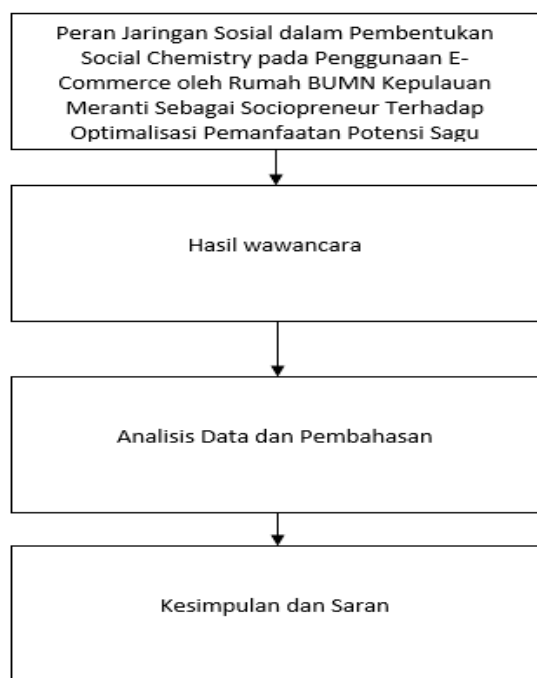
Human resource development is also key to addressing these challenges. Training and mentoring for sago farmers are essential to enhance their knowledge and skills in sago cultivation and processing. With adequate knowledge and skills, sago farmers in Meranti will be able to increase the productivity and quality of their sago, which in turn will improve their welfare.

This study is an extension of a previous study titled "Strategi Pembangunan Perniagaan Melalui Jaringan Sosial Di Kalangan Usahawan Asnaf Di Pantai Timur Malaysia", which concluded that the level of social networking among the entrepreneurs was quite high, with an average score of 3.95. The study concluded that there is still much room for improvement in the social networks of these entrepreneurs. The importance of social networks can certainly help develop and sustain their businesses.

The aim of this study is to understand the Role of Social Networks in the Formation of Social Chemistry in the Use of E-Commerce by Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands as a Sociopreneur in Optimizing the Utilization of Sago Potential.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on phenomena that occur in reality. The researcher does not provide special treatment to the research object, as all events are systematically described, with facts and characteristics of the object being presented accurately (Sudaryono, 2021). Data sources include interviews with informants, observations, and documentation during the research process. Secondary data is obtained through document analysis from books, journals, news articles, social media, and official websites. The following are the stages of this research:



Result and Discussion

The role of social networks in the formation of social chemistry in the use of e-commerce is both important and complex. Social networks, which include social media platforms, online communities, and discussion forums, provide a space for individuals to interact, share experiences, and build relationships based on trust and shared interests. In the context of e-commerce, social chemistry refers to the interpersonal dynamics and sense of connection that occur between sellers and buyers, as well as among platform users themselves.

First, social networks allow sellers to build and maintain their reputation through reviews, testimonials, and content shared by satisfied customers. Positive reviews from other users help to establish trust with potential buyers, which is crucial in the e-commerce world where face-to-face interactions are absent. Second, social networks facilitate the rapid and wide spread of information. Users can easily share their experiences with a particular product or service, which can increase the visibility and popularity of the seller and attract more customers.

Furthermore, interactions within social networks can create a sense of community among users. Groups or discussion forums focused on specific interests or needs allow members to exchange information, advice, and recommendations. This not only helps buyers make more informed decisions, but also forms emotional bonds and loyalty to specific platforms or brands.

Social networks also allow e-commerce companies to interact directly with their customers, providing responsive and personalized customer service. Through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, companies can respond to questions, address complaints, and provide updates on new products in real-time. These interactions create positive social chemistry between the company and its customers, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In the formation of social chemistry, transparency and authenticity also play a crucial role. Users tend to trust and feel more connected to sellers or companies that are honest and transparent about their products or services. Authentic content, such as behind-the-scenes videos or stories from the company's founders, can strengthen the emotional bond between sellers and buyers.

This was expressed by one of the managers of Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands in an interview session with the researcher:

Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands uses social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to build connections with relevant stakeholders. We create dedicated groups and pages that focus on the topic of sago, where sago farmers, craftsmen, local SMEs, and consumers can interact, share information, and receive the latest updates.

Regarding the types of social media platforms most effective for building connections with the target audience, here is the information provided by the BUMN manager:

The most effective platforms are Facebook and WhatsApp. Facebook is used to reach a wider audience and facilitate public discussions, while WhatsApp is used for more direct and personal communication with specific group members.

Concerning the strategy used by Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands to encourage interaction and collaboration among stakeholders via social media, here is the information shared by the manager:

We encourage interaction by hosting online discussions, webinars, and Q&A sessions that involve experts and stakeholders. In addition, we frequently hold contests and challenges that invite active participation from the community.

On the other hand, regarding how Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands handles customer complaints and inquiries on social media, here is the information provided:

We have a dedicated team responsible for handling customer complaints and inquiries. This team is responsive and strives to provide satisfactory solutions or answers quickly. They also have guidelines for managing various types of complaints

to ensure that responses remain consistent and professional.

Finally, regarding Rumah BUMN Meranti's Islands strategy for leveraging social media to build an active and supportive online community around sago products, here is the information shared with the researcher:

We utilize social media by creating groups and pages that focus on sago products, where members can share experiences, tips, and ideas. We also hold online events such as live streaming sessions and workshops to increase engagement and foster a sense of community. We also encourage participation by recognizing and rewarding members who actively contribute.

The role of social networks in the formation of social chemistry in the use of e-commerce by Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands as a sociopreneur for optimizing the utilization of sago potential shows a significant synergy between digital technology and social dynamics. Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands leverages social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to establish strong connections with various stakeholders, including sago farmers, craftsmen, local SMEs, and consumers. In this effort, they create dedicated groups and pages focusing on the topic of sago, providing a space for community members to interact, share information, and receive the latest updates. These interactions are further strengthened through online discussions, webinars, and Q&A sessions that involve experts and stakeholders, creating a collaborative forum that supports the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Moreover, Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands encourages active community participation through contests and challenges, which not only increase engagement but also strengthen the sense of belonging among members. A dedicated team handles customer complaints and inquiries, ensuring that interactions remain positive and constructive, with quick responses and satisfactory solutions. This approach reflects the principles of social chemistry, where the quality of interpersonal relationships and positive social interactions can enhance community cohesion and collective trust.

Additionally, this initiative includes the creation of groups and pages focused on sago products, where community members can share experiences, tips, and ideas. Online events such as live streaming and workshops add value by increasing engagement and fostering a sense of togetherness. Recognition and rewards given to active members contribute to motivation and ongoing participation, further strengthening existing social networks.

In the context of social chemistry theory, these interactions build a supportive social environment where relationships between individuals are optimized through effective communication and empathy. This theory emphasizes the importance of harmonious and constructive interactions in forming positive social chemistry, which in turn can improve the effectiveness of collaboration and innovation. By leveraging e-commerce and social networks, Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands not only promotes sago products but also develops a dynamic and sustainable ecosystem, where the potential of sago can be optimized through the synergy of community and technology.

Conclusion

The role of social networks in the formation of social chemistry in the use of e-commerce by Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands as a sociopreneur for optimizing the utilization of sago potential shows significant synergy between digital technology and social dynamics. Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands has successfully leveraged social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to establish close connections with various stakeholders, including sago farmers, craftsmen, local SMEs, and consumers, through dedicated groups, pages, online discussions, webinars, and Q&A sessions. Active community participation is also encouraged through contests and challenges, which strengthen the sense of belonging among members. With this approach, Rumah BUMN Meranti Islands not only promotes sago products but also creates a dynamic and sustainable ecosystem, where the potential of sago can be optimized through the synergy of community and technology. These harmonious and constructive interactions reflect the principles of social chemistry, enhancing community cohesion, collective trust, and the effectiveness of collaboration and innovation.

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Author Contributions

The principal author of this study is Yusmar Yusuf, who was responsible for designing the research, collecting and analyzing data, and writing the manuscript. Other authors, Rd.

Siti Sofro Sidiq, Resdati, and Berkah Bahagiana, also contributed to data collection and analysis and provided input during the manuscript writing process.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that could have influenced the results of this research. The authors did not receive any funding or support from parties with interests in the outcome of this study.

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