

Bringing Food Culture from Archipelagic Area to Land-Based area: Case of a Restaurant in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

Sri Fatimah^{1,*}, Hepi Hapsari², Sulistyodewi Nur Wiyono³, Eka Purna Yudha⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Department of Socio-Economics & Agribusiness, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Padjadjaran, West Java, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: sri.fatimah@unpad.ac.id

Received : May, 28 2024

Accepted: June, 2 2024

Available online: June, 10 2024

Abstract. *The restaurant industry in the city of Bandung is experiencing rapid growth, with a variety of culinary offerings, some are Nusantara archipelagic cuisine that mainly provide archipelagic food types and culture contexts. This paper aims at analyzing the lessons learned brought by food businessman with the background of experiencing most of Indonesian areas or also well-known called Nusantara archipelagic areas' cuisines to open food business in Bandung, a land-based city in West Java. The approach used is qualitative method with an in-depth interview and case study approach for a restaurant located in a mall in Bandung. The research results show that the management of a restaurant providing Nusantara archipelagic-based cuisines business in Bandung in introducing the cuisines has considered several important aspects, namely location selection, restaurant design and concept, human resource management, marketing strategy, and financial management. Restaurant owners face challenges related to introducing various Nusantara Archipelagic food taste and adaptability, competition with local food, fluctuations in raw material prices, supply freshness and seasonality, and changes in consumer preferences, resilience and creativity, customer engagement and communication. However, they implement various strategies to maintain and develop their business, such as menu differentiation, the use of digital media, and innovation in the processing of typical Nusantara Archipelagic cuisine. This paper sheds light on knowledge transfer dynamics in archipelagic country like Indonesia, emphasizing practical strategies for enhancing food business/restaurant management across diverse settings.*

Keywords: *Food Culture, Eastern Indonesia, Land-based Restaurant, Sustainability*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic nation, is blessed with an exceptionally diverse and rich culinary heritage. From the western to the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago, they present a distinct and captivating gastronomic experience, which has been shaped by their unique cultural influences and the abundance of natural resources in the region (Nugroho et al., 2021). The eastern regions of the Indonesian the most archipelagic areas in Indonesia offer the range of the spicy and aromatic dishes of Maluku to the seafood-centric cuisine of Sulawesi, have developed vibrant

and distinctive food cultures. These culinary traditions reflect the geographical and ethnic diversity of these archipelagic areas, showcasing the unique influences and abundant natural resources that have shaped the local gastronomic landscape (Sutiadiningsih et al., 2023).

This study examines the challenges and opportunities encountered by Nusantara Archipelagic restaurant as it operates in urban, land-based environments, using a case study of a restaurant located in Bandung, West Java. As the fourth-largest city in Indonesia, Bandung provides a unique context for these establishments, where they must navigate the preferences and expectations of a

predominantly land-based customer base while striving to preserve the flavors and traditions of their archipelagic culinary heritage.

Exploring the dynamics of knowledge transfer and adaptation in the context of food culture exchange between archipelagic and land-based regions holds considerable value and importance. This understanding can provide valuable insights into how culinary traditions and knowledge are shared, adapted, and preserved as they move across different geographical and cultural boundaries (Chou et al., 2020). This paper contributes to the understanding of effective business strategies for Nusantara Archipelagic restaurants operating in urban environments. The insights gained from this study can potentially inform and guide similar ventures, while also promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the rich culinary heritage originating from Indonesia's diverse archipelagic regions (Soeroso & Susilo, 2014).

By examining the case study of the Bandung-based restaurant, this paper sheds light on the innovative approaches and strategies employed by Nusantara archipelagic-based restaurateurs to bridge the gap between their regional cuisine and the tastes and preferences of land-based urban consumers. The findings of this study may serve as a valuable reference for other entrepreneurs and culinary enthusiasts seeking to showcase the diversity and depth of Indonesia's food culture beyond the confines of its archipelagic regions, helping to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the country's rich gastronomic heritage (Nugroho et al., 2021).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews and a case study to explore the research topic. The research focuses on a single Nusantara archipelagic-based restaurant located within a mall in Bandung. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the restaurant's owner and representative employees. The observation and interview were conducted in some research and observation visits during 2 months in March-April 2024 period.

The interview guide explored various aspects of the restaurant's operations, including its location selection and customer base, human resource management such as recruitment and training, the adaptation of food tastes to cater to local preferences, competition with established local cuisines, the supply chain for raw materials, considerations around seasonality and freshness, as well as customer engagement and communication strategies. The interview data was then analyzed thematically, identifying recurring patterns and key insights that shed light on the challenges faced by the

restaurant and the strategies it employed to adapt to the land-based urban environment (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Nusantara archipelagic-based restaurant encountered a distinct set of challenges in establishing its presence and appeal within the urban, land-based environment of Bandung. As a culinary ambassador for the rich and diverse gastronomic traditions of the Nusantara Archipelagic archipelago, the restaurant had to navigate a complex landscape of strategic considerations to captivate a new customer base, which was predominantly accustomed to land-based cuisine and preferences (Choi et al., 2022).

From the very beginning of its establishment in 2017, the process of selecting the restaurant's location was a crucial consideration. The restaurant's management recognized the importance of situating the establishment within a high-traffic area that could effectively expose their culinary offerings to a broad and diverse demographic of potential customers (Jang & Eves, 2019). By choosing a prominent mall setting, the restaurant's management strategically positioned the establishment to pique the curiosity of casual mall-goers and introduce them to the vibrant flavors and culinary traditions of Eastern Indonesia. An estimated 50 thousands of potential buyer are inhibited nearby the mall. That is considered prospective by the owner to select the location. By situating the establishment in a prominent mall, the restaurant aims to leverage high foot traffic and exposure to a diverse customer base, thereby piquing their curiosity and presenting an opportunity to introduce them to the rich flavors and cultural heritage of Nusantara archipelagic cuisine (see Wondirad et al., 2021). This strategic placement allows the restaurant to proactively engage with a new demographic, enticing them to explore the vibrant flavors and rich cultural heritage of Nusantara archipelagic-based cuisine.

In addition to the strategic selection of the physical location, the restaurant also had to carefully curate its human resources to ensure a harmonious blending of regional expertise and local market knowledge. The team of chefs brought an authentic mastery of traditional cooking techniques and flavor profiles, while the local staff provided invaluable insights into the preferences and dining habits of the Bandung community. This integration of regional culinary knowledge and local market understanding was crucial in the restaurant's efforts to captivate and cater to its target customer base (Şahin Perçin et al., 2021). This hybridized approach, combining the expertise of Nusantara Archipelagic culinary professionals and the local market knowledge of the

Bandung-based staff, allowed the restaurant to strike a balance. It enabled the restaurant to maintain the integrity and authenticity of its regional cuisines while also adapting to cater to the sensibilities and preferences of the local customer base.

Besides the above two issues, there are several key areas that the restaurant management has carefully considered as it works to establish and expands its presence within the Bandung market. In the interview some points of areas of strategic focus of the management include:

1. Human Resource Management

The restaurant keep update to the knowledge of all Nusantara food and cuisine to deep expertise in authentic cooking techniques and flavor profiles for the food from all Nusantara archipelagic places, while keeping the preferences and dining habits of the Bandung people that mainly Sundanese tribe. This hybridized approach allowed the restaurant to maintain the integrity of its regional cuisines while also catering to the sensibilities of the local customer base. Overall comprehensive training programs were implemented to ensure consistency in food preparation, service quality, and cultural knowledge among all staff members.

2. Food Taste Adaptation and Competition

The restaurant faced the challenge of adapting the bold and complex flavors of Nusantara archipelagic-based cuisine to local palates that were more accustomed to the milder Sundanese culinary traditions. To address this, they offered a diverse menu featuring a variety of dishes with varying spice levels, including milder versions of traditional recipes. The restaurant also emphasized the unique ingredients, cooking methods, and cultural significance of its Nusantara archipelagic fare, positioning it as a distinct and compelling alternative to the ubiquitous local cuisine. This strategic approach aimed to introduce and familiarize the local customer base with the vibrant flavors and culinary heritage of the Nusantara archipelagic. This has been considered successfully by the owner as proven by continues order of the food either on site eating or via delivery.

3. Raw Material Supply Chain, Seasonality, and Freshness.

To maintain the authenticity and quality of its ingredients, the restaurant established a reliable supply chain for key Nusantara archipelagic product, proteins, and spices.

It implemented strategies to ensure freshness, such as airfreight transportation and specialized storage facilities. The menu was carefully curated to accommodate seasonal variations in ingredient availability, allowing the restaurant to continue offering its signature dishes throughout the year. This commitment to sourcing and preserving the freshness of authentic regional ingredients was crucial in upholding the integrity and appeal of the Nusantara Archipelagic cuisine.

4. Customer Engagement and Communication.

The restaurant actively engaged with its customers through various channels, including social media, promotional events, and loyalty programs. It provides detailed information about Nusantara Archipelagic cuisine, its rich cultural heritage, and the unique stories behind the dishes. The staff was trained to be knowledgeable ambassadors of the restaurant's culinary traditions, fostering a welcoming and educational dining experience that encouraged customers to explore and appreciate the diverse flavors of the Nusantara archipelagic-based restaurant. This comprehensive approach to customer engagement and communication aimed to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation for the restaurant's regional cuisine among its patrons.

The restaurant's success in Bandung hinges on its ability to strategically navigate the various factors at play in this new market. The management realized now that for the next business expansion that will be soon decided some lessons are important to note. Introducing the unique culinary traditions of all Nusantara part requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the distinct expectations and preferences of the local dining landscape. The owner state that it will find a new location for expansion that situating the restaurant themselves within a high-traffic, urban setting like a prominent mall, therefore restaurant can maximize exposure to a diverse customer base and pique the curiosity of casual passersby. This strategic placement allows the restaurant to proactively engage with a new demographic, enticing them to explore the vibrant flavors and rich cultural heritage of Nusantara archipelagic-based cuisine as have been identified in the current restaurant operation.

Equally critical is the restaurant's management on human resources that are dynamic and need to be managed specifically in the food and cuisine section.

The most critical part is to ensure the chef and its staffs able to provide the food accordingly. A hybrid team comprising both Nusantara Archipelagic culinary experts and local staff will be arranged to strike balance of regional authenticity and market-specific insight. This combination is believed by the owner will be able to maintain the integrity of its traditional dishes while also catering to the preferences of the Bandung community. A continues and comprehensive training programs will be implemented so that they will be empowered to serve as knowledgeable ambassadors, fostering a welcoming and educational dining experience that encourages customers to discover and appreciate the diverse culinary traditions of the Nusantara archipelagic-based cuisines (see Chou et al., 2020).

Beyond location and personnel, the restaurant has plan to better address the challenges of adapting its bold, complex flavors to local palates, managing supply chain logistics, and engaging customers through effective communication channels. The experience has proved that the restaurant able to offer a diverse menu with varying spice levels, including milder versions of traditional recipes. By doing this the restaurant can introduce its Nusantara archipelagic cuisine to customers accustomed to the milder Sundanese culinary traditions. Additionally, the restaurant's commitment to maintaining a reliable supply chain and ensuring the freshness of its authentic regional ingredients is considered crucial by the owner in upholding the integrity and appeal of its offerings. To do so the management will be more aware on the buying of the food ingredients and spices with a more standardized requirement to the suppliers.

Lastly, the restaurant's active engagement with customers through various ways. It uses most popular social media, promotional events, staff training, aims to foster a welcoming, educational dining experience. The restaurant encourages exploration and appreciation of the diverse flavors and cultural heritage of the Nusantara archipelagic through an active engagement of customer in the food menu suggestion. Regularly the management provide a topical discussion in the social media that will be expanded in its type, frequency and engagement that hopefully able to support the business expansion in the future.

By strategically navigating these multifaceted considerations, the Nusantara Archipelagic restaurant can successfully introduce its unique culinary traditions and compete effectively within the Bandung dining landscape. This success inspired the management to expand the business in other places starting firstly in Bandung and nearby. to the broader areas in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Nusantara archipelagic-based restaurant in Bandung successfully navigated the challenges of introducing its unique culinary traditions to a new market. By strategically selecting a prominent location within a high-traffic mall, employing a local staffs that have specific skill to provide Nusantara archipelagic culinary, adapting its menu to accommodate local palate preferences, managing its supply chain effectively to ensure ingredient freshness and authenticity, and actively engaging with customers through various communication channels, the restaurant was able to establish a strong presence and compete effectively within the Bandung dining landscape. It has a business expansion plan considering the strategic factors as lessons learned.

This case study provides valuable insights for other entrepreneurs and culinary enthusiasts seeking to introduce diverse culinary traditions to new audiences. It highlights the importance of strategic planning, cultural sensitivity, and effective communication in fostering a successful and sustainable business model when expanding into new markets. The restaurant's multifaceted approach to navigating the distinct expectations and preferences of the Bandung dining scene serves as a blueprint for others seeking to share the rich flavors and cultural heritage of regional cuisines with new customer bases.

REFERENCE

- Assyakurrohim, D., Ikhrum, D., Sirodj, R. A., & Afgani, M. W. (2022). Metode Studi Kasus dalam Penelitian Kualitatif. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Dan Komputer*, 3(01), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.47709/jpsk.v3i01.1951>
- Choi, H., Joung, H. W., Choi, E. K., & Kim, H. S. (2022). Understanding vegetarian customers: the effects of restaurant attributes on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 25(3), 353–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2021.1948296>
- Chou, S. F., Horng, J. S., Liu, C. H., Huang, Y. C., & Zhang, S. N. (2020). The critical criteria for innovation entrepreneurship of restaurants: Considering the interrelationship effect of human capital and competitive strategy a case study in Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 42(August 2019), 222–234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.01.006>
- Jang, S., & Eves, A. (2019). Tourism and Tourism At Home: A Qualitative Study of Relationships between Tourism and Ethnic Restaurants. *Journal of Tourism and*

- Hospitality Management*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.15640/jthm.v7n1a17>
- Nugroho, S. P., Nur Islami, G. M. E., & Setiaji, Y. (2021). *Tourists' Motivation in Visiting nDalem Prince Joyokusuman (Gadri Resto) Yogyakarta as a Gastronomy Tourism Destination*. *Ntf* 2019, 37–42.
<https://doi.org/10.5220/0009319800370042>
- Şahin Perçin, N., Eren, D., & Sezgin, A. (2021). The Effects of Local Food Consumption Motivations on Customer Satisfaction: A Research on Turkish Food. *Journal of Social Research and Behavioral Sciences*, 7(13), 400–423.
<https://doi.org/10.52096/jsrbs.6.1.7.13.20>
- Soeroso, A., & Susilo, Y. S. (2014). Traditional Indonesian Gastronomy As a Cultural Tourism Attraction. *Journal of Applied Economics in Developing Countries*, 1(1), 45–49.
- Sutiadiningsih, A., Purwidiani, N., Dewi, I. H. P., Hamdani, A. T., & Tho Le, H. (2023). Gastronomic Experience As a Motivation for Tourists To Choose Tourist Destinations in Indonesia and Vietnam. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 47(2), 424–431.
<https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.47208-1040>
- Wondirad, A., Kebete, Y., & Li, Y. (2021). Culinary tourism as a driver of regional economic development and socio-cultural revitalization: Evidence from Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 19 (February 2020), 100482.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100482>