

IMPLICATIONS OF ACFTA (ASEAN CHINA FREE TRADE AREA) ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMEs (MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES) IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area) is one of the collaborations built by Indonesia in the context of improving the domestic economy, in which Indonesia must follow the free trade policies and regulations set by the WTO (World Trade Organization). Indonesia's readiness to face this free trade is highly questionable. This also has an impact on MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) in Indonesia, with the existence of free trade, trade competition is getting hotter. This article aims to look at the implications of ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area) on the development of Indonesian SMEs. Qualitative research with analytical descriptive methods is applied in this study, based on data sources obtained through library research techniques. This study shows that the implication of ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area) is not contributing to the economic improvement of MSMEs (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) this is inseparable from the government factor which is more concerned with Chinese imports and the lack of understanding of marketing for MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises)

Key words: Implication, ACFTA, MSMEs, Free Trade,

Introduction

ACFTA is an agreement signed and ratified by several ASEAN countries and initially formed through AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area) which began to apply on January 1, 1993. One of the main factors in the formation of AFTA is they still maintain the economy in each of its countries. Then over the course of time all countries in the ASEAN Area finally united and cooperated with China to develop its trade framework on the ACFTA agreement. (Asean China Free Trade Area). The ACFTA agreement was initiated by ASEAN participants and the Chinese nation in Brunei Darussalam in November 2001, at which meeting ASEAN-China leaders came and joined in signing the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the ASEAN and the people of the Republic of China in Phom Penh, Cambodia on November 4, 2022.

As for some of the main factors in the blocking of local industries such as MSMEs on the post-ACFTA agreement implemented is that the more products from China that enter Indonesia through easier access, the more the tax objects so if accumulated will be great

potential and can generate tax revenue for the government. The existing countries, Indonesia itself is considered to be a massive minority in paying attention to the development of infrastructure and means for economic development that aim to be prepared in the face of the consequences after the conclusion of an agreement and will head to the level of international trade.

Indonesia is also in a poor condition, currently experiencing difficulties in the economic sector and where this country was once a large and fertile country, now can no longer produce food materials that can be used as a basic need as well as one of the food needs for its communities. A small example is the production of garlic that is eliminated and imports from China are more important, in the field of fertilization such as apples are also now beginning to dominate the import of apples from China because the price at sale is also cheaper than the price per kilogram in Indonesia and ultimately affects the workers who become unemployed due to the existence of the ACFTA agreement.

Review of Literature

This study of ACFTA is interesting to discuss given that economic cooperation not only affects the trade sector but also all aspects related to it such as marketing strategies, intellectuality, rules to be followed, changes in policies and laws. It requires MSMEs actors to be able to compete and navigate the global market. Certainly a mature preparation and strategy is necessary without sufficient intellectuality to navigate the global market of MSMEs actors will be very easily defeated and will result in the bankruptcy of the industry. This research will focus on the implications of ACFTA for the development of MSMEs in Indonesia.

Studies on ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area) have been conducted with a wide range of focus, such as the discussion of the implications of ACFTO for MSMEs and the welfare of MSMES perpetrators in Banyuwangi district (Meranti, 2015) according to Meranti ACFTE has a positive impact on MSMEs performance in the Banyuwangi district while also providing incentives to continue to maintain its existence in the global competition. In addition, because of the expansion of the MSMEs product market, this has an impact on the improvement of the well-being for MSMEs perpetrators.

The implementation of the ACFTA Cooperation Agreement also implicates Indonesia as one of the member states of ASEAN. In the article entitled "Implementation of the

ASEAN-China Free Trade Cooperation Agreement in 2010 and its Implications for Indonesia” (Magdariza & Delfiyanti, 2010). According to Magdariza and Delfianty this agreement is to create a free trade area and reduce both tariff and non-tariff barriers while improving market access and investment as well as the well-being of ASEAN and China communities. The implications of the ACFTA agreement will have a lot of positive impact. But on the other hand, this deal has a lot of negative effects. As there was a reduction in the production of Indonesian products, PHK massively, as well as local industries and entrepreneurs who rolled out as a result of losing competition with Chinese products.

The existence of the ACFTA agreement as well as its impact on the protection of MSMEs is also discussed in the article entitled “Existence of ASEAN-China Free Trade Area Agreement and its impact for the Protection of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises” (Kurniastuti, 2013) in this study examining the position of the ACFTA within the secure Indonesian legal system leading to conflict with the law that protects MSMEs and the ideal form of legal protection for MSMEs due to the impact of the agreement. According to Kurniastuti ACFTA has been valid in the Indonesian legal system this is because ACFTA has gone through three stages of negotiation, signature and validation. In addition, national law protection against MSMEs is government regulated no. 20/2008 in terms of empowerment and development of enterprises, funding and partnership.

Method of research

In this study, researchers use a library study or more known as library research, which is a method of collecting data by exploring a number of literature related to the problem to be studied. The source of data in this research is secondary data in the form of journals, articles, books, papers, reports and the internet, as well as related to the research that the method is used to be studied After collecting data as needed, the data will be selected and then processed through discussion.

Result and Discussion

Portrait of ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area) in Indonesia

Trade relations (international trade) that occur between one country and another are not the result of interdependence at the global level as well as at the regional level, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Free Trade Area (ACFTA). (Kurniastuti, 2013) .This cooperation has grown rapidly, giving

birth to the legal norm known as international trade law, and the law becomes the tool that determines the success of development. In regional areas such as (ACFTA) and global (WTO). (Evita Isretno Israhadi, 2018). Within its own region, Indonesia has joined ASEAN which implements free trade (Free Trade Area). This represents the main objectives of the formation of ASEAN as follows:

1. Increase economic growth, economic progress, social progress and cultural development through efforts for prosperous and peaceful Southeast Asian communities.
2. Improve more effective ways to greater usability in the industrial, agricultural, international trade sectors and raise the standard of living of the people (Sood, 2012).

At the beginning of the establishment of AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area), it was negotiated by Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Thailand. This is followed by Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area) came into force on January, 1, 1993, and the formation of AFTA lasted for 15 years. (Strategy et al. 2005). The main reason is that each ASEAN country wants to strengthen its economic policies, and AFTA is one of the free trade blocs that aims to increase the value of trade, economic cooperation between countries including China.

In November 2001, ASEAN and China signed an agreement on the establishment of ACFTA in Brunei Darussalam. As the first milestone in the ACFTA process, leaders from each country attended and signed the ASEAN-People Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement Report, People's Republic of China in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 4, 2002.

On October 6, 2001, a protocol to amend the Framework Agreement was signed in Bali, Indonesia. And signed the Second Amendment Protocol on December, 8, 2006. In this context, Indonesia has ratified the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement framework agreement through Presidential Decision No. 48 on June, 15, 2004. (Finance, 2004) After negotiations were completed, the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement was implemented. After the signing of the Trade Agreement on Goods in Vientiane, Laos on November 29, 2004. At the 12th ASEAN Summit held in Cebu, Philippines, the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area Service Agreement was signed.

The agreement was signed at the 14th meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers on August, 15, 2009 in Bangkok. The Ministry of Industry expressed its confidence in the

existence of a trade agreement between ASEAN and China in the ACFTA agreement, which will the end the flood of special imported products originating in China. Since its inception, ASEAN has given birth to various types of agreements. A rare event in the formation in the field of ASEAN economy was achieved in 1992 when the ASEAN countries agreed on the Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation (Wildani et al., 2017). Indonesia has also ratified the ACFTA through the President. No. 48/2004 and this system will take place on January 1, 2010. (Indonesia, 2008). With its implementation, ASEAN products, especially China, will have easy access to Indonesia and will have cheaper prices because of tariff reductions. In addition, Indonesia has entered the foreign markets of ASEAN and China.

In line with this, Indonesia's readiness to accept free markets is highly questionable because many local industries are not ready to compete in the free market. This has resulted in the bankruptcy of companies in the country, especially in the local industry sector, the result of a large number of Chinese products. Slowly but surely, when an industry goes bankrupt, workers are also threatened with termination of employment.

Indeed, Indonesia as one of the ASEAN member states find difficulty in enforcing the law in protecting the economy of the people in accordance with Constitution Article 33 paragraph (3)1945 which states that "The earth and water and the natural wealth contained therein is controlled by the State and is used for the greater prosperity of people". But in fact, natural resources that have a greater opportunity for the well-being of peoples have been dominated by other countries (Ayullah Kusuma, 2019)

If logically thought, Indonesia joining the ACFTA membership that imposes free trade this implies that all products linked to the Constitution must adopt the principles relating to trade liberalization that have been agreed to by the WTO and the Free Trade Agreement. In this case, huge challenges and heavy competition are faced by local producers because of facing directly with foreign imported products that tend to be cheap and much preferred by consumers (INDONESIA, n.d.)

The Role of MSMEs for the Indonesian Economy

This adult small-scale industry that is better known as the SME is one of the types of business that develops rapidly. The role of small and medium-sized enterprises cannot be seen by the eyes of the Indonesian economy. The SME has provided a huge contribution to

the Indonesian economy. The increased motivation and benefits that have been brought by small and medium-sized enterprises have contributed to the countries rise from the economic downturn, becoming a reservoir and opportunity for highly creative societies and jobs for the unemployed that are still in the productive age of the country. But cravings are something that always exists. Opportunities for small enterprise to contribute to building the economy are becoming increasingly difficult. This is due to many problems that hinder the development of small and medium-sized companies themselves (Prayogo, 2017)

In the Great Dictionary of Economics, there are at least four barriers faced by small and medium-sized industries:

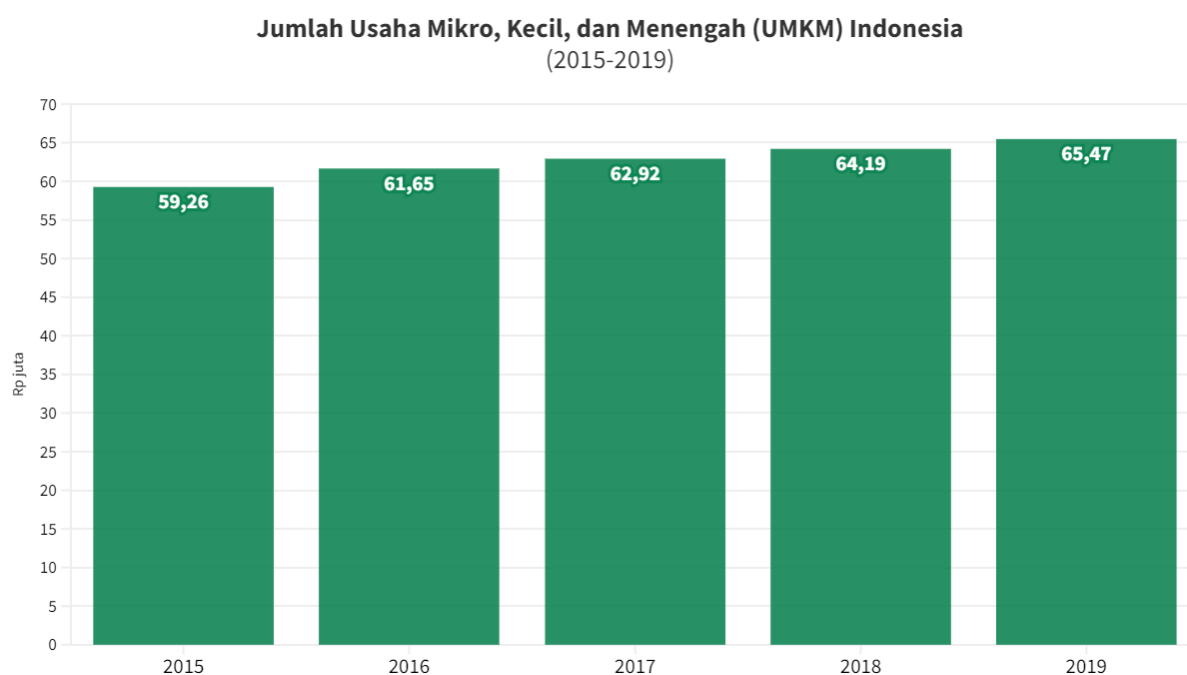
1. Small and medium-sized industries still have a lack of knowledge about technology and quality control, which is due to the minimal opportunity for small and medium sized industries to keep up with technological developments as well as the lack of education and training.
2. Lack of knowledge of small and medium-sized industries about how marketing and the marketplace itself.
3. The limitation of human resources.
4. Small and medium-sized industries still have shortcomings in financial and accounting understanding (Dr. Sri Adiningsih, 2008)

The main obstacle experienced by small and medium-sized industries is the lack of knowledge about product marketing. In this context, we can conclude that with the use of good marketing concepts will bring good feedback to the company, and a bad marketing concept will result in the company's downturn. Small and large industries want the profits obtained from the sales of their products and the sale of products will give a good income if marketing is done with a good concept (Anabarja, 2010)

In its participation the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises becomes an actor who has a strategic role for the representation of the national economy, in addition to actively contributing to the increase of economic growth and the absorption of national workforce SMEs also contribute in the distribution sector of development outcomes. It seen from the many large-scale enterprises that have experienced stagnation and have to roll tick, the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise sector remains in existence and firm in the face of the crisis that has occurred (Mariana, 2012)

In order to be categorized in Small and Medium Enterprises must meet or comply with the aspects and provisions regulated in the laws concerning expenditure (capital) and profit (benefit), in terms of capital reference to, Article 6 paragraph (2) letters a and b of Government Regulated No. 20/2008 about “SMEs must have net assets exceeding (above) 50.000,000 rupiah (fifty million rupiah) with the most wealth is 500.000 rupiah (five hundred million rupiah) and not including land and buildings used as a place of business. In addition, it has annual sales of more than 300.000.000 rupiah(three hundred million rupiah) up to the most is 2.500.000.000 rupiah(two billion five hundred million rupiah) (Indriasri et al., 2017)

Referring to Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises



Source: Ministry of Small and Medium Business Cooperatives

Small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) experienced an increase in the number of units from 59.26 million units in 2015 increased to 65.47 million in 2019 this figure shows an increase of 1.98% when compared to 2018 which reached 64.19 million. It should be noted that this amount has reached 99.99% of the total amount of business in Indonesia. Meanwhile, large-scale enterprises are below MSMEs which is only 5.637 units or 0.01% equivalent. In detail, the 64.6 million existing units are micro-enterprises. The number of micro enterprises is equivalent to 98.67% of the total MSMEs existing in Indonesia. The total of 798.679 units is a small business. It accounts for 1.22% of the total small and medium-

sized enterprises in the country. Meanwhile, the average enterprise is only 65.465 units. With this amount, medium-sized enterprises accounted for 0.1% of the total small and medium sized macro enterprises in Indonesia (SMEs, 2019)

Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) cannot be seen as referring to a concrete contribution to the realisation of national economic development goals including national economic growth, increased national currency, regional economic growth and job creation. In this case, the government must have a proper strategy in supporting the SME in order to realize its national economic growth (Sofyan, 2017)

Impact of ACFTA for MSMEs in Indonesia

The ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) is a discussion that some people see as one of the steps that will have a positive impact on the workplace. However, this step cannot only be taken in positive terms. Unless there is a negative impact as well. Especially to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia in regional and remote areas

One of the prominent impacts after the implementation of an ACFTA agreement implemented on January 1, 2010, Indonesia is currently not doing well due to its dependence on imported goods from China, and at this time Indonesia always brings products imported from abroad. This has a great impact and endangers the national industries of micro and medium-sized enterprises when this issue is not immediately dealt with.

When the MSMEs sells something, it will be difficult to get support material, so that the domestic economic conditions especially for the lower middle class will not develop as long as the free trade are still in place. The other factor is that the more products from China will enter Indonesia through easier access, the more tax objects so that if accumulated will be potentially greater and can generate more tax revenue for the government (Meranti, 2015)

The ACFTA agreement continues to develop and improve the existing facilities and infrastructure in each country, but Indonesia itself is considered to be less concerned with the development of infrastructure and means for economic development which aims to be prepared in the face of the consequences after the conclusion of an agreement and will head to the level of international trade.

From here, Indonesia is considered not ready to face the consequences of the existence of the ACFTA agreement. Because Indonesia is currently experiencing difficulties in the economic sector and this country, which was once a large and fertile country, can no longer produce food materials that can be used as a basic need as well as one of the food needs for its communities. Some examples include domestic garlic products that smell removed with the presence of local aid culture from China so that the productivity of onions in the country is also replaced with products originating in China, and its implications for fertilization fields such as apples that are now dominant in the region and society. Because even if both are market prices and are affordable by the local community, and it is not possible to predict when at some point all domestic products could eventually be shifted with the presence of foreign culture caused by this free trade (Rajagukguk, 2013)

In addition to affecting food in terms of reducing tariffs, because with the existence of a reduction in tariffs can even reach zero percent. As well as products originating from countries in the ASEAN region and China will be easier to access Indonesia at affordable prices and is expected to be sold at a much cheaper price, compared to products from the home country. The development of MSMEs in Indonesia is not ready to compete and enter the area of international business or free trade, because there are also some problems both internally and externally.

The main problem that is being sought by MSMEs in its solution is the presence of restrictions on infrastructure and government access associated with continued mass licensing and bureaucracy and making opportunities in local industrial development are eventually becoming hindered due to the lack of awareness and role of the government in dealing with the issues that are happening in the community. In addition to the news, MSMEs can survive with the presence of a global crisis but is not comparable to a reality where more and more serious problems continue to hurt both domestic, labour wages, corruption and labour disadvantages.

A concern also comes due to the political dumping system carried out by China and of course it could kill local producers that move mainly on agricultural production. Because the policy of dumping itself includes deceitful acts that put the interests of the country ahead of the economic development of the target country. The main objective before the creation of a general provision on free trade in the ACFTA agreement, is to establish cooperation that does

not conflict between the two sides and to ensure a peace that generates disasters in economic issues (Wildani et al., 2017)

For the last impact with the creation of an ACFTA agreement, the rise of violations committed by China on dumping and sensitive track which includes agricultural products such as onions, potatoes, and others. The reference taken in Article 3 of the ACFTA cooperation framework with some foodstuffs imported from China and then sold freely in the local market, so that it is easy to make local entrepreneurs such as MSMEs entrepreneur will feel difficult to compete in the international trade area. This ACFTA is still considered to provide benefits to the country by applying trade balance, but the benefits provided by the state are not possible if felt also by the communities. So the mass of the majority of people who have professions as farmers or mass workers suffered losses on a large scale and caused the emergence of unemployment and in the end the presentation of poverty in Indonesia has also increased rapidly in the recent period.

Therefore, it is expected that the government should always think of the interests of its country from both the upper (bourgeois) and the lower (proletarian) layers before receiving any form of aid from abroad. Because this problem requires the role of the government to face and respond to the emergence of competition in free market trade especially to micro and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are located in regional areas or areas that are not accessible by the government both in terms of security and economy (Hardiani, 2017)

The Concept of Free Trade in Islamic Perspective

Islamic religion has a principle and view that this free trade is an activity that will never be released in the application of Nusantara Islamization system and free trade relations this must lead to goods of production that interfere with the prosperity of Muslims. Because if an Islamic country or a country that includes the majority of the population adhering to the Islamic religion such as Indonesia implements a free trade system or can be called with the agreement ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Agreement), then they will not be easy to get rid of commodities that are not permitted in Islam (Astuti, 2022)

Before Islam was in the Arab world. Relations between Arab merchants and other countries were very good, and there was a harmony between the Arabs in ancient times. This has passed through various contradictions and differences of opinion, and eventually due to

the time that the settlement was a way to create arms between the peoples and finally to the present time in the implementation of the system of sale and purchase between countries or with free trade. In connection with the process of Islamization of Nusantara in the time of success of Sriwijaya in the 7th century, of course the Islamic religion which at that time was still a minority will definitely feel difficulties in worship. And according to the theory, a great culture will swallow a small culture, so one of the ways to make it easier is by crossing the trade route (Erasiah, 2018)

In this process, trade with Islamization is very important when used and applied at the time of Sriwijaya it is because in Islam it allows for sale but also prohibits the interest as it is described in Q.S. Al-Baqarah is 275. This is the revelation of God's promise, and God has forbidden it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah has cursed the Jews, for they have been forbidden to eat fat, but they sell it and eat from it. Indeed, if Allah forbids a people from eating something, then it is forbidden to sell it. (HR Ahmad and Abu Dawud).

From the second paragraph above, it can be inferred that in Islam it is permitted to sell in regional and international areas. But here can not be ignored also when our own country is Indonesia, has lived and implemented ACFTA will be avoided from a situation especially working with the country of China, the majority of the population there are non-Muslims and can be assured of the goods of its production even we do not easily believe it, whether it is halal or illegal. Therefore, it is better to pay more attention to the background of the country of destination and what its features are before we establish a relationship of cooperation, especially in the economic sphere in which the whole society involves not only the elite or the government, which bears both the advantages and disadvantages with the consent of such a free party.

Conclusion

Since the implementation of the ACFTA (ASEAN China Free Trade Area), the government believes it will prevent the initial axis for the import of goods from ASEAN, especially China. This cannot be ruled out by the non-tariff arrangement for goods that enter Indonesia making imports many and cheap. However, this has become a great challenge for MSMEs in Indonesia because of its unpreparedness to engage in free trade (free trade) and the existing barriers are major obstacles to face. Although MSMEs (small medium-sized business) tends to increase every year, but only in the regional scale. MSMEs as one of the motor drivers of economic development can not be seen by the side of the eye, the existence

and contribution of MSMEs (Middle Micro Small Business) must be seen and respected. The government continues to push MSMEs (small and medium sized micro business) to compete at the global level, as a consequence of the free trade agreements that have been made.

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