



## Internationalization Strategy of Farmer Groups in the Export Value Chain of *Elaeocarpus Ganitrus* Seeds

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the internationalization strategies of farmer groups in integrating *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds into the global export value chain. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed, focusing on a farmer group in Kedemangan Village. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis involving open coding, categorization, and theme development. The findings identify four main themes: multichannel marketing, the role of diaspora as market agents, digital communication in trust-building, and the dynamics of production capacity. The results reveal that internationalization evolves organically through the utilization of diaspora networks and digital technologies to overcome market access constraints. Diaspora actors function as strategic intermediaries bridging information gaps and fostering trust with international buyers. Digital communication enhances transparency and product credibility, while the farmer group demonstrates emerging capabilities in maintaining quality and supply consistency. From a Global Value Chain perspective, upgrading processes are primarily limited to product and process improvements, with minimal engagement in higher value-added functions. This study contributes to the literature on community-based internationalization by highlighting the critical role of social networks in global market integration and offers practical implications for strengthening the capacity of farmer groups.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of economic globalization has encouraged Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to not only be oriented to the domestic market, but also participate in the international market through the internationalization process. MSMEs make a significant contribution to the global economy, accounting for about 90% of total business and more than 50% of employment worldwide (Kumari, 2025; OECD, 2020). In the context of developing countries, the involvement of MSMEs in global value chains (GVCs) is increasingly important because it provides access to markets, technology, and organizational learning (Gereffi & Lee, 2016). Thus, the internationalization of MSMEs not only has an impact on company performance, but also on regional and national economic development.

In the natural resource-based agribusiness sector, the potential for internationalization is increasing in line with the growing global demand for natural and sustainable products (Gereffi & Lee, 2016). Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) make a significant contribution to rural household incomes and local economic resilience. Global studies show that environment-based income can account for about 28% of total rural household income (Angelsen et al., 2014). This confirms the importance of nature-based commodities in the local economy and their integration in the global market. In this context, *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* (genitri) seeds as a commodity of economic and spiritual value have the opportunity to be developed as a competitive export product, especially through coordinated and collaboration-based value chain management.

The internationalization of agribusiness MSMEs faces various structural challenges, including limited access to financing, technology, market information, and compliance with international quality standards and certifications. The literature suggests that integration within GVCs can encourage the upgrading and export of MSMEs, but the process is highly dependent on value chain governance and inter-actor relationships (Ponte & Sturgeon, 2014; Wolter et al., 2016). In the agro sector, understanding of how MSMEs are effectively integrated with upstream actors such as farmer groups is still relatively limited, especially in the context of specific commodities and micro-scale.

The global value chain (GVC) approach offers an analytical framework for understanding the coordination, distribution of value, and upgrading mechanisms in global production systems (Gereffi & Lee, 2016; Ponte & Sturgeon, 2014). Dalam konteks agribisnis, keberhasilan integrasi GVC sangat dipengaruhi oleh kualitas koordinasi dengan aktor hulu, termasuk petani dan kelompok tani, yang menentukan kualitas, kontinuitas, dan keberlanjutan pasokan. Kolaborasi vertikal antara UMKM dan kelompok tani dapat memperkuat daya saing ekspor melalui peningkatan kualitas dan standarisasi produksi.

There is a significant research gap. First, most studies on the internationalization of MSMEs still focus on the firm level and do not sufficiently explore the role of upstream actors in the value chain (Baier-Fuentes et al., 2023). Second, internationalization studies in the non-timber forest products sector

remain limited and tend to focus more on sustainability aspects than on global market integration strategies. Third, NTFP value chain research often focuses on value distribution and governance, but has not explored the dynamics of local institutions such as farmer groups in the context of exports (Grilli & Murtinu, 2018). This research offers several contributions. Examining the internationalization of MSMEs from an upstream perspective by placing farmer groups as strategic actors in the export value chain. Using the context of a specific commodity, namely the seeds of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*, which is still rarely discussed in the international literature. Using a case study approach to explore the dynamics of interaction between actors in the internationalization process. Based on this, the formulation of this research problem is how farmer groups develop internationalization strategies in integrating *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds into the export value chain and how their position and role are shaped by the governance structure of the value chain. This research also aims to analyze the internationalization strategy of farmer groups, identify governance dynamics and upgrading in the export value chain, and formulate a community-based internationalization model that can strengthen the competitiveness of non-timber forest product commodities in the global market.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Internationalization from the Perspective of Non-Firm Actors*

The internationalization literature is classically dominated by a firm-level approach, especially through the Uppsala model which emphasizes the gradual process of entering the international market through the accumulation of experiential learning and increased market commitment (Santangelo & Meyer, 2017). The latest developments in this model emphasize the importance of networks as a key mechanism in reducing uncertainty and accelerating international expansion. This perspective shifts attention from mere corporate decisions to embeddedness in cross-border relational networks. Internationalization is no longer understood as a purely linear process, but as an evolutionary process involving continuous learning, strategic adaptation, and attachment in cross-border networks (Santangelo & Meyer, 2017). This perspective emphasizes that access to international relationships and information is a key determinant in shaping market expansion strategies

Most studies remain positioning companies as the main unit of analysis, with a focus on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as exporters (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). Studies of upstream actors such as farmer groups or primary producers in the context of internationalization are still relatively limited. In fact, in the natural resource-based and agribusiness-based sectors, primary producers are often the determinants of quality, sustainability, and continuity of supply that are prerequisites for integration in global markets (Narrod et al., 2016). Internationalization at the community level can be understood as a collective process that involves coordination, shared learning, and institutional capacity building to meet the demands of the international market. This approach is in line with the perspective of network based internationalization which emphasizes the importance of relationships between

actors in shaping access to global market opportunities (Johanson & Vahlne, 2017). Therefore, the strategy of internationalization of farmer groups needs to be analyzed not only as an economic decision, but also as a social and institutional process embedded in the network structure of the value chain.

### ***Global Value Chain (GVC) dan Tata Kelola (Governance Structure)***

The Global Value Chain (GVC) approach provides an analytical framework for understanding how production, distribution, and consumption activities are coordinated in a global system (Gereffi & Lee, 2016). The GVC emphasizes the distribution of added value, the division of roles between actors, and the governance structure that determines how power and information flow in the production chain. The concept of governance in GVC refers to how relationships between actors are regulated and coordinated. Wolter et al., (2016) Identify five types of governance: market, modular, relational, captive, and hierarchy. This governance structure determines the level of dependency, quality control, and upgrading opportunities for actors in upstream positions. In the field of agribusiness and natural resource-based commodities, governance is often relational or captive, where primary producers depend on traders or exporters who have market access and information (Wolter et al., 2016).

This dependency can limit the bargaining power of farmer groups, but at the same time opens up opportunities for learning and capacity building if the relationship is collaborative. Institutional support and export promotion programs play a role in strengthening network capacity and international market access for small businesses through relational embeddedness mechanisms (Mansor et al., 2024). In the context of farmer groups, the role of intermediary actors is important to bridge the limitations of information and global market access. For farmer groups that produce *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds, integration in the GVC means meeting quality standards, supply consistency, and export regulations set by downstream actors or international buyers. Therefore, their internationalization strategy is greatly influenced by the governance structure that applies in the value chain.

### ***Upgrading in the Value Chain***

The concept of upgrading is a central element in the Global Value Chain (GVC) analysis because it describes how actors in the value chain improve their capabilities and competitive position to obtain greater added value (Gereffi & Lee, 2016). Upgrading not only refers to improving technical efficiency, but also includes strategic transformation in the production process, product differentiation, shift in functions in the value chain, to market penetration with higher standards. The GVC literature identifies four main forms of upgrading, namely process upgrading, product upgrading, functional upgrading, and market upgrading (Wolter et al., 2016) In the context of farmer groups as primary producers, upgrading often starts from improving product quality and standardization to meet export requirements, followed by strengthening organizational capacity and access to market information. Studies show that the success of upgrading is strongly influenced by the governance structure of the

value chain as well as the intensity of collaborative relationships with downstream actors (Santangelo & Meyer, 2017). Therefore, the strategy of internationalization of farmer groups in the export value chain of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds cannot be separated from their ability to upgrade sustainably, both in technical and institutional aspects, in order to strengthen competitiveness and bargaining position in the global market.

### ***Local Institutions and Institutional Embeddedness***

Internationalization at the community level cannot be separated from the local institutional context. The concept of institutional embeddedness describes how economic activity is embedded in social norms, formal rules, and local organizational structures (Granovetter, 2021). In the case of farmer groups, the success of internationalization is greatly influenced by organizational capacity, leadership, trust among members, and local policy support. Studies show that collective institutions such as cooperatives or farmer groups can improve bargaining positions in the value chain through production aggregation and collective negotiation (Narrod et al., 2016). In addition, public policy support and export development programs can accelerate the integration of primary producers in international markets (Mansor et al., 2024). Thus, the internationalization strategy of farmer groups must be understood as an interaction between global market dynamics and local institutional structures.

### ***Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and Export Dynamics***

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) play an important role in rural economies, with a significant contribution to household incomes. (Angelsen et al., 2014). However, the integration of NTFPs in the global market faces challenges in the form of fluctuations in demand, sustainability standards, and limited market access. The literature shows that the success of NTFPs exports depends on value chain coordination, product quality, and sustainability reputation (Haddoud et al., 2017; Papadopoulos, 2018). In this context, *Elaeocarpus ganitrus seeds* as a commodity of economic and spiritual value have international market opportunities, but require strengthening governance and quality standardization.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand in depth the internationalization strategy of MSMEs and the role of farmer groups in the export value chain of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore phenomena contextually, especially related to the processes, interactions, and meanings built by business actors in the real environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study is used because this research focuses on one specific context, namely collaboration between MSMEs and farmer groups in the process of internationalization of genitri commodities.

The research location is in Kedemangan Village, Blitar Regency, East Java, which is one of the seed-producing areas of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*. The selection

of the location was carried out purposively with the consideration that this village has production activities and the potential for the development of export of genitri commodities. In addition, the existence of farmer groups that are active in the management and distribution of products is an important reason for the selection of research locations.

The informants in this study were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on certain considerations relevant to the purpose of the research (Sugiyono, 2017). The main informant consists of the head of the farmer group, namely Sucipto, who has a strategic role in decision-making and coordination of group activities. In addition, there are two members of the farmer group, namely Tedy Nawala and Mardian, who play a direct role in the production and distribution process of genitri seeds. These three informants were chosen because they are considered to have adequate knowledge and experience related to production activities, management, and involvement in the export value chain.

Data collection techniques are carried out through in depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to explore information related to internationalization strategies, the role of farmer groups, and the dynamics of relations between farmer groups and MSMEs. Observations are carried out to directly understand the production process and interaction between actors in the value chain. Meanwhile, documentation is used to complete data in the form of records, reports, and evidence of activities relevant to the research.

The data analysis in this study uses a thematic analysis approach that refers to the stages (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which includes: (1) data familiarization, (2) the initial coding process (open coding), (3) the grouping of codes into categories (axial coding), (4) the formation of the main theme (selective coding), and (5) the interpretation of thematic meaning. In the initial stage, the entire interview data is transcribed and read over and over again to understand the context thoroughly. Furthermore, the researcher conducted open coding by identifying the units of meaning of the informant's statement, such as "the role of nomads in opening up the market", "the use of WhatsApp for business communication", and "recommendations between buyers". The codes are then grouped into more abstract categories, such as "network-based marketing strategies", "use of digital technologies", and "trust-building mechanisms". In the next stage, the category is developed into the main themes that represent patterns in the data, namely: (1) multichannel marketing, (2) the role of the diaspora as an agent of internationalization, (3) digital communication and trust-building, and (4) the dynamics of production capacity in the value chain. To increase the credibility of the thematic analysis, the researcher triangulates sources, checks members, and maintains the consistency of the coding process through trail audits.

The final stage is carried out by interpreting these themes using the theoretical framework of Global Value Chain and network-based internationalization to understand the deeper meaning of the phenomenon being studied. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and method

triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from various informants, while method triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the researcher also conducted a member check by asking for confirmation from the informant regarding the results of data interpretation, thereby increasing the validity of the research findings. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive overview of the internationalization strategy of genitri commodity-based MSMEs and the role of farmer groups in supporting the process in the context of the export value chain.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic analysis process, this study identifies several main themes that describe the internationalization strategy of farmer groups in the export value chain, namely: (1) multichannel marketing, (2) the role of the diaspora as market agents, (3) digital communication in building trust, and (4) production capacity dynamics. Based on thematic analysis, this study identifies four main themes as follows:

Table 1. Thematic Analysis Coding Footprint Table

Data Collection (Empirical)	Initial Code (Open Coding)	Category	Theme
"A nomad in Hong Kong introduced our genitri seeds to local importers"	The role of nomads as market links	International social networks	The role of the diaspora as market agents
"We prepared small shipments for quality testing"	Initial sample delivery	Market penetration strategy	Omnichannel marketing
"We sent photos of genitri seeds via WhatsApp"	Promotion via WhatsApp	Digital communication	Digital communication and trust-building
"We exchanged videos about the process of picking seeds in the garden"	Transparency of the production process	Trust building	Digital communication and trust-building
"The buyer came because of a recommendation from a previous buyer"	Word of mouth	Trust between networks	Digital communication and trust-building
"The importer was hesitant at first, but after seeing the photos of the fields, he believed me"	Visual-based trust	Trust building	Digital communication and trust-building

Data Collection (Empirical)	Initial Code (Open Coding)	Category	Theme
"Nomads help connect with buyers in India and Hong Kong"	Diaspora opens up market access	Global market access	The role of the diaspora as market agents
"We use WeChat and WhatsApp for business communication"	Use of digital platforms	Marketing technology	Digital communication and trust-building
"The total supply reaches about 500 kg per year"	Production capacity	Production and supply	Production capacity dynamics
"Seeds are sorted by size and quality"	Product standardization	Quality control	Production capacity dynamics
"Income is used for household needs"	Direct economic impact	Farmers' welfare	Socio-economic implications

The table above shows that the resulting themes are the result of a gradual coding process that starts from the identification of the unit of meaning (initial code), grouping into categories, to the formation of the main theme. This process ensures that the resulting interpretation is grounded and based on empirical data.

### *Direct and Indirect Marketing*

Interview data showed that the marketing of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* seeds in Kedemangan Village was carried out through a combination of direct and indirect channels. The findings of the study show that the marketing strategy carried out by farmer groups in Kedemangan Village is multichannel, namely combining a direct approach through the diaspora and an indirect approach through digital media. Direct marketing is done through nomads who act as informal agents in the destination country, while indirect marketing is done through communication platforms such as WhatsApp, WeChat, and social media. Directly, the head of the farmer group (Sucipto) explained that the initiation occurred through nomads from Kedemangan who worked as Indonesian Workers (TKI) abroad, especially in India and Hong Kong. This diaspora acts as informal agents of products; They bring seed samples and product information to acquaintances or potential buyers in the country of placement. Sucipto mentioned, "A migrant in Hong Kong introduced our genitri seeds to a local importer. He showed us the photos and specifications of the beans, and then after the buyer was interested, we prepared a small shipment for quality testing." The same goes for migrants in India who communicate with importers there. The process of introducing products by the diaspora led to the initial business relationship of one importer in India and one in Hong Kong who is now recorded as a regular buyer.

On the other hand, marketing does not directly utilize social networks and digital media. Migrants and members of farmer groups are using instant messaging apps such as WeChat (popular in the Chinese community) and WhatsApp, as well as social media (Facebook) to disseminate information and photos of products to potential buyers. Tedy Nawala, a member of the farmer group, said that "We sent photos of genitri seeds via WhatsApp to contacts obtained by migrants. Once someone was interested, we exchanged videos about the process of picking seeds in the garden." This digital communication facilitates the delivery of information across distances, while expanding market reach.

The results of field observations also noted that there is marketing through word-of-mouth promotion among the diaspora and farming communities. When one buyer is satisfied with the quality, they recommend the product to another acquaintance. This is in line with the literature that states that interpersonal networking can increase product visibility and consumer trust in new markets (Dizo-Conteh et al., 2025). Thus, the marketing of genitri seeds in Kedemangan runs in a multitiered manner combining a traditional face-to-face approach by the diaspora and a modern strategy based on digital networks.

Analytically, this strategy reflects a form of adaptation to the structural limitations of MSMEs in accessing global markets, especially in terms of limited capital, market information, and formal networks. In the perspective of *network-based internationalization*, this strategy shows that internationalization does not always depend on formal mechanisms, but can develop through the use of existing social networks (Santangelo & Meyer, 2017). Furthermore, the use of this multichannel approach also shows a combination of traditional mechanisms (interpersonal relationships) and modern (digital technologies), which simultaneously expand market reach while increasing communication flexibility. This shows that farmer groups not only play a role as producers, but also as adaptive actors who are able to develop contextual marketing strategies in the face of global market dynamics.

### ***The Role of the Diaspora as Market Agents***

The analysis of the interview results confirms the importance of the role of the diaspora as a liaison to the international market. The diaspora of Kedemangan village has a "double embeddedness" they are familiar with the conditions in the village of origin and in the country of settlement, so that they are able to bridge the two markets. Sucipto said that the migrants took advantage of their local knowledge: "They knew the taste and uniqueness of our genitri seeds, and then offered them to their acquaintances who were looking for exotic products." Furthermore, the diaspora not only searches for buyers, but also helps ensure initial delivery procedures (e.g. organizing the initial shipment independently) and handles the export administration process informally. This personal relationship and mutual trust confirms the network theory literature which states that the power of social networks (social capital) can provide new market access for MSMEs (Dizo-Conteh et al., 2025). In other words, the marketing strategy 'through the sole of their own feet' (nomads who proactively

sell products) shows how Kedemangan MSMEs utilize the capital of the diaspora network to penetrate foreign markets.

The diaspora translates the culture and preferences of foreign consumers to us, and instead introduces village products to foreign markets. This condition reduces the uncertainty of new markets, buyers feel more confident because marketing agents (diaspora) come from the farming community and understand the characteristics of the product. For example, Mardian (a member of the group) recounts that "Importers in Hong Kong were initially skeptical about the quality of the seeds, but after being told about the role of our group leader and seeing photos of the fields, his confidence grew." The results of the study confirm that the diaspora has a central role in the process of internationalization of genitri seeds. The diaspora not only serves as a market link, but also as an actor that bridges the information gap and builds trust between local producers and international buyers.

Conceptually, this role can be understood as a form of *bridge actor* in an international network, which has a *dual embeddedness* – that is, attachment to local and global contexts simultaneously. The diaspora is able to translate the preferences of the international market to local producers, while also introducing the characteristics of local products to foreign buyers. From the perspective of network theory, the role of the diaspora functions as an *uncertainty reduction mechanism* in cross-border transactions. The initial trust formed through the personal relationships of the diaspora became crucial social capital in opening up access to new markets. These findings are in line with the literature that emphasizes that social networks play an important role in accelerating the internationalization of MSMEs, especially in the context of limited resources (Dizo-Conteh et al., 2025). Thus, the diaspora plays a role not only as a distribution channel, but also as a catalyst in the community-based internationalization process

### ***Digital Communication Strategy and Trust Building***

The results of observations show that Kedemangan's marketing approach relies heavily on digital communication as the main channel. WeChat is used to contact buyers in East Asia, while WhatsApp is widely used to communicate with contacts in South Asia and old friends. Tedy Nawala explained, "When the importer contacted us via chat, we immediately sent a full photo and description. If they are interested, we invite them to the farmer group to see the fields." The use of digital media is the initial bridge before direct interaction occurs. After the initial conversation and the buyer feels confident, the transaction continues virtually via WhatsApp only.

The findings of the study show that digital communication is the main instrument in building business relationships with international buyers. The use of platforms such as WhatsApp and WeChat allows for the rapid exchange of information, including the sending of photos, videos, and product descriptions. However, in more depth, the function of digital communication is not only limited to the delivery of information, but also as a mechanism for building trust. The transparency shown through visual documentation of the production

process, such as videos of picking seeds in the garden, plays a role in increasing the credibility of the product in the eyes of buyers. From the perspective of internationalization theory, trust is a key element in reducing risk and uncertainty in cross-border business relationships (Santangelo & Meyer, 2017). The combination of digital communication and personal interaction (e.g. direct visits to buyers) creates a *hybrid trust-building* model, which is the integration of technology-based trust and relationship-based trust. In addition, the *word-of-mouth* mechanism that occurs between buyers shows that trust is not only built bilaterally, but also spreads through social networks. This strengthens the position of farmer groups in the international market network without requiring large investments in formal promotion.

Marketing through social media is also supported by informal (word-of-mouth) promotions. Some new buyers come to the village based on recommendations from early buyers. Sucipto said, "After the first Indian importer shopped and was satisfied, they recommended to their colleagues. Now someone contacts us directly via WhatsApp after hearing from a friend." This kind of recommendation, while not formally recorded, works like a very effective free advertisement in diasporic communities. This phenomenon confirms the role of social networks in expanding the market without having to pay large advertising costs; It is enough to take advantage of trust between individuals. In this way, Kedemangan's marketing strategy combines the power of digital and interpersonal relationships to attract new buyers.

### ***Production Capacity and Value Chain Dynamics***

In terms of production, the study found that the production capacity of genitri seeds in Kedemangan Village reached around 500 kg per year, with a collection system based on farmer groups. The production process involves collecting from each member's garden, followed by sorting by quality and size. Within the framework of the Global Value Chain (GVC), these findings show that farmer groups play the role of upstream actors responsible for the quality and continuity of supply. These two aspects are the main prerequisites for integration into the global market. Furthermore, the practice of sorting and standardization shows the existence of a form of *process upgrading* and *product upgrading*, although it is still in the early stages. However, farmer groups have still not achieved *functional upgrading*, because they have not been involved in high-value-added activities such as advanced processing or mastering export distribution independently. The structure of relationships with international buyers also shows a governance tendency that is *relational towards captive*, where farmer groups begin to build collaborative relationships, but still have a dependence on buyers in terms of market access and information.

This amount of supply is thanks to good coordination in the local value chain. Farmer groups act as raw material aggregators (genitri producers) that distribute to MSMEs processing/marketing. This stable supply availability is important in global *value chain* (GVC) schemes, as overseas buyers need a guarantee of continuity. Gereffi & Lee, (2016) affirms that integration into the GVC requires consistency of supply and quality of raw materials. In this case,

production coordination through the Kedemangan farmer group is part of the value chain strategy.

The direct economic contribution of this supply is also evident. If one kilogram of genitri seeds is valued (conservatively) at a few hundred thousand rupiah, then the total annual sales reach tens of millions of rupiah. This figure is an important source of additional income for farmers in Kedemangan Village. As noted by Sucipto, the income from the sale of genitri is used for household needs, children's education costs, and other agricultural capital. This fact is consistent with the findings Angelsen et al., (2014) which suggests that environmentally-based products (such as NTFPs) can account for about 28% of farmers' household income in developing countries (Walelign et al., 2020). Genitri marketing has the potential to improve the economic welfare of rural communities through diversification of sources of income. This data confirms that the development of the genitri export market not only benefits processing MSMEs, but also directly improves the economy of farmers' households as raw material providers.

### *Socio Economic Implications*

Based on the above results, it can be seen that the combination of direct-indirect marketing strategies and the use of diaspora networks has formed a new pattern in the internationalization of agribusiness MSMEs. This approach is relevant to network and capability theory, where social resources (diaspora) and digital communication become competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). The findings of the study show that the export activity of genitri seeds makes a real contribution to increasing farmers' household income. Income from this commodity is used to meet basic needs, education, and support other agricultural activities. In the context of rural economics, this emphasizes the role of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) as an alternative source of income that can increase household economic resilience. In addition, involvement in the international market also encourages the organizational capacity of farmer groups, both in terms of production coordination and quality management. More broadly, these findings suggest that community-based internationalization not only impacts the economic aspect, but also strengthens local institutions through increased collaboration and trust between members

In terms of policies and practices, the results of the study recommend further assistance to strengthen the capacity of farmer groups in meeting global market demands. For example, quality management training and product certification can add to competitiveness, while logistics support will help with larger scale of delivery. Local governments or non-governmental organizations can facilitate more formal relationships between farmer groups and importers through trade shows or e-commerce platforms. In addition, the literature suggests the need to pay attention to market diversification; Like the diaspora, the potential export market for genitri can be developed through promotion in countries with large diaspora communities (e.g. Indonesian communities in the Middle East or Chinese communities in Southeast Asia) (Dizo-Conteh et al., 2025). Implementing a more structured digital marketing strategy (e.g. building

a presence on WeChat Business or international marketplaces) will also expand reach.

Overall, these results and discussions underscore how multichannel marketing supported by diaspora networks has created new opportunities for Kedemangan MSMEs. The integration between local actions (village production and marketing) and global (exports through the diaspora) underscores the importance of multi-sector collaboration in the agribusiness value chain. The success of this business not only increases farmers' income, but also shows a model for other villages that have unique commodities to be used as export products. These findings show that the diaspora not only acts as a marketing intermediary, but also as a mechanism to reduce market uncertainty (uncertainty reduction mechanism). From the perspective of network-based internationalization, the diaspora serves as a *bridge actor* that connects the local context with the global market, while increasing the credibility of the product through trust-based relationships.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze the internationalization strategy of farmer groups in integrating *Elaeocarpus ganitrus seeds* into the export value chain. Based on thematic analysis, it was found that the internationalization process does not take place through a structured formal mechanism, but develops organically through a combination of social network-based strategies and the use of digital technology. A multichannel marketing strategy that integrates the role of the diaspora and digital communication is key in opening up access to international markets, especially in the conditions of limited resources faced by farmer groups. The findings of the study show that the diaspora plays a strategic role in bridging the relationship between local producers and the global market. This role is not only limited to the marketing function, but also includes building trust and reducing uncertainty in cross-border transactions.

In addition, digital communication serves as an important instrument in building product credibility through information transparency and direct interaction with buyers. In this context, trust is formed through a combination of virtual interaction and hands-on experience, which strengthens business relationships on an ongoing basis.

From the perspective of the global value chain, farmer groups play the role of upstream actors who are beginning to demonstrate the ability to maintain quality and continuity of supply. The upgrading process that occurred is still dominated by improving product quality and production process efficiency, while the improvement of functions in the value chain is still limited. The governance structure that is formed shows a pattern of relational relations to captive, where farmer groups are beginning to be integrated in the global market network, but still have a dependence on downstream actors in market access and information. Socio-economically, involvement in export activities contributes significantly to increasing farmers' household income and strengthening the institutional capacity of farmer groups. This shows that community-based

internationalization can be an effective strategy in increasing the competitiveness and resilience of rural economies, especially in non-timber forest products.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has several limitations, especially in the limited number of informants and focuses on one case study location, so the generalization of the findings is still limited. In addition, this study has not yet involved the perspective of downstream actors such as exporters or importers, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of value chain dynamics.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct comparative studies on different commodities or regions, as well as involve more actors in the value chain, including exporters, distributors, and international buyers. A mixed-method approach can also be used to quantitatively test the relationship between social networks, marketing strategies, and internationalization performance.

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