

UDC 332

**WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN  
VEGETABLE TRADERS IN INCREASING FAMILY INCOME IN THE INPRES  
NAIKOTEN I KUPANG MARKET**

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**ABSTRACT**

Women in the Informal Sector (Case Study of the Role of Women Vegetable Traders in Increasing Family Income at the Inpres Naikoten I Market, Kupang). This research was conducted at the Naikoten I Kupang Presidential Instruction Market which is one of the largest markets in Kupang City. First; The aim of the study was to determine the role of women as vegetable traders in increasing family income and; second; to determine the level of income earned in meeting the needs of family life. This type of qualitative research with a case study approach, data collection is done by observation, and interviews. Data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively. Based on the results of the study, it showed that the role of housewives as vegetable traders in increasing income and meeting the needs of family life was very good, their position was not only as housewives but as breadwinners helping their husbands. This role is carried out optimally by utilizing relatively small business capital in buying and selling vegetables with the intensity of the time every week the market opens without holidays except for religious days and religious holidays and in sick conditions. With the level of income obtained, it is able to meet the minimum needs, namely the primary and secondary needs of the family, namely clothing, food and shelter), the need for children's education and other needs according to their abilities.

**KEY WORDS**

Housewives, informal sector, income.

Humans naturally have individual dimensions and social dimensions, the individual dimension is related to motivation and personal desire to improve and meet the needs of his life on a regular basis while living in this world. Humans are involved in many sectors and business activities to meet their standard of living and welfare. The second dimension is the social dimension, in his life he needs other people. Humans need a pattern of interaction in meeting their needs. In general, it can be said that humans are sociologically dependent on one another (Soekanto, 2007).

One aspect of development related to peme activitiesThe need for subsistence is the economic sector. The economic sector has many aspects of activity, one of which is the informal sector. Informal sectoris the economic sector consisting of small-scale business units, which produce and distribute sand services, with the main objective of creating employment opportunities and opportunities to earn income for the actors. The constraints that are often faced by this sector are limitations, physical or labor, as well as skills. The informal sector in developing countries grows and develops as a result of the high rate of increase in the labor force, as well as the inability of the formal sector to absorb it.

In the context of fulfilling the necessities of life and welfare, every human being, whether individually, in groups or in a community, has the opportunity to obtain work according to his abilities and finances, resources, manpower in terms of increasing the income and welfare of his family. In this relationship women are part of the individual, social and family and community who have the same opportunity to get that opportunity in order to realize their welfare. Women have to work, whether they are married or not and married or not as well as other socio-cultural barriers.

The role of women in efforts to fulfill household needs is also influenced by the socio-cultural structure of society. Culture within the framework of the social system of society is a

form of communal identity and becomes a social symbol. Gender is also a work of culture so that social reality is heavily influenced by culture. In another perspective, culture is a source of problems for gender justice. On the other hand, culture in the study of social science is the basis for constructing a just and egalitarian social system. The issue of gender justice, which is based on the order of values, is very dependent on how these values are formed in society, so that it requires a cultural work to shape existing values in society, which are in accordance with gender fair values.

Informal sector is the economic sector consisting of small-scale business units, which produce and distribute goods and services, with the main objective of creating employment opportunities and opportunities to earn income for the actors. The constraints that are often faced by this sector are limitations, physical or labor, as well as skills. The informal sector in developing countries grows and develops as a result of the high rate of increase in the labor force, as well as the inability of the formal sector to absorb it (Faried 2021),.

Informal sector business activities are part of the community's efforts to obtain jobs and income. In addition, business activities like this can be called a new business activity and employ a lot of people in the midst of society. In addition, this activity also does not require a workforce that has very high human resources, including levels of education and skills, but what is more important is motivation and desire to work and be able to earn income.

The main characteristics of informal economic activity according to Kurniawan and Ardianti (2014), have several things, namely work activities do not have a specific organization, do not have certain rules, work time is not limited, business activity capital can also be large or small depending on personal financial capabilities, do not use formal means and do not even have official permission.

According to (Reni Pratiwi, 2012), The informal sector is small-scale unofficial business units that produce and distribute goods and services without having a business permit and or location permit based on the provisions of the applicable laws and regulations. The informal sector is described as a small-scale business activity managed by individuals with a high degree of freedom in regulating how and where the business is run. The informal sector is also defined as a sector that does not receive assistance from the government; sectors that have not used economic assistance from the government even though the assistance is already available and sectors that have received economic assistance from the government but are not yet able to be independent.

Currently, business activities in the informal sector are important in the formulation of employment by the government. The sector is an alternative job opportunity that is able to accommodate workers without certain requirements such as education level and work skills. This is one of the main factors that eases labor entry into the sector and further establishes its presence as a buffer against labor oversupply. In some ways, the informal sector is more adaptable and less bothered by rigid operational management. During an economic recession, the informal sector, which is adaptive and flexible, still survives and is even able to develop business opportunities compared to large companies.

That with an increase in the income of the lower classes of society, there will be an increase in their standard of living. This situation is expected to contribute to increasing regional and national income. Therefore the role of the informal sector has an important part in realizing the goal of access to national development equity.

According to Rakhma, 2012), the characteristics of the informal economy;

- Irregular form of business activity;
- Small business size, utilizing simple technology;
- The organization of activities is based on the family work unit;
- Hours for work are not set, depending on the situation and conditions of crowds, rain, heat;
- To do his job the location is not fixed, move around;
- Efforts to serve certain groups of people do not have competitiveness;
- Lacks expertise and is based on specialized formal education;
- Less able to use linkages with other similar and larger businesses;

- Be innovative based on limited consumer needs and have resilience to change;
- Unreachable formal service system.

From the several characteristics that exist, it can be concluded that most of them have small capital; use simple facilities, business activities are not well organized, and there are few employees and are relatives or family members of the entrepreneur.

## METHODS OF RESEARCH

Judging from the problems, focus and objectives of this research, this type of research is a quantitative and qualitative research (Mixing method) with a case study approach (Alan, 1988). This research was conducted at the Naikoten I Presidential Instruction Market, Kupang. The duration of the research is two months, from October to November 2022. In accordance with the object of the research, the subjects of this study are mothers who are married, have husbands and children who all day and year work as vegetable traders at the Inpres Naikoten Market. Kupang.

The informants studied were 25 people and the average age of the informants studied ranged from 35 years to 57 years. The informants live in Kupang City and are scattered in various sub-districts in Kupang City, namely 7 (seven people) living in Naikoten I Village, 6 (six people) living in Oepura Village, 3 (three people) living in Kuanino Village. 5 (five people) live in the Liliba Village and 4 (four people) live in the Oebufu Village.

Data is collected by observing, conducting interviews, group discussions. In conducting interviews, not all informants will be interviewed if the required data is considered sufficiently complete and valid and represents all informal informants using the snowball technique (Patton, 1990). The results of the research were analyzed descriptively quantitatively and qualitatively (Julia 1997).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at the Naikoten I Presidential Instruction Market, Kupang. Naikoten I Market which is the largest market in the city of Kupang and continues to experience growth from year to year, both in terms of market visitors, market mobility of sellers and traders and also from the physical development of buildings which the government continues to repair, maintain and add to, so that from from time to time both market visitors carrying out economic activities and traders feel comfortable from a security standpoint as well as from a mobility perspective of people and goods. The focus of this research is socio-economic activities in the informal sector which are carried out by women who are housewives and work as vegetable traders at the Inpres Naikoten I Kupang market.

Table 1 – Characteristics of informants from the aspect of age and position in the household

No	Age	Position in the household	Frequency	Percentage
1	35 - 38 years	Wife/housewife	4	16.00
2	39 - 42 years	Wife/housewife	5	20.00
3	43 – 45 years	Wife/housewife	5	20.00
4	46 – 50 years	Wife/housewife	5	20.00
5	53 – 57 years	Wife/housewife	6	24.00
	Amount	-	25	100%

Source: Primary Data, processed by the Author, 2022.

The informal sector, especially selling vegetables, is one of the work sectors that does not have to have reliable skills through an adequate educational process and human resources, but this sector requires more desire, high motivation to work. The informal sector also does not need a lot of financing or large capital to carry out its activities, as well as locations in business activities that do not require a large area, can move from place to place within a certain time of day and even at certain hours. The activities of vegetable traders carried out by housewives at the Inpres Naikoten I Kupang market also always change

places, if in the morning they are in a different place, in the afternoon and also in the evening they can also move places. Moreover, vegetable traders do not have tents to protect them from the hot sun or during the rainy season. The following table will describe the average age of the informants, their position and position in the household, as follows.

Based on the table, it shows that of the 25 respondents (100%), there were 3 informants (16.00%) married women aged between 35 and 38 years, 5 respondents (20%) aged 39 to 42 people, married women/families aged 43 to 45, 5 informants (20%) aged 46 to 50 years and 6 informants (24%) aged 53 to 57 years.

From the description above, it shows that women who work as vegetable traders and are domiciled as wives range in age from 35 to 57 years. According to the informant, "Young or old age is not a barrier to work, for us working as vegetable traders is a noble job earning a living helping husbands to increase family income and welfare. Even from selling vegetables we can meet the primary, secondary and educational needs of our children. We are grateful to be given health which allows us to have strong immune systems so that the activities of buying and selling vegetables do not experience daily difficulties. For us this job is very fun, we really enjoy it, so that we can survive to this day and we can make ends meet" (Interview with HR, RN and MN, November 25, 2022). In addition, the residence of housewives selling vegetables varies, not concentrated in certain sub-districts or regions (table 2).

Table 2 – Characteristics of informants from place of residence (living)

No	Residence	Frequency	Percentage
1	Naikoten I Kupang	7	28.00
2	Oepura Kupang	6	24.00
3	Quanio Kupang	3	12.00
4	Liliba Kupang	5	20.00
5	Oebufu Kupang	4	16.00
	Amount	25	100%

Source: Primary Data, processed by the Author, 2022.

The table above shows that 25 informants (100%), 7 informants (28%) live in Kelurahan Naiokoten I, 6 informants (26%) have residence in Oepura, 3 informants (12%) have residence in Kuanino, 5 (20%), informants live in Liliba and 4 informants (16%) informants live in Oebufu village.

Table 3 – Characteristics of informants from the aspect of Education Level

No	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate/not	-	-
2	Elementary School (SD)	2	8.00
3	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	12	48.00
4	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	11	44.00
5	College	-	-
	Amount	25	100%

Source: Primary Data, processed by the Author, 2022.

Based on the table above shows that there were 2 informants (8.00%) who had an elementary school education level, 12 informants (48.00%) had a junior high school education level and 11 informants (44.00%) had a high school education level/equivalent (44, 00%), while those with higher education do not exist. From these informants it is clear that housewives who sell vegetables at the Inpres Naikoten Market I Kupang have an adequate level of education, namely 92% have secondary education, junior high school/equivalent and high school/equivalent. This shows that with adequate resource capabilities, housewives can manage the purchase and sale of vegetables optimally, as well as manage their finances, so as to obtain a fairly good profit and have an impact on fulfilling the necessities of life which is quite adequate as well.

Table 5 – Housewife's husband's occupation

No	Work	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farmer	1	4.00
2	Fisherman	1	4.00
3	Carpentry	10	40.00
4	Masonry	12	48.00
5	Mechanic	1	4.00
	Amount	25	100%

Source: Primary Data, processed by the Author, 2022.

Based on the table above, it shows that out of 25 informants (100%), there was 1 person (4.%) whose husband worked as a farmer, 1 person (4%) worked as a fisherman, 10 (60%) as a carpenter, 12 people (44%) as bricklayers and 1 person (4%) as mechanics who work in the workshop. Variations in the work of husbands from housewives indicate that husbands are not unemployed but have a pretty good job even though the income they earn is small and is not sufficient for the family's needs. However, with the support of the wife, the husband's income can support family life.

In carrying out their daily activities, housewives sell vegetables every day for a week, from Monday to Saturday, while on Sunday they also sell vegetables, namely in the afternoon. It can even be said that this activity is carried out without holidays, except sick conditions and religious worship activities and religious holidays. The results showed that the vegetables sold came from various areas of Kupang Regency and Kupang City, namely from Takari, Camplong, Oesao, Naibonat, Oekabiti, Baun from West Kupang and from Kupang City including from Bakunase, Liliba, Baumata, Lasiana. The types of vegetables sold are red spinach, green spinach, green mustard and chicory, cabbage/cabbage, kale. Cassava, pumpkin shoots, pumpkin fruit.

Sociologically, to get vegetables to be sold at the market, women (housewives) go to various places to get vegetables. Usually there are those who are alone as well as in groups consisting of 2 to 3 people riding in pick-up vehicles. To obtain vegetables on a regular basis, vegetable traders work closely with vegetable farmers so they become regular customers, as well as transport vehicles that are also subscription pick-up vehicles, so that if they are needed at any time they do not experience difficulties.

In order to get various types of vegetables, women (housewives) do their activities in the afternoon to find and buy vegetables at the location of the vegetables, besides in the afternoon they also do it at 03.00 in the morning to look for vegetables and buy them from the farmers who are their customers. The capital for these business activities is not large, around Rp. 3,500,000 to 5,000,000 to buy vegetables from vegetable farmers per day. Vegetables are purchased in the form of logs using baskets and sacks. After the purchase is made, the vegetables are loaded into a rented vehicle, namely a pick-up car, which costs Rp. 300,000 (three hundred thousand rupiah). The cost of pick up vehicles of this size is paid jointly or jointly with vegetable buyers, consisting of two to three people.

The results of observations and interviews show that there has been an increase in the prices of various types of vegetables purchased by housewives from vegetable farmers. The high price of vegetables was also due to an increase in fertilizer and other operational costs. In addition, the increase in the price of fuel oil (BBM) also triggered an increase in the price of vegetables from farmers. Even though the area is quite far, whether in the afternoon or at night, housewives still make various efforts to find and buy vegetables from farmers and sell them to consumers at the Inpres Naikoten I Kupang market in order to make a living to meet the needs of their family by continuing to increase income from time to time.

In line with the description above, the following are statements from three informants:

"To meet the needs of our family we have to work to help our husbands, especially since the husband does not have a permanent job, the husband works as a handyman and the income is very limited and time is certainly not enough to meet the needs of the family, especially since we already have children and there are children who are studying well in Elementary, Middle and High School. We never complain at work, we really enjoy this job

and as vegetable sellers it is a very pleasant job because we definitely get money every day. This work also does not require large costs as initial capital and as vegetable traders we have been doing it for a long time, some of us have been doing this for dozens of years and some have only taken up this job five years ago" (Interview with Ms. MT, YHN, MR, November 24, 2022 )

The description above shows that to get the vegetables that housewives want, they have to look to various vegetable-producing centers, namely Camplong, Oekabiti, Oessao, Baun, West Kupang and at Bakunase Kota Kupang. Even though the time span is very far, expensive financing does not dampen the intention and enthusiasm of housewives to get vegetables, sell them, which then earn profits to meet their daily needs.

In order to get a large profit from the activity of buying and selling mayu vegetables, housewives must make careful calculations from the financing aspect, the financing in this case that is often done is the initial capital for buying vegetables, transportation costs and other costs that support activities. selling vegetables, namely paying for a place to sell or rent. Based on the results of the study, it was shown that selling vegetables by housewives at the Naikoten I Presidential Instruction market in Kupang earned significant income. Selling vegetables with various types, a housewife in her daily life sells vegetables such as kale, spinach, chicory and green mustard, as well as eggplant.

According to the informant "selling vegetables cannot be done by relying on one type of vegetable, if that's what I do then the vegetable seller will incur a loss, therefore once we sell we must have a variety of types of vegetables, this is because vegetable buyers don't only like one type vegetables, the choice of buyers varies, this means we have to have many types of vegetables, this is what we have been doing since the beginning as a vegetable seller, so that we can earn income every day. This type of vegetable is not something new, but people's consumption tastes have never shifted from their daily routine, so the types of vegetables that must be sold are kale, cabbage, cabbage, spinach. Besides that, during the rainy season, they also sell cassava leaves, pumpkin shoots and pumpkin fruit" (Interview with informant).

Vegetable sales activities are carried out from morning to evening around 18.00 WITA. From the sale of vegetables, a very varied income is obtained because different types of vegetables have different prices and also certain vegetables that are in demand by consumers. The best-selling types of vegetables are kale, mustard greens and spinach. As for cassava leaf vegetables, apart from being less marketable, this type of vegetable spoils quickly, as well as shoot vegetables during the rainy season. From the sale of these vegetables, daily income ranges from IDR 250,000 to IDR 3,000,000. The average income obtained is the gross income before deducting the costs incurred per day. The results of the study show that if reduced by operational costs per day, then the income earned by vegetable sellers (housewives) ranges from Rp. 250,000 to 350,000 per day.

Based on the results of the study, it was shown that the informants who carried out activities selling vegetables at the Inpres Naikoten Market I Kupang already had their own capital, not the proceeds from loans from banks, cooperatives or from friends and neighbors. This is because the informants who have been selling vegetables have been going on for a long time, ranging from 7 to 23 years, meaning that from the aspect of capital the informants already have sufficient capital, although it is very limited (capital is still small), the most important thing is not to owe. Besides that, there were several informants who said that if you sell with your own capital, you are more comfortable at work and you are not under pressure to pay loan repayments, especially if you borrow money from either a bank or a credit cooperative, you have to think about repaying it. Therefore, with their own capital, apart from being comfortable at work, the informant will also do it very carefully in managing the finances obtained by the increasing burden of family financing and other operational costs. Based on the results of the study, vegetables sold in bundles, especially kale, spinach, mustard greens, have an average selling price of Rp. 5,000 (five thousand rupiah).

Based on the interviews conducted, the informants stated that "the average selling price of vegetables is Rp. 5,000 / per bundle, but if a lot has been sold and taking into account profits, if there are still lots of vegetables, they are usually sold for 3 bundles of Rp.

10,000, which should have been Rp. 15,000. Considerations apart from selling quickly and taking into account the profits, even though they are small, the vegetables that are sold are still suitable for consumption and are not damaged. the important thing is to get benefits, that is the goal with the aim of maintaining continuity with consumers to maintain it" (Interview with YT.IS and MS, November 23, 2022).

With the level of income earned, the informant is able to pay for his life well, especially being able to have his own house from the results of the toil he does every day, namely being able to have his own house, as shown in the table below.

Table 6 – Living conditions

No	House Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Permanent	18	72.00
2	Semi Permanent	7	28.00
3	Emergency	-	-
	Amount	25	100%

*Data Source: Primary Data processed by the author, 2022.*

The table above shows that of the 25 informants (100%), 18 informants (72%) have permanent homes and 7 informants (28%) have semi-permanent homes. This was also confirmed by the informant that "for years we have been selling vegetables, setting aside little by little, making savings to buy a plot of land and building a permanent house. Incidentally, Sumi has a profession as a handyman, so building a house is not difficult. We buy building materials and a husband who do it (interview with RN, MS and HY, November 24, 2022).

The description above shows that housewives as in carrying out their business activities are fully aware that this profession, if done optimally, will bring good results, although not as big as entrepreneurs or other large business activities. family living needs, education and owning a house both privately and those who are still renting. With the support of husbands, the business activities in the informal sector run optimally within their capabilities in terms of capital and profits.

Table 7 – Ownership of Residence

No	House Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Private House	18	72.00%
2	rent	7	28.00%
	Amount	25	100%

*Source: Primary Data, processed by the Author, 2022.*

The table above shows that out of 25 informants (100%), 18 informants (72%) stated that they had a private house, 7 informants (28%) owned a rented house. This was also confirmed by the informant that even though we are only sellers of vegetables and our husbands work as a handyman or as a farmer we can build a harvester's house in addition to paying for our daily life and paying for our children's education and indeed life must be frugal, if not thrifty we will experience difficulties and will not have a home. When buying land, building a house is also by installments instead of paying in cash, but the landowners want to understand us with the difficult life as vegetable sellers. For the rest of us who are still under contract, we will continue to try even with low income, We believe that one day we will be able to build a house like our other friends who already have their own homes. At present, we are still paying off the land we purchased according to our ability, meaning that the desire to have our own home is our family's dream" (interview with JMB, TM and ML, November 25, 2022).

From the description above, it shows that the informal sector, especially vegetable traders, can generate quite a good income for housewives who run the business, with stress and hard work and very limited business capital as well as moving business places, living frugally, being able to provide values that are very important in family life, namely being able

to increase family income and finance daily life needs, especially primary life needs which are the main goal besides secondary needs and other social needs. With informal sector activities carried out by housewives as vegetable sellers, they can maintain the continuity of life slowly over time for the better.

## CONCLUSION

Housewives have a very important role, apart from being a wife and taking care of the children and without neglecting their nature, they are able to carry out their role well as vegetable traders at the Inpres Naikoten I Kupang market. His role as a vegetable seller is carried out to the fullest by utilizing limited access to transportation, the reach of concentrated areas of vegetable farmers to search for, buy vegetables and sell them to consumers in markets. Activities in the informal sector as a vegetable seller have been carried out for 22 years. From the aspect of the average age of housewives ranges from 35 to 55 years and the majority of husbands of housewives selling vegetables work as carpenters and stone carpenters.

With limited capital and the spirit of a good work ethic, activities and mobility selling vegetables can increase family income, the average net income per day is around Rp. 250,000 to 350,000.

With the level of income obtained, it can meet the minimum primary needs for clothing, food and shelter and financing the education of their children and most of the informants have private and permanent homes.

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