

ENHANCING RESTAURANT BUSINESS GROWTH IN INDONESIA: A MASLAHAH PERSPECTIVE ON CULINARY INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the challenges in business growth faced by Rumah Makan Rani in Laugendek, Berastagi, especially the drop in customer numbers due to limited menu innovation and weak online promotion. The goal is to analyze both internal and external factors contributing to this decline, focusing on operational and customer-related issues, and to create strategies for business improvement based on the masalah hajiyyah principle. The study uses a qualitative method, employing SWOT analysis, with data gathered from semi-structured interviews with the business owner and customers, as well as direct observations conducted over two weeks. The results show that the strengths of Rumah Makan Rani lie in its authentic local flavors, halal-certified ingredients, and excellent customer service. However, weaknesses were found in its limited menu variety and low use of digital marketing, which has led to fewer repeat customers compared to competitors offering more diverse menus and better online presence. The research identifies opportunities for business expansion, such as the growing public interest in local cuisine and the increasing popularity of social media platforms, while challenges include fierce competition and rising costs of raw materials. Based on these insights, the study suggests that the business should diversify its menu and leverage digital platforms like Instagram and Facebook to share updates and engage customers. This research aims to offer practical recommendations for small culinary businesses to create sustainable models that bring greater social and economic value to the community.

Keywords: Business Development; SWOT Analysis; Culinary Innovation; Digital Promotion, Local Culinary Trends

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki tantangan dalam pertumbuhan bisnis yang dihadapi oleh Rumah Makan Rani di Laugendek, Berastagi, khususnya penurunan jumlah pelanggan akibat inovasi menu yang terbatas dan promosi digital yang lemah. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis faktor internal dan eksternal yang berkontribusi terhadap penurunan ini, dengan fokus pada masalah operasional dan yang terkait dengan pelanggan, serta merumuskan strategi untuk perbaikan bisnis berdasarkan prinsip masalah hajiyyah. Penelitian ini menggunakan

metode kualitatif dengan analisis SWOT, dengan data yang diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pemilik bisnis dan pelanggan, serta observasi langsung yang dilakukan selama dua minggu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kekuatan Rumah Makan Rani terletak pada cita rasa lokal yang autentik, bahan-bahan yang terjamin halal, dan layanan pelanggan yang baik. Namun, kelemahan ditemukan pada variasi menu yang terbatas dan penggunaan pemasaran digital yang minim, yang menyebabkan berkurangnya pelanggan tetap dibandingkan dengan pesaing yang menawarkan menu yang lebih beragam dan memiliki kehadiran online yang lebih baik. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi peluang untuk pengembangan bisnis, seperti meningkatnya minat publik terhadap kuliner lokal dan popularitas platform media sosial yang semakin meningkat, sementara tantangan yang dihadapi meliputi persaingan yang ketat dan meningkatnya biaya bahan baku. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini menyarankan agar bisnis melakukan diversifikasi menu dan memanfaatkan platform digital seperti Instagram dan Facebook untuk membagikan pembaruan menu dan meningkatkan keterlibatan pelanggan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan rekomendasi praktis bagi pelaku bisnis kuliner kecil dalam menciptakan model usaha yang berkelanjutan yang dapat memberikan manfaat sosial dan ekonomi yang lebih besar bagi komunitas.

Kata kunci: Pengembangan Bisnis; Analisis SWOT; Inovasi Kuliner; Promosi Digital; Tren Kuliner Lokal

INTRODUCTION

Restaurant business development plays a vital role in sustaining culinary ventures, especially amidst fierce market competition. As the culinary industry rapidly expands, business owners must continuously innovate to retain customer interest and loyalty. Key areas for innovation include menu variety, service quality, and the integration of digital technologies, which are crucial for enhancing competitiveness. Failure to innovate risks declining customer numbers and threatens long-term sustainability (Hamindu et al., 2020).

In Laugendek, Berastagi, Rumah Makan Rani, once a popular dining spot, has recently seen a noticeable decline in customers. This issue highlights the broader challenges faced by small local culinary businesses striving to survive amidst growing competition and shifting consumer preferences. Today's consumers demand more diverse menus, enhanced dining experiences, and easy access to information, placing pressure on small restaurant owners to adapt.

An interview with the owner, Mr. Gatot, revealed that the drop in visitors was largely due to a lack of menu variety. An internal survey confirmed that many customers were dissatisfied with the unchanged menu over the past two years. Menu diversity is essential for maintaining competitiveness and customer loyalty (Tanjung, Adha, & Batubara, 2023).

From an Islamic economics perspective, business development should focus on *maslahah*, or public benefit, rather than just profit. *Maslahah* emphasizes business practices that benefit both the owners and society, such as providing halal food, fair pricing, and ethical treatment of employees.

Studies show that applying *maslahah* principles enhances business stability and social responsibility. However, research on *maslahah hajiyyah* in small rural businesses remains limited, despite the unique challenges these businesses face.

Maslahah hajiyyah, which focuses on benefits that ease daily life, is highly relevant to restaurant businesses, as it ensures halal food, reasonable prices, and customer satisfaction. Integrating this principle can improve both economic sustainability and social welfare, including food safety and hygiene.

This research uses a qualitative case study approach, focusing on Rumah Makan Rani due to its typical challenges. Data were collected through interviews with the owner and customers, and observations of daily operations, using SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The study aims to assess Rumah Makan Rani's business development from a *maslahah* perspective, identify challenges, and recommend strategies grounded in public benefit. The findings will provide practical insights for local culinary entrepreneurs and help shape sustainable and ethical business strategies in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing SWOT analysis to explore the business development strategy of Rumah Makan Rani in Lau Gendek, Berastagi. The qualitative method allows for an in-depth, contextual understanding of business operations, managerial practices, and strategic challenges within small-scale culinary businesses, where social dynamics and operational practices are crucial for sustainability.

The study was conducted over one month in March 2025 at Rumah Makan Rani, selected for its relevance as a local culinary business experiencing a decline in customer numbers. The location's accessibility facilitated continuous data collection.

Informants were chosen through purposive sampling, focusing on individuals with relevant experience in restaurant operations and customer interactions. Nine informants were selected, including the restaurant owner, three employees, and five customers, providing a comprehensive view of the business's internal dynamics.

Data was gathered via semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews provided insights into management practices, challenges, innovation strategies, and *maslahah* principles. Direct observations focused on the restaurant's operations, service quality,

menu offerings, hygiene, and halal practices. Documentation, including business records and sales data, provided additional context.

Triangulation of data sources ensured reliability, and member checking was employed to confirm key interview findings. Data analysis was performed in stages, using SWOT analysis to identify internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, ultimately leading to strategic business development recommendations based on *masalah hajiyyah*. The study aims to offer practical recommendations for sustainable business development in the culinary sector.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The results indicate that Rumah Makan Rani, located in Laugendek, Berastagi, has experienced a significant decline in customer visits over the past two years. Based on data obtained from interviews, direct observations, and documentation, this decline is mainly caused by limited menu variation and a lack of innovation, which have reduced customer interest and repeat visits. This condition poses a serious challenge to business sustainability and therefore becomes the central focus of this study, which aims to analyze existing problems, identify internal and external factors through SWOT analysis, and formulate appropriate business development strategies based on the principle of *masalah hajiyyah*.

The SWOT analysis reveals several internal strengths that support the business performance of Rumah Makan Rani. These strengths include the authentic taste of its food, the consistent use of halal-certified ingredients, and friendly customer service. These factors were consistently emphasized by informants during interviews. Customers highlighted signature North Sumatran dishes such as *arsik Medan* and *ayam cipera* as unique products that distinguish the restaurant from its competitors. Observational data further confirmed that food preparation is carried out carefully, ensuring consistency in taste and cleanliness. From the perspective of Islamic economics, these strengths reflect the fulfillment of basic consumer needs and align with ethical and halal business principles.

However, despite these strengths, the study also identifies several weaknesses that hinder business growth. The most prominent weakness is the lack of menu variation, which has led to consumer boredom. Several customers reported that the menu has remained largely unchanged for a long period, reducing their motivation to revisit the restaurant. In addition, marketing activities remain conventional and rely heavily on word-of-mouth promotion, with minimal

utilization of digital platforms. Interviews with employees revealed the absence of structured promotional planning and performance evaluation, which limits the business's ability to respond effectively to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics.

From an external perspective, Rumah Makan Rani has considerable opportunities for development. The increasing popularity of local and traditional cuisine, particularly among tourists visiting Berastagi, creates potential demand for the restaurant's products. Moreover, the rapid growth of digital technology and social media platforms provides an opportunity for wider, more efficient, and cost-effective promotion. Documentation and observational findings indicate that similar local culinary businesses that actively utilize social media tend to achieve higher visibility and stronger customer engagement, suggesting significant potential benefits if similar strategies are adopted by Rumah Makan Rani.

At the same time, the business faces several external threats that may affect its sustainability. These threats include increasing competition from newly established culinary businesses, fluctuations in raw material prices, and changes in consumer preferences that favor more innovative and modern dining concepts. Without strategic adaptation, these external pressures may further weaken the restaurant's competitiveness and reduce its market share.

The findings also emphasize the importance of integrating the principle of *masalahah hajiyyah* into business development strategies. This principle focuses on fulfilling secondary needs that enhance comfort, convenience, and customer satisfaction without compromising ethical values. At Rumah Makan Rani, the application of *masalahah hajiyyah* is reflected in the provision of halal food, reasonable pricing, and courteous service. However, the results indicate that its implementation remains limited in areas such as menu innovation, service improvement, and customer engagement. Customer feedback suggests that unmet secondary needs such as menu variety, convenience, and modern promotional methods have negatively affected satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, strengthening the application of *masalahah hajiyyah* through menu diversification, improved service quality, and accessible information via digital media is essential to support both customer welfare and business growth.

Based on the integration of interview findings, observations, and SWOT analysis, this study recommends several strategic actions. These include periodic menu innovation to respond to consumer preferences and reduce customer boredom, optimization of digital marketing through platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to expand market reach, and employee training to improve service consistency and professionalism. In addition, collaboration with local tourism

stakeholders, such as tour guides and travel agents, is recommended as an effective strategy to attract new customer segments. Overall, the results demonstrate that Rumah Makan Rani possesses strong internal potential but requires strategic adjustments to address its weaknesses and external challenges. By aligning business development strategies with the principles of *maslahah hajiyyah*, the restaurant can enhance customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, and contribute more effectively to the local economy and community welfare.

Maslahah Production

Selection of Raw Materials, Rani Restaurant is committed to using halal and high quality raw materials. This selection not only ensures the halalness of the food, but also the health of the consumers. By using fresh and local ingredients, the restaurant helps to improve the economy of local farmers and reduce the carbon footprint of raw material transportation.

Processing Process

Food processing is done with attention to hygiene and sanitation. This creates a safe environment for consumers and ensures that the food served is not only halal but also healthy. The halalan thoyyiban principle is applied here, where food must be good (thoyyib) in terms of quality and hygiene.

Implementation of Halal Standar.

At every stage of production, Rani Restaurant strives to meet halal standards set by certification bodies. This not only increases customer confidence, but also provides assurance that the products they consume are safe and in accordance with sharia principles.

In this case, menu innovation at RM Rani can be a form of real effort in maintaining business sustainability while realizing the principle of *maslahah* in the culinary world.

SWOT Analysis of Rani Restaurant

A. Strength analysis

The strengths of Rani Restaurant are: The unique taste of the mainstay menu such as Arsik Medan and Ayam Ciper typical of Karo is the main attraction, because it is processed directly with authentic recipes and special spices that have been passed down from generation to generation, creating a taste that is appetizing and difficult to find elsewhere.

The selection of raw materials is done selectively and carefully, in order to maintain the quality of taste and food hygiene. This commitment is part of the *maslahah* principle, which is to provide the best benefits for consumers through healthy and safe dishes. Hygiene in the production process is essential to maintain food quality and consumer health. Rani Restaurant

applies strict hygiene standards in every stage of production, from the selection of raw materials, processing, to serving.

Rumah Makan Rani has a well-trained and dedicated workforce, with friendly and swift service, creating a comfortable and pleasant dining atmosphere for every customer who comes.

Despite the relatively small size of the place, the warm and cozy atmosphere provides its own added value, so that customers feel at home and happy to return. This atmosphere supports the creation of benefits in terms of comfort and tranquility while eating.

Halal and Halal Certification Food halalness is a fundamental aspect in the culinary business, especially for Muslim consumers. Rani Restaurant needs to ensure that all raw materials used in the production process are halal. This includes not only meat and food ingredients, but also seasonings and other additives. As the second largest religion in the world, Indonesia fuels optimism that the halal industry is likely to be developed maturely (Batubara and Harahap 2022).

B. Weakness Analysis

The weaknesses is the menu has limited shelf life, mainly because it uses natural ingredients without preservatives. While this is in line with the *maslahah* principle of maintaining consumer health, it limits the potential for distribution to more distant areas.

Promotional activities are still carried out simply and have not utilized digital media optimally, so the existence of Rumah Makan Rani has not been widely recognized by people outside the Berastagi area and its surroundings. Technological developments in a business, cannot be separated from the existence of information because with this technological development information, it can change the way the marketing strategy itself (Comparison of Marketing Strategies for Online Shopping Applications on Shopee and Lazada Aris Kukuh Prasetyo, Nur Khalizah Siregar and North Sumatra, 2021). This is a challenge in spreading the benefits of regional culinary specialties to a wider audience.

The business management system is still traditional and owner-centered, so decision-making has not fully involved a professional or participatory approach. This has the potential to hamper more sustainable business development in accordance with the spirit of *maslahah jama'iyah* (common good).

C. Opportunity Analysis

The opportunities owned by Rani Restaurant are: The increasing public interest in regional culinary specialties as part of the preservation of local culture, provides a great opportunity for Rani Restaurant to introduce menus such as *Arsik Medan* and *Ayam Ciper* typical of Karo to a

wider audience. This is in line with the *maslahah* value of preserving cultural heritage that benefits future generations.

The development of digital technology and social media opens up wider and cost-effective promotional opportunities, so Rumah Makan Rani can reach new customers and build a community of traditional culinary lovers more effectively.

The potential for cooperation with local tourism actors in Berastagi and its surroundings is very open, given the position of the region as a tourist destination. This can increase the flow of visits to the restaurant and supports the principle of *maslahah* in empowering the local economy in a sustainable manner.

In marketing its products, Rani Restaurant can emphasize aspects of halal and hygiene as the main selling points. Educating consumers about the importance of choosing halal and healthy food can be part of an effective marketing strategy.

D. Threats Analysis

The threats faced by Rani Restaurant are: Increased competition with the emergence of new restaurants around the Berastagi area, including those offering similar menus or using more aggressive pricing strategies. This can disrupt business continuity if not balanced with innovation and improved service quality, which basically contradicts the principle of *maslahah* in maintaining long-term benefits.

Fluctuations in the prices of local raw materials, especially regional herbs and spices, can affect operational stability and selling prices. This instability can reduce people's purchasing power and hinder access to healthy and quality food, which is part of the public good.

Reliance on limited physical locations and the absence of an online distribution system, makes Rumah Makan Rani vulnerable to a decrease in the number of visitors when there are external disruptions such as bad weather or economic crisis. This limits the spread of benefits that the business can provide to the wider community.

SWOT Matrix Analysis

The SWOT matrix is a strategic instrument used to design the direction of business development through the identification of internal and external factors. Through this matrix, companies can formulate the right strategy by matching potential internal strengths and weaknesses against opportunities and threats from the external environment. The determination of weights in the SWOT matrix is compiled by researchers based on the results of in-depth analysis. The development strategy for Rani Restaurant can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. IFAS Matrix (Internal Factor Analysis Summary)

| Strengths | | | | |
|----------------------|---|--------|--------|-------|
| No | Determining factor | Rating | Weight | Score |
| 1 | Signature menu and authentic flavors and Halal verified | 0,18 | 4 | 0,72 |
| 2 | Selection of quality raw materials | 0,14 | 4 | 0,56 |
| 3 | Cozy atmosphere even though it is small | 0,10 | 3 | 0,30 |
| 4 | Sustainable business for more than 5 years | 0,11 | 3 | 0,33 |
| 5 | Fast and friendly service | 0,12 | 3 | 0,36 |
| | Total strengths | 0,65 | | 2,27 |
| Weaknesses | | | | |
| No | Determining factor | Rating | Weight | Score |
| 1 | Limited food durability and menu variations Monotonous | 0,10 | 2 | 0,20 |
| 2 | Promotion has not been maximized | 0,15 | 2 | 0,30 |
| 3 | Management system is still traditional | 0,10 | 2 | 0,20 |
| | Total weaknes | 1,00 | | 0,70 |
| | Total | 1.00 | | 2,97 |
| Opportunities | | | | |
| No | Determining factor | Rating | Weight | Score |
| 1 | Culinary trends | 0,20 | 4 | 0,80 |
| 2 | Social media utilization | 0,15 | 3 | 0,45 |
| 3 | Cooperation with the tourism sector | 0,15 | 3 | 0,45 |
| | Total | 0,50 | | 1,70 |
| Threats | | | | |
| No | Determining factor | Rating | Weight | Score |

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------|---|------|
| 1 | New restaurant competition | 0,20 | 2 | 0,40 |
| 2 | Fluctuation of raw materials | 0,15 | 2 | 0,30 |
| 3 | Dependence on physical location | 0,15 | 2 | 0,30 |
| | Total | 0,50 | | 1,00 |

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Description:

Weight: Scale between 0-1 and total weight = 1.00.

Rating: Scale of 1 (not effective) to 4 (very effective).

Score: The product of weight and rating.

From the results of IFAS and EFAS data processing,
the total score for each factor is as follows:

Total score for strength factors: 2,27

Total score for weakness factors: 0,70

Total score for opportunity factors: 1,70

Total score for threat factors: 1,00

Based on the processing results, it can be explained as follows:

Strengths

The total score of the strength factor in the RM Rani Restaurant business is 2.27. This figure shows that the strengths of the restaurant are quite significant and make an important contribution to the sustainability and potential for business development. The score is dominated by a high assessment of the typical menu factors and authentic and halal guaranteed flavors (score 0.72), as well as the selection of quality raw materials (score 0.56), both of which are the main determining factors in attracting and retaining customers. These characteristics and authentic flavors contribute to *masalah dharuriyyah* (primary needs), because healthy and quality food is included in the basic needs that must be met in daily life according to Islamic views.

Weaknesses

The weakness factor obtained a score of 0.70, which means that weaknesses have not become significant obstacles but still need to be improved. The main weaknesses are monotonous menu variations and a promotion system that has not been maximized. Some customers expressed boredom because there was no new menu innovation. This weakness is related to

masalah hajiyyah (complementary needs), where diversity and convenience are an important part of the service that can support consumer welfare in the long run. In the culinary business, the diversity of menus offered by restaurants is a key element in competition. Therefore, the right decisions regarding menu variations must be made to attract consumer attention (Tanjung et al., 2023).

Opportunities

The opportunity factor scored 1.70, which indicates that RM Rani has promising development prospects. The biggest opportunities come from local culinary trends, social media utilization, and potential cooperation with the tourism sector. If utilized properly, this will increase market reach and business competitiveness. In the principle of masalah tahsiniyyah (perfection), utilizing this opportunity will provide added value and broader socio-economic benefits.

Threats

Threats have a score of 1.00, which means RM Rani faces external pressures, but not too great. Competition from new restaurants and dependence on physical location are things that must be anticipated. Fluctuations in raw material prices can also affect operational stability. In the context of masalah, mitigating these threats is an effort to prevent mafsadah or losses that can disrupt business continuity and the welfare of consumers and employees.

S-O Strategy (Strengths -Opportunities)

Strategies that can be done are: Utilizing the uniqueness of regional specialties to attract people who love traditional culinary. By highlighting the uniqueness and richness of regional specialties, we can attract the attention of people who love traditional cuisine. Each dish reflects the local culture and offers a different taste experience, thus increasing interest and appreciation for culinary heritage.

Increasing presence through active promotion on social media to reach a wider audience. Active promotion on social media is essential to increase business presence. Business actors need to have an understanding of technology and the ability to utilize it to increase sales (Aulia and Batubara, 2023). In digital marketing, today's consumers tend to demand more than they want in traditional marketing, Information technology is developing rapidly, constantly providing them with information. Customers sometimes have more knowledge than marketers because of the abundance of knowledge (Batubara et al., 2024) By creating interesting content and interacting with followers, we can reach a wider range of consumers, build loyal communities, and increase

brand visibility.

Collaborate with local tourism players to expand market reach and introduce typical cuisine to tourists. Collaboration with local tourism players can help expand market reach and introduce specialty cuisines to tourists. Through this collaboration, we are able to offer an interesting culinary experience, while increasing product exposure to visitors who come to the area.

Halal and Halal Certification

Food halalness is a fundamental aspect in the culinary business, especially for Muslim consumers. Rani Restaurant needs to ensure that all raw materials used in the production process are halal. This includes not only meat and food ingredients, but also seasonings and other additives.

Halal certification from a recognized institution can increase consumer confidence. By having a clear halal logo, Rani Restaurant can attract more customers who prioritize halal in choosing a place to eat. This is in line with the principle of halalan thoyyiban, which emphasizes food that is not only halal, but also good and healthy. The halal industry can increase Indonesia's economic growth by increasing the halal sector (Imsar et al. 2024).

W-O Strategy (Weaknesses-Opportunities)

This strategy includes: Explaining the business management system to be more professional and efficient. By developing a more professional management system, we can improve operational efficiency and ensure smooth running in every aspect of the business.

Optimizing digital promotion strategies to increase the visibility of the restaurant. Optimizing digital promotion strategies is important to increase the visibility of the restaurant, so that it can reach more customers through online platforms. Enhancing brand appeal through content that highlights the quality, authenticity, and cultural value of the menu offered. Increasing brand appeal can be done by creating content that highlights the quality and authenticity of the menu, as well as the cultural values contained in it. Business actors need to have an understanding of technology and the ability to utilize it to increase sales (Ananda, Zuhri and Nawawi, 2023).

S-T Strategy (Strengths - Threats)

This strategy includes: Maintaining the quality of taste and service to face competition from other restaurants. It is important to maintain the quality of taste and service to stay ahead of competition with other restaurants, so that customers remain loyal and satisfied.

Adjusting prices wisely and flexibly to remain competitive amid fluctuations in raw materials. Adjusting prices wisely and flexibly is very important to stay competitive, especially

when there is a disruption in the price of raw materials, without sacrificing quality.

Creating menu innovations without abandoning the authenticity of signature flavors, in response to market competition. Creating an innovative menu that retains the authenticity of the signature flavors is a strategic move to respond to market competition and attract new customers.

W-T Strategy (Weakness - Threats)

This strategy includes: Maintaining the quality of taste and service to face competition from other restaurants. In the face of intense competition from other restaurants, it is very important to continue to maintain the quality of taste and excellent service. This will not only make customers feel satisfied, but also encourage them to return and recommend our place to others.

Adjust prices wisely and flexibly to stay competitive amidst raw material fluctuations. To remain competitive in a dynamic market, we need to adjust prices wisely and flexibly, especially when there is synchronization in raw material prices. With the right pricing strategy, we can attract customers without compromising on the quality of the products offered. In relation to the menu, price is the most influential determinant. Consumers will order a menu that suits their budget.

Creating menu innovations without abandoning the authenticity of typical flavors, as a response to market competition. In overcoming market competition, it is important to create menu innovations that are attractive, but still maintain the authenticity of the distinctive flavors that are our identity. In this way, we can attract new customers while maintaining the loyalty of existing customers.

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis and the masalah approach, the strategies that can be applied for the development of RM Rani are as follows:

Increase Business Capital

Strengthening capital through partnerships or financial institutions is needed to increase production capacity and expand business reach. This supports sustainability and economic growth, in line with masalah hajiyyah.

Strategic Location Selection

Choosing a business location that is crowded and easily accessible is important to attract consumers and reduce direct competition. This supports masalah dharuriyyah as it makes it easier for people to fulfill their basic needs.

Menu Innovation

Adding menu variations without losing the characteristics of the restaurant can prevent

customer saturation. This strategy is included in *masalah tahsiniyyah* because it increases consumer convenience and choice. Creating innovation can be a tool to develop the organization and entrepreneurial spirit (Yuslem, Nawawi, and Siregar 2022).

Participating in Entrepreneurial Training

Entrepreneurs need to continuously improve their skills through seminars and training. This helps in facing business challenges and supports better management. Local businesses can also play an important role in economic development, especially in building people's livelihoods (Arif, Rokan, and Kumala 2023).

Application of Islamic Business Ethics

Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness are important to apply in business management. This reinforces blessings and benefits, in accordance with the principle of *masalah* in Islam. Islam has a holistic and integrated vision of marketing ethics rooted in the Quran (Hidayana1 & Batubara, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The discussion of this study seeks to establish a robust link between the empirical findings and the theoretical framework of business development, specifically drawing on Islamic economic principles, particularly the concept of *masalah hajiyyah*. The results of the SWOT analysis serve as a critical analytical tool for understanding both internal and external factors that shape the long-term viability of Rumah Makan Rani. These factors are then examined through established theories of competitiveness, innovation, and ethical business practices, offering a deeper insight into the restaurant's current and potential market standing.

The strengths identified in the study, including the consistent use of halal-certified ingredients, locally sourced raw materials, and the preservation of authentic North Sumatran flavors, align closely with consumer preference theory. This theory underscores the growing importance of product authenticity and ethical attributes in influencing customer purchasing decisions and fostering brand loyalty. Existing research on culinary business development corroborates this, highlighting that consumers increasingly prioritize food quality, halal assurance, and cultural authenticity as essential elements of sustainable and responsible business practices. In this regard, the strengths of Rumah Makan Rani not only enhance its competitive edge but also reflect the integration of ethical and socially responsible business principles, in alignment with Islamic economic values.

On the other hand, the weaknesses identified, particularly the lack of menu innovation, limited staff training, and the absence of a structured marketing strategy, are consistent with established business management and innovation theories. These theories emphasize that continuous innovation is vital for maintaining competitiveness, especially in fast-paced markets such as the culinary industry, where consumer preferences are in constant flux. Customer feedback from participants, including Mr. Saimon, Mrs. Sri, Mrs. Aga, Mr. Mariono, and Mrs. Lilis, consistently pointed to menu monotony as a key factor contributing to the decline in customer interest and repeat visits. These findings align with previous research, which suggests that a lack of product variety can lead to consumer fatigue and weakened long-term loyalty. From a managerial standpoint, the absence of innovation and structured evaluation reflects a gap in strategic planning, which may impede the restaurant's growth and limit its ability to adapt to market changes effectively.

The opportunities identified through the SWOT analysis, including the rising demand for local culinary experiences and the growing influence of digital platforms, further validate the findings in existing literature on the development of small businesses. Research on micro and small enterprises consistently highlights that digital marketing and social media engagement are powerful, cost-effective tools for expanding market reach and enhancing brand visibility. For Rumah Makan Rani, insights from informants indicate that competitors actively utilizing social media platforms experience higher customer engagement, underscoring that the failure to embrace digital strategies represents a missed opportunity for growth and market expansion.

The threats confronting the restaurant, such as escalating competition, evolving consumer preferences, and fluctuating raw material costs, are also consistent with theories in strategic management related to external environmental factors. Without a commitment to innovation and strategic responsiveness, these external challenges can severely erode a firm's competitive advantage. This observation supports the argument that internal weaknesses, when compounded by external threats, can precipitate business decline unless addressed by proactive development strategies.

From the perspective of *masalah hajiyyah*, the findings suggest that customer complaints about menu monotony point to unmet secondary needs related to comfort, satisfaction, and convenience. Islamic economic theory stresses that business activities should not only generate profit but also deliver broader societal benefits and minimize harm to consumers. In this context, the application of *masalah hajiyyah* is reflected in the provision of halal food, fair pricing, and

courteous service. However, the limited focus on menu diversification, service improvement, and customer engagement reveals that the full potential of this principle has yet to be realized. Addressing these secondary needs is crucial for safeguarding consumer welfare and ensuring the sustainability of the business model.

From an operational standpoint, the supervision of food preparation at Rumah Makan Rani highlights efforts to maintain quality, hygiene, and distinctive taste. This approach aligns with the *maslahah* principle by prioritizing not just economic efficiency but also social and health considerations. Ensuring food safety, cleanliness, and nutritional quality is fundamental to consumer well-being and reinforces trust in the business. However, to fully capitalize on these operational strengths, the restaurant must complement them with innovation in product offerings and service delivery.

Overall, the discussion illustrates that the empirical findings of this study are in harmony with both business development theory and Islamic economic principles. By addressing identified weaknesses and capitalizing on its strengths and opportunities, Rumah Makan Rani can devise a more robust and effective development strategy. Integrating SWOT analysis with the concept of *maslahah hajiyyah* offers a holistic framework for guiding ethical, competitive, and sustainable growth in the culinary industry. This approach not only benefits Rumah Makan Rani but also serves as a valuable model for other small-scale restaurants, particularly those in rural areas, seeking to build a sustainable and socially responsible business.

CONCLUSION

The development strategy of Rumah Makan Rani (RM Rani) is fundamentally grounded in the principle of *maslahah*, which prioritizes not only economic success but also the well-being of customers and the broader community. The restaurant's commitment to halal and thayyiban standards, through the use of halal-certified, nutritious, and locally sourced ingredients, forms a strong ethical and sustainable business foundation. These practices foster consumer trust and address both basic and secondary needs, aligning with the concept of *maslahah hajiyyah*.

However, for RM Rani to ensure long-term sustainability, its strategy must transcend short-term enhancements and focus on continuous growth and adaptability. While the restaurant benefits from favorable external opportunities, such as the rising popularity of local cuisine and its strategic location near educational institutions, these advantages remain underutilized. The

restaurant's weaknesses in promotion and marketing, particularly the limited use of digital platforms, present a significant barrier to expanding its market reach and retaining customers.

A robust and sustainable approach to strengthening digital marketing is essential. This includes the proactive use of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to share menu updates, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes content. Additionally, collaborating with local food influencers can further boost visibility and customer engagement. The success of these digital initiatives can be measured by tracking key performance indicators such as growth in social media interactions, increased online inquiries, and sales generated through digital platforms or online delivery services.

Menu innovation is another pivotal aspect of RM Rani's long-term business growth. Rather than sporadic changes, menu innovation should be systematic and strategic. For example, introducing seasonal dishes, regional specialties, or variations catering to specific customer segments such as students, families, or tourists would diversify offerings and maintain customer interest. The effectiveness of these innovations can be assessed through measurable outcomes such as repeat customer rates, the performance of new menu items in sales, and customer satisfaction levels gathered from feedback or surveys.

Moreover, enhancing service quality through regular employee training is crucial for maintaining customer comfort and loyalty. The success of such training programs can be evaluated using indicators such as a reduction in customer complaints, faster service delivery, and more favorable customer reviews. On a broader scale, RM Rani's commitment to maintaining *maslahah* values by supporting local suppliers and engaging with the community reinforces its role as a socially responsible business.

In conclusion, this study finds that while RM Rani has significant internal strengths, its approach to business development needs to be more systematic and forward-thinking in order to achieve sustainable growth. By integrating continuous menu innovation, structured digital marketing, service quality enhancement, and clear performance metrics within the framework of *maslahah hajiyyah*, RM Rani can improve its competitive position, secure long-term sustainability, and set an example for ethical, community-focused culinary enterprises in Indonesia.

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