

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INFORMAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN BATURAJA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare informal business enterprises in Baturaja on the basis of vending location, by highlighting on start-up capital, working capital, labor employment, operating hours, and operating income. The outcome is to generate contribution for local government of Ogan Komering Ulu Regency to initiate policy in organizing and empowering informal economy sector. The research applied descriptive method, and the sampling method applied is area sampling, a method of sampling used when no complete frame of reference is available. The primary data is collected by observation and structured interview. A large portion of informal business enterprises run by women, whereas the rest by men. Informal entrepreneurs and street vendors in Baturaja are educated workforce, and tribal origins are dominated by Oganese (native) and Javanese (non-native). Informal business enterprises in five vending location have distinctive characteristics, but they have three characteristics in common, i.e. labor employment size, lucrative vending location, and do not perceive any benefit and advantage of formality. Policy to formalize the informality in Baturaja, and OKU Regency at large can be systematically done by considering these five key elements simultaneously, i.e. relocating, licensing, taxing, facilitating, and protecting.

Keywords: formalization, informal business enterprise, informal entrepreneur, informal economy, vending location


Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan perbandingan usaha sektor informal di Kota Baturaja berdasarkan lokasi usaha, dengan menitikberatkan perbedaan pada aspek investasi, modal kerja, penggunaan tenaga kerja, jam kerja, dan pendapatan operasional. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam perumusan kebijakan penataan dan pemberdayaan sektor informal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif. Metode sampling yang digunakan adalah teknik sampling area. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan teknik wawancara berstruktur. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa pengusaha sektor informal dan pedagang kaki lima di Baturaja dijalankan oleh perempuan, mengenyam pendidikan yang memadai, di mana suku mayoritas berasal dari suku Ogan dan Jawa. Usaha informal yang diteliti pada lima lokasi memiliki karakteristik yang berbeda, namun ada kesamaan dalam hal tenaga kerja yang digunakan, lokasi usaha yang menguntungkan, dan belum memahami adanya manfaat menguntungkan bila usahanya diformalisasi. Kebijakan yang ditempuh oleh Pemerintah Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu harus mempertimbangkan secara serentak lima aspek, yaitu relokasi, pemberian izin usaha, perpajakan/retribusi, pemberian fasilitas, dan perlindungan.

Kata Kunci: formalisasi, sektor informal, pengusaha informal, usaha sektor informal, lokasi usaha

INTRODUCTION

Baturaja is the capital of Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, in South Sumatra, and is under transformation from rural to urban settlement. The town is going through significant improvement in many aspects of social, economic, and cultural. The progress is a plausible consequence and outcome of decentralized local government. Economic progress in Baturaja is



proven by its gross domestic regional product and average income growth. In the last seven years, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency (OKU Regency) gross domestic regional product had doubled, from Rp6.629.769 million to Rp12.389.025,60 million. Average income or per capita income had shown major improvement. In 2015 average income was Rp25,91 million and by the end of 2017 had reached Rp29,30 million (BPS Ogan Komering Ulu, 2018).

Baturaja has several business hotspots, the largest is Pasar Pucuk. In the vicinity of Pasar Pucuk located the famous Pasar Inpres, and a far from Pasar Pucuk is Pasar Baru, Taman Kota, and the newly established Citimall Baturaja. Many street vendors had established their business on the street side of hotspots mentioned. Street vending is very common finding, especially in developing countries (Bhowmik, 2012), and can be considered as informal business.


People forced to enter informal sector are the only means of survival. This has led to a rapid growth of the informal sector in most of the large cities in developing countries. For the urban poor, street vending is the only way of earning livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and skill involved are low (Bhowmik, 1998). In OKU Regency, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) had reach 75.622 units, whereas 57.600 can be classified into micro enterprises (Sriwijaya Post, 2016).

Informal business such as street vendor operates by multitasking, whereas owner also serves as manager, labor, and cashier. Street vendors offer goods to the public by occupying street side without having any built structure are either stationary, occupying space on the pavement or some other public/private space, or are mobile carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets (Cross, 2000). Besides street vendor, common micro enterprises can be included as informal business as well with net worth up to Rp50 million.

Street vendors are very sizable proportion of informal sector, important income and employment source, as well as providing goods and services at affordable price to people (MHUPA, 2011). Informal business sector in Baturaja, likewise in other Indonesian cities does not always provide goods and services to the poor, as well as it does not always have specific social class market segmentation.

The growth of informal business in Baturaja continues at rapid ascending rate due to town expansion, rural migration to urban area, and interprovincial migration. Furthermore, this will correspond to the growth rate of informal businesses, for instance micro, small and street vending enterprises.

This research objective is to conduct study on informal business enterprises operating in the town of Baturaja by comparing to their specific characteristics, whereas one location acts as



transitional borderline between informal and less-informal business. This research is also conducting a comparative study on informal business practice performance *vis a vis* to its vending location, by highlighting on start-up capital or investment, working capital, labor employment size, operating hours, and operating income aspect. The results should give a descriptive and meaningful information of which the most and less lucrative vending operation area for informal business enterprise. Therefore, local government could compose distinctive and fair regulation of formalization in respect of vending location.


LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a general misconception that the informal economy is reviewed illegal, or somehow criminal. A clear border line must be made, *i.e.* illegal activities go against the law; but informal activities are *extralegal*, in the sense that they are not officially declared and do not take place in the reach of the laws which govern them. The recent re-convergence of interest in the informal economy stems from the recognition that the informal economy is growing; that it is a permanent, not a short-term, phenomenon. Therefore, it should be viewed not as a marginal or peripheral sector, but as a basic component of the total economy.

Hart (1973) was the first scholar to bring the term informal sector (while conducting research in Ghana) into the academic community, which takes place outside of the formal labor market; he considered the informal sector as almost synonymous for the categories of small self-employed. This was thereafter typically used to refer to ways of making a living outside the formal wage economy, either as an alternative to it, or as a means of supplementing income earned with it (Becker, 1968; Bromley and Gerry, 1979).

The ILO (2002) definition of formal and informal income opportunities are set apart on the basis of whether the activity entailed wage or self-employment, implying that wage earning employment is a characteristic of the formal sector only. Informal economy refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are—in law or in practice—not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law or regulation, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law (*extralegal*); or they are not covered in practice. Even though, they are operating within the conventional reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

Two approaches were identified to define the informal sector, namely, the definitional approach and the behavioral approach. The former defines it as all the unrecorded economic



activities, while the later considers it as a change in the behavior of economic agents in reaction to institutional constraints (Dell' Anno, 2003).

The informal sector can be incorporated to all economic or business activities that are not formally registered by the government and do not pay taxes. The issue is bottom lining on the absence of legal recognition, government protection, official taxation, licensing and regulation (Babbit, *et al.*, 2015; Harris-White, 2010; Maloney, 2004; and Mead & Morrisson, 1996). Street vending is manage differently across nations, some do not recognize street vendor, while others acknowledge their central role in urban areas and facilitate the informal business improvement as well as the urban environment by consulting various stakeholders (Kusakabe, 2014).

The informal economic and street vending activities was included in ASEAN Vision 2020, and was remarked as an important issue. However, The Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA,) only discussed little part of this initiative in developing the informal sector under the human resource development section (Hassan 2003). Informal sector is an important portion to ASEAN countries in developing the greater ASEAN Economic Community. Understanding the implication of informal sector, which includes PKL, street vendor, street hawker or other naming, is an initiative that should be considered by policy makers (Maneepong & Walsh 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research, by sorting population of informal businesses operating in Baturaja by vending location, wares, and workplace traits. The sampling method applied is area sampling, a method of sampling used when no complete frame of reference is available. The total area under investigation is divided into small sub-areas which are sampled at random or according to a restricted process (stratification of sampling). Each of the chosen sub-areas is then fully inspected and enumerated, and may form the basis for further sampling if desired (Eurostat, 2015). Total sample size is 80 informal business units operate within 5 business hotspots in Baturaja, comprising of 19 samples in Taman Kota (Town Square), 10 samples in Pasar Inpres 15 samples in Pasar Baru 25 samples in Pasar Pucuk, and 11 samples in Citimall Baturaja. The primary data is collected by observation and structured interview supported by Google Forms. The collected data is organized using Microsoft Excel worksheet. The data is then analyzed with the intention to create comparison charts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent profile shown that majority of informal business units in sampling areas are run by women (55%), whereas the rest are run by men (45%). Age disparity is 16 to 75 years old, with the average age of 36 years old. One sample had been engaged in informal business for 36 years, and five others are new comers who had engaged not more than a year, and the average period of involvement in informal business is 7,6 years. It confirmed that in Baturaja, informal businesses flourished in the last 10 years, moreover it corresponds to the growth of gross domestic regional product and average income.

Informal business vendors in Baturaja can be classified as educated workforce, since 50% of them are senior high school graduates, and 5% are university graduates. Academic background of informal workforce is shown by chart below.

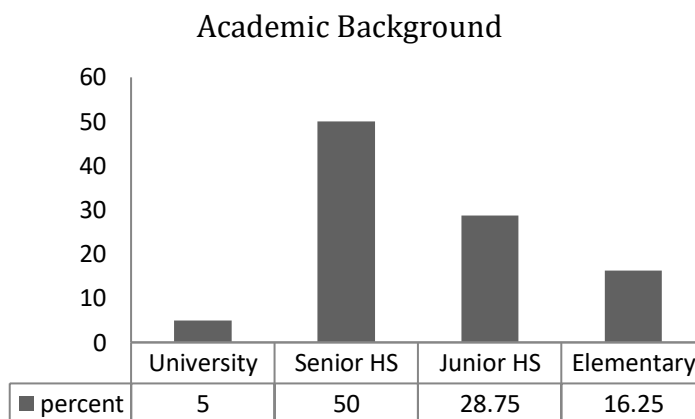


Figure 1. Academic Background of Informal Workforce

The variety of tribal origin is diverse, the dominant is Oganese followed by Javanese. Oganese is native in the OKU Regency, whereas Javanese is migrant or non-native. The natives are the Oganese, Lengkeyapnese, and Komeringsnese, the others *i.e.* Javanese, Palembangnese, Maduranese, Bataknese, Padangnese, Semendanese, and Sundanese are non-natives. The tribal origin diversity is shown in following chart.



Tribal Origin

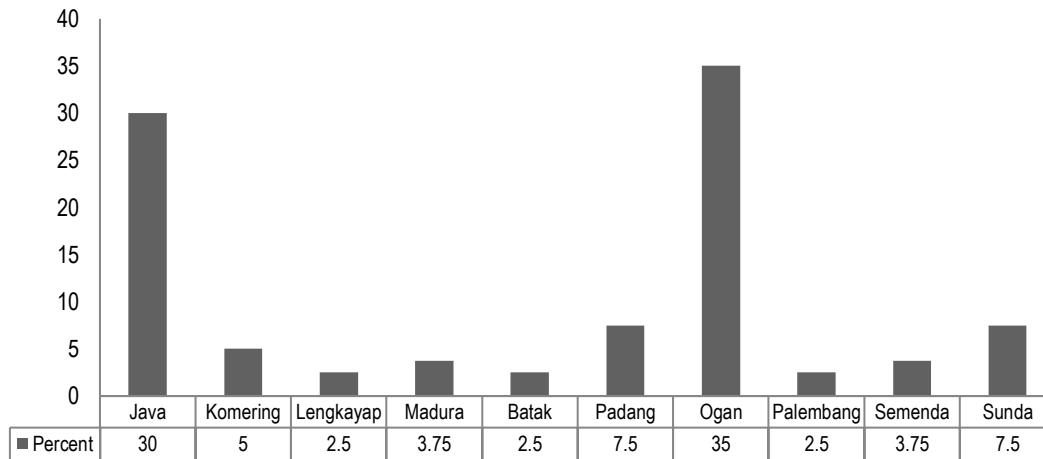


Figure 2. Tribal Origin of Informal Workforce

Observation confirmed that informal enterprises and street vendors in Baturaja do not always provide goods and services to the poor. As a consequence, social class market segmentation is not practical in many cases, excluding several in Citimall Baturaja and Taman Kota. The reason for that is street vendors provide less expensive goods and services, and the perceived quality of goods and fresh produces they offer are sufficient; not to mention people in Baturaja are accustomed to buy individual and household supplies on daily basis. In most cases, street vendors in Pasar Pucuk and Pasar Inpres have developed pleasant mutual relationship to customers residing in neighboring rural settlements, due to easy access and prolong dependency.

A portion of 96,25% informal business entrepreneurs interviewed affirm that they were engaged in informal business to support household finance in order to feed their family, for the reason that well paid job is hard to acquire. On the contrary 3,75% declared that the purpose they entered the informal business is for passion and leisure time activity. In most cases, informal business units are source of income and employment. They provide livelihood to household and family members involved as present in the following chart. In general, 23,75% informal business gives support to 2 family members, whilst only 10% of the vendors are responsible to more than 5 family members.

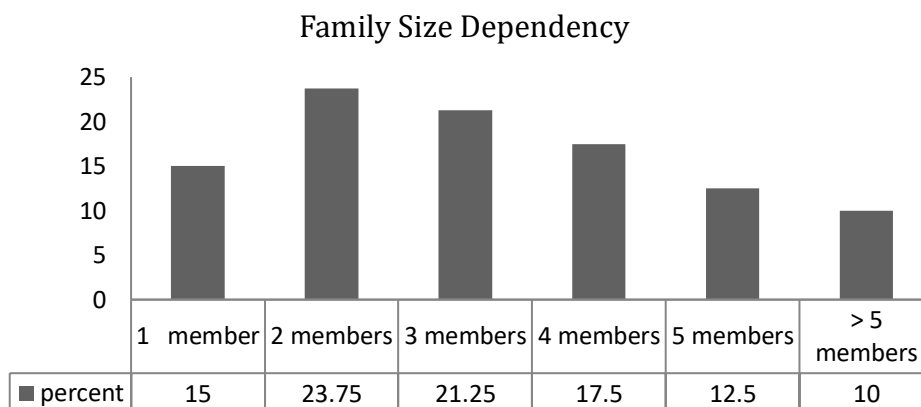



Figure 3. Family Size Dependency on Informal Business Enterprise

The observation on five vending locations confirmed that the workplace structure of informal business units in Baturaja nearly correspond to the finding of Informal Economy Monitoring Study (2012) cited in Roever (2014), except for the findings in Citimall Baturaja and Taman Kota, and can be classified in the following table. The workplace structure of street vendors is compact, portable, and light weight, but there are only a few already aware of business differentiation.

Table 1. Workplace Structure of Informal Business Enterprise

No.	Informal Business Workplace Structure	Location				
		Taman Kota	Pasar Inpres	Pasar Baru	Pasar Pucuk	Citimall Baturaja
1	Concession stand, pop-up platform	√	X	X	X	√
2	Fixed stall (permanent vendor), stand, kiosk	√	√	√	√	√
3	Mobile stand cart, bicycle, trolley, car, motor cycle	√	√	√	√	X
4	Table, carton, crate, box	X	√	√	√	X
5	Ground, on a blanket or tarp on the ground/floor	X	√	√	√	X
6	Self (basket, bag, hands, pick up cart)	√	√	√	√	X

Informal business in Baturaja, in particular street vendor or street merchant or hawker or PKL set up their business in public area, only a handful operates within the legal area provided by private sector and local government. It is very challenging to figure out the exact number of informal business enterprises, due to its mobility, irregular operating hour and seasonal operation, such as the durian, rambutan, cempedak, and duku vendors. In addition, to



complicate the situation, interview confirmed that all vendors in public area agreed on their vending location is strategic, lucrative, and worth safeguarding at all cost. The complication grows more intense as the street vendors move inward the street, especially during duku and durian harvest season. The reason is for customer convenient to pick and grab the produce, and limited space available to set up stall, since the space is already occupied by permanent street vendors.

The situation is less complicated in Taman Kota (Town Square), where the street vendors in general only cramped the sidewalks, and the operation hour is strictly supervised. They usually begin operation at afternoon and close at midnight. Street vendors in Taman Kota are more organized, but still it squeezes traffic, because the street is exploited for parking lot. The customers in Taman Kota is not segmented into social class, typically street vendors are not only selling foods and beverages, but serving dine-in as well; not to mention Taman Kota also plays a part as popular social gathering public area in Baturaja.

Citimall Baturaja also lures local people, native or non-native, to start up business in the vicinity or inside the shopping mall. Informal business vendors or merchant inside the shopping mall are having good and protective environment to operate their business; therefore, it can be considered as border line between informality and formality. There are three sections of shopping mall surveyed in this research, *i.e.*, food court, passage ways, and atrium. Interview confirmed that location in three sections of shopping mall is strategic and lucrative for business, since it is located on the ground floor. The vendors in shopping mall are considered as legal tenant and unique, therefore they cannot be classified as fully-informal business, and play a part as border line between informal and formal business enterprise. The restraining factor is that to start-up a business in shopping mall requires more capital than on the street side. The following chart presents capital requires to start-up an informal business in Baturaja.

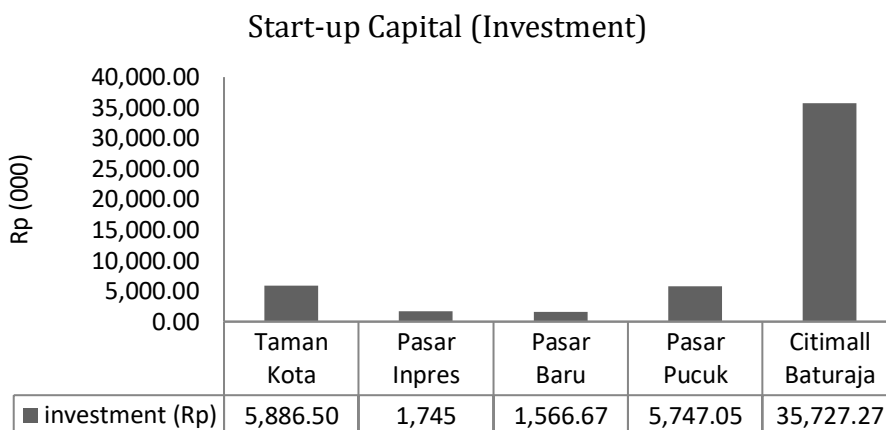


Figure 4. Start-up Capital of Informal Business Enterprises

In Citimall Baturaja, most of capital is allocated for renting business space inside the shopping mall, even though it is on the passage way or atrium. Investment to start informal business in Taman Kota requires less amount of capitals, the money is usually for providing tangible assets, *e.g.* cart, table, chair, cookware, tent, etc. In general, vendors in Taman Kota are fully aware to give attention to customer satisfaction aspect, and they serve open air dining, besides pick and grab; in view of the fact that they are competing with thriving culinary formal businesses. Whereas, on the street side of Pasar Pucuk, the street vendors usually used cart, and several are also serving dine-in for customers, whilst on the street side of Pasar Inpres and Pasar Baru, dine-in is not complementary. Some of street vendors in Pasar Pucuk and Pasar Inpres are senior and more experience in the business, for the reason that both business hotspots are the oldest market place in Baturaja; hence they started street vending ahead before others.

Working capital to run an informal business in Baturaja is not significantly different by location. Vendors in Citimall Baturaja are somehow exploiting less working capital than other locations. The irregularity is caused by permanent installment of business stall or stand, and not to mention that public utilities provided by shopping mall for tenants are superior to the street side vendors. As a result, vendors do not need to provide independent power supply and fresh water, and preparing equipments on a daily basis. Street vendors in Taman Kota has the highest amount of working capital, because they have to provide power and fresh water supply, besides the expenses in preparation, *e.g.* rearranging structures, tables, and chairs for customers to dine-in. Working capital requires to operate informal business units on daily basis is present in the following chart.

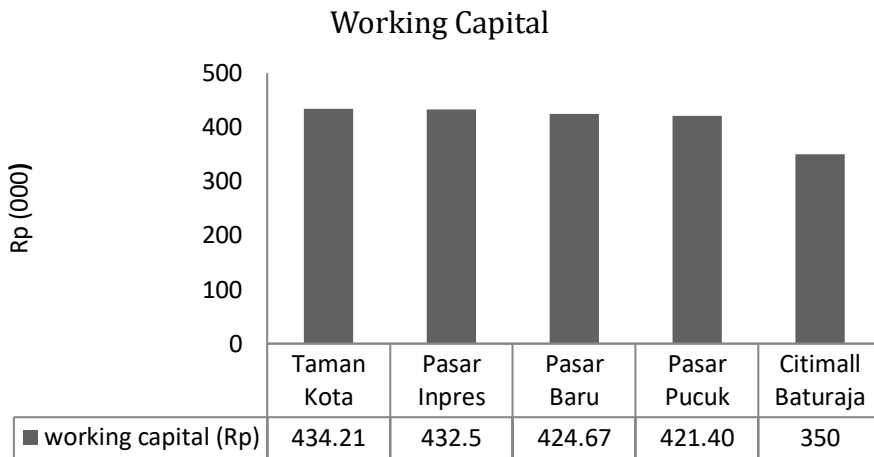


Figure 5. Working Capital of Informal Business Enterprises

Informal business sector also provides part time job and employment, besides employment for the owner, moreover there are 52.50% owner of informal enterprises perform multitasking job as owner-manager and labor as well. Employee of informal business work as helper in part time job relationship, some employees are family member, since they supply cheap labor. Labors are usually employed to help pushing cart, preparing workplace structure, and doing clean-up job. In average, majority of street vendors employ 2 labors; concurrently, informal business units in Citimall Baturaja employ 3 labors. The disparity of labor utilization is due to business organizational and operational traits. In Citimall Baturaja, social class market segmentation is applied and carefully put into action, therefore they need more labor to perform job as waitress and cashier, in order to keep up with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Labor employment in informal business units present in following chart Figure 6.

Pasar Baru street vendors are employing labors with the longest working hour, the reason is not yet been studied, but observation had been made uncovering that it is caused by sizable space available in Pasar Baru, in contrast to Pasar Pucuk and Pasar Inpres. Street vendors can operate without rotation and time bound, and not to mention that they do not have to compete with legal shop or store nearby. Labor working hour in informal business in Baturaja varied amongst locations. Labor in Citimall Baturaja is undergoing shorter working hours in contrast to Pasar Baru, but this shorter period is basically back up by good working environment. The shortest working hour is perform by street vendors in Pasar Inpres, the situation is generated by shorter period of preparation, *i.e.* several number of street vendors inside and on the street side of Pasar Inpres simply using compact knock down structure to operate, the reason for that is the

frequent raid of illegal street vendors on this location. Labor working hour of informal business in Baturaja is presented in following chart (see Fig.7).

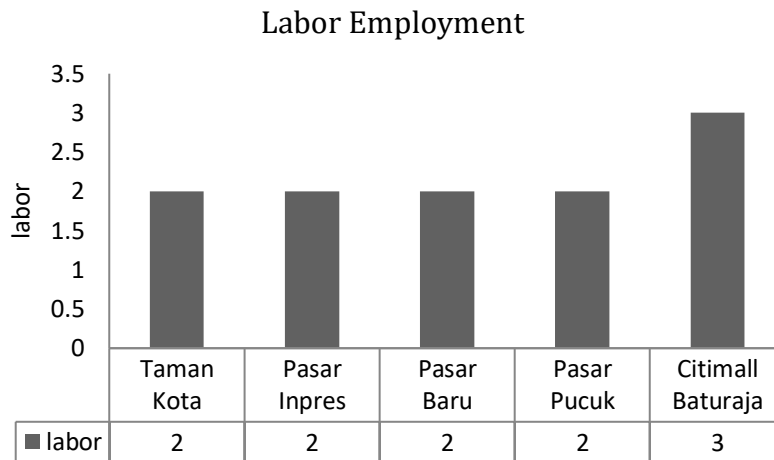


Figure 6. Labor Employed by Informal Business

Operating income earned by informal enterprises are unstable and irregular, therefore to set a target on operating income is only a resort. The daily basis income for culinary street vendors is more unpredictable during rainy season, durian and duku harvest, because the produces are competitor. On the contrary, price rate of raw rubber material and agricultural produce are going along with informal business income. The situation does not interrupt with the consistency and willing of the informal business entrepreneur, hence the optimistic attitude is way of life.

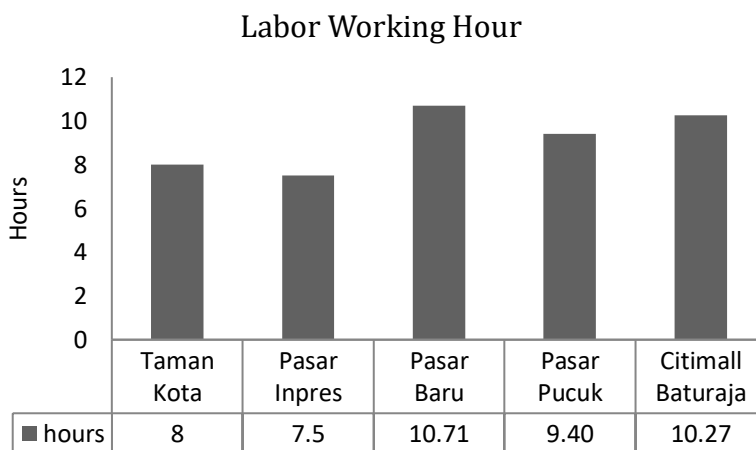


Figure 7. Labor Working Hours Spent by Informal Business

Informal business entrepreneurs in Citimall Baturaja gain the highest operating income; the earning doubled the amount of Pasar Inpres street vendors. Operating income is then generally allocated for three purposes, *i.e.* working capital, household finance, and saving. Information of income acquired within informal economy enterprises are somehow unreliable, because book keeping is not on any job description, except for those operating in Citimall Baturaja and several in Taman Kota. The following chart illustrated operating income earned by informal business enterprises in Baturaja.

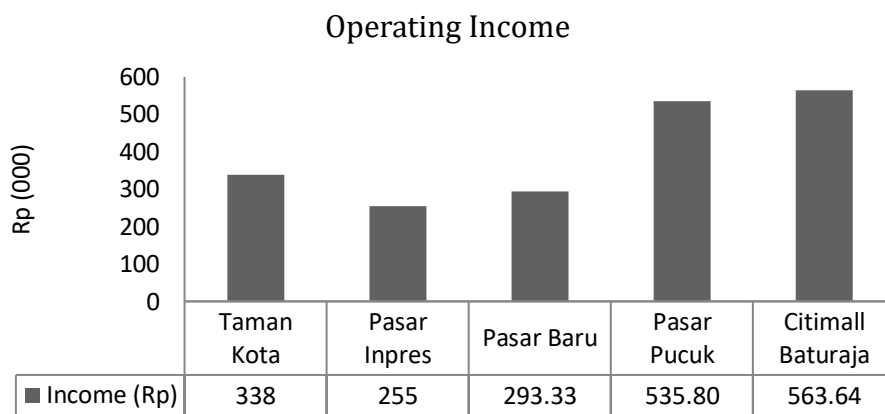



Figure 8. Operating Income Earned by Informal Business Enterprises

Pasar Pucuk and Pasar Inpres are the worst case scenarios of informal economy in Baturaja, and OKU Regency at large. Although Pasar Inpres is located in vicinity of Pasar Pucuk, the findings is not comparable, however the reason for it to occurred is not been deeply studied. This research only made an observation on this observable fact, *i.e.* generated by typical product offer to the customers. In general, street vendors in Pasar Inpres offer local vegetable, fruit, and other produces, as well as shorter working hours. The implication makes matter worst due to intense competition amongst the street vendors and with legal vendors nearby.

Citimall Baturaja and Taman Kota is the best case model for informal economy enterprises vending zone in Baturaja, regardless of their incomparable traits, but both can be a model as transitional stage in formalizing the informal economy sector. Relocation of entire informal business enterprises to Taman Kota and Citimall Baturaja is not an option, since both location required more capital and sophisticated workplace structure. The ideal place for relocation is *e.g.* Pasar Baru, placing street vendors outside the five business hotspots studied could be in fact causing unrest, because every single one of informal business entrepreneurs claimed that their



spot is strategic, lucrative, and worth safeguarding at all costs. Informal business cannot be ground breaking enterprise because of limited resources acquired. Relocation to remote location and suburban area, in the end will make them to re-enter and resettle to previous location. Therefore, relocation policy should offered informal business entrepreneur to have similar advantage and opportunity as in prior location.

Formalizing the informality will soon be a challenging responsibility carried by OKU Regency Government. If not managed thoroughly, it could inflict the growth of gross domestic regional product, real-domestic income, and employment in the near future. Therefore, the policy of formalizing the informality in Baturaja, and OKU Regency at large can be systematically done simultaneously by considering these five key elements, *i.e.* relocating, licensing, taxing, facilitating, and protecting. Further discussion on the theoretical framework and policy modeling will be available in later article.

One case example can be seen at informal business enterprise workplace provided by private sector as in shopping mall, whereas good working environment and workplace structure can impose significant disparity with other locations. The main obstacle of formalization is that informal entrepreneurs do not perceive any benefit and advantage of being formalized, and for this reason they remain secured in comfort zone of informality, also confirmed by a finding of insignificant difference of operating income between informal vendors in shopping mall against street side vendors in particular location.

CONCLUSION

A large portion of informal business enterprises run by women, whereas the rest by men. Age disparity is 16 to 75 years old, with the average age of 36 years old. Informal entrepreneurs in Baturaja are educated workforce, and tribal origins are dominated by Oganese (native) and Javanese (non-native). Informal business enterprises in five vending location have distinctive characteristics, but they have three characteristics in common, *i.e.* labor employment size, lucrative vending spot, and do not perceive any benefit and advantage of formalization. The less informal business enterprises located at vending zone in shopping mall disclosed that they are spending more in start-up capital, labor employment, labor working hour, but spending less in working capital, and earning more in operating income. The restraining factor of formalization is that the informal entrepreneurs do not perceive any benefit and advantage of being formalized. Therefore, they remain secured in informality, confirmed by finding of insignificant difference of operating income between informal vendors in shopping mall against street side vendors. The

policy of formalizing the informality in Baturaja, and OKU Regency at large can be systematically done simultaneously by considering these five key elements, *i.e.* relocating, licensing, taxing, facilitating, and protecting.

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