



# Rationality of Informal Sector Vendor Groups in Maintaining Business

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## ABSTRACT

Informal sector vendors have now penetrated every city. This phenomenon is interesting to study further, especially their rational efforts to maintain their business. This study aims to determine how the rationality of informal sector vendor groups works in running and maintaining their business. Studying rationality becomes important because, for base consideration, it is important that they run in the group so that they are capable of maintaining their efforts until the moment. This study uses a social definition paradigm with a qualitative approach and a case study research type. The data collection methods used are in-depth interviews and observations. Data analysis uses interactive model analysis with data validity checks by triangulation. The study results show that informal sector vendors do not run informal sector vendors individually and separately, but their vendors are run in groups. The existence of these groups is important because they can help each other or help each other, support each other's vendors by maintaining harmony and mutual respect between each other so that they can run and maintain their business. The rationality of informal sector vendors is included in the type of value rational action (Werk Rational).

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## 1. Introduction

The growth of the informal sector can be analyzed from both negative and positive sides. From the negative side, the development of the informal sector is often considered to disrupt traffic, the beauty of the city, and cleanliness. The existence of the informal sector is often considered to disrupt the smooth flow of traffic in urban areas so local government officials always try to regulate it. Efforts to regulate it often meet with resistance from informal sector vendors. Demonstrations by informal sector vendors protesting efforts to regulate informal sector vendors are often found and often end in clashes between local government officials and vendor actors (Fajri And Suasti, 2018).

Many local governments still do not anticipate the development and unavailability of vendor premises for informal sector vendor actors, especially street vendors, in urban areas. This impacts urban areas where many community activities are always used as vendor locations for street vendors because these areas are considered strategic for developing their business. Often regarded as strategic areas include residential areas, trade, offices, and other public facilities. Unorganized vendor premises with diverse physical forms and a haphazard impression are considered to disrupt the beauty of urban areas that have been arranged with careful planning. According to the local government, street vendor activities in strategic areas will reduce the quality of the urban environment which should be neatly arranged and kept clean (Lutfiana and Rahaju, 2022).

Viewed from the positive side, the development of the informal sector is often considered a buffer economy (Farraz and Fathiah, 2021) and has been able to independently create a new field of work to reduce the number of unemployed and provide necessities for the community, especially for those at the lower middle economic level. In this case, the informal sector has been able to become a people's economy because its survival has managed to survive the economic crisis. The informal sector has proven to be able to become one of the economic activities that has slowly begun to recover due to the economic crisis in 1998. During the economic crisis, the role of the informal sector became important as an alternative provider of employment when development programs were still unable to employ in the formal sector (Aditiya and Wildana, 2023 ).

Regardless of the negative and positive aspects related to the development of informal sector vendors in urban areas, one interesting phenomenon that can be studied in more depth is that informal sector vendors can develop their vendors and are also able to face the dynamics of tight vendor competition in urban areas. Informal sector vendors can be one of the safety valves of the economy because they can provide jobs, absorb labour, and develop community entrepreneurship in urban areas. The ability of informal sector vendors to maintain their vendors is supported by the development of community rationality related to the ability to make choices for vendor opportunities, supported by the courage to try something new, the existence of social rationality shown by behaviour inviting people to open vendors, imitating vendors processes, and the existence of opportunities for joint vendors choices, both with friends and family (Sayrani, 2018).

The ability of informal sector vendors to maintain their vendors cannot be separated from the rationality and strength of their vendor networks. People choose to run informal sector vendors as a rational choice or consideration and in developing their vendors they form social networks and have strategies to maintain their vendors. Meanwhile, the strength of the informal sector vendors network is because social groups have been built with the values they practice (Hayat, 2016).

The phenomenon of the rationality of informal sector vendors, according to Weber's thinking, the rationalization process includes a person's thinking process in taking action and choosing the tools and goals to be achieved. The choice of tools and goals is based on existing customs, regulations, and laws and is applied comprehensively from various larger structures. A movement cannot be called a social action if the movement does not have subjective meaning for the individual who carries out the movement and for others (Ritzer, 2018). Therefore, a person's behaviour can only be a social action if the person has an awareness of what is being done and can be analyzed based on the intent of his actions, the motives for his actions, the feelings experienced, and the consideration of the actions that are linked and oriented to the behaviour of others.

## 2. Literature Review

Weber explains that there are five main characteristics of action (Johnson, 1994), namely: a) Real human action and has subjective meaning; b) Real human action, subjective, and inward; c) Human action that has a positive influence based on conditions and situations, the action is an intentional action, repeated, and has a tacit agreement meaning; d) Human action that is directed, either to an individual or several other individuals; and e) Human action that is carried out cannot be separated from paying attention to the directed actions carried out by other parties. Furthermore, Weber places more emphasis on subjective understanding (*verstehen*), namely as a method to gain a valid knowledge of the subjective meanings of social action (Johnson, 1994). This understanding is not only in the form of introspection, namely a person's knowledge of the motives of his actions or subjective meaning but also understanding the subjective meaning of the actions of others. Understanding the meaning of subjective behaviour is very important so that biased interpretations can be avoided in giving individual meaning to the behaviour or actions of others.

Weber developed the concept of rationality which is the key to understanding and analyzing subjective meaning and becomes the basis for comparing various types of different social actions. Furthermore, Weber emphasized that social action activities are directed at a social system depending on the goals of individuals who have their characteristics and are considered rationally. These considerations include reactions that emerge as a rational attitude towards various tools to achieve their goals, the relationship between various individual goals and the intended results, and considerations in interpreting an important meaning and goals that are relatively potentially different from one another. Weber groups them into four types of social actions (Johnson, 1994)

First, Instrumental Rational Action (*Zwerk rational*). Instrumental rational action is the highest form of rational action because it involves various considerations and conscious choices about the purpose of the action itself and the tools used in achieving the goal. In this case, each individual is seen as having various goals that they want to achieve, and with careful consideration, they choose between these goals. Furthermore, individuals assess and consider the tools they will use to achieve the goals that have been set.

Second, Value Rational Action (*Werk rational*). This type of rational action is almost the same as instrumental rational because an individual uses various mature and reasonable considerations and has a clear goal. However, what distinguishes it from the previous one is how the values underlying a social action are carried out, namely the existing tools are still based on considerations directed at consciousness but the goals that are determined already contain individual values that are absolute or cannot be changed in them.

This type of social action tends to consider benefits rather than paying attention to the goals to be achieved. The thing that is strong at this point is that the resulting social action has a match between the actions taken and the values or norms that have been running in the society itself. These values or norms have many meanings, such as culture, religion, and values that have become beliefs for each individual in society.

Third, Affective Action. This type of social action is different from the type of instrumental rational action and value rational, where the actor has awareness in deciding with certain considerations. This type of action leads to spontaneous reactions based on emotions or feelings and is not an action based on conscious planning or intellectual reflection. In other words, in short, affective action is an action based on spontaneity, a form of emotional expression from the individual and is not rational.

Fourth, Traditional Action. This type of social action is more based on the actions of a person who follows existing traditions or customs and has become a tradition passed down from ancestors and tends to be standard, fixed, and difficult to change. Traditional actions do not consider intellectual reflection and awareness of a conscious plan, but only repeat habits that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Weber's social action theory is used as a basis for studying in depth the existence of informal sector groups in Ponorogo City. By using the understanding of the social action theory, it will be known how they take action in their groups to build vendors' strength and maintain harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships among group members.

### 3. Research Method

The paradigm used in this study leads to the Social Definition paradigm, which emphasizes that meaningful actions from individuals can be seen from how the activities or actions they carry out have subjective meaning or meaning, either intentionally or unintentionally, and are aimed at others (Ritzer, 2018). The approach used is a qualitative approach. The type of research used is a Case Study. A case study is a type of research that investigates in depth an event, activity, process, or the existence of a group of

individuals. According to Yin (2012), a case study is a research strategy or review related to the investigation of a symptom that exists in real life. The symptom that exists in real life is studied as a real case by limiting both time and activity.

Related to the qualitative approach and the need for data or information, the data or information collection technique uses open interviews and direct observation. For data analysis using the Interactive Model (Miles, et al., 2014) and checking the validity of the data using Triangulation, namely source triangulation and method triangulation and using a relatively long time in the field. The length of time in the field to understand the real conditions more deeply and the collection of data and information at different times enriches the data and information obtained from the research subjects.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Research Result

Angkringan vendors are some of the vendors that have developed greatly and have their characteristics. They carry out their vendors using a wooden cart with wheels from noon or afternoon until midnight or early morning. The location of the Angkringan vendors is usually on the sidewalk or in the front yard of the shop. The Angkringan cart is covered with a tarpaulin from the bottom front to the roof or some reach the bottom back of the cart similar to a tent. The front and back sides of the cart and the left side are provided with seats for buyers, while the surrounding yard is cleaned and provided with plastic mats for buyers who like to sit below or lesehan. The side of the cart that is close to the trader is used for spoons, various retail cigarettes, sugar, and coffee. The sugar and coffee reserves, cigarette reserves and other drinking materials are usually stored in the top drawer of the cart and the small drawer under the pile of food is used to store money. The back of the trader's seat is provided with two or more buckets of water which are used for the supply of clean water to be cooked and to wash dirty glasses.

Inside the cart, on the right side, there is a charcoal stove to heat water and above it, there are three large teapots. The three large teapots are the characteristics of Angkringan and are different from local coffee shops. The three large teapots contain one boiled water, one ginger drink, and the other tea drink. On the left side, the three large teapots are usually filled with rice packages, side dishes such as *ceker* (chicken feet), tempeh and tofu bacem and several types of satay, such as intestine satay and quail egg satay. The wrapped rice provided is usually called *sego kucing*, because the contents are relatively less, in the form of rice with anchovy chili sauce or rice with fried tempeh mixture.

The informal sector trader group (angkringan vendors) migrants in Ponorogo City are vendor actors who never give up and have the spirit to face economic conditions. Before the vendors who came from outside the city opened vendors in the urban area of Ponorogo, the majority of them already had experience working and/or entrepreneurship in other cities, either working independently or joining other groups (Slamet and Harsono, 2013; Santoso, 2018). When their vendors experienced a decline,

many competitors, and even went bankrupt, they remained enthusiastic about looking for vendor opportunities in other cities to meet the economic needs of their families.

Previous vendor's experience, never-give-up spirit, and efforts to open other vendors can be described as expressed by informal sector vendors below:

*Sndy said "I used to run an angkringan vendor in Solo for about four years. Because in Solo there are many angkringan vendors, and many competitors and the results are lacking, finally I chose to move to another city. Initially, in Ponorogo I did not immediately open vendors, but first saw the situation. I saw that the people of Ponorogo liked to hang out every night, so on average the coffee shops were busy and had many buyers. Finally, I dared to decide to open an angkringan vendor because it was different from the coffee shops in Ponorogo".*

*Wnrn said "I used to run an angkringan vendor in Solo. In Solo, there were already many people selling angkringan and it was difficult to develop. When I got information from my brother-in-law who had been running an angkringan vendor for quite a long time in Ponorogo, that in Ponorogo, angkringan was very popular but not many people had opened an angkringan vendor. After discussing it with my family, in 2002 I finally went to Ponorogo and opened an angkringan vendor".*

*Slmt said "I used to run a herbal medicine vendor in the city of Semarang. Because it went bankrupt, I kept trying to find other vendor opportunities. The possible vendor was angkringan because it had been run by my wife's family for a long time. Because there were already many angkringan in Yogyakarta and the surrounding areas, I finally tried to go to another city that could develop angkringan. Around 2004 I finally started angkringan vendors in Ponorogo. Because at that time almost all angkringan vendors were busy and in demand so they could continue to grow".*

*Rnt said "Before this angkringan vendors, I used to sell fried rice in Makasar. Because living there is expensive and the competition for vendors is very tight, I finally chose to return to Java and join my brother (Mr. Wnrn) who has been running an angkringan in Ponorogo. When I was still helping at Mr Wnrn's angkringan, I learned about the conditions in Ponorogo and the opportunities to develop The angkringan vendors were still wide open, finally I dared to open my angkringan vendors in 2004".*

*AW said "After a long time joining my friend's angkringan vendors in Malang, I wanted to be able to open my angkringan vendors. When I visited Ponorogo, I hung out at Pak Sndy's angkringan. After chatting for a long time and getting to know each other, I was given information that angkringan in Ponorogo was still popular and the results were quite good. Finally I agreed to join Pak Sndy's angkringan group. After preparing everything, around the end of 2001 I opened an angkringan vendor, becoming a member of Pak Sndy".*

*Tnt said "I used to run an angkringan vendor in Yogyakarta, and I lived in my uncle's family's house. There, there were already a lot of competitors in the angkringan, and the longer I felt embarrassed always staying at my uncle's house, I planned to move my vendors to another city. When I returned to my hometown in Bayat Klaten, I met Mr Sndy (a close relative) who had been in Ponorogo City for a long time running an angkringan vendor, then invited me to join in opening an angkringan vendor, because the vendor's opportunity was*

*still very busy. Finally, around the year 2000 I went with Mr. Sndy to Ponorogo. Initially, I was still helping Mr. Sndy's angkringan. After two months and knowing the busy situation of the angkringan vendors, I intended to open my angkringan and that intention was approved by Mr. Sndy. Finally, I opened my angkringan, automatically becoming a member of Mr. Sndy".*

*Ysnt said " I used to be a snack distributor in Purwanto, before running a food stall vendors in Ponorogo. Because the results were uncertain and minimal, I wanted to have my vendors even though it was small, have a permanent place of vendors, and get daily income. When hanging out and chatting for a long time with Mr. Slmt, I was invited to join his food stall group, finally in 2007 I started running food stall vendors, automatically becoming a subordinate of Mr. Slmt's food stall group".*

Based on various information from the data mining results above, it is known that informal sector vendors have carried out social actions, because the actions taken have awareness of what is being done and have meaning based on the intention of the action, have motives for action, feelings experienced, and consideration of actions if associated and oriented to the behaviour of others (Ritzer, 2018). Understanding the social actions of informal sector vendors is not just in the form of introspection, namely a person's understanding of the motives of their actions or subjective meaning, but also understanding the subjective meaning of the actions of others (Johnson, 1994).

Social actions carried out by informal sector vendors have mature and reasonable considerations before they decide to run their angkringan vendors. They have conducted a direct proof of various vendor opportunity information that they obtained by observing real conditions in the field, direct proof of the still crowded buyers who visit the vendors in the field, and up to proof of the many strategic locations to open the vendors. The social actions of informal sector vendors that are full of mature considerations are called rational social actions by Weber, namely social action activities that are directed at a social system that has a rational nature and considerations. These considerations include reactions that emerge as a rational attitude towards various tools to achieve goals, as well as considerations in interpreting an important meaning and goals that are relatively different from one another (Johnson, 1994).

The rational social actions of informal sector vendors are actions with choices based on rational and reasonable considerations closely related to the goals they want to achieve. The goal of migrant angkringan vendors opening vendors in Ponorogo City is to improve the economic conditions or welfare of their families. The description of income level of angkringan vendors and the improvement in economic conditions or welfare levels of migrant angkringan vendors can be described as follows:

*Sndy said, "The average daily net income is Rp. 200,000 ... Alhamdulillah I can pay for my child's college education .... From the results of my vendors, now I have one house and two motorbikes".*

*Wnrn said that "Around Rp. 40,000 when it's quiet, but when it's busy, especially when there are crowded events (Saturday Night, Grebeg Suro, Idul Fitri Night Market) around Rp.*

*140,000 ... It's been able to meet the daily needs of the family and send children to school ... Not bad, now I have three houses and two motorbikes".*

*Slmt said "The net result is around Rp. 150,000 per day ... Alhamdulillah, compared to the previous vendors, this angkringan stall vendor can improve my family's economic condition ... Now I have land, three houses, and two motorbikes".*

*Rnt said, "The average daily result is IDR 200,000... It has improved and can meet the family's daily living needs... Thank God, I have been able to buy two motorbikes".*

*AW said, "Between Rp. 80,000 to Rp. 150,000 a day ... Alhamdulillah, this angkringan vendor is getting better, it can meet my daily needs".*

*Tnt said, "Between Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 80,000 ... Alhamdulillah it's quite a lot and after I got married I could also meet my daily needs".*

*Ysnt said that "Around Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000 ... Alhamdulillah, now my family's economic condition is better compared to my previous job. From the results of the angkringan I have been able to buy 65 square meters of land".*

The information that has been submitted by the research subjects above has provided a real explanation that informal sector vendors have carried out rational social actions with rational, mature, and reasonable calculations in making decisions to develop their vendors in Ponorogo, and they believe that their vendors can provide economic improvement or welfare for their families, which is shown by their ability to meet daily needs, send children to school, have more than one motorized vehicle, and even be able to buy land and have more than one house. This can be interpreted that informal sector vendors have considered their actions rationally and reasonably in running and developing their vendors in Ponorogo City to improve the economic conditions or welfare of their families.

## **Discussion**

Informal sector vendors (angkringan vendors) are not native residents of Ponorogo but are immigrants from cities outside Ponorogo Regency or called migrant vendors. Although informal sector vendors have been able to spread on every sidewalk of the main road in the centre of Ponorogo City, they run their vendors not separately as individuals but by forming trader groups. An informal sector vendors group is chaired by a trader and has several group members who are usually still related. Awareness to form such trader groups is important for them because they must be able to work together, help each other or help each other, and support each other's smooth vendors so that their vendors can continue to survive, be able to face competition and provide good results to improve the economic conditions of their families.

Informal sector vendors did not directly open vendors when they first entered Ponorogo City. They had obtained various information related to vendor opportunities in Ponorogo City, both from relatives in their hometown and the results of discussions that were not short with migrant informal sector vendors who had long opened vendors in Ponorogo City. They conducted real observations in the field and at the same time worked together to find a strategic location for their vendors. Sndy and Slmt conducted a survey and observed the habits of the Ponorogo community before deciding to open an informal



sector vendor in Ponorogo City. Wnrn, Rnt, and Tnt did not immediately open vendors but initially still joined their relatives' angkringan and at the same time observed the real conditions in the field and vendor opportunities before deciding to open their own in Ponorogo City. Meanwhile, AW and Ysnt had received a lot of information about vendor opportunities that were still wide open before deciding to open vendors in Ponorogo City and they proved these opportunities themselves.

Regarding the selection of a location to open vendors and at the same time a permit to be able to occupy the location of the member's vendors, it has been done by Sndy, Wnrn and Slmt, as the head of the trader group. The actions taken by the group leader to his group members are a form of responsibility to ensure the smooth running of the group members' vendors so that they can provide improvements to the economic conditions of their families. According to Weber's Theory of Social Action, rational social actions carried out by informal sector vendors to run and develop vendors are classified as *Value Rational Actions* or *Work Rational* (Johnson, 1994), because to achieve the goal of improving the economic conditions of families through informal sector vendors, they have made mature and reasonable considerations and the actions they carry out are based on values that are believed in and run within the informal sector trader group.

The values underlying the rational social actions carried out by migrant informal sector vendors are directly related to the existing culture, namely a) The value of caring for helping each other, b) The value of harmony in running vendors together and supporting each other's vendors, and c) The value of tolerance that respects each other among angkringan vendors.

### **Value of Caring**

The value of caring in the form of mutual assistance efforts that grow in the kinship of migrant informal sector vendors (angkringan) in Ponorogo City, starting from the group leader who provides information related to vendors opportunities to taking responsibility for finding a strategic vendor location as well as obtaining permission from the party who has a front yard to be occupied by the informal sector vendors. Furthermore, the group leader also takes responsibility for housing for group members who are not yet able to rent their own house or boarding house, lends carts to group members who are not yet able to make their own, and provides assistance if there are problems with their vendors.

The values of care that have been understood and implemented in the informal migrant trader group as mentioned above, apart from being inseparable from the closeness of the kinship of the vendors, are also influenced by Javanese culture. The traditions that have developed in Javanese culture still place great emphasis on kinship patterns and genealogy (Birsyada, et al., 2016). Javanese people, because of their common descent or blood ties, tend to feel that they share the same fate. As a result, they finally formed an informal organization as a Javanese community. They were able to leave their homes, but it was difficult for them to leave the culture that they had been practising (Laksono, 2014).

The Javanese people's habits in living their lives prioritize good relationships with others, not doing excessive or strange things, and just acting normally. Relationships with others are often built without discriminating even though they are not from their own family. The impact of this habit is that they become quick to help others. Helping each other is done because there is an awareness that life cannot be done alone, and may one day also require the help of others (Susetyo, et al., 2014).

### **Value of Harmony**

The informal sector vendors (angkringan) of migrants that have developed in Ponorogo City are not run individually or alone, but they form a group. An informal sector group is chaired by a head of angkringan vendors and has several members. They establish kinship relationships and support each other's vendors so that their vendors can run and develop well so that they can provide improvements to their family's economy.

The value of harmony is manifested in the form of a habit of supporting each other's vendors that has developed not only within a group of vendors but also between vendors from different groups. The habit of supporting each other's vendors begins with determining locations that are not close to each other so that the existing vendors' locations can spread across every sidewalk of the main road in Ponorogo City. In addition, when they run out of food, snacks and drink ingredients that are served, they are allowed to take food, snacks and drink ingredients from other vendors, even though they are not in the same group. Likewise, if the group leader who provides food and snacks is on leave and is not producing because he has returned to his hometown, then his members are allowed to take food and snacks from the other group leaders. The implementation of the value of harmony between vendors has resulted in informal sector vendors continuing to run and develop well and being able to provide an increase in the economy of their vendors.

The value of harmony that is manifested in the habit of helping each other is inseparable from the customs of Javanese society which prioritizes harmony and a sense of shared destiny. According to Fitri et al (2022), in Javanese merchants' associations, there is an expression *tuna satak bathi sanak* (even if you lose money, your relatives will profit) which means that the happiness of a trader is not measured by luck in financial form but the number of relatives or partners is counted as a profit in vendors. Therefore, regarding a trader when he runs out and takes food, snacks, and drink ingredients from another group of vendors, although in terms of financial gain, it is not as much as if they sell it themselves, they prioritize the kinship that has been established well and prioritize the values of helping each other among them.

### **Tolerance Value**

The values of tolerance and mutual respect among migrant informal sector vendors (angkringan), both within one trader group and with other groups, have grown well. Vendors' locations that are not close to each other, mutual assistance efforts among fellow vendors, and the willingness not to sell because of attending a trader's celebration even though they are not in the same group, are forms of tolerance or mutual respect that

have grown in informal sector trader groups in Ponorogo City. One form of tolerance and mutual respect is when Tnt, a member of the Sndy trader group, held his wedding celebration in his hometown, which was attended not only by members of the Sndy group but also by all vendors in Ponorogo City at that time who took time off to attend his wedding celebration.

The common fate of being migrant informal sector vendors has formed a strong bond of brotherhood and kinship among them. The vendor's attitudes that reflect this harmony cannot be separated from the attitudes and values of *tepo sliro* (tolerance, mutual respect, and tolerance). The value of brotherhood among them is a special and primary consideration in running a vendor (Fitri et al., 2022). *Bathi sanak* (increasing brotherhood) is a fundamental value in running vendors because increasing brotherhood will increase the fortune that will be received.

## 5. Conclusion

Research conclusions that can be drawn based on the findings and discussion can be described as follows, Migrant informal sector vendors (angkringan vendors) run their businesses in Ponorogo City, not individually or separately from one another, but they form a group. The existence of this group of vendors cannot be separated from the values that underlie social actions in the kinship relationships between them. The social actions of vendors in deciding to run and develop their business in Ponorogo City can be classified as Rational Value Actions (Werk Rational), namely actions to achieve goals with mature, reasonable consideration, and based on values that are believed within the group.

The existence of groups of migrant informal sector vendors (angkringan vendors) has value in maintaining the continuity of their businesses in Ponorogo City. Kinship relationships, whether based on marriage or social kinship, have fostered the habit of helping each other or helping each other (the value of caring), supporting each other's businesses (the value of harmony), and mutual appreciation and respect between vendors (the value of tolerance). They have understood and implemented these values, thereby supporting the smooth development of their business in Ponorogo City.

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