

## Mixue Ice Cream Business Development Strategy in Lhokseumawe City

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the business development strategy of Mixue ice cream in Lhokseumawe, with a focus on identifying the factors that influence business growth and sustainability. Mixue, as one of the rapidly growing ice cream and beverage brands in Indonesia, including in Lhokseumawe, requires an appropriate strategy to maintain its existence and enhance competitiveness in the local market. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with informants consisting of the store manager, admin, employees, and Mixue customers. Data were collected through interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The results of the study show that Mixue has succeeded in expanding the market through effective digital marketing strategies, maintaining product quality through consistent operational standards, running a business according to government regulations such as halal certification and business permits that strengthen consumer trust. This research is expected to provide useful insights for similar business actors in formulating effective and sustainable business strategies.

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### INTRODUCTION

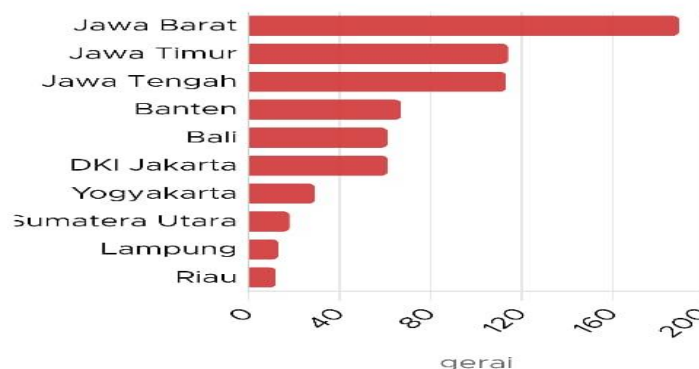
Strategy is a long-term action plan that serves as a guide for top management in allocating company resources to achieve sustainable goals. Witcher in the book *Contemporary Business Management* (in Saputra, 2020) explains that strategy is an approach to directing a company operations toward sustainable long term directions and goals. Therefore, the strategy must be compiled multifunctionally by considering the company's internal and external factors. The right strategy will affect the smooth running of the business in the long term, as well as being the basis for strategic decision making and business development planning.

Business development itself is a systematic effort to improve the competitiveness of companies, either through market expansion, product diversification, service quality improvement, or optimization of human resources. According to Elis (in Purwandari, 2024), a development strategy is a document that details the long-term goals of the organization as well as the concrete steps that will be taken to achieve them. This strategy serves as a road map in determining the actions, processes, and resources needed to achieve sustainable organizational success.

In the context of increasingly competitive competition, companies are required to continue to innovate and develop their business to remain relevant in the eyes of consumers. One of the sectors experiencing rapid growth in Indonesia is the food and beverage industry, especially the ice cream segment. Ice cream is now not

only a dessert, but has become part of people's lifestyle, especially the younger generation. Unique flavors, product innovation, and marketing strategies are the main keys in winning the competition in this industry.

Mixue, a Chinese franchise company specializing in ice cream and tea drinks, has managed to attract the attention of the Indonesian market since it first arrived in 2020. With the concept of affordable prices and good product quality, Mixue is able to develop its outlet network quickly in various cities. This is shown in the following diagram:



Source: Data goodstats.id (2023)

Mixue has hundreds of outlets spread across various provinces, especially in Java. In addition to having obtained halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Mixue's existence is increasingly accepted by Indonesian consumers because of the variety of products that suit local tastes.

In Lhokseumawe City, which is one of the developing cities in Aceh Province, Mixue has also been present as part of the current culinary trend. The tropical climate, young population, and public interest in ice cream products provide great opportunities for Mixue to expand its market. However, based on initial observations and pre-interviews with customers, there are several obstacles that can hinder the development of Mixue's business in this area. Some of them are the limited variety of menus, long waiting times due to queues, and dissatisfaction with the size of the portion of ice cream served.

Customers stated that their initial interest in Mixue was due to social media trends and recommendations from friends. In addition, customers' interest in making repeat visits is influenced by the presence of new menus or attractive promotions. This shows the importance of innovation and developing a more dynamic marketing strategy. Customers also want additional menus, such as snacks or other desserts, which can increase comfort and satisfaction when visiting.

In facing competition with local and international ice cream brands, Mixue needs to develop a more comprehensive business development strategy, not only limited to products, but also aspects of service, promotion, and menu diversification. Therefore, this research aims to formulate Mixue's business development strategy in Lhokseumawe City through analyzing the company's internal and external factors. It is expected that the results of this study can provide strategic recommendations that are applicable to support the sustainable growth of the Mixue business in the region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Strategy

According to Ansoff in Chairunnisa's quote (2022), explains that strategy is a set of rules that govern decision making and standard setting. Often, a company's strategy is referred to as its business plan.

According to Crittenden and Crittenden in the quote from Febrianty et al (2023), conveyed in the preparation of the strategic planning process there are 5 important indicators, including:

1. Goal setting,
2. Environmental analysis,
3. Alternative strategies,
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

## Business Development

According to Hafsah in quotation Supriadi et al (2023), states that business development is any effort to improve the implementation of current and future work, by providing information to influence attitudes or increase skills.

According to Chairunnisa (2022) business development indicators are as follows:

1. Human resources
2. Marketing
3. Operation or production
4. Capital conditions
5. Management
6. Revenue
7. Government policy

## METHOD

This research was conducted at Mixue outlets in Lhokseumawe city. The selection of this location is based on the consideration that Mixue Lhokseumawe is one of the outlets that experiences long queues and only provides products in the form of ice cream and drinks. This condition indicates challenges in service and product variety that can affect the level of customer satisfaction.

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it can describe in detail and in depth the phenomena that occur in the field in accordance with social reality. According to Moleong in the book *Qualitative Research Methods* (Nasution, 2023), conveying qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena thoroughly by describing them in the form of words, language, and natural context. This method allows researchers to interact directly with informants in order to gain a contextual understanding of the Mixue business development strategy in Lhokseumawe city.

The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling technique, which is a selection technique based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The informants consist of managers, admins, employees, and Mixue customers who have experience and knowledge related to operations and services at the outlet.

The data sources used in this research are primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques use field research based on observation, interviews, and documentation. The interview technique used by the author is an unstructured interview. Unstructured interviews are free interviews, where researchers do not use interview guidelines that are arranged systematically and completely for data collection. The interview guide used is only an outline of the problem asked through direct question and answer to the informant.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mixue comes from the Mandarin words Mi and Xue. Mi means “honey” which is derived from the words feng mi and tiang mi meaning sweet, while Xue means “snow”. In combination, Mixue means “snow that is sweet like honey”. The unique meaning of the name Mixue is not only an interesting knowledge for customers, but also an inspiring story for entrepreneurs. Taking inspiration from the meaning of its name, Mixue's founder, Zhang Hongchao, developed various types of ice cream and cold drinks that have a sweet and refreshing taste.

Not only that, Mixue offers flavors that perfectly match the preferences of Indonesians who love sweet drinks. Comes with the concept of affordable yet quality ice cream, making a favorite choice among various ages. Product uniqueness, flavor innovation, and effective marketing strategies have brought Mixue to become one of the important players in the ice cream industry in Indonesia. In the city of Lhokseumawe, which is one of the developing cities in Aceh, has an attractive market potential for the ice cream business. With a sizable population, especially young people who like contemporary culinary, and a favorable tropical climate, Lhokseumawe offers promising opportunities for Mixue to expand its reach.

Mixue is a business that implements a franchise system in the food and beverage sector, which allows third parties (franchisees) to open and operate Mixue outlets using brands, products, and business systems that have been developed by the parent company (franchisor). The advantage of a franchise business is that there is no need to bother building a system because the franchisee only needs to follow the system that has been built by the franchisor.

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#### 1. Marketing

Mixue's market development in Lhokseumawe shows success in introducing its brand and products through social media such as Instagram and TikTok. By utilizing the digital platform, Mixue is able to attract the attention of consumers from various regions to recognize and buy its products.

#### 2. Operations and Production

Mixue has successfully developed operations and production by prioritizing quality and innovation in every product produced. Through consistent operational standards in all branches, Mixue is able to maintain product quality and distinctive flavors that customers love.

#### 3. Capital Condition

Mixue's capital condition is supported by a franchise system that allows rapid expansion by involving partners as capital owners to open outlets. Mixue can expand its network without incurring large capital expenditures of its own, while maintaining consistent product and service quality across all outlets.

#### 4. Revenue

Mixue in Lhokseumawe at the beginning of its opening managed to attract many customers due to its unique product concept, affordable prices, and the growing trend among the community. However, Mixue's revenue in Lhokseumawe has decreased along with the increase of the number of new branches which causes wider customer distribution and reduces visits to these outlets.

#### 5. Government Policy

Mixue has demonstrated its commitment to conducting business legally, safely, and in compliance with Indonesian government regulations by complying with applicable policies. By fulfilling all requirements set by the government, Mixue not only builds customer trust, but also creates a sustainable business environment and can expand its business network with clear legality.

Factors Influencing Business Development

#### 1. Internal Factors

The imbalance between the number of staff and the number of customers during peak hours shows the need for evaluation of workforce management so that services remain optimal. This reinforces the importance of a business development strategy that focuses on internal strengths.

#### 2. External Factors

The low price strategy is a form of response to external conditions such as the economic level of the local community. Affordable pricing is part of the market penetration strategy to attract new consumers, while at the same time retaining existing customers through the creation of value that is commensurate between price and product quality.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been conducted on the Mixue Ice Cream business in Lhokseumawe City, the following conclusions can be drawn:

#### 1. Mixue Ice Cream Business Development Strategy in Lhokseumawe City

Based on the research results, the Mixue ice cream business development strategy in Lhokseumawe City is carried out through optimizing digital marketing, maintaining product quality consistency, accelerating expansion with a franchise system, and complying with government regulations. Although revenue has decreased due to the increasing number of branches, with a strong marketing strategy, continuous product innovation, and business legality support, Mixue has a great opportunity to continue developing and expanding its market reach.

#### 2. Factors Influencing the Development of the Mixue Ice Cream Business in Lhokseumawe City

Business environment factors, both internal and external, greatly influence the development of Mixue ice cream business in Lhokseumawe City. From the internal side, competent human resources and optimal service strategies are the key to operational success and customer satisfaction, so that effective HR management is needed to maintain service quality. While from the external side, an affordable pricing strategy has succeeded

in attracting various groups of consumers, expanding the market, and increasing business competitiveness in the midst of people's economic conditions.

#### Suggestion

Suggestions that can be given to improve the Mixue ice cream business development strategy Lhokseumawe City are as follows:

1. Mixue should add new menu variants to provide more choices to customers and maintain product appeal. For example, presenting innovations such as waffles or desserts to complement snack choices for customers, Mixue can attract new customers while maintaining the loyalty of old customers. In addition, developing a new menu can also be a strategy to increase competitiveness in the increasingly competitive beverage and ice cream industry.
2. Mixue should address the frequent long queues, as they can discourage customers from waiting and risk losing interest. One solution is to increase the number of cashiers or provide a self-ordering system via an app or machine. Self - service to speed up transactions. A comfortable and clear waiting area can also help reduce customer discomfort while waiting in line.
3. The promotional strategy through social media instagram and tiktok that is implemented is quite interesting but as a suggestion, a member card or membership program can be added for loyal customers which aims to get bonuses from purchasing Mixue products. This program will not only increase customer loyalty, but also encourage them to visit more often and make purchases.

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