



Competitive advantage of food truck enterprises in Kediri: A Phenomenological study

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the fact that more and more food truck businesses in Kediri City are being visited by the public, one of which is the food truck that sells chicken porridge, Immanuel. This increasingly shows the competition among food and beverage business actors in Kediri City. So that a business can achieve excellence, business actors must use competitive strategies to increase competitive advantage and win the competition. The problem of this research is the competitive advantage implemented by the Immanuel food truck. This research aims to determine the competitive advantage implemented by the Immanuel food truck to face business competition. This research is a type of qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. This was done through direct observation and in-depth interviews with the food truck owner, Immanuel. Informants were selected using the 5 R criteria (Relevance, Recommendation, Rapport, Readiness, and Reassurance). Direct observation was carried out by direct observation at the food truck location. Next, interviews were conducted to find out the competitive advantage of the Immanuel food truck. The results of in-depth observations and interviews in this research found that to win the business competition, the competitive advantage of the Immanuel food truck is (1) service to customers, (2) consistency in product prices, (3) maintaining product quality, and (4) product uniqueness.

Keywords: Business Economic, Marketing, Competitive Advantage

JEL Classification: M21, M31

INTRODUCTION

The business world is increasingly showing increasing competition. Business actors must increase their competitive power and develop strategies to face competitive challenges. According to Hunger and Wheelen (2003:4), strategy is a series of decisions and managerial actions that determine company performance in the long term. According to Tjiptono (2015: 436), apart from competition, there is a product life cycle, or product life cycle, that starts from the introduction, growth, maturity, and decline stages. A competitive strategy is needed to survive the product life



cycle. Competitive strategies and product life cycles apply to all types of businesses, including culinary businesses, cafes, restaurants, shops, and food trucks. According to Farkas (2013:2), a food truck is a vehicle for selling mobile food with certain criteria, such as having a mini kitchen for processing food, adequate sanitation, and compliance with local regulations. In Indonesia, food trucks differ from those abroad because they change and bring contemporary concepts and flavors, making Indonesians comfortable with food trucks. In Indonesia, food trucks generally operate in busy areas such as offices, campuses, and parking lots, and their locations can change anytime. This is related to the purpose of food trucks, which want to deliver their products as close as possible to customers so that customers know where they are. In Kediri City, food trucks can be found along Jl. PK Bangsa, in front of Disbudparpora and on Jl. Dhoho Kediri City. Food trucks in Kediri City sell a wide variety of menus, ranging from snacks such as crapes, ice cream, fresh drinks, cakes, donuts, and coffee to heavy foods such as gudeg, grilled chicken rice, yellow rice, and chicken porridge. It is in this field that food truck businesses compete. One of the food truck businesses that is the focus of the research is the Immanuel food truck on Jl. Dhoho. Food truck Immanuel makes chicken porridge as the main menu and is Immanuel's mainstay. The problem is that other food trucks also sell chicken porridge and heavy food as the main and mainstay menu, including the food trucks Bubur Ayam Bandung, Gudeg Jogja, Bubur Ayam Presto, Bubur Ayam Jakarta, etc., which sell heavy food as the main menu. The concept of "roadside" and the business of food trucks is one of Immanuel's food trucks' attractions for researchers to learn more about the competitive strategies practiced by business people. In a more specific context, the author wants to know more about the competitive advantages practiced by Immanuel Food Trucks to win the competition.

This research will deepen the focus on how the Immanuel food truck implements competitive advantage. The aim is to determine how the Immanuel food truck implements the competitive advantage concept to face business competition. This research is useful for helping business people as input and recommendations in decision-making and as learning material.



LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kotler and Keller (2009:301), Competitive advantage is a company's ability to work in one or more ways that competitors cannot or will not match.

According to Hunger and Wheelen (2003: 245), competitive advantage is a collection of strategies to determine a company's superiority over competition among other companies. These strategies include low costs and differentiation. Combining these two strategies is called focus.

According to Tjiptono (2015:24), Competitive advantage allows a company to obtain higher profits than the industry average. Competitive advantage has five characteristics: core competency, creating imperfect competition, sustainability, harmony with the external environment, and profits greater than the industry average.

The era of competitive advantage can be described as a country with abundant natural wealth that is superior to other countries. At this time, people call it the era of comparative advantage. In this era, Indonesia should be one of the countries with abundant natural wealth and can outperform countries with little or poor natural wealth. However, what is happening now is that developed countries have little natural wealth; they are not richer in natural wealth but can outperform other countries. This is what is called the era of competitive advantage.

A country can be said to have a competitive advantage if it already has advantages in one or several areas that can be superior to winning the competition. Marketing must explore the micro and macro aspects because marketing has not yet connected these concepts. The macro aspects include individual and cultural values. Competitive strategy factors influence competitive strategy: company strengths and weaknesses, industry opportunities and threats, community expectations, and values held by key executives.

According to Porter (1994: 4), in any industry, both domestically and internationally, the rules of competition are covered by five competitive forces such as the entry of new competitors, the threat of substitute products, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers and competition. According to Kotler and Keller (2009:8), differentiation is designing meaningful



differences to differentiate a company's offerings from its competitors. According to Tjiptono (2015:262), differentiation is an effort to find and develop new products or markets, or both, to pursue growth and increase sales, profitability, and flexibility. A differentiation strategy is a strategy that can maintain customer loyalty, whereby customers get more value compared to other products. Porter (1994: 121) states that differentiation strategy also has factors that help to obtain broad competitive coverage, namely:

- 1) Ability to serve buyers' needs anywhere.
- 2) Maintenance is simple for the purchaser if the same parts and design philosophy are used across a broad line.
- 3) Similarity of where the buyer will go to make a purchase.
- 4) Same place for customer service
- 5) Compatibility advantages compared to other products.

In this differentiation, a company selects one or more attributes considered important by many buyers in an industry and uniquely positions itself to meet those needs. The way to differentiate is different in each industry. Differentiation can be based on the product itself, the product delivery system used to sell it, the marketing approach, and many other factors. Differentiation cannot be understood simply by looking at the company as a whole but rather through several specific activities carried out by the company and the influence of these activities on customers. The potential for agility (maneuverability) that various companies have in carrying out differentiation is determined by the differences in marketing offers provided by the company from those of its competitors. According to Porter (1994: 126), companies constantly try to differentiate their market offers from competitors' offers. Companies promise new services and guarantees, special rewards for loyal users, new conveniences, and excitement. Therefore, companies must examine the uniqueness of each product to determine the factors that determine that uniqueness because several factors determine uniqueness and provide longer durability. Companies implementing a differentiation strategy will not appear as those implementing a low-



cost strategy to differentiate them from similar products. The following are the characteristics of a differentiation strategy, according to Aisyah (2007:4), including:

- 1) Prestige and brand image
- 2) Technology
- 3) Innovation
- 4) Features
- 5) Customer service
- 6) Dealer network

METHODS

A qualitative research approach was used for this research. According to Moleong (2017: 6), qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically and describe them in words and language. The type of research used is phenomenology. According to Kamayanti (2016: 150), Phenomenology is the awareness that appears within an individual, not a study that contains a phenomenon. Even though the name is "phenomenon," the researcher will get subjective empirical truth. A researcher in this research acts as a phenomenologist who acts as a human instrument, whose function is to select data source informants, determine the focus of the research, carry out data collection, assess the quality of the data that has been collected, data analysis, interpreting the data and then making a conclusion based on what was found in the field. The research stages in the picture above are the pre-field stage, field stage (interviews, data collection), data analysis, conclusions, and reporting of research results. The research location is at the Immanuel food truck, which sells in the morning; the Immanuel food truck is in Jalan Dhoho Kediri City, precisely in front of the shops on Jl. Dhoho Kediri City. This research uses primary and secondary data. The data must be obtained directly from the informants or respondents to complete the analysis. In this research, researchers look for information in documents, graphics, videos, recordings, and photos through observation,



interviews, and documentation. In qualitative research, the selection of informants is an important aspect. Very important (Fauji, 2017, p. 320). Therefore, it is very important to select informants according to the 5R criteria: Relevance, Recommendation, Rapport, Readiness, Reassurance. Based on these criteria, two informants were selected.

Tabel Profile Informants

| | |
|--------|--|
| Nama | Rikky Rinaldy dan Fenna |
| Alamat | Jalan Garuda No.7 Gogorante Kecamatan Ngasem Kabupeten Kediri |
| Umur | 48 dan 46 years |
| Posisi | owner <i>Food truck</i> Immanuel |

Source: Primary data processed in 2020

Analysis Stages

According to (Kamayanti, 2017, pp. 146-160), five stages of analysis can be used to analyze data, namely:

1. Noema

Noema is included in the outermost part of the interview with the informant. Noema is the initial theme or core information that prioritizes the informant's awareness.

2. Epoch

It can also be called bracketing, a term in the phenomenological method that refers to focusing on the study of a finding and then carrying out a deeper analysis process regarding discovering a theme in the noema and why that theme occurred.

3. Noesis

It is an awareness that arises from experience in time and place. In research, Noesis is included in the deepest part of the information the informant conveys.



4. Intentional Analysis

Study how noesis can form noema, namely why the action or behavior can occur. In other words, intentional analysis requires a closer meaning of the main ideas that have been discovered

5. Eidetic Reduction

A process of discovering the main idea or interpreting the underlying findings of the main idea. The data processing results carried out from start to finish will be described in eidetic reduction.

Checking Data Validity

This research uses theoretical triangulation techniques. The method compares data and information collected by researchers through one informant with theories from experts, starting from pre-field and two field stages. The following is a timetable for data collection implementation.

RESULTS

| | <i>Noema</i> | <i>Epoche</i> | <i>Noesis</i> |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1. | The first thing for service is how we retain and serve customers. (Service to Customers) | 1. So you can embrace customers and get to know them. "For example, Darwin bought it once, uncle. I do not need to use green" (Vegetables). Darwin came again, uncle, and he had memorized it. That is the bond; that is our added value. 2. That is how we serve. No matter how many customers we have, we must recognize them. | We are always looking for ways to continue to serve customers, but the relationship must remain good. We work with individuals and conventional couriers. Before Corona, if I collaborated with Grab and Gojek, I thought it would be even busier. However, those who are conventional feel sorry for not having any orders. Suppose we serve |



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- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>2.</p> | <p>3. Even my subordinates have to understand. Who bought it, and what did they want? Until the car came from afar, I knew what they wanted to buy and who they were.</p> <p>4. Yes, it has to be like that, especially for those who handle marketing management; customer service is important; we have to know what customers want</p> <p>We did not lower or increase prices; even now, our prices are benchmarks for other porridge. Our focus is on having COGS; if people sell under me, they will not make a profit. I have calculated my HPP with expenses and the risk of return. So, other porridge sells below us and rarely sells.</p> | <p>everyone because customers cannot come (gojek, grab). In that case, we also have to be friendly with customers like you were before, bro (getting to know customers, being friendly, considering you as brothers, etc.).</p> |
| <p>3. But do not reduce the quality of the product, sir; that is important (Maintaining Product Quality)</p> | <p>1. The important thing is that the customer is finally satisfied. Not only the service but also the quality must be taken care of. Try it if you go to Immanuel and observe. Sometimes, customers go to Immanuel not to buy but just to chat, say hello, and so on. We can embrace everything. We are number one in service and quality.</p> <p>2. There used to be a customer in one of the branches who complained, "Auntie, why do you feel like this branch is like this, this, this... well, I finally closed the unfortunate branch,</p> | <p>Uncle and aunt do not raise prices even if prices go up, even during holidays, unless the price of basic commodities goes up for a long time.</p> <p>Taste should not be added or subtracted in the slightest; it must be by the standard of kediri. We have our ingredients, but they cannot add or subtract. There will be a tester later. Sometimes, we use people to test</p> |



sir, because it does not fit the SOP" (with a style of speaking like a complainer)

3. Taste: Taste cannot be changed. Because we have standards for taste. We have 4 branches in Pare Tulangang, Surabaya. The plan is to open in Malang as well. Because there is this corona, yes, we are pending first, whether we want to or not

4. Well, that is special here (Cakwe Kering). Try Darwin eating Immanuel's innocent porridge and comparing it with porridge in other places; there is a difference.

(Product Uniqueness)

1. Besides dry cakwe, another thing distinguishes it, the kenyal-kenyal, you know? Caipo is his name. It is a sweet radish; if you bite it, it tastes salty, sweet, and sour, like no other porridge. That is still maintained despite the high price because that is especially Emmanuel's porridge; we even bring it from China for that material, import mas. Because this is a corona, we have to make it ourselves. The process is long; it takes a week to make it. Even if other places add to the porridge he wants to be replaced wherever it is, it will not be the same.

2. Characteristic bubur tangerang is still there, honey; even without side dishes, our porridge can be eaten; why do we have so many children customers? Because yes, without topping, our porridge is already delicious to eat; they can taste it. A sick child

Yes, that is one of the differentiating strategies from Tangerang porridge; apart from Tangerang porridge without gravy, we have capo, and not everyone likes pepper, which cannot be eliminated. Moreover, greetings are one of the services. As such approach



even asked for Immanuel's porridge, but it ran out. I finally figured it out by giving him a box of Immanuel and told him to buy porridge elsewhere, but after buying it, it turned out that the child knew this was not Immanuel's porridge

Intentional Analysis

In intentional analysis, study how noesis can form a noema. So the explanation is as follows.

- a. The service at Immanuel's food truck, by way of approach with customers, must still recognize customers no matter how many customers come, and the informant also demands his employees to memorize the names of customers who come. Because of the experience of noesis about serving customers commonly done by the informant, a theme or noema was formed, namely service to customers.
- b. Informants still do not raise the product's price because they calculate the production cost to determine the product's selling price. Because of the experience of noesis in calculating the price of basic production materials, which is usually done by the informant, a theme or noema was formed, consistent in product prices.
- c. Maintaining the quality of Immanuel products is by maintaining the taste of the product. Informants have taste standards set in their branches, which will be checked periodically. Because of the experience of the noesis about checking the taste of the product, which is usually done by the informant, a theme or noema was formed, which is to maintain the quality of the product.
- d. Informants use capo in their porridge, dry cake, and pepper. Another characteristic of Tangerang porridge is that it is without gravy. Because of the experience of noesis about the use of capo ingredients, which are difficult to obtain and are usually made directly by the informant, a theme or noema is formed, which is the uniqueness of the product.



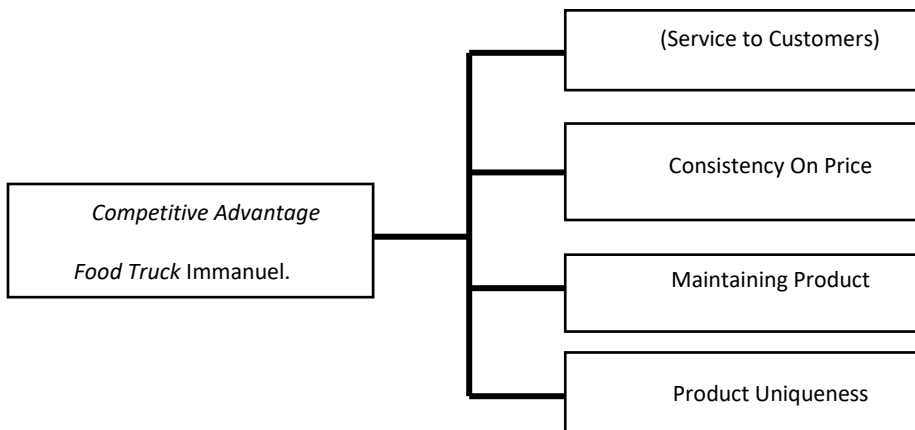
Presentation of Eidetic Reduction

Eidetic reduction is the process of discovering a main idea or the main idea of what the findings' results mean. After the stages had been completed, several basic ideas from the informants about the competitive advantage of the Immanuel food truck were found.

Reporting Research Results

According to the two informants in this research, four factors can create competitive advantages for food truck businesses: customer service, price consistency, maintaining product quality, and unique products. The following image illustrates this.

Picture Competitive Advantage Food Truck Immanuel



Source: processed primary data, 2020

DISCUSSION

a. Customer Service

At this point, Mr. Rikky and Mrs. Fenna's understanding of "I" is: "I use an approach with customers, receive customer input, serve with heart, optimize inter-message according to



customer needs because I am aware that serving customers must be as much as possible." This result is based on the theory of Tjiptono (2001); another way to differentiate is to provide better service quality than competitors consistently.

c. Maintaining Product Quality

At this point, Mr. Rikky and Mrs. Fenna's understanding of "me" is "I take care of the quality or taste of the products I make because there are complaints from customers because I realize that taking care of quality is important.". This is to the theory of Kotler and Keller (2009), broadly stating that product differentiation is the company's product offerings with something better, faster, and cheaper that will create higher value for customers than competitor products.

d. Maintaining Product Quality

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e. Product Uniqueness

At this point, Pak Rikky and Bu Fenna's understanding of "I" is that "I have to make my product have a uniqueness that competitors do not possess because I know that that uniqueness cannot be eliminated. This result is based on Porter's theory (1994:126). When the company wants to win the competition, it must check the uniqueness of each of its products to find out the factors that determine that uniqueness because several factors that determine uniqueness provide longer durability.

CONCLUSION

The service to customers carried out by the Immanuel food truck is getting to know as many customers as possible, understanding what customers want, serving with heart, accepting critical suggestions, and working with conventional couriers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Immanuel food truck collaborated with online motorcycle taxis to help with their services so that



customers who could not come directly to the Immanuel food truck could buy via the application. Consistency in product prices is carried out by the Immanuel food truck by not increasing the price of its products unless The price of raw materials for making products has increased over a long period. The Immanuel food truck uses a production cost calculation to calculate the product's selling price. Maintaining product quality in the Immanuel food truck is done by maintaining the product's taste. The informant will periodically check the quality of the products in all branches. The uniqueness of the Immanuel food truck product is that Immanuel's chicken porridge uses dried cakwe as a topping, caipo as a mixture of porridge, pepper and no sauce. According to the informant's statement, the uniqueness of Immanuel's food truck products cannot be duplicated by competitors, considering that caipo raw materials are very difficult to obtain.

LIMITATION

The number of informants and food truck businesses studied cannot yet represent the number of food truck businesses in Kediri City, thus opening up opportunities for further research in the future.

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