

Planned Granulated Palm Sugar Business Development as a Program to Strengthen the Economy of Hargotirto Village Kulon Progo

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Abstract. Hargotirto Village is one of ten villages with the highest poverty rate in Kulon Progo Regency. Granulated palm sugar is the primary product of the village. It has a business-to-business (B2B) marketing strategy. Products are distributed to market stalls and partly to collectors to be reprocessed by a manufacturer. To package granulated palm sugar, producers only use polypropylene plastic. These circumstances lead to products with less value added. The study goals are to identify the state of the granulated palm sugar business and formulate strategies to enhance the local economy and the added value of granulated palm sugar. The research methodology involved observation, interviews, product trials, and questionnaires. The findings indicated that granulated palm sugar is offered for sale in one-kilogram-sized packages. Most products are produced individually, not in groups like the Farmer Women's Group (KWT). The product variations are made to fit local commodities, like ginger and turmeric. A program that can be implemented to increase the added value of products is redesigning packaging in a way that is economical, attractive, and informative. Additionally, widen the product varieties in keeping with the commodity potentials around Hargotirto Village such as lime, moringa, and coffee. The local economy can be improved by identifying the right target market and empowering businesses through KWT and the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). They may help to facilitate marketing and sales activities. As recommendations, product trials must be conducted from the sensory, packaging, and marketing aspects of the specified target market prior to product launch.

Keywords: Granulated Palm Sugar; Business; Economy; Packaging, Poverty

1. INTRODUCTION

Hargotirto Village was one of the ten villages in Kulon Progo Regency with the highest poverty rates according to the data from the Government of Kulon Progo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta in 2023 (Antara News, 2023). Merbawani and Rijanta (2016) discovered that 48.57% of households had a survival livelihood strategy. Anjani and Ma'rif (2020) also stated that villagers only ate twice daily and have access to milk, meat, poultry, and fish once a week. In addition, 79% of people could not afford to take their kids to elementary school. They could only afford to buy new clothes once a year. The main product of Hargotirto Village is granulated palm sugar which is known as "gula semul" in Indonesian. Granulated palm sugar is a kind of sugar made from the sap of palm or coconut plants. All 14 of the sub-villages in this village are granulated palm sugar producers. Most of the marketing strategy was distributed to traditional markets and stalls. Partly, granulated palm sugar was sent to collectors, who then handed it over to the manufacturer to be processed again before being exported. Based on the condition, the marketing approach of granulated palm sugar could be said that it used business-to-business (B2B).

Granulated palm sugar products only use polypropylene (PP) plastic as packaging. Additionally, producers did not use labels or other types of media to communicate product information. In the meantime, the Indonesian Food and Drug Authority (2020) regulated that product information should meet at least the following criteria: product name, ingredients, manufactured, and expired dates, production code, net weight, halal

(if required), producer name and address, the source of specific ingredients, and distribution permit number. Adding the product information label was generally done in response to customer requests or during product exhibitions. The product's packaging was one of the reasons for the poor added value of granulated palm sugar. This was in line with the National Research and Innovation Agency (2022) which stated that packaging strategies are necessary to increase the value of products made by Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). According to Cahyorini and Rusfian's (2015), graphic design as a part of the packaging could influence someone's impulsive buying. In addition, due to unattractive product designs, local agricultural products in Ghana were unable to compete with imported products (Kwaku and Fan, 2020).

Product development is an approach that may be applied to boost the sales of a business. For instance, it can be done by adding product variants. Syamsuri et al. (2022) stated that product variants and price have a major influence on a customer's choice to buy a product. It is also in line with the research by Wicaksono and Sutanto (2022) that product variants significantly influenced customers' decisions to purchase ready-to-drink coffee products. It is expected that the right strategies for the development of small businesses would contribute to the growth of the local economy. Based on Guide House (2020), small businesses provide economic potential for those with a range of educational backgrounds and open job opportunities. Furthermore, the research study by Surya et al. (2021) stated that empowering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) may also help in fostering Makassar City's economic growth. Thus, developing and increasing the added value of granulated palm sugar products as a superior product of Hargotirto Village has the potential to boost product sales as well as the village's local economy. The study aims to identify the state of the local economy in Hargotirto Village and the granulated palm sugar business and also to formulate action planning for increasing the added value of granulated palm sugar products and strengthening the local economy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Village Economic Improvement

One of the strategies to improve the local economy is empowering the village-owned Enterprise (BUMDes). BUMDes can assist the village in managing local assets, promoting SMEs products, and aiding those who want to start a business in order to improve the village's income and create job opportunities (Alfirdausi & Riyanto, 2019; Ismail & Aris, 2022; Oktarina & Nababan, 2020; Salim et al., 2021). Creating a tourist village also can be a solution to attract tourists to come to the village. However, to create a tourist village, the village should have an extraordinary attraction to make it different from others (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Republic of Indonesia, 2023). The previous study, Pacekelan Village in Purworejo Regency formed a tourist village program to enhance the community economy. It first identified possible visitors and tourist attractions (like culinary, nature, craft, and cultural arts), suggested possible programs, and asked for community opinion. (Priatmoko & Djaja, 2020).

2.2 Product Development

Innovation comes in two types: market-pull and technology-push. Market-pull places a strong focus on using the market to drive research and development (R&D) activities. Technology-push places a strong focus on R&D and the market will benefit from the R&D findings (Trott, 2017). The concept development process is a step in the product development process after idea generation and screening and before business analysis (Loch & Kavadias, 2008). Concept development activities namely identifying customer needs, establishing target specifications, generating product concepts, selecting product concept(s), testing product concept(s), setting final specifications, and planning downstream development (Ulrich & Eppinger, 2016).

2.3 Value-Added Packaging

The role of packaging on a product is not only as protection but also as a way of communicating information to customers. Additionally, packaging can influence

purchasing intention of customers and support the marketing process so that it has a chance to thrive in a competitive market (Sukri et al., 2023). This is in line with studies by Mazhar et al. (2015) and Diana-Rose et al. (2016) that found the packaging to be the most crucial element in a customer's choice to buy a product. Several factors that may be utilized to increase the value of products include choosing eye-catching package designs and colors, packaging sizes, materials, and printing techniques (Arohit & Prateek, 2015; Sukri et al., 2023).

3. RESEARCH METHODS/METHODOLOGY

The research method employed in the study was qualitative. The study was carried out in Hargotirto Village, Kulon Progo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with the granulated palm sugar producers and village authorities. Information about the state of Hargotirto Village and the granulated palm sugar business was acquired through in-depth interviews. In addition, the preliminary survey was distributed to the potential target market, which included lecturers and students. The survey topic was product packaging. It received responses from 24 people by random sampling. The purpose of the survey was to find out what possible target customers thought of the product concept through the prototypes. Granulated palm sugar products and their prices were also observed in the marketplace. The study was placed in May and June of 2023.

In order to generate ideas for developing granulated palm sugar products and designing programs to boost the economy of Hargotirto Village, data from in-depth interviews and observations were utilized. When ideas were generated, they were screened to make sure they matched the business's objectives and customer needs. The chosen ideas then proceeded to create product concepts. Researchers conducted trials and errors to choose the proper product serving recommendations and packaging (based on the product's weight). Furthermore, at the selecting product concept(s) stage, researchers made product prototypes for the selected concepts. Afterward, the prototypes were assessed through the preliminary survey. The survey results were utilized as an appraisal of the concept before doing the final concept testing and developing programs for strengthening the village economy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The condition of Hargotirto Village and Granulated Palm Sugar Business

Hargotirto is a tourist village. It is included in the top 75 categories of the 2023 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI), as listed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia (2023). Songgo Langit, Gunung Gajah Cliff, Pule Payung, Rumah Pintar, Segajih Live-In, Kelok Slem pang, and Menoreh Cliff are only a few of the village's well-known natural tourism attractions. However, there had not been an ideal economic balance between these tourism-related enterprises and creative economic activities. As the primary agricultural product of Hargotirto Village is granulated palm sugar. The production of most granulated palm sugar products took place independently. The community preferred to produce independently even if there was a Farmer Women's Group (KWT) that serves as a business platform for women farmers. This is a result of producers' lack of awareness of and/or understanding of the value of a business community for business growth. According to the findings of an interview with one of the KWT leaders, Marsilah, KWT activities were often solely employed for cooperative savings and lending activities. Meanwhile, business was carried out individually, resulting in a lack of financial management and marketing.

The financial management of the granulated palm sugar business outcomes was still currently combined with each producer's personal finances. It is a result of the producer's lack of access to resources and knowledge in financial management (Anggraini et al., 2022). From a marketing standpoint, promotional activities were challenging to execute since nearly all producers lacked trademarks and had varying product qualities. Additionally, producers lacked expertise in product marketing, target market identification, and packaging techniques. This was consistent with the findings of interviews with village administrators and KWT members, which showed that most producers were only able to make products but struggled to identify market channels for

those products.

The original (without the addition of other components), ginger, and turmeric were the most widely available product variants of granulated palm sugar. A variety of ginger and turmeric was developed because of the village's vast abundance of raw resources. The one-kilogram package of granulated palm sugar was sold to traditional markets and stalls. The average price of the original variant in one-kilogram-sized packages was between Rp 19,000.00 and Rp 22,000.00 while the ginger and turmeric variants were charged Rp 50,000.00 and Rp 40,000.00, respectively. The ten-kilogram-sized package was also available for distribution to collectors. Products were given to collectors, then dispersed to manufacturers to undergo additional processing before exporting. In general, only a one-kilogram product had a product information label, and its availability depended on needs. However, not all products weighing ten kilograms passed the examination due to the manufacturer's strict standards for product quality. This was what eventually led to the product only being offered for sale in a one-kilogram package. Many businesses that produced granulated palm sugar did not have MSMEs product distribution permission numbers (P-IRT) because of limited facilities for production and/or a shortage of knowledge about these numbers. P-IRT is a certificate for home industry food production. It is one of the requirements that a micro and small business must have as a distribution permit number. The purposes of P-IRT in a product are to assure product quality and persuade customers that the product is safe to consume and can compete competitively with other products (Fahira & Yasin, 2022).

4.2 Development of Granulated Palm Sugar Product

Granulated palm sugar business development started from product development. Based on a market-pull approach, product development was employed for the granulated palm sugar product. Figure 1 shows the steps of product development that were completed. The first reason for product development was that granulated palm sugar products had low added value, which lowers their selling value. The minimal packing technique, which included a small range of product sizes, and no product information labels, was one of the contributing causes of poor added value.

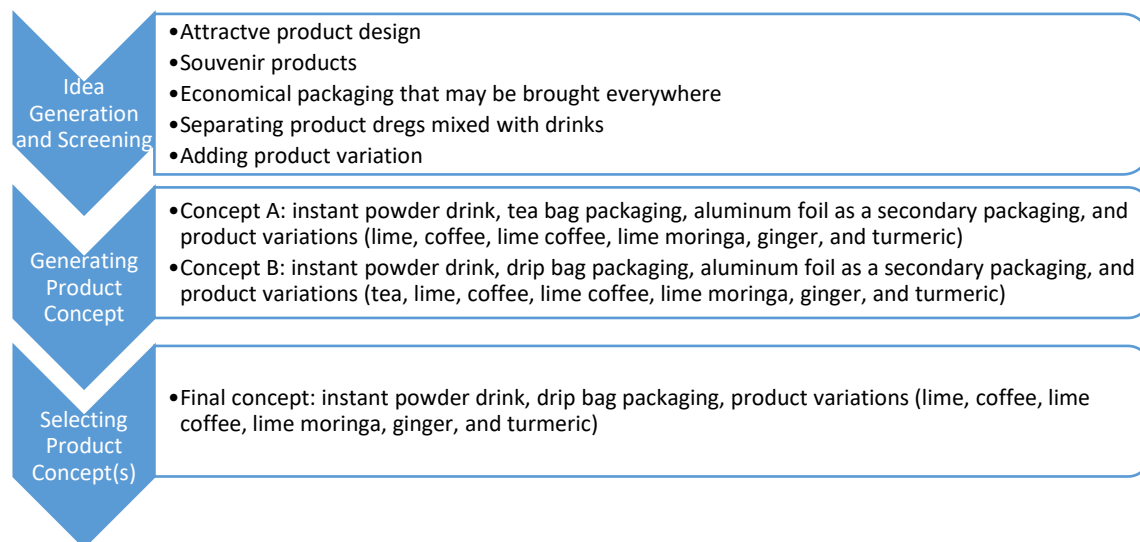


Figure 1. Stages and results of product development carried out. Source: Processed data (2023)

Second, granulated palm sugar, as one of the original products of Kulon Progo, could be created as a souvenir. Third, offering products in economical sizes made it simpler for travelers to bring souvenirs with them. Fourth, when the products on the market were brewed, they left behind a lot of dregs, much like coffee grounds. These reasons led to the development of the concept creation and screening phases. Based on the previous overview, some concepts that might be created include generating attractive package designs, producing souvenir products, producing products in affordable sizes, applying suitable brewing methods to separate product dregs, and adding product variants. Other agricultural and plantation products that were widely available close to Hargotirto village might be combined with the addition of product

variants.

Generating product concepts were built by combining all selected ideas. Two conceptual models were created. Each idea was developed as a single-serving instant powder drink. To separate product dregs for Concept A, granulated palm sugar was inserted inside a tea bag. According to the variants that were accessible, particularly ginger and turmeric, product variations were created. Then modifications were added in accordance with the readily available commodities in Hargotirto village, such as lime, coffee, lime and coffee, as well as lime and moringa. Concept B involved packaging granulated palm sugar in drip bags resembling those used for concept coffee. The designed product variants were identical to Concept A.

After the product concepts were available, screening concepts were carried out. At this point, experiments were being done by researchers to find the perfect blend for each product variety when serving a product in a cup. The components were combined with 150 and 200 ml of hot water for running the experiment. After finding the perfect blend, it was determined that the tea bags could not hold the quantity of granulated palm sugar, leading to the selection of idea B. The recommended serving method was to combine 150 ml of hot water with the blended product of granulated palm sugar. To fit a variety of granulated palm sugar products, the maximum capacity of the drip bag was set to 150 ml of hot water. When experiments were conducted to find the perfect blend, it was discovered that tea and granulated palm sugar could not be combined because the granulated palm sugar taste overpowered the tea taste. As a result, the tea variant was eliminated. The final concept chosen was an instant powder drink in a drip bag and there were six product variants. These variants consisted of four new product variants—lime, coffee, lime coffee, and lime moringa—as well as two already-existing ones—ginger and turmeric.



Figure 2. Prototype of the granulated palm sugar product packaging's front. Source: Personal data (2023)

Six products were turned into prototypes using the selected concept. Products made from lime, coffee, ginger, turmeric, and moringa are among them. Aluminum foil packaging was utilized as secondary product packaging. Figures 2 and 3 show the created product prototypes. Kerry (2012) stated that aluminum foil is preferred because it resists oxidation, acts as a barrier to gases and liquids, and does not interact with any harmful compounds. The aluminum foil used was black in color. According to Ozcan

and Kandirmaz (2002), the usage of black on packaging can denote pricey, luxury goods, the caliber of the product itself, and can catch the eye of customers. Additionally, using a neutral black color makes it simple to mix and match color patterns on product information labels.



Figure 3. Prototype of the granulated palm sugar product packaging's back. Source: Personal data (2023)

The name "Wedang Palem," which is Indonesian, was adopted as the trademark for the selected product concept. Wedang is a drink consisting of sugar that is typically prepared with hot water to warm the body (Indonesia Dictionary, n.d.). The word "palm" implies that the product is produced from sugar made from one specific kind of palm plant. The components of the product information label printed on the product prototype complied with the Processed Food Label Guidelines given by the Indonesian Food and Drug Authority in 2020.

The preliminary survey regarding product prototype findings revealed that 54.2 percent of participants highly felt that Wedang Palem products had attractive packaging. Additionally, 45.8 percent of respondents strongly concurred that the product packaging design encouraged them to try it. According to 70.8 percent of the respondents, the information on the product information label was complete in terms of the aspects contained there. For the packing size, according to 87.5 percent of respondents, it was already fit. Furthermore, the packaging made 95.9 percent of respondents agreed that the product was easy to carry. Then, 58.3 percent of respondents strongly concurred that the packaging of the product in drip bags made it simpler for customers to serve it.

4.3 Development of Granulated Palm Sugar Business

Marketing is one of several strategies needed to develop a business. The granulated palm sugar business in Hargotirto Village confronted difficulties mostly due to this factor. The marketing strategy should be based on the 4P marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). The marketing strategy needs to be based on the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) marketing mix. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) stated that the marketing mix is a collection of tactical marketing tools used by a business to elicit the intended reaction from a certain target market. The product is the first component. Wedang Palem as instant powder drink products may be utilized as

souvenirs, the same as the original idea to develop granulated palm sugar products. Tourists who travel to Hargotirto Village and around the Special Region of Yogyakarta are the product market targets. Second, Hargotirto Village tourist attractions, Yogyakarta International Airport, gift stores, and social media sites like YouTube and Instagram may all be employed as product market channels. Wedang Palembang products can also be distributed to cafés, restaurants, and hotels by adopting the idea of instant powder drinks. Third, varieties of ginger, turmeric, lime, and lime moringa products can be sold starting at Rp 5,000.00 for each based on the cost of goods sold (COGS) calculation for Wedang Palembang products. The price of coffee and lime coffee variations can be sold starting at Rp 5,500.00 each. In addition, hampers can be implemented as one of the product promotions. Fourth, Wedang Palembang products may be promoted by posting content about their products and business endeavors on social media. It can help introduce and raise brand awareness of Wedang Palembang products.

4.4 Empowering KWT, BUMDes, and Tourist Village to Strengthen the Economy

To improve the local economy, implement KWT, BUMDes, and tourist village empowerment. In order to manage finances effectively, facilitate marketing operations (promotion, brand awareness, and brand trust), and increase sales, granulated palm sugar businesses must first be informed of the value of business groups. With KWT, the trade name and business name of the producer of granulated palm sugar will be the same within the scope of KWT. Producer names will be converted to KWT names in general. Furthermore, the availability of KWT facilitates the integration of sales, marketing, financial management, and manufacturing operations. It is possible to assign current members of a team different tasks and responsibilities for each activity in the business. Each producer in the granulated palm sugar business will feel less burdened due to this duty division.

The development of the Wedang Palembang palm sugar product can be followed up with this information-gathering session for KWT members. The purpose of member registration is to guarantee the existence of producers of granulated palm sugar in a KWT. Additionally, the recording feature is used for member discussions to choose the coordinator and treasurer of the Wedang Palembang business. Controlling and tracking cash flows into and out of the business is the responsibility of the treasurer. Cash flow for the business becomes more organized with a treasurer, and financial management is more openly acknowledged. The treasurer is also responsible for paying members salaries, such as those for packing Wedang Palembang products and turning sap into granulated palm sugar. Payment may be made according to the amount of processed sap, the quantity of produced sachet packing products, and the number of packed product variants. Recording production reports is important to determine the amount of compensation awarded. Each team member who produces and packages the product is responsible for filing the production reports. Moreover, numerous Wedang Palembang variants need a larger area and room for producers to store the finished products. To get around this, warehouse management is required, and producers are encouraged to store their original products (without mixing) there. When there is a request or order from customers, product varieties other than ginger and turmeric—which have been made together—are created.

The purpose of BUMDes is to develop and manage the village's potential as well as the expansion of the market and business opportunities (Darmawan et al., 2022). BUMDes has a good effect on the rural economic development in Trenggalek Regency in terms of the number of employees, the cooperatives owned by BUMDes, increasing the village's initial income, as well as financial turnover and profit (Hidayah et al., 2022). Waste management, agriculture, commerce, village markets, rental, and tourism are among the industries that BUMDes in Trenggalek Regency have created and managed. Based on those references, KWT in Hargotirto Village and BUMDes can collaborate on the marketing and sales of Wedang Palembang products. For every product that BUMDes is able to sell, BUMDes is eligible to receive a profit share. Additionally, because of marketing initiatives undertaken by BUMDes, KWT may offer salaries for every predetermined amount of time. In order to persuade customers that Wedang Palembang products are safe for consumption, BUMDes can help KWT prepare and manage P-IRT

of the products.

As a tourist village, Hargotirto village offers a variety of tourism initiatives, including live-in. A live-in program allows visitors to spend a little amount of time in the village and get a glimpse of the daily routine there. Visitors are typically asked to participate in a variety of daily activities carried out by locals, such as taking part in village tours, learning how to make a craft, dancing, and/or playing traditional musical instruments. The live-in program can be one of the promotional events for Wedang Palembang granulated palm sugar products. Tourists may observe and gain knowledge about the granulated palm sugar production process of Wedang Palembang. Additionally, many tourist attractions have storefronts where MSMEs products are advertised and sold. This access can be used by KWT as a marketing channel for souvenir products being developed.

CONCLUSION

Granulated palm sugar is the primary product of the tourist village of Hargotirto. Most of the granulated palm sugar was produced by an independent business. The function of KWT was primarily for saving and lending activities rather than for the commercial purpose of producing granulated palm sugar products. Products made from granulated palm sugar still had a minimum value added. It did not have complete product information such as the distribution permit number and expiration date on the label. In addition, only original, ginger, and turmeric variants were offered, with each sold in quantities of one kilogram and ten kilograms. As a result, product development planning was done in accordance with the village's profile as a tourist village. Product development focused on developing instant powder drinks in a sachet, redesigning product packaging, and creating new variants of products made from coffee, moringa, and lime. Redesigning packaging was driven by the requirement for economical, attractive, and informative aspects. Then, granulated palm sugar business development was matched with the target market to be achieved. By leveraging KWT as an integrated business group, the growth of the granulated palm sugar business may be hastened and strengthening the village economy. Marketing and sales activities for the granulated palm sugar business can benefit from collaboration with BUMDes and tourist village management. Large-scale concept testing of potential target markets should be carried out in the development of granulated palm sugar products as a recommendation for further studies. Aspects that need attention are sensory, physical, and function tests of product prototypes resulting from selected product concepts. Furthermore, marketing and business strategy analysis, product development, and test marketing are required prior to product launch and commercialization.

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