



Post-layoff Entrepreneurial Dynamics: An Analysis of Kofchi's Journey to Success Through Self-Taught Learning

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| ABSTRACT | ARTICLE INFO |
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| <p>This article analyzes the entrepreneurial journey of Kofchi, a fried chicken business that managed to rise after its founder was laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In facing post-layoff challenges, Kofchi managed to turn the crisis into a business opportunity through a self-taught learning approach and utilization of digital platforms for marketing. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the dynamics of entrepreneurship, with data collected through in-depth interviews and observations at Kofchi outlets in Tasikmalaya. The results show that Kofchi's success is driven by product innovation, competitive pricing, and social media-based marketing strategies such as TikTok and Instagram. In addition, good operational management, strict implementation of SOPs, and an integrated financial system are the keys to success in maintaining product consistency and customer satisfaction. Although faced with challenges such as fierce competition and customer complaints, Kofchi managed to overcome these obstacles through proper business strategy management. This story inspires other entrepreneurs to stay focused, innovative, and adaptable in the face of changes in the business environment.</p> <p>© 2021 Kantor Jurnal dan Publikasi UPI</p> | <p>Article History: <i>Received: 1 July 2024</i> <i>Revised: 1 August 2024</i> <i>Accepted: 1 October 2024</i> <i>Available online: 20 October 2024</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: <i>Entrepreneurship,</i> <i>Fried Chicken,</i> <i>Kofchi,</i> <i>Layyofs,</i> <i>Self-taught Learning</i></p> |

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 era is the period that most restricts everyone's mobility. The government imposed Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) regulated in Government Regulation Number 21/2020, which resulted in setbacks in various fields, especially the national economy. These Large-Scale Social Restrictions include school vacations, workplaces, restrictions on religious activities, and restrictions on activities in public places. Some of these provisions are carried out with several conditions, namely that they must still consider the needs of education, work productivity, population worship, and the basic needs of the population. With this regulation, people are prohibited from crowding or traveling to public places to avoid the spread of the corona virus outbreak from spreading further. This also has an impact on workers in factories or a company is temporarily partially closed referring to the Labor Circular Number SE-907/MEN/PHI-PPHI/X/2004 concerning Prevention of Termination of Employment (PHK). However, if the company is experiencing difficulties that affect employment, then layoffs are the last solution after several efforts mentioned in the circular. Because during the covid-19 period production was reduced and buyers were reduced, so that the company began to lose money, which resulted in the decline or bankruptcy of the company, inevitably the company took decisive action against this by mass layoffs at that time to reduce costs incurred by the company.

According to data from the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemnaker RI) in April 2020 there were 2,084,593 formal and informal workers laid off and laid off. Meanwhile, the East Java Provincial Government noted that 7,246 were affected by layoffs due to the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic (Setyorini, B. Y.,

2021). This layoff has resulted in a large number of unemployment mushrooming everywhere. In this situation, there are some people who change things for the better by learning new skills to apply. The increasingly sophisticated digital world is utilized to improve skills in maintaining survival. Entrepreneurship emerges as one of the attractive solutions for those affected by layoffs to create their own job opportunities. Kofchi, a fried chicken business in Tasikmalaya, is a clear example of an individual who managed to turn post-layoff challenges into a successful business opportunity through the use of technology. With a focus on product innovation and digital marketing strategies, Kofchi has been able to attract the attention of the student and lower middle class market segments.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach to explore the dynamics of Kofchi entrepreneurship after layoffs. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in its original context in depth.

2.1 Research Methods

Based on the variables studied, this study uses descriptive qualitative methods. According to Sugiyono (2021), qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism or interpretive used to research on scientific objects where the researcher is the key instrument of his research. Naturally, namely describing the object as it is without being manipulated by the researcher. Qualitative methods are suitable for understanding social phenomena from the perspective of participants. This descriptive has the aim of providing a description, explanation, as well as validation of the phenomenon

under study (Ramdhan, M., 2021). So descriptive qualitative research is research that describes or provides an explanation of the phenomenon under study naturally or as it is without being manipulated by the researcher.

2.2 Respondents

Respondents in this study are Kofchi business owners. The respondents were selected purposively to obtain relevant and in-depth information about business strategies and self-taught learning applied by Kofchi business owners.

2.3 Place and Time of Research

The research was conducted at the Kofchi outlet located on Jalan Cilolohan No.3 (beside SDN Cilolohan), Tasikmalaya City. The research time took place during September to October 2024.

2.4. Data Type

The data collection method used is primary data, which is taking data directly through in-depth observation, interviews, and documentation with Kofchi business owners.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kofchi is a culinary business that was founded with self-taught capital by an entrepreneur who has an educational background in S1 Industrial Engineering from a private university in Bandung. The main capital of self-taught is the determination and willpower that is diligent and hard in trying to find the starting point of what is to be done to determine the steps to be taken in the business (Juliani, 2020). Capitalizing on self-taught, the owner of Kofchi founded this culinary business after working as an engineer for seven years and he was laid off during the COVID-19 pandemic so he decided to return to his hometown in Tasikmalaya. Under these conditions, the Kofchi owner tried to start a culinary

business from scratch without any previous relevant experience in this food field. In 2020, he founded Kofchi, a fried chicken business with a touch of Korean sauce inspired by the culinary trends that were popular at the time. Thanks to his creativity and self-taught spirit, he learned various cooking techniques through platforms like YouTube and managed to grow his business despite starting with modest capital.

Kofchi's main concept focuses on providing chicken-based food with three main variations: fried chicken, burgers, and ramen. Currently, Kofchi focuses more on the fried chicken menu due to limited resources. The strategic location near Siliwangi University allows Kofchi to target students and the lower middle class. The all-round pricing of 10,000 rupiah at the branch near Unsil has attracted students, making Kofchi the top choice in that market segment. In addition, in terms of operational management, the owner of Kofchi implements a well-structured system. Operational management itself is seen as a comprehensive and optimal management method that pays attention to labor, goods such as machinery, raw materials, equipment, or products that can be made into a product or service that can be sold (Faiq, et al., 2021). Monthly expenses including raw materials, employee salaries, and shop rental are managed efficiently. Kofchi's financial system is also well integrated through daily recording done by employees, both for offline and online sales. In terms of finance, the owner utilizes technology such as cash registers and digital apps to accurately track daily turnover and expenses. This helps him manage his finances carefully, especially in the early days of the business. In addition, Kofchi also has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to maintain the quality of food taste, including special training for employees in

frying chicken according to predetermined temperature and time standards. This is supported by the statement put forward by Hongdiyanto, et al. (2024) which states that a good SOP helps ensure that every operational step is carried out consistently and in accordance with predetermined standards, which is important in the food and beverage industry where product quality is very important to maintain customer satisfaction, and can ensure that every product produced has the same quality.

In terms of marketing, the owner relies on social media such as TikTok and Instagram. TikTok has proven to be the most effective platform, especially with promotional strategies that target specific market segments, such as young women around Tasikmalaya. The owner also manages TikTok content herself, with occasional use of paid promotions such as TikTok ads and endorsements from influencers. Nevertheless, customer complaints persisted, especially in the early days of the business when Adit was still learning about the technicalities of managing ingredients and operations. However, through employee training and strict implementation of SOPs, these complaints have decreased and the quality of service continues to improve.

Over time, Kofchi has grown by opening two branches in the Cilolohan and Unsil areas, and partnering with other parties in Bantar Sari. The partnership system applied by the owner of Kofchi allows partners to buy business packages without having to pay royalties, where partners are required to buy the main raw materials from Kofchi. This approach makes Kofchi's expansion easier to do without having to go through a complex franchise business model. In day-to-day operations, the owner also manages three permanent employees and several part-

time employees to ensure smooth operations at various branches.

The development of the Kofchi business is also inseparable from the challenges faced. In the world of culinary business, challenges are inevitable, especially for small and medium enterprises. In running its culinary business, Kofchi often faces various challenges commonly encountered by small and medium enterprises. The main challenge faced is the presence of competitors which causes intense competition with various brands that have similar businesses such as Hayam, Lazatto, and Albaik. Malihah (2024) mentioned that competition is inevitable in a business or venture. Every business actor will certainly always try to win the competition and dominate the market (Prioctavia, 2020). In addition, Kofchi also faces challenges in daily operations, including customer complaint management and efforts to maintain consistent product quality. However, in facing these challenges, the owner of Kofchi has several ways/strategies to deal with them. One of the ways/strategies used to deal with competitors as a challenge in the business is to set prices that are slightly lower than competitors, but still maintain profit margins. Another strategy/strategy used by Kofchi is to offer larger portions and product differentiation, namely holding product variants that do not exist in competitors, such as Kofchi itself has a characteristic for its consumers, namely the presence of Korean sauces that characterize them which are not owned by competitors. With this strategy, Kofchi has succeeded in creating added value for consumers, which can be a key factor in maintaining its target market.

In addition to the challenges faced, Kofchi also has several opportunities for business development. Opportunity itself is a favorable situation in the company's

external environment (Sulistiani, 2014). One of the opportunities for Kofchi's own business development is related to plans to expand branches. However, the plan is still under consideration by the owner because given the current situation there is an economic slowdown that affects consumer purchasing power so that even if it will increase branches it will be more focused on reducing risk through opening small outlets first which are more affordable and easy to manage. However, in addition to the plan to open new branches considered by the owner, in the near future based on the owner's narrative that he plans to expand the existing outlet at Unsil to make it even bigger and later recruitment of new employees is also planned along with this expansion, where the placement will be prioritized at the second outlet that will be enlarged.

Based on the explanation above, the story of the owner of Kofchi shows how an entrepreneur can achieve success through creativity, perseverance, and adaptability. Despite starting from scratch with no background in the culinary world, the owner was able to develop his business into one of the most popular fried chicken businesses in Tasikmalaya. In addition, the story of the owner of Kofchi can be an inspiration for anyone who has a desire in the business field, especially the culinary business. Because according to him, anyone who wants to open a business, especially in the culinary field, the most important capital is willingness because skills such as cooking or management can be honed over time. However, the owner emphasized that when you want to open a business in the culinary field, the most important thing is to focus on developing skills in the culinary field and focus on customer satisfaction, which must be customer oriented (based on customer needs), and must see the target and market opportunities. As an owner, you

must also be able to invite employees to build a solid team by adjusting employee workloads and creating a comfortable work environment, as well as good communication as the key to maintaining their loyalty. As a reflection of the experience of running a business, advice is given to budding entrepreneurs to stay focused on one business, continue to innovate, and be patient in undergoing a challenging business process, because success in business takes a long time and perseverance.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that entrepreneurship can be an effective solution for individuals affected by layoffs, as demonstrated by the case of Kofchi. With self-taught capital, the owner of Kofchi successfully started and developed a fried chicken culinary business in Tasikmalaya, turning crisis into opportunity through the use of technology and digital marketing strategies. Kofchi's success cannot be separated from the willingness to learn independently, product innovation, implementation of good operational management, and the use of social media platforms to expand market reach. Despite facing challenges such as intense business competition and customer complaint management, competitive pricing strategies, product differentiation, and focus on service quality have proven effective in sustaining business growth.

Kofchi's story emphasizes the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and innovation in entrepreneurship, especially in the midst of uncertain conditions such as the pandemic. In addition, entrepreneurs need to focus on skill development and understanding market needs to create sustainable added value. Kofchi also serves as an example

that success in entrepreneurship requires not only technical skills, but also effective management and a willingness to learn.

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