

Innovation and Service Excellence in MF Banana Chips Business

Nurhidayah¹, Budi Gautama²

Email: nurhidayahsrg@uinsyahada.ac.id¹, budigautama@iain.padangsidimpunan.com²

^{1,2}UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpunan

Abstrak

Dalam sebuah usaha, peningkatan produksi dan pelayanan merupakan hal yang sangat penting untuk kemajuan usaha melalui kreativitas dan inovasi. Untuk para pelaku UMKM dengan berkreaitivitas dalam meningkatkan kualitas produk, membuat inovasi atau terobosan baru pada produk dan meningkatkan pelayanan merupakan hal yang akan menjadi kekuatan dan cara untuk mempertahankan keberlangsungan usaha, yang mana hal tersebut juga akan membantu meningkatkan penjualan. Seperti yang diterapkan oleh usaha keripik pisang MF yang berdiri sejak tahun 2017 dan bertempat di Ujung Gurap, Padangsidimpunan Sumatera Utara telah berhasil menaikkan omzet usaha tersebut. Dengan keterbatasan bahan baku, varian rasa yang sedeikit, kemasan produk yang sederhana serta pelayanan yang biasa saja menghantarkan usaha ini untuk berinovasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui inovasi produk dan layanan prima yang dilakukan oleh usaha keripik pisang MF. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data melalui teknik wawancara dan observasi serta menggunakan pendekatan studi literatur. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa pemilik usaha tersebut (Ibu Fahri) melakukan kreativitas dan inovasi atas produk nya yaitu perubahan jenis bahan baku untuk keripik pisang dan menambah varian rasa baru pada produknya. Selain itu usaha keripik pisang MF juga memberikan pelayanan prima melalui kemudahan, kecepatan dan keramahamtaman melalui tindakan, yang mana sebelumnya terdapat pelayanan yang kurang baik.

Kata kunci: Inovasi, Kreativitas, Pelayanan Prima

Abstract

In a business, increasing production and service is very important for business progress through creativity and innovation. For MSME players, being creative in improving product quality, making innovations or new breakthroughs in products and improving services are things that will become strengths and ways to maintain business continuity, which will also help increase sales. As applied by the MF banana chips business which was established in 2017 and is located in Ujung Gurap, Padangsidimpunan, North Sumatra, it has succeeded in increasing the business turnover. With limited raw materials, few flavor variants, simple product packaging and mediocre service led this business to innovate. This study aims to determine product innovation and excellent service carried out by the MF banana chips business. This research is a type of qualitative research with data collection methods through interview and observation techniques and using a literature study approach. The results stated that the business owner (Mrs. Fahri) did creativity and innovation in her product, namely changing the type of raw material for banana chips and adding new flavors to her product. In addition, the MF banana chips business also provides excellent service

through convenience, speed and hospitality through actions, where previously there were services that were not available.

Keywords: *Innovation, Creativity, Excellent Service*

INTRODUCTION

Background

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a major role in improving the economy and supporting the economic growth of the community as well as one of the businesses that is able to absorb a lot of labor with its labor-intensive nature. In the midst of globalization and high competition, entrepreneurs, both small and large, must be able to face the challenges of globalization and increasingly fierce competition in the food industry. Today's consumers are also increasingly selective in choosing the products they consume, so that only superior, unique and creative products are able to compete in the global market. The conditions require entrepreneurs to be more creative and innovative in making products and or services to meet the needs and desires of consumers. For MSME players, being creative in improving product quality, making innovations or new breakthroughs in products is something that will be a strength and a way to maintain business continuity. This will also help increase product sales. Apart from innovation, excellent service also plays an important role in business sustainability and progress (Basalamah, 2021, p. hal 3). By providing the best service, customers will be loyal to the products of a business.

The statement accordance with research conducted by Enda Rahayu (Lestari, 2019) and Hana (Urbancova, 2013) which states that to be able to win the competition, satisfy consumers and obtain high profits and get new customers, a competitive advantage is needed, which can be created through product excellence, service, price and other aspects that are the reason for consumer to choose a business product. One of the businesses that still survive amidst economic difficulties and globalization and competition is "MF Banana Chips Business", which is located at Ujung Gurap Padangsidempuan. The business has been established since 2017 by Mrs. Fahri. She started her business with a small amount of savings and her children and husband as her employees.

In running her business making banana chips, in addition to the difficulty of getting raw materials to make banana chips and competition and seeing the situation and conditions of consumer or community behavior that is changing, selective, and has many desires, making Mrs. Fahri look for ideas to maintain the sustainability of her business by being creative and innovating on products and product packaging and services. Previously, Mrs. Fahri's banana chip products offered to consumers had only salty flavor variants and the bananas used before in making banana chips were kepok bananas.

In addition to the flavor, MF's banana chip business also creates product design creativity to attract consumer interest balanced with excellent service, namely convincing consumers of the innovation of new banana chip products with different banana staples. New product development is not a simple matter for MF's banana chips business. Product planning requires an in-depth analysis of the market or consumer behavior, including testing whether the product can be accepted by the community or not. Through creativity and innovation as well as excellent service, the business has

experienced an increase in turnover in the sense that the creativity carried out is accepted by the community so that it becomes an innovation for businesses and consumers who have just tried the product. Based on the background that has been described, this study aims to find out how the creativity of Fahri's mother has become an innovation for banana chip products in the business and the services provided to consumers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. How has the MF banana chips business innovated?
2. How innovative is the service provided by MF banana chips business to customers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creativity

A person in entrepreneurship does not run a business for just one or two years, but for a long period of time or continuously until it develops and progresses. To realize this, several ways are needed, such as creativity and innovation. With creativity and innovation in business, it will produce products or services according to the needs and desires of the community or consumers, so that products or services can be accepted by the wider community or sell well in the market. The acceptance of products in the wider community will generate business profits and business continuity can be stable and for a long time. Creativity according to Rusdiana is the skill to create new ideas and find new methods in seeing a problem and opportunity (Wiyono & Ardiansyah, 2020, p. hlm 23). To be creative requires a process that is not short, it needs a process with certain steps such as preparation, investigation, transformation, incubation, illumination, fermentation and implementation.

Alma preparation can be done through formal education and training as well as from work experience. Investigation, is to study and identify the main components of a problem. Transformation, identifying similarities and differences in the information obtained. Incubation, is the activity of leaving the house and seemingly forgetting about the problem at hand. Illumination is a step that brings up new ideas in an unlimited amount of time. Next, fermentation, which is trying to simulate or test the market for products to validate the right idea, and finally Implementation is the stage of starting to transform ideas into reality and use (Wiyono & Ardiansyah, 2020, p. hlm 21).

Innovation

Innovation is something related to goods, services or ideas that are perceived as new by someone, even though the idea has long existed but can be said to be an innovation for people who have just seen or felt it (Hadiyati, 2011, p. hal 11). Innovation is related to creativity, where in innovation there is the ability to apply creative solutions to existing problems and opportunities. Innovation thinking is connected to the act of studying a problem in depth, which requires knowledge and entrepreneurial purity. Innovation is inseparable from two main criteria, namely novelty and improvement.

Novelty here does not have to be in the form of creating a new product, but can also be in terms of use value, conditions and applications. The improvement criterion here means finding the best alternative that is most efficient and effective for the process of a product (Saragih, 2017). In making innovations, steps need to be taken such

as observing and researching the internal and external environment. The choice of triggers for innovation, as well as researching the many options for resources and the creation of products or services (Wiyono & Ardiansyah, 2020).

Excellent Service

In the development of the world of services in a business or business, the term excellent service is known. Excellent service is a concern for customers by providing the best service to facilitate the ease of meeting needs to realize their satisfaction so that they remain loyal (Atmadjati, 2018, p. hlm 1). Some important things that need to be considered by the company to achieve an excellent service are looking good, neat, being friendly and polite, showing an attitude of enthusiasm for work and an attitude of always being ready to serve.

In addition, the attitude of calm and not humble and able to understand and understand sign language and handle customer complaints also need to be considered. Barata said there are five main elements of excellent service is :(Atmadjati, 2018, p. hlm 2)

1. Ability, 2. Attitude, 3. Appearance, 4. Attention, 5. Action

Meanwhile, according to Tjipto, excellent service consists of four main elements is : speed, accuracy, friendliness, and comfort (Tjiptono, 2008).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative type of research, where qualitative research is a data collection activity in a natural setting with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur (Setiawan, 2018, p. hal 8). This research will interpret and describe the phenomena that occur in the MF Ujung Gurap Banana Chips Business in terms of innovation and excellent service applied. The types of data used in this research are primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out using observation and interview methods. This research also uses a literature study approach to obtain secondary data.

1. Observation is a method used to obtain data by observing the subject or reviewing directly to the research location.
2. Interview, a method of collecting data by conducting questions and answers with the Umi banana chips business owner directly.
3. Literature study, a method of collecting library data by reading and recording relevant theoretical references through journals or articles, books and documentation (Habsy, 2017, p. hal 92). Then all data obtained is analyzed using descriptive analysis method.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Creativity in MF Banana Chips Business

Understanding creativity (inventiveness) will provide a strong basis for developing a business in entrepreneurship so that the business can survive and be able to compete. The central role of entrepreneurship is the strong ability to create something new, such as new products and services, new ways of managing things, and new ways of making decisions (Hadiyati, 2011). An entrepreneur is required to have creative power, so that the business being managed develops. Creative thinking patterns are

important to describe the future state, besides that creative thinking also provides the possibility of achieving goals for everyone.

The following characteristics of creative thinking are sensitivity to problems, being ability to generate a number of big ideas, flexibility, originality, willingness to listen to feelings, having motivation, being free from fear of failure, being able to concentrate and having the ability to choose Randsepp in (Rusdiana, 2014, p. hal 95). The creativity of an entrepreneur can improve work efficiency, increase initiative, improve appearance, improve product quality and increase profits so that they can develop their business or achieve success. There are several things that need to be considered by creative entrepreneurs in finding important information for their business, be it through television, newspapers, magazines, leaflets and so on is:(Rusdiana, 2014, p. hlm 96)

1. Information about their personality and abilities
2. Market opportunities
3. Business opportunities that benefit the company
4. Suppliers of goods
5. Consumer needs and wants for products
6. Competition in the business world

The level of creativity is very supportive in business progress for entrepreneurs, such as the creativity carried out by the MF banana chip business by developing creative ideas, the idea is to create new products in different flavors than before with different banana raw materials. Through an interview with Mrs. Fahri as the owner of the MF banana chips business, she said that:

"Initially, the flavors of our banana chips were only salty, then we added several flavors such as sweet, cheese and chocolate. However, for the time being, we are still producing more salty and sweet flavors, because salty and sweet flavors have many customers who are interested in them, so chocolate and cheese flavors still need some time to be known to the wider community, which requires more optimal marketing".

The creation of new products is in accordance with the definition of creativity above. The ability of creativity includes creating new things or products, being able to make combinations, and to develop something different from the others. In addition to creativity in flavor variants, the MF banana chips business is also creative in creating new packaging for its products by packaging them in medium-sized standing pouches. Besides creating new products with different flavors and new packaging, the MF banana chip business tries to offer and convince consumers of the product, so that consumers are interested and willing to buy to try it. This is because not all new product variants can simply be accepted by consumers or the public.

Innovation in MF Banana Chips Products

Without innovation, it will be difficult for a business or company to survive for a long time, because the needs, wants and demands of customers are not fixed or changing. Customers do not always consume the same product, hence the importance of innovation for a business to maintain and sustain its business. Another definition of innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of something new, not meaning original but rather novelty, in the sense that innovation is creating and implementing something into a combination (Sya'roni & Sudirham, 2014).

Innovation can be in the form of product, process, organizational, and service innovation, where innovation in products is in the form of new product development or product improvement. Product innovation refers to the case when a business introduces new products or provides new services. Product innovation is inseparable from the factors that influence its achievement, namely yaitu (Rusdiana, 2014, p. hlm 107):

1. Vision, have a short but clear vision and provide real support for the realization of innovation.
2. Market orientation, grounding the vision in the market.
3. Organization that stays flat and small.
4. Interactive learning, in an environment of innovation.

Entrepreneurs are required to be creative and innovate. Where the success of a business is influenced by the application of innovation in its business activities (Sisca et al., 2021, p. hal 19). As in the MF banana chips business, through an interview with the owner (Mrs. Fahri) said:

"We innovate our banana chip products by creating new products in several flavors, besides that because it is difficult to get raw materials for kepok bananas, we change the raw materials used for banana chips to uli bananas. Given the buyer's request to create new flavors, I remembered the crispy banana sprinkled with chocolate and cheese, from that I applied it to my own banana chip business, where the product with the new flavor variant is acceptable and in demand by the public or consumers, which is evident through the increase in turnover obtained".

Based on the interview above, innovation in the type of raw material for making banana chips is a practical and more efficient way to produce the product. Given the difficulty of obtaining raw materials for kepok bananas in the Padangsidempuan area of North Sumatra, these bananas are increasingly expensive, which increases production costs. The innovation is a stepping stone to obtaining cheaper and more sustainable raw materials because the availability of uli bananas in the Padangsidempuan area is quite dominant. The cause of the difficulty and high price of kepok bananas is thought to be because several regions in North Sumatra are export-oriented. It was recorded that from January to September 2019, 3.1 thousand tons of kepok bananas worth 14.6 billion were exported to Malaysia (Rizky, 2019).

The taste and texture of uli banana and kepok banana is not much different depending on the topping (flavor variant), but kepok banana is still superior. With product innovation in both cheaper and more readily available raw materials, the addition of flavors that consumers are interested in and more practical packaging is a way for MF's banana chips business to obtain higher sales and profits.

In accordance with previous research statements by (Osei et al., 2016) and (Oke et al., 2007) that product innovation can increase company productivity, sales and profitability. By the factors that influence the achievement of innovation, the MF banana chip business has a vision of "introducing Indonesian specialty food products of banana chips and being able to become quality food, attractive and accepted by the community".

Market orientation in this case, the MF banana chip business has a marketing strategy that focuses on fulfilling customer interests and desires through the products offered. From the above, MF banana chip business assumes that their success depends on customer satisfaction. In terms of organization, which remains flat and small, MF

banana chip businesses keep it efficient and focused. Interactive learning process, in an environment of innovation, the business owner learns and through the surrounding environment can come up with ideas that encourage innovation.

Excellent Service at the MF Banana Chips Business

To produce optimal services, a business must be able to provide services above the desired expectations. In serving customers, a business must provide the best service to attract customer attention and interest so that customers become satisfied and loyal to the products offered. In its application to the MF banana chips business, based on the main elements of excellent service, namely ability, attitude, appearance, attention, action, responsibility, speed, accuracy, hospitality, and comfort, it has been implemented well. Before the application of these main elements, Mrs. MF said:

"We used to have two employees besides me, my son and my husband, who provided mediocre service. As time went on, one of my employees was always late and unfriendly, while the other employee was often off and slow at work, which made my customers' orders always delivered late and always minus the amount usually ordered. This caused our customers to often be disappointed and accept offers of banana chips from other businesses and caused our business turnover to drop. This made me think of firing them, but then I thought of giving them training. They are difficult people, so we should give them training."

The results of the interview above show that employees who are irresponsible, unfriendly and slow can be interpreted as not providing optimal service to the business and customers, which has an impact on business effectiveness. In this case, a stimulus and assertiveness from the business owner are needed so that Mrs. Fahri tries to provide training to the two employees on customer service and respect for the business where they work, where the training taught is obtained through YouTube, even Mrs. Fahri promises an increase in wages if business turnover continues to increase. This turned out to have good results, both employees and Mrs. Fahri herself began to get used to providing better service and working harder.

Service innovation is carried out in the form of politeness and hospitality, employees have good manners, patience and a smile when dealing with customers. Then, the efficiency of employee performance is also trained and not slow in serving customers, so that customers do not feel their time is wasted. Along with product innovation and optimized services, the number of customer requests for MF banana chips products increased. This states that product and service innovations can affect customer satisfaction which has an impact on customer loyalty and increased productivity and business turnover. In accordance with research conducted (Hasanah, 2016) and (Hapsari et al., 2015) states that excellent service has a significant effect on customer satisfaction and has an impact on customer loyalty.

Determination of Superior Products

In a business, superior products are products that are competitive or able to compete with other products. It is important for a business to have superior products to be able to survive and dominate the market that is already owned as well as opportunities to enter new markets. There are three benchmarks to determine whether a

business or company has a competitive superior product or not, namely (Lestari, 2019, p. hal 4) :

1. Product Uniqueness

The uniqueness of a company's product can be a distinctive feature that provides a difference with competitors' products or general products on the market.

2. Product Quality

Good product quality will have high competitiveness.

3. Competitive Price

Competitive prices can be interpreted as the company's ability to produce products at prices that are able to compete in the market.

Product excellence in food can be viewed from the aspects of taste, color aspects and aspects of the manufacturing process. In the MF banana chips product, in terms of taste, the banana chips have a savory taste with different flavor variants, namely salty, sweet, chocolate and cheese flavors, making it attractive and popular with the public. In terms of color, MF's banana chips products have colors according to the flavor variants, so they have their own interest. In terms of the manufacturing process, MF banana chips are different from the general process of frying chips over a gas flame. MF banana chips are fried using firewood, resulting in a savory taste and a unique and distinctive aroma.

Human Resource Management and Innovation

Human resources are human potential that becomes a non-material asset and functions as a driving force in a business or organization. Matutina in (Atmaja and Ratnawati) states that the quality of human resources refers to 1) Knowledge gained through the learning process and experience, 2) Skills to manipulate an object physically, 3) Ability, namely the attitude to perform tasks in a business (Eka Atmaja & Ratnawati, n.d., p. hlm 26). An entrepreneur needs HR management to organize ideas resulting from creativity and innovation in his business. The existence of these ideas must be organized and arranged in a systematic, structured, efficient and sustainable manner to suit business development. Sunarto in his research stated that HR is a driver for innovation and to be successful in it requires planning, supporting and maintaining a culture of innovation (Ading, 2020). To ensure the success of innovation, innovation management is needed which is related to the human resources in a business. Related to HR management, innovation management plays an important role in business growth, such as in Apple and Google companies that have the ability to good manage innovation (Kostrad Diharto, 2022, p. hlm 1).

Innovation management itself is the process of managing innovation in the company in order to produce superior output in competing and sustainable for the company (Lestari, 2019, p. hlm 8). Products and services that have good quality can provide benefits for businesses, so that they get good feedback from the community which makes people or consumers become loyal customers or make repeated purchases. So a business must always pay attention to aspects of customer satisfaction related to the quality of its services. The types of services that can be provided include convenience, speed, ability and hospitality shown through attitudes and direct actions towards consumers. Success in managing innovation, especially in products and services, will lead the company to be more competitive than other companies. The success of innovation management depends on the following two things (Rusdiana, 2014):

1. Technical resources (human, equipment, knowledge and finance)
2. Capabilities (organizational capabilities to manage the resources in point 1)

Based on the above, innovation management in MF banana chips business is as follows:

1. Setting Product and Service Quality Standards

By setting standards and quality of products and services will maintain the strength and quality of products in the MF banana chips business. In setting product and service quality standards by selecting quality raw materials, good and halal processing and services that convince and satisfy customers.

2. Developing Product and Service Quality

MF banana chip business develops product and service quality while still guided by existing product and service quality standards, especially standards from MUI halal certificates. The development of product and service quality is also adapted to consumer desires and changes in consumer lifestyles. For example, by providing order delivery facilities to consumers' places so that consumers do not need to leave their homes or offices.

3. Setting a Competitive Price

The pricing process for MF banana chips is done carefully by considering the capital that has been spent and the prices of competitors. Because if it is too expensive, it will not be able to compete, but if it is too cheap, consumers will be suspicious of the quality of the product.

4. Implementation of the Brotherhood System and Always Maintain Trust in All Activities.

The brotherhood system means that the MF banana chips business establishes good relations with suppliers, competitors and customers. Suppliers who are considered brothers by the business owner provide goods with guaranteed quality, and friendly prices. Customers who are considered brothers and vice versa are loyal to the MF banana chips business. This system of brotherhood can continue with the existence of trust in each other and must be maintained.

CONCLUSION

Creativity and innovation are defined as fundamental in a business, because they can influence buying interest, with a good innovation in accordance with the times and good service and alertness. Besides, innovation management is important for entrepreneurs to manage innovation in the company to produce superior products in competition. A company will continue to earn profits from increasing sales. It is inversely proportional if the product is without innovation and creativity, consumers will switch to competing products which causes a decrease in sales volume. Creativity and innovation as well as excellent service carried out by the MF banana chips business have yielded good results with the increase in turnover obtained. Product innovation can generally be caused by various things, including responses from consumers and environmental conditions.

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