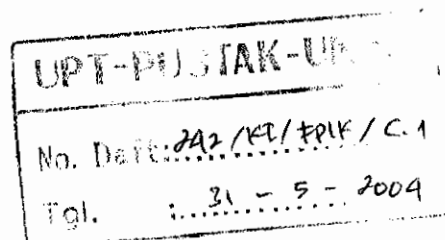


**EMPOWERING HOME INDUSTRY FOR FISH/SHRIMP CRACKERS
IN CENTRAL JAVA**

By:

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ABSTRACT

The processing of fish/shrimp crackers in Central Java is mostly done in a simple way, in the form of traditional home industries. The characteristics of home industry are small capital, small scale industry, the products are manually processed in a simple way which are completed by a lot of workers. The weakness of the home industry products is that the quality of the products is usually low or under standart quality which finally causes some difficulties in their marketing.

In general, the problems faced by fish/shrimp crackers home industries are the raw material supply, capital, technology applied, human resources, organization, and marketing. To overcome those problems in facing free-market economic globalization, it is necessary to empower these home industries. This can be done by supporting the capital, establishing steady organization in handling the process from the beginning; the supply of raw material until the product marketing, developing human resources quality, mastering technology applied, and supervising the quality of products. Through these efforts, it is hoped that fish/shrimp crackers production can be developed, its quality could be standardized, hence the quality, quantity and continuity of the products could be maximized to increase its marketing and competitive value in domestic or international market.

Keywords: Fish/shrimp crackers, empowerment, home industry.

Introduction

Fish or other fishery products should be managed well so that they can be maximally useful as foodstuff. The processing of fish products is very necessary because of fish nature which is easily spoiled. Thus, fish processing will make the products last longer. Fish processed also has more value than the fresh one. This can be seen from its lasting capacity, its specific taste and its wider market range.

Fish processed can be in the forms of smoke fish, dried fish, salted fish, fish sauce, and fish/shrimp crackers. Fish crackers and shrimp crackers have better taste and have more nutrients compared to other crackers made from wheat or rice flour. Fish/shrimp crackers is made in the way of making tapioca crackers with fish/shrimp and spices addition. Fish/shrimp crackers can be differentiated through its taste, the more fish/shrimp added, the better the taste will be and the price will also be higher. The processing of fish/shrimp crackers in Central Java is mostly done in a simple way, in the form of traditional home industries.

The characteristics of home industry are small capital, small scale industry, fast turn-over rate, and the products are manually processed in a simple way which is completed by a lot of workers.

The general weakness that can be found in small scale industry (home industry) is that the quality of the product is usually low or under standard quality which finally causes some difficulties for the buyers to get good quality crackers. There are many fish/shrimp crackers products available in the market labeling as the first quality products, but there is not any guarantee or any information on the ingredients

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which comply with the Indonesian National Standard (SNI). Another weakness is that the product quality is low in its appearance, aroma, taste and consistency. Since it is traditionally processed, fish/shrimp crackers has various protein content and the amount of main and supporting ingredients can not be mixed proportionally.

Problems

The actual problems faced by fish processing industry are not mainly on the raw material supply but also the limited availability to the access for applying technology, limited capital, marketing problems, human resources, and culture (Batubara 1996, Erizal 1997). There are also some other problems connected to the organization, such as the problems with government law and regulations (Wiryanti 2000). In sum, the general problems faced by home industry for fish/shrimp crackers are raw material supply, capital, technology applied, human resources, organization, and marketing.

1. Problems in raw material supply

One of the problems faced by traditional home industry for fish/shrimp crackers is the difficulties in supplying raw materials, i.e. fish and shrimp. These raw materials can not be supplied continuously because fishery products are seasonal. When it is fish season, the fish products will be abundant, thus there are no problem to get fish supply. On the other hand, when it is not fish season, then it will be difficult to get fish supply, especially for spanish mackerel (tenggiri) as the main ingredients for tenggiri crackers which is the favourite among Indonesian consumers and consumers in other countries as well. The amount of tenggiri supply will influence the total production and also influence the cost for supplying the fish. If these raw materials are available in the time when it is not fish season, then the amount is limited and the price is quite expensive.

Due to the limitness of the raw materials, fish/shrimp crackers home industries have to compete to get sufficient supply of the raw materials. As the consequence, fish/shrimps crackers industries often have to work under their optimal capacity due to rareness of the raw materials, or because the price of the raw materials is too high as the result of competition for buying them.

2. Limited Capital

Besides raw materials, the availability of capital also becomes problem for developing fish/shrimp crackers industry. Generally, the capital invested in home industry is attained from personal capital. This capital is spent for both constructing the building and for providing production equipments which include pan, boiler, blender, racks, bamboo spear, food scale, plastic bucket, ham slicer, and water pump. The number of equipments needed for production depends on the working capacity needs. Since the industry is in the form of small scale industry (home industry), hence the capital attained is also in small amount. The limitness of this capital will affect the amount and the quality of inputs used in the process of production, and eventually it will also affect the amount and the quality of resulted products.

3. Simple Technology

The capital limitness will also influence the technology used in the process of production. In general, due to the capital limitness, technology used in fish/shrimp crackers industry is the simple one. Although this simple technology can absorb a lot of workers, it is considered as being inefficient in its production cost and less productive in its productivity. The manual work in fish/shrimp crackers industry will produce various crackers products which can not be standardized. This condition will bring about difficulties in grading the quality of the products. As what has already known, fish/shrimp crackers can be graded based on its quality, namely 1st quality, 2nd quality, and 3rd quality. This quality grading will ascertain the price of the products. The better the products' quality, the more expensive the price will be.

4. Human Resources

Problems in human resources in fish/shrimp crackers home industry are connected with the workers' abilities and skills in utilizing technology which should be able to support the production of fish/shrimp

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crackers to comply standardized quality. Method used in making crackers is simple and is usually carried out manually. The skills for making crackers are passed on from senior workers to the other junior ones, hence it is very important to monitor and supervise the workers' abilities in producing qualified products. Other problems are the problems of lacking abilities in management both for production and marketing.

5. Organization

Problems in organization which still has many weaknesses are mainly in organization dealing with raw material supply, organization for producers, and organization for product marketing. Those organizations are not well established, some even have not been formed yet. In supplying raw material (flour and fish), crackers producers do not have solid organization to obtain raw materials in sufficient amount and in lower price. There is also lackness in organization for producers. Fish/shrimp crackers producers do not form any cooperative organizations or other sort of organizations to strengthen productivity or to increase the amount, the quality, and the continuity of the productions. The lackness of bigger companies which are able to help to distribute and market the products is another problem in empowering producers in small scale industry to widen production scale and market range and also to have the access for international crackers markets.

6. Marketing

Problems in marketing which can be easily found are the difficulties in increasing the sale volume and the difficulties in widening the market range. Those problems emerge as the consequence of lower competition among crackers products. The sale volume is difficult to increase because of under standard quality of crackers products in their form, size, and taste. The difficulties in widening market range occur as the result of inadequate sale promotion and product packing which is less attractive. The existence of commerce alliances which administer tight requirements for the product quality imported (HACCP by United States of America, QME by Canada, and ISO 9000 by European Countries) is considered as the problems in marketing crackers products internationally.

Empowering fish/shrimp crackers home industry

As what has been explained previously, most of fish/shrimp crackers industries are small scale industries (home industries) with insufficient capital and human resource, and inadequate aids from supporting organizations. In addition, simple technology and disorganized business organization bring about unqualified products which are less competitive. To overcome those problems, it is important to resolve the system to make it forceful, which hold sufficient capital, healthy business, modern technology, capable human resources, and supporting organizations. With that condition, it is hoped that fish/shrimp crackers home industry will have strong, advantageous bargaining position for fulfilling raw material supply, during the process of production, and in its effort to keep the good quality, and also bargaining position in marketing the products. The good bargaining position can be achieved by creating commercial business system by retrieving sub systems involved in fish/shrimp crackers industry. The sub systems are:

1. sub system for supplying raw materials
2. sub system for product processing and keeping good quality products
3. sub system for product distribution and marketing
4. sub system for supervising the production and its quality

To empower sub system for supplying raw materials it is necessary to establish an organization which is able to continuously supply flour and fish in sufficient amount and adequate quality. By establishing this organization it is hoped that raw material price can stay stable. It is also hoped that this organization will be able to collectively buy raw materials in lower prize rather than if each producer buys them individually. Purchasing raw materials collectively can increase the quantity and the quality of the raw materials. It will also reduce the expense for transportation and porter services.

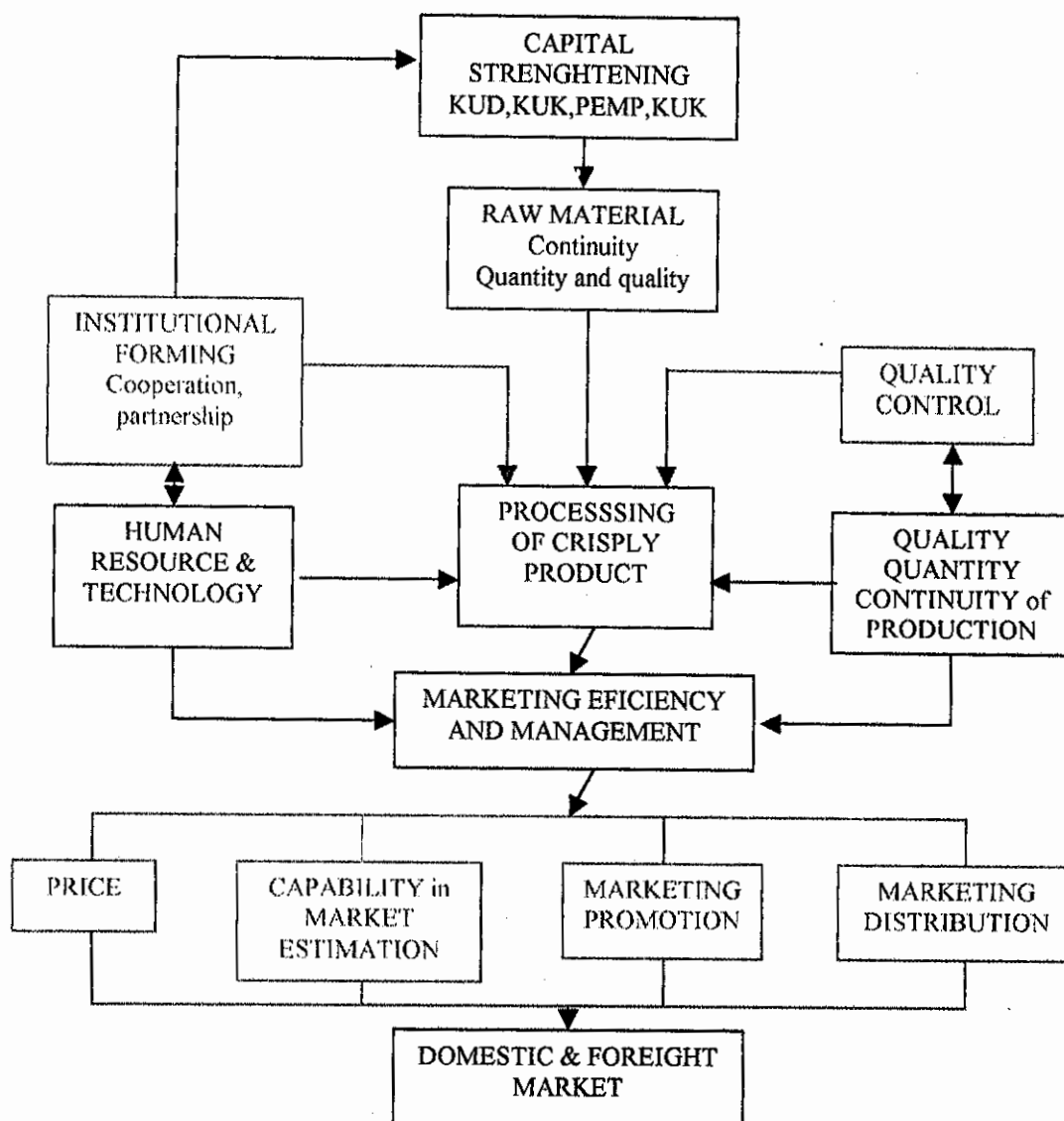


Figure 1. Empowerment of Fish Crackers Industry

Sub system for product processing and keeping good quality products can be empowered by strengthening the capital, producer organization, and strengthening quality supervising. Strengthening the capital can be accomplished by cooperatively work with established finance organization like Fisherman Cooperation (KUD Mina), Small Scale Industry Cooperation, Organization for Fisheries Economic Development (LEPP M3) or other sort of organizations. Producer organizations can be in the form of cooperation/organization for fish/shrimp crackers producers, or business partnership. Meanwhile, quality control can be done by individually supervising the producer's own work, and by asking aid from government institution like LPPMHP.

Sub system for product distribution and its marketing can be empowered by improving productivity, quality, and continuity of the products. For that purpose it is essential to have reliable organization to handle marketing problems such as the ability to estimate market needs, to determine the price, to promote the products either for domestic or international market.

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Conclusion

The characteristics of home industry are small capital, small scale industry, and the products are processed manually. The actual problems faced by fish processing industry are not mainly on the raw material supply but also the limited availability to the access for applying technology, limited capital, marketing problems, human resources, and culture.

The empowerment of home industry can be achieved by creating commercial business system by retrieving sub systems involved in fish/shrimp crackers industry such as sub system for supplying raw materials, sub system for product processing and keeping good quality products, sub system for product distribution and marketing, and sub system for supervising the production and its quality.

To empower sub system for supplying raw materials it is necessary to establish an organization which is able to continuously supply flour and fish in sufficient amount and adequate quality. Purchasing raw materials collectively can increase the quantity and the quality of the raw materials. It will also reduce the expense for transportation and porter services.

Sub system for product processing and keeping good quality products can be empowered by strengthening the capital, producer organization, and strengthening quality control. Strengthening the capital can be accomplished by cooperatively work with existed finance organization like Fisherman Cooperation (KUD Mina), Small Scale Industry Cooperation, Organization for Fisheries Economic Development (LEPP M3) or other similar organizations. Producer organizations can be in the form of cooperation/organization for fish/shrimp crackers producers, or business partnership. Meanwhile, quality control can be done by individually supervising the producer's own work, and by asking aid from government institution like LPPMHP. Sub system for product distribution and its marketing can be empowered by improving productivity, quality, and continuity of the products.

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