PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AT SAMESTA COOPERATIVE IN ACHIEVING MILK SALES DISTRIBUTION TARGETS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing national milk demand has not been offset by domestic milk production capacity, so the role of cooperative institutions is crucial in connecting farmers with the market. The Merapi Sejahtera Cow Cooperative faces challenges in the form of production fluctuations and changes in sales composition between the retail channel and the Dairy Processing Industry, so that the achievement of sales distribution targets has not been consistent. This study aims to analyze the conditions of partnership implementation, identify internal and external factors, and formulate cooperative partnership strategies in meeting the distribution target of milk sales. The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach supported by SWOT analysis as well as IFAS and EFAS analysis, with primary data from interviews with cooperative member farmers and administrators as well as secondary data from cooperative and related agency documents. The results of the study show that the implementation of the partnership has been carried out through technical coaching, capital facilities, quality control, and milk distribution to two marketing channels. The strategic position of the cooperative is in a quadrant that reflects internal strengths greater than weaknesses, but external threats are more dominant than opportunities, so the prioritized strategy is the use of internal strengths to overcome external threats to support the achievement of sustainable milk sales distribution targets

KEYWORDS

Cooperative Partnership; Sales Distribution Strategy; SWOT Analysis; Dairy Farming; IFAS-EFAS

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INTRODUCTION

The dairy farming sector is one of the important subsectors in agricultural development that plays a role in providing animal protein sources, especially milk commodities that contain lactose, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals for the nutritional needs of the community. Domestic milk production capacity is still not able to meet the needs of national milk consumption optimally, as shown by data from the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health which records that domestic milk production is below 1 million tons per year, while national demand has reached more than 4 million tons per year (Mandharenie, 2022). This gap is reinforced by findings (Ginting et al., 2023) which state that domestic milk production is only able to meet about 20% of the total national needs, so most milk needs still depend on imports.

Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, is one of the areas with growing dairy farming activities, especially in Cangkringan District as the production center with the largest contribution. Dairy cow population data in Sleman Regency for the 2021–2025 period shows a fluctuating trend, in line with the milk production pattern which also declined in 2022–2023 before starting to recover in 2024–2025. The Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative (SAMESTA) acts as an economic institution that organizes the production, storage, and distribution of milk from 220 member farmers who are members of 16 groups in three sub-districts, through two main marketing channels, namely the Dairy Processing Industry (IPS)—with the main partner PT. Sarihusada Generasi Mahardika—and the retail market, with a distribution target policy of 60% to social studies and 40% to retail.

Cooperative milk sales distribution data shows that the realization from 2021 to 2024 is not on target because sales are still dominated by retail channels, and the new target is achieved in 2025 when the proportion of sales to IPS increases sharply. This change in distribution pattern indicates that there are internal and external factors that affect the performance of cooperative partnerships, so cooperatives are required not only to maintain production continuity but also to optimize the distribution of production products according to market needs (Malau et al., 2021). Partnerships as a business strategy between two or more parties play an important role in supporting the capacity and sustainability of people's livestock businesses through the provision of production facilities, fostering farmers, and strengthening business institutions (Febrianti et al., 2025).

The partnership strategy between cooperatives and farmers in supporting changes in the distribution pattern of milk sales towards the target of 60% IPS and 40% retail has not been systematically identified, so this research is important to answer three problem formulations, namely how the conditions of the implementation of the partnership between cooperatives and member farmers, what are the internal and external factors that affect the implementation of the partnership, and how to the right partnership strategy for cooperatives in increasing the distribution of milk sales. The purpose of this study is to analyze the conditions of partnership implementation, analyze internal and external factors that affect it, and formulate a partnership strategy of the Merapi Sejahtera Cow Cooperative in increasing the distribution of milk sales, by referring to the agribusiness partnership theory (Hendrarini et al., 2024), partnership strategies based on the principles of efficiency, adaptivity, and sustainability (Widiarta et al., 2026), sales theory that emphasizes value creation and relationship management long-term (Arianty, 2024), as well as sales distribution theory that emphasizes the importance of effective distribution channels in maintaining supply alignment with market needs (Thalib, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach supported by strategic analysis tools, with the aim of systematically describing the conditions of partnership implementation between cooperatives and member farmers, as well as formulating partnership strategies based on the identification of internal and external factors faced by the organization. The descriptive approach was chosen because this study aims to map the actual state of the field (Sari et al., 2022), while a strategic approach is needed to translate these conditions into strategy formulations that are applicable to cooperatives.

Location and Time of Research. The research was carried out at the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative (SAMESTA) located on Jl. Plosokerep Raya, Plosokerep, Umbulharjo, Cangkringan District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Location determination is carried out *purposively* , which is a method of selecting subjects based on certain considerations so that researchers can obtain quality data that is relevant to the research objectives (Khoiroh et al., 2026). The consideration of location selection is based on the fact that the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative is an agribusiness institution that is active in the management of dairy farming and milk marketing, establishes direct partnerships with 220 member farmers in three sub-districts (Cangkringan, Pakem, and Turi), and has a measurable sales distribution target policy (60% to the Dairy Processing Industry and 40% to *retail*), so it is relevant to be studied as an object of research on partnership strategies in sustainable business.

Data Type and Source. This study uses two types of data. Primary data was obtained directly from the first source in the field through interviews with key informants and research respondents (Mardatillah & Murhayati, 2025), including information on the implementation of partnerships, milk production conditions and quality, sales distribution systems, and internal and external factors that affect the achievement of distribution targets. Secondary data was obtained indirectly through previously available sources (Nurachman et al., 2026), including official cooperative reports, statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency, publications of related agencies, internal archives of cooperatives, and relevant scientific literature. Secondary data are used to strengthen the analysis, particularly in examining the gap between milk production and sales distribution during the period 2021–2025, as well as as as a comparison to findings obtained in the field.

Population and Sample. The study population was divided into two groups. The main population includes all dairy farmers who are active members of the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative which totals 220 people, because farmers are parties who are directly involved in milk production activities and the implementation of partnerships with cooperatives. The second group is key informants from the cooperative management, selected because they have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in decision-making and implementation of cooperative partnership strategies. The number of breeder samples was determined using the Slovin formula with an error level (*e*) of 10% for large populations, namely $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2) = 220 / (1 + 220(0.1)^2) = 220 / 3.2 = 68.75$, which was rounded to 69 breeders as a research sample. Sampling of farmers is carried out using *a simple random sampling technique*, which is a technique that provides an equal opportunity for each member of the population to be selected as a respondent (Noor et al., 2022). The determination of key informants from the management is carried out by *purposive sampling technique* based on consideration of roles and involvement in cooperative management. From the cooperative organizational structure consisting of 19 workers (management and operational units), 6 key informants were determined to represent strategic positions, namely the chairman, secretary, treasurer, milk admin, representative of the dairy management unit, and head of the feed and livestock unit. Thus,

the total number of respondents in this study is 75 people, consisting of 69 farmers and 6 cooperative administrators.

Data Collection Techniques. Data collection is carried out through three complementary techniques. *First*, direct observation is carried out by observing the cooperative's operational activities directly, starting from the milk receipt process, quality testing, storage in *cooling* tanks, to distribution to marketing partners, in order to obtain a real picture of the partnership system and distribution mechanism for milk sales. *Second*, interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to cooperative administrators as key informants and breeders as respondents, using question guidelines that have been prepared according to research variables so that the data obtained is more systematic and in accordance with field conditions. The interview instrument also contains a structured questionnaire to explore respondents' assessment of strategic factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) that are used as the basis for weighting in the IFAS and EFAS analysis. *Third*, documentation is carried out throughout the research in the form of photos, videos, and the collection of supporting data, as a complement of data that supports the accuracy of the research description and arguments.

Data Analysis Method. The data analysis in this study was carried out through three interrelated stages. *The first stage* is a descriptive analysis, which is used to describe the conditions of cooperative partnerships in a systematic manner, including the characteristics of respondents, the implementation of coaching, and the distribution mechanism of milk sales (Sari et al., 2022). *The second stage* is SWOT analysis, which is a method to evaluate the internal and external conditions of the organization as the basis for strategy formulation (Sari Nastiti et al., 2023). Internal factors are classified into strengths and weaknesses, while external factors are classified into opportunities and threats, which are obtained based on observations, interviews, and questionnaires of research respondents. *The third stage* is the analysis of IFAS (*Internal Factor Analysis Summary*) and EFAS (*External Factor Analysis Summary*) (Widyasana & Telagawathi, 2026), which is carried out through six steps: (1) compiling the internal and external strategic factors of the identified results into a table; (2) give weight to each factor on a scale of 0.0 (non-important) to 1.0 (very important), provided that the total amount of weight is not more than 1.00; (3) rating each factor on a scale of 1 (weak) to 4 (very strong), where the strength and opportunity factors are given a unidirectional value (the bigger the better), while the weakness and threat factors are given opposite values (the greater the negative impact, the higher the score); (4) multiplying the weight by *the rating* to obtain the weighting score of each factor; (5) summing up all weighting scores to obtain the total IFAS and EFAS scores; and (6) determine the position of the cooperative in the SWOT quadrant diagram by calculating the coordinates (x, y) using the formula $x = (S–W)/2$ and $y = (O–T)/2$, where S and W are the total strengths and weaknesses scores, while O and T are the total odds and threat scores (Lestari et al., 2024).

The results of the coordinate mapping determine the position of cooperatives in one of the four strategic quadrants. Quadrant I describes a very favorable situation, where cooperatives have the power to take advantage of existing opportunities so that the appropriate strategy is an aggressive growth strategy (*growth oriented strategy*). Quadrant II describes a condition where cooperatives still have internal strength despite facing various threats, so the strategy used is to utilize strength to reduce the impact of threats. Quadrant III describes the condition of large market opportunities but there are still internal weaknesses, so the appropriate strategy is to improve internal weaknesses while taking advantage of opportunities. Quadrant IV describes a less favorable condition, namely when the cooperative faces internal weaknesses as well as external threats, so the strategy used is a defensive *strategy*. The results of the quadrant mapping were then used as the basis for

the preparation of the SWOT Matrix, which resulted in four groups of alternative strategies, namely the SO (*Strengths-Opportunities*) strategy that utilizes strengths to capture opportunities, the ST (*Strengths-Threats*) strategy that uses strength to deal with threats, the WO (*Weaknesses-Opportunities*) strategy that minimizes weaknesses by utilizing opportunities, and the WT strategy (*Weaknesses-Threats*) which are defensive in nature to reduce weaknesses while avoiding threats (Rahma, 2024). The four strategy groups were formulated into partnership strategy recommendations that are in accordance with the actual conditions of the Merapi Sejahtera Cow Cooperative in meeting the milk sales distribution target.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents. This study involved 75 respondents, consisting of 69 member breeders and 6 administrators of the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative. The characteristics of the management respondents show that the majority are in the age range of 31-40 years (66.67%) which is classified as productive age, dominated by men (66.67%), with a relatively homogeneous formal education background, namely all high school/vocational high school equivalent (100%), and have an evenly distributed working period between 1-5 years (50%) and 6-10 years (50%). This composition shows that cooperative managers are at an age and work experience that supports managerial functions, decision-making, and management of partnerships with farmers, while reflecting a combination of experienced managers who understand the internal conditions of the cooperative in depth and managers with shorter working periods that can provide new perspectives for organizational development.

The characteristics of the respondent farmers showed the dominance of men by 78.26% compared to women of 21.74%, which reflects that the dairy farming business in the study area is generally run by male heads of families. Based on age, the majority of farmers are in the elderly age group, namely over 70 years old (27.54%) and 50–59 years old (26.09%), followed by the age group of 40–49 years and 60–69 years old (18.84% each), as well as the young productive age group of 30–39 years old (8.70%). The age composition, which is dominated by the adult to elderly group, indicates the challenge of regeneration of dairy farming business actors in the future, even though farmers are still actively running businesses and partnerships with cooperatives. In terms of education, farmers are dominated by high school/vocational school graduates (39.13%), followed by elementary (34.78%) and junior high school (26.09%), which show a fairly diverse level of formal education but generally supports the ability of farmers to understand information and follow the guidance provided by cooperatives. Based on the length of membership, the majority of farmers have joined for 7–10 years (46.38%), showing a fairly long partnership experience with cooperatives. In terms of business scale, most farmers have small dairy cattle ownership, namely 2-3 heads (57.97%), which confirms that the dairy farming business in the research area is dominated by small-scale farmers, so the role of cooperatives as a producer of production from many farmers is very crucial to meet the distribution needs to the retail market and the dairy processing industry.

Conditions for Partnership Implementation. The results of the study show that the implementation of the partnership between the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative and member breeders has been carried out through several forms of structured services. Technical coaching is carried out regularly every month through counseling and assistance regarding dairy cow maintenance, feeding management, cage cleanliness, livestock health, and the implementation of good *milking practices* to maintain milk quality. The cooperative also provides support in the form of capital loan facilities and the provision of livestock

production facilities such as concentrated feed, forage feed, medicines, and vitamins, with a payment system carried out through the deduction of farmers' monthly milk sales. Each milk deposit is recorded and accumulated by the cooperative for one month, then at the end of the period the total sales value is calculated after deducting the farmers' obligations, so that the farmers receive net income periodically. This partnership system provides reciprocal benefits: for farmers in the form of ease of obtaining capital, means of production, technical guidance, and marketing certainty; Meanwhile, for cooperatives, it is in the form of continuity of milk supply, product quality according to marketing partner standards, and support for achieving sales distribution targets. These findings are in line with research (Manurung et al., 2021) which states that financing facilities provided by cooperatives can increase farmers' business capacity and support increased milk production.

The distribution of milk sales begins with the collection of fresh milk from member farmers which is carried out every day in groups, followed by testing the physical quality of the milk before being stored in *a cooling tank* to maintain freshness during the storage process. This condition is in line with research (Tanjung et al., 2025) which states that quality testing at the milk receipt stage is part of quality control to ensure that milk meets standards before being distributed to the Dairy Processing Industry. Milk is then distributed through two marketing channels, namely the *retail market* and the Dairy Processing Industry (IPS), with PT Sarihusada Generasi Mahardhika as one of the main partners in the industrial sector. Milk sales distribution data for the 2021–2025 period shows that the realization of distribution in 2021 to 2024 is not in accordance with the cooperative's internal policy target of 60% IPS and 40% *retail*, because sales are still dominated by *retail channels* with percentages of 72.2%, 84.0%, 79.2%, and 55.5%, respectively. The new distribution target is achieved in 2025, when the proportion of sales to social studies increases significantly to 63.4% while *retail* decreases to 36.6%. This change in distribution pattern reflects the adjustment of the cooperative's marketing strategy in response to market dynamics as well as efforts to optimize the organized distribution system through the process of collecting, testing quality, storing, and distributing milk to marketing partners.

SWOT Analysis Results. The identification of internal and external factors based on the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires of 75 respondents resulted in seven factors in each category. Strengths include: cooperative facilities that support the business development of member farmers; the ability of the management to manage partnerships; the quality of milk produced by farmers has met the standards of marketing partners; cooperative management that supports the smooth implementation of partnerships and distribution; distribution channels that support the distribution of milk to *the retail* and IPS markets; good cooperative relationships between cooperatives and farmers; and regular coaching provided by cooperatives to improve milk production and quality. Weaknesses *include*: partnership strategies that still need to be improved to meet distribution targets; the cooperative's dependence on certain marketing partners; uneven consistency of milk quality across farmers; management of sales distribution that still needs to be improved in effectiveness; unstable milk production of farmers; the relatively small scale of the business of member breeders; as well as coordination between cooperatives and breeders which still needs to be strengthened.

On the external side, opportunities include: government program support for the development of dairy cow businesses; increase in community milk consumption; food diversification programs that expand milk marketing; technological developments that support production, quality, and distribution; opportunities for cooperation with social studies that can still be developed; increased public awareness of milk consumption; and

increasing demand for fresh milk in the market. Threat factors include: fluctuations in feed prices; competition with imported milk products; changes in the quality standards of social studies; changes in government policies in the livestock sector; diseases in dairy cows that decrease milk production and quality; changes in climatic conditions; as well as fluctuations in market demand.

Results of IFAS and EFAS Analysis. The results of the IFAS matrix calculation show that the total weight of the strength factor is 0.507 with a total score of 1.957, while the total weight of the weakness factor is 0.493 with a total score of 1.767, so that the difference in the IFAS (*Strengths–Weaknesses*) score is 0.190. This positive value shows that the internal condition of the cooperative is more dominated by strength factors than weaknesses, indicating a fairly good internal ability to support the implementation of partnerships. On the other hand, the results of the EFAS matrix calculation showed a total weight of opportunity factor of 0.509 with a total score of 1.598, while the total weight of the threat factor was 0.491 with a total score of 1.878, so that the difference in EFAS score (*Opportunities–Threats*) was -0.280. This negative value indicates that the external environment of the cooperative is dominated by threat factors rather than opportunities, indicating a significant external challenge to the sustainability of the partnership. These findings are consistent with the view (Budiarso et al., 2025) that the IFAS-EFAS analysis provides a systematic basis for determining the strategic position of a business institution based on the strengths and challenges faced.

The calculation of quadrant coordinates using the formula x = (S–W)/2 and y = (O–T)/2 results in x = (1.957–1.767)/2 = 0.095 and y = (1.598–1.878)/2 = -0.140, so that the coordinate point (0.095; -0.140) is obtained, which places the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative in Quadrant IV (*Strengths–Threats/ST).* This position shows that cooperatives have greater internal strengths than weaknesses, but on the other hand face external threats that are more dominant than the available opportunities. The strength of cooperatives is reflected in the ability of the management to manage partnerships, good cooperative relations with farmers, distribution channels that have been running, and regular coaching, while the main threats faced come from fluctuations in feed prices, competition in imported dairy products, changes in social security quality standards, livestock diseases, climate change, and fluctuations in market demand.

Partnership strategy based on a SWOT matrix. Based on the position of Quadrant IV, the main strategy prioritized is the ST (*Strengths-Threats*) strategy, which is to utilize the internal strength of the cooperative to overcome external threats. The ST strategy formulated includes: strengthening coaching to farmers so that milk quality remains in accordance with social security standards despite changes in quality standards; optimizing partnership relationships between cooperatives and farmers to maintain the continuity of milk supply amid fluctuations in market demand and competition for imported products; and increase the effectiveness of milk distribution management and quality supervision so that cooperatives are able to face changes in market conditions and other external threats. In addition to the main strategy, the SWOT matrix also produces three groups of supporting strategies. The SO (*Strengths-Opportunities*) strategy is directed at utilizing the ability of management, coaching, and supporting government programs to improve milk quality and production, optimizing distribution channels and expanding cooperation with social studies, and utilizing technological developments for production and distribution efficiency. The WO (*Weaknesses-Opportunities*) strategy focuses on improving the quality of partnership implementation through the use of government and technology programs, expanding marketing networks so that cooperatives do not depend on one partner, and improving cooperative-farmer coordination to maintain quality and continuity of production. The WT (*Weaknesses-Threats*) strategy as a defensive strategy is

directed at improving coordination and communication to reduce production instability, reduce dependence on one marketing partner through the development of alternative distribution channels, and increase the productivity of farmers through continuous coaching.

The findings of the position of Quadrant IV in this study reinforce the results of the study (Sari et al., 2025) which affirms that the effectiveness of the breeder partnership program at the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative (SAMESTA) is greatly influenced by the consistency of coaching and management of sustainable partnership relationships between cooperatives and member breeders, in the midst of external pressures such as fluctuations in input prices and competition for imported products that are common characteristics of the national dairy industry. The fundamental difference between this quadrant position and the ideal position of Quadrant I (*growth oriented*) confirms that the achievement of the 60:40 sales distribution target by 2025 is more the result of optimizing the internal strength of the cooperative in the face of external pressures, rather than a reflection of a fully conducive business environment, so that the sustainability of achieving these targets in the future depends on the consistency of the implementation of the ST strategy that has been formulated.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of partnerships between the Merapi Sejahtera Cattle Cooperative and member farmers has gone well through the provision of capital facilities, technical coaching, milk quality monitoring, and milk distribution to retail channels and the Dairy Processing Industry, although the cooperative still faces obstacles in the form of unstable milk production and dependence on certain marketing partners. Internal factors of cooperatives are dominated by strengths in the form of management skills, good cooperative relationships, and regular coaching, while external factors are dominated by threats in the form of fluctuations in feed prices, competition in imported products, and climate change. The strategic position of the cooperative is in the Strengths-Threats quadrant, so the right partnership strategy is to utilize the internal strength of the cooperative to overcome external threats through strengthening the development of farmers, improving the quality and continuity of milk production, optimizing partnership relationships, and increasing the effectiveness of the distribution system and quality control, in order to support the achievement of the sustainable distribution of milk sales targets. Further research is suggested to expand the scope of other dairy cooperative partnership areas so that the findings of the partnership strategy can be generalized more broadly in the context of national dairy agribusiness.

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