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Analysis of Business Strategy of Ayang Beib Steak Cafe in Facing Market Competition During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In the contemporary global market, businesses encounter intense competition, particularly within the culinary sector, driven by rapid technological advancements and economic growth. To secure long-term competitive advantages, companies must strategically position their products or services in consumers' minds through effective advertising and innovative strategies. Ayang Beib Steak Cafe, established in 2018 and located at Jl. Cik Ditiro Ruko Wisma Mas (next to Kosasih Kemiling) in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia, benefits from a strategic location on one of the city's busiest streets, surrounded by numerous culinary establishments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ayang Beib Steak Cafe adapted to the challenging market conditions by maintaining a dedicated team of five staff members focused on delivering excellent customer service. This study employs the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to analyze the business strategies implemented by Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to navigate market competition during the pandemic. The research identifies key internal and external factors influencing sales growth, including human resource coordination, menu diversification, outlet modernization, promotional activities, competitive conditions, consumer taste trends, and economic fluctuations. The findings suggest that modernizing outlet services and developing new menu items are the most prioritized strategies for enhancing sales and sustaining competitive advantage. Additionally, word-of-mouth and holiday promotions play significant roles in attracting and retaining customers. This comprehensive analysis provides actionable insights for Ayang Beib Steak Cafe and similar businesses aiming to thrive in a highly competitive and volatile market environment.

Keywords *business strategy, market competition, culinary industry.*

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of the global market, businesses face relentless competition that demand continuous innovation and strategic planning. The culinary sector, in particular, has witnessed significant transformations due to rapid technological advancements and evolving consumer preferences. These changes have intensified competition among culinary businesses, compelling them to adopt effective strategies to maintain and enhance their market positions. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, introducing unprecedented disruptions to the food and beverage industry worldwide. Lockdowns, social distancing measures, and shifts in consumer behavior necessitated immediate and strategic responses from businesses to survive and thrive.

Ayang Beib Steak Cafe, a prominent player in Bandar Lampung's culinary scene, serves as an exemplary case of strategic adaptation amidst these turbulent times. Established in January 2018 by Raden Bimbi Primer S.E. and Tri Oktaviani, Ayang Beib Steak Cafe is strategically located at Jl. Cik Ditiro Ruko Wisma Mas, adjacent to Kosasih Kemiling. This location is one of the busiest streets in Bandar Lampung, renowned for its vibrant culinary offerings and high foot traffic, providing Ayang Beib Steak Cafe with a competitive advantage in terms of visibility and accessibility.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the business strategies employed by Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to navigate and sustain its operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. By examining both internal and external factors that influence sales growth, this research aims to identify the key strategies that have contributed to the cafe's resilience and continued success in a highly competitive market. The study utilizes the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritize these strategies based on their effectiveness and relevance, providing a structured framework for decision-making.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to offer valuable insights into effective business strategies that can be adopted by similar enterprises facing market competition and economic uncertainties. Understanding the strategic responses to the pandemic can aid businesses in developing robust plans to mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities in the future. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader discourse on strategic management within the culinary industry, highlighting the importance of adaptability and innovation in achieving long-term sustainability.

Objectives of the Study: (1) To identify and evaluate the internal and external factors influencing sales growth at Ayang Beib Steak Café; (2) To analyze the effectiveness of various business strategies implemented by the cafe during the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) To prioritize the strategies using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) based on their impact and feasibility; (4) To provide recommendations for Ayang Beib Steak Cafe and similar businesses to enhance their competitive advantage and sustain growth in a challenging market environment.

This research focuses on Ayang Beib Steak Cafe in Bandar Lampung, examining its strategic responses to market competition during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study encompasses an analysis of internal factors such as human resource coordination, menu diversification, and outlet modernization, as well as external factors including competition conditions, consumer taste trends, and economic conditions. The findings are intended to offer practical recommendations for strategic improvements and long-term sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Strategy and Competitive Advantage

Business strategy is a critical component that determines the long-term success and sustainability of an organization. According to Porter (1980), strategy involves creating a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities, to deliver a mix of value. Competitive advantage, as defined by Barney (1991), is the ability of a firm to outperform its competitors consistently. This advantage can stem from various sources, including access to unique resources, innovative capabilities, and superior operational processes.

Marketing Mix (4Ps) in the Culinary Industry

The marketing mix, commonly referred to as the 4Ps—Product, Price, Promotion, and Place—is fundamental in shaping a business's marketing strategy. Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasize that the effective management of these elements can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby strengthening a business's competitive position.

1. Product: In the culinary industry, the product encompasses the variety, quality, and uniqueness of the menu offerings. Innovation in menu items is crucial to attract diverse customer segments and meet evolving consumer preferences (Schindler & Dibb, 2018).
2. Price: Competitive pricing strategies are essential to attract and retain customers, especially in a saturated market. Pricing must reflect the perceived value of the offerings while remaining attractive to the target market (Nagle & Holden, 2002).
3. Promotion: Effective promotional strategies, including advertising, public relations, and digital marketing, are vital for brand positioning and attracting potential customers. Promotional activities should communicate the unique value proposition of the business (Belch & Belch, 2017).
4. Place: Strategic location selection ensures accessibility and convenience for customers, influencing their dining choices. The ambiance and physical setup of the establishment also play a significant role in attracting and retaining customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Impact of COVID-19 on the Culinary Sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the culinary sector, forcing businesses to adapt to unprecedented challenges. Smith (2020) notes that the pandemic has led to significant shifts in consumer behavior, with increased demand for contactless services, online ordering, and delivery options. Operational challenges, such as supply chain disruptions and the need for enhanced health and safety measures, have necessitated strategic adaptations (Gössling et al., 2020).

Businesses have responded by implementing digital transformation strategies, including the adoption of online ordering systems, contactless payment methods, and enhancing their online presence through social media and e-commerce platforms (Hobbs, 2020). Additionally, the pandemic has underscored the importance of flexibility and resilience in business operations, prompting establishments to diversify their revenue streams and explore new business models (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019).

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) in Strategic Decision-Making

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a structured decision-making framework that assists in prioritizing complex decisions by breaking them down into a hierarchy of more easily comprehended sub-problems, each of which can be analyzed independently (Saaty, 1980). AHP facilitates the comparison of various criteria and alternatives, allowing decision-makers to assign weights based on their relative importance and calculate overall priorities (Forman & Selly, 2001).

In strategic management, AHP is utilized to evaluate and prioritize strategic options based on multiple criteria, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced assessment (Saaty, 2008). This method is particularly useful in scenarios where decisions involve subjective judgments and multiple objectives, providing a rational and systematic approach to decision-making (Vaidya & Kumar, 2006).

Strategic Responses to Market Competition

To maintain competitiveness in a dynamic market, businesses must adopt strategic responses that align with their core strengths and market opportunities. Strategies such as differentiation, cost leadership, and focus can help businesses carve out a unique position in the market (Porter, 1980). Differentiation involves offering unique products or services that stand out from competitors, while cost leadership focuses on minimizing costs to offer competitive pricing (Barney, 1991).

In the context of the culinary industry, strategies may include menu innovation, enhancing customer experience, leveraging technology for operational efficiency, and implementing effective marketing campaigns (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Additionally, fostering strong customer relationships and building brand loyalty are essential components of a successful business strategy (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

The literature underscores the importance of strategic planning and effective management of the marketing mix in achieving competitive advantage within the culinary sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for adaptability and innovation in business strategies to navigate unprecedented challenges. The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) emerges as a valuable tool in strategic decision-making, enabling businesses to prioritize strategies based on their relative importance and potential impact. This study leverages these insights to analyze the business strategies of Ayang Beib Steak Cafe, aiming to identify key factors that contribute to its resilience and sustained competitiveness during the pandemic.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design supplemented by quantitative analysis through the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). The primary objective is to evaluate the business strategies employed by Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to maintain competitiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The qualitative approach facilitates an in-depth understanding of the strategies, while the quantitative AHP analysis provides a structured framework for prioritizing these strategies based on their effectiveness.

Data was collected using multiple methods to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives. The primary data sources include:

1. Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with the management and key staff members of Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to gain insights into the strategic decisions and operational adjustments made during the pandemic.
2. Focus Group Discussions: Group discussions with selected employees and loyal customers provided diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.
3. Document Analysis: Internal documents, such as business plans, promotional materials, and sales reports, were reviewed to gather quantitative data and contextual information.
4. Observations: Direct observations at the cafe's location offered firsthand insights into the operational changes and customer interactions.

The study employed a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, to select informants who have direct involvement and comprehensive understanding of the business strategies at Ayang Beib Steak Cafe. This approach ensures that the data collected is relevant and provides meaningful insights into the research problem. The sample included:

1. Management Team: Owners and managers who are responsible for strategic decision-making.
2. Staff Members: Frontline employees who implement and execute the strategies.
3. Customers: Regular patrons who can provide feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the cafe's offerings and services.

AHP was utilized to prioritize the various business strategies based on their relative importance and effectiveness. The process involved the following steps:

1. Hierarchy Structuring: The decision problem was structured into a hierarchy consisting of the goal, criteria, sub-criteria, and alternative strategies.
2. Pairwise Comparisons: Criteria and sub-criteria were compared pairwise to assess their relative importance using a scale of 1 to 9.
3. Weight Calculation: The weights for each criterion and sub-criterion were calculated to determine their significance in the decision-making process.
4. Priority Ranking: The alternative strategies were evaluated and ranked based on their weighted scores to identify the most effective strategies for sales growth and competitive advantage.

The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were thematically analyzed to identify key strategies and factors influencing sales growth. Quantitative data from document analysis and AHP were processed to assign weights and prioritize the strategies based on their impact and feasibility.

The study adhered to ethical standards, ensuring informed consent from all participants, maintaining confidentiality of sensitive information, and presenting findings objectively without bias.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on a single establishment, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the reliance on purposive sampling may introduce selection bias, although efforts were made to ensure diverse and representative inputs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hierarchical Structure of AHP

Based on interviews and focus group discussions, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) hierarchy for this study was established with three main levels: the goal, criteria (internal and external), sub-criteria, and alternative strategies.

Figure 1. AHP Hierarchy Structure

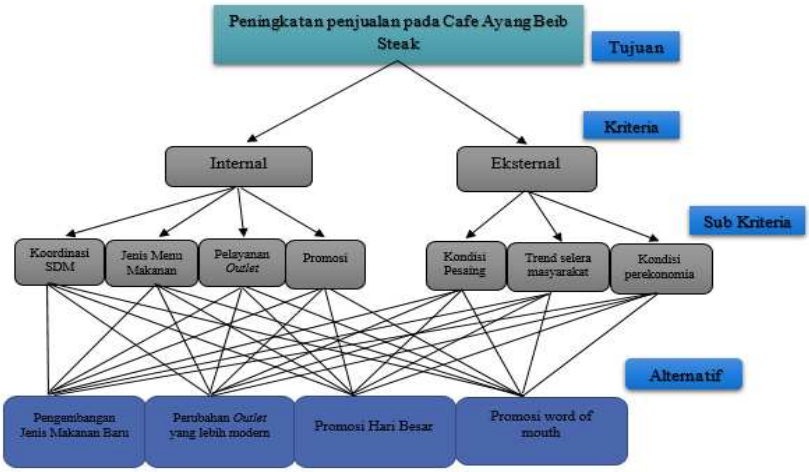

Table 1. Definition of Criteria

No	Criteria, Sub-Criteria, and Alternatives	Definition
1	Internal	Factors influencing internal sales levels at Ayang Beib Steak Cafe Bandar Lampung.
2	External	External factors influencing sales levels at Ayang Beib Steak Cafe Bandar Lampung.
3	Human Resource Coordination	The process of organizing and balancing all activities between parties to achieve both individual and shared goals.
4	Menu Types	A variety of food menus provided for customers.
5	Outlet Services	All forms of activities provided to customers to deliver satisfaction, such as implementing modern ordering systems through online applications like GoFood.
6	Promotion	Efforts to inform or offer products or services to consumers with the goal of attracting potential customers to purchase and consume.
7	Competition Conditions	The competitiveness among sellers and businesses to gain profits.
8	Consumer Taste Trends	The public's taste preferences in Lampung.
9	Economic Conditions	The economy is always subject to changes due to global uncertainties.
10	Development of New Food Types	Creating innovative new food types according to consumer preferences.
11	Modernizing Outlet Services	Improving service quality to consumers by integrating modern technology, strategic locations, and ensuring comfort for customers.
12	Holiday Promotions	Promotions conducted on major holidays, such as Cafe Ayang Beib Steak's anniversary, New Year, Teacher's Day, Mother's Day, etc. Promotions

No	Criteria, Sub-Criteria, and Alternatives	Definition
		like "buy one get one free," bonuses with each purchase, such as free iced tea, etc.
13	Word-of-Mouth Promotions	Promotions through community correlations, meaning word-of-mouth promotion.

Table 2. Criteria Assessment Weight

Alternative Sales Level	Internal (L: 0.294)	External (L: 0.875)
Development of New Food Types	0.23	0.237
Modernizing Outlet Services	0.508	0.586
Holiday Promotions	0.126	0.077
Word-of-Mouth Promotions	0.137	0.101

Data Source: Processed in 2022

Table 3. Weights of Assessment for Internal Sub-Criteria

Alternative Sales Increase	Human Resource Coordination (L: 0.294)	Menu Types Development (L: 0.275)	Outlet Services (L: 0.346)	Promotion (L: 0.084)
Development of New Food Types	0.307	0.217	0.173	0.233
Modernizing Outlet Services	0.486	0.603	0.481	0.381
Holiday Promotions	0.152	0.128	0.086	0.189
Word-of-Mouth Promotions	0.055	0.052	0.26	0.198

Data Source: Processed in 2022

Table 4. Assessment Weights for External Sub-Criteria

Alternative Sales Level	Competition Conditions (L: 0.638)	Consumer Taste Trends (L: 0.307)	Economic Conditions (L: 0.055)
Development of New Food Types	0.226	0.252	0.272
Modernizing Outlet Services	0.601	0.562	0.543
Holiday Promotions	0.073	0.073	0.14
Word-of-Mouth Promotions	0.1	0.113	0.044

Data Source: Processed in 2022

Table 5. Alternative Weights for Increasing Sales

Alternative Sales Priority Level	Weight
Development of New Food Types	0.236
Modernizing Outlet Services	0.576
Holiday Promotions	0.083
Word-of-Mouth Promotions	0.106

Data Source: Processed in 2022

Analysis of Results

The AHP analysis reveals that the most prioritized strategy by respondents is modernizing outlet services (Weight: 0.576), followed by developing new food types (Weight: 0.236), word-of-mouth promotions (Weight: 0.106), and holiday promotions (Weight: 0.083). This prioritization indicates that operational enhancements and menu diversification are critical for achieving sustained sales growth and competitive advantage.

1. Modernizing Outlet Services
   Modernizing outlet services is identified as the top priority to enhance customer experience and satisfaction. This strategy involves upgrading the physical appearance of the cafe, integrating modern technology for ordering and service, and ensuring a comfortable and strategic location setup. By doing so, Ayang Beib Steak Cafe can attract more customers and retain existing ones by providing a superior dining environment. The modernization efforts also encompass the implementation of consistent quality standards, service protocols, and staff training programs to maintain high service levels.
2. Development of New Food Types
   Introducing new and innovative menu items is essential to meet evolving customer preferences and stay competitive. By regularly updating the menu and aligning it with current taste trends, Ayang Beib Steak Cafe can attract a diverse customer base and encourage repeat visits. Menu diversification not only caters to varied tastes but also allows the cafe to experiment with seasonal and limited-time offerings, thereby keeping the menu fresh and exciting for customers.
3. Word-of-Mouth Promotions
   Leveraging word-of-mouth promotions can significantly enhance the cafe's reputation and reach. Positive recommendations from satisfied customers build trust and credibility, attracting new customers without substantial advertising costs. Encouraging customers to share their positive experiences on social media platforms and review sites can amplify the cafe's visibility and foster a loyal customer base.
4. Holiday Promotions
   Implementing special promotions during major holidays and events can drive sales and increase customer footfall. Promotional offers such as "buy one get one free" or complimentary items with purchases can incentivize customers to choose Ayang Beib Steak Cafe over competitors during these periods. Holiday promotions also provide opportunities to engage with customers through themed events and limited-time menu items, enhancing the overall dining experience.

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Internal Factors Influencing Sales Growth

1. Human Resource Coordination: Effective coordination among staff members ensures seamless operations and high-quality customer service. Well-trained and motivated employees contribute to customer satisfaction and repeat business, which are crucial for sustaining sales growth.
2. Menu Diversification: Offering a diverse and innovative menu attracts a broader customer base and meets varying taste preferences. Continuous menu development helps in retaining existing customers and attracting new ones by providing unique and appealing food options.
3. Outlet Modernization: Upgrading the cafe's physical infrastructure and integrating modern technology enhances the customer experience. Modern outlets are more attractive, comfortable, and efficient, leading to increased customer satisfaction and higher sales.
4. Promotion Strategies: Effective promotional activities increase brand visibility and attract potential customers. Strategic promotions, especially during peak seasons and holidays, can significantly boost sales and enhance the cafe's market presence.

External Factors Influencing Sales Growth

1. Competition Conditions: Understanding the competitive landscape is essential for developing strategies that differentiate Ayang Beib Steak Cafe from its competitors. Competitive analysis helps in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, enabling the cafe to position itself effectively in the market.
2. Consumer Taste Trends: Aligning menu offerings with current consumer preferences ensures relevance and customer satisfaction. Monitoring and adapting to changing taste trends can help the cafe stay ahead of competitors and meet customer expectations.
3. Economic Conditions: Economic fluctuations impact consumer spending patterns and business operations. Adapting to economic changes by adjusting pricing strategies and optimizing operational costs can help the cafe maintain financial stability and sustain sales growth.

Strategic Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following strategic recommendations are proposed for Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to enhance its competitive advantage and sustain growth:

1. Invest in Outlet Modernization: Continuously upgrade the cafe's physical infrastructure and integrate advanced technologies to improve operational efficiency and customer experience. This includes implementing modern ordering systems, enhancing the interior design, and ensuring a comfortable dining environment.
2. Expand and Innovate the Menu: Regularly introduce new and innovative menu items to cater to diverse customer preferences and stay aligned with current taste trends. Conduct market research to identify popular and emerging food trends, and incorporate them into the menu.

3. Enhance Promotional Activities: Develop targeted promotional campaigns, especially during holidays and special events, to attract and retain customers. Utilize a mix of traditional and digital marketing strategies to increase brand visibility and engage with customers effectively.
4. Leverage Word-of-Mouth Marketing: Encourage satisfied customers to share their positive experiences through social media, online reviews, and personal recommendations. Implement referral programs and incentivize customers to promote the cafe to their networks.
5. Strengthen Human Resource Management: Invest in staff training and development to enhance service quality and operational efficiency. Foster a positive work environment to motivate employees and reduce turnover, ensuring consistent and high-quality customer service.

The findings indicate that modernizing outlet services and developing new food types are the most effective strategies for enhancing sales and maintaining a competitive edge. Additionally, word-of-mouth and holiday promotions are crucial for attracting and retaining customers. By focusing on these strategies, Ayang Beib Steak Cafe can navigate market competition effectively, sustain growth, and achieve long-term success in the culinary industry.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to the culinary sector, forcing businesses to adapt swiftly to changing market conditions and consumer behaviors. Ayang Beib Steak Cafe's strategic responses to these challenges provide valuable insights into effective business strategy implementation in a highly competitive environment. This study aimed to analyze the business strategies employed by Ayang Beib Steak Cafe to sustain its operations and maintain competitiveness during the pandemic, utilizing the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritize these strategies based on their effectiveness and impact.

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