

ANALYSIS OF KEY RESOURCES IN SUPPORTING OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY AT MSME DIMSUM KEJU LUMER GORENG MEDAN

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the role of Key Resources in supporting operational performance and business sustainability in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) within the culinary sector. This research uses a qualitative approach with a single case study design conducted at MSME Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with business owners and operational managers, direct observation of production activities, internal document analysis, and examination of online customer reviews. Findings show that business sustainability is driven by the integration of intellectual resources in the form of secret cheese recipes, physical resources related to efficient frying equipment, and human resources with specialized technical skill. This synergy produces a unique product with a crispy texture on the outside and a consistently melting cheese filling, which is difficult for competitors to imitate. This study concludes that effective key resource management is a critical foundation for achieving competitive advantage and long-term sustainability in the culinary MSME sector.*

Keywords: *Key Resources, Business Sustainability, Culinary MSMEs.*

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a very strategic role in the national economic structure, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. MSMEs not only serve as a primary provider of employment but also as an engine for local economic growth that is resilient to global crises. Among the various existing sectors, the culinary industry is one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing. Medan City, as one of the largest metropolitan cities in Indonesia, is known as a culinary paradise with a very high level of competition. In this highly competitive environment, business actors are required not only to sell products but also to be able to create unique value propositions that are difficult for competitors to imitate in order to maintain the continuity of their business operations (Iskandar et al., 2025).

A phenomenon that often occurs in the field shows that many culinary MSMEs are able to emerge with viral products but fail to survive in the long term. This failure is often not caused by a lack of market demand, but rather the inability of business actors to manage the internal foundations of their business. One of the fundamental factors that determine the sustainability of a business is the ability of management to identify, manage, and optimize "Key Resources" effectively. In a strategic management perspective, the success of a business model depends heavily on the strategic assets owned by the company to create value for consumers (Triha & Putri, 2025).

In the context of the Business Model Canvas (BMC) theory, Key Resources refer to the most crucial assets needed for a business model to function well. These resources include physical, intellectual, human, and financial aspects. Without proper management of key resources, key activities cannot be carried out, and value propositions will not reach the hands of customers. Unfortunately, previous studies on MSMEs have often only focused on external aspects such as digital marketing strategies, financial management, or strategic location selection. There is still a literature gap where attention given to internal aspects—especially how the integration between intellectual resources (such as secret recipes) and operations contributes to product differentiation—is still very limited (Fajarwati et al., 2025).

MSME "Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan" becomes an interesting research subject because it represents a unique case study where product innovation becomes the main driver of consumer attraction. Unlike traditional dimsum in general, this product offers a combination of fried dimsum texture with a melted cheese filling that provides a distinctive sensory experience for consumers. This product's uniqueness was not born by chance, but is the result of the orchestration of various key resources, ranging from recipes (intellectual), chef skills (human), to production equipment (physical) (Caswito et al., 2024).

This research is important to answer a fundamental question: how can integrated key resource management support daily operations while ensuring business sustainability in a saturated market?. This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of Key Resources (Mukataron et al., 2022) in creating sustainable competitive advantages in culinary MSMEs. The results of this study are expected to provide a theoretical contribution regarding the application of the Resource-Based View to micro-scale businesses, as well as provide practical guidance for other MSME actors in managing their strategic assets (Wijayanti & Hidayat, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Key Resources) Definition: According to Osterwalder and Pigneur, Key Resources are defined as the most important assets needed by an organization for its business model to work. These are the strategic "raw materials" owned or controlled by the company to run its business activities.

Function: Functionally, Key Resources serve as the main driver in the building blocks of the business model²⁸. Without these resources, a company cannot create and offer a Value Proposition, reach Target Markets (Customer Segments), fail to maintain Customer Relationships, and ultimately be unable to generate Revenue Streams (Victor et al., 2024).

Role: The role of Key Resources is vital because it determines the technical and strategic capabilities of the company. These resources play a role in four main categories:

1. Physical: Acts as infrastructure (such as machines, buildings, and POS systems) that supports production efficiency.
2. Intellectual: Acts as a protector of business uniqueness (such as brands, patents, and secret recipes) that are difficult for competitors to adopt.
3. Human: Acts as operational executors and a source of creativity, especially in industries that rely on craftsmanship.
4. Financial: Acts as a guarantor of liquidity and operational funding (Hambali, 2021).

(Resource-Based View-RBV Theory) Definition: RBV is a strategic management theoretical framework that views the company as a collection of resources and capabilities. This theory defines that company performance is determined more by the internal characteristics of its resources than by external industry factors (Slamet et al., 2016).

Function: The main function of RBV is as an analytical tool to identify which resources have strategic potential. RBV functions to select resources based on the VRIN framework (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable).

Role: In the context of business competition, RBV plays a central role in the creation of Sustainable Competitive Advantage. For culinary MSMEs, RBV explains why one stall can survive for decades while others close, namely because of the role of unique assets (such as legacy recipes or specific chef skills) that cannot be duplicated by competitors (Lawitani et al., 2024).

(Business Sustainability) Definition: Defined as the company's capacity to maintain its operational continuity in the long term while remaining relevant to market changes and minimizing the risk of failure. At the MSME level, this is often interpreted as economic resilience (Triha & Putri, 2025).

Function: The function of the sustainability concept is to maintain a balance between short-term efficiency (current profit) and long-term growth. It serves as an indicator of organizational health.

Role: Sustainability acts as the ultimate goal of resource integration. Effective management of physical, intellectual, and human Key Resources plays a key role in ensuring this sustainability. If resources are managed well, they help build customer loyalty and operational stability, which are key foundations for small businesses to survive in a crowded and competitive market. (Slamet et al., 2016)

METHODS

This study uses a Qualitative Research Design with a Single Case Study Approach. The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain a deep and contextual understanding of how key resources are managed and utilized to support operational activities and business sustainability. The single case study design allows researchers to explore phenomena holistically in a real-life context.

This research was conducted at MSME Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with business owners and operational managers⁵¹. Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis to gain insight into resource management strategies, operational processes, and sustainability practices.

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis. The data collected systematically was

reduced, categorized, and interpreted to identify patterns related to intellectual, physical, and human resources, as well as their role in supporting operational effectiveness and long-term business sustainability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings show that the sustainability of Dimsum Goreng Keju Lumer Medan is supported by the integration of several key resources that function synergistically.

Intellectual Resources: Secret Recipes and Brand Identity. The most critical intellectual resource identified is the secret formula for the cheese filling. Interview results show that this formula ensures the cheese remains melted when served and maintains its texture even when taken home. This consistency strengthens brand identity and builds customer trust, because consumers associate this product with an authentic 'melting cheese' experience in Medan. Protection of this recipe is considered a strategic priority by management.

Physical Resources: Operational Efficiency. The main physical resources consist of specialized frying equipment capable of controlling temperature with precision. According to the operational manager, this equipment produces dimsum with optimal crispiness while minimizing excess oil absorption. An efficient kitchen layout and the use of appropriate equipment help accelerate service during rush hours, essentially for customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Human Resources: Specialized Skills. Human resources are managed through strict Standard Operating Procedures and skills-based training. The technical skills of the chef are very important in the folding process to prevent filling leakage and achieve the ideal level of frying. Continuous supervision and training ensure product consistency, which is crucial for maintaining brand reputation.

Product Advantages and Business Sustainability The integration of intellectual, physical, and human resources produces a unique product characterized by a blend of crispy texture and melting cheese with a savory taste. This innovation attracts a wider market segment, including young consumers who like modern fusion food. Competitive advantage lies not only in the product itself but also in the consistent delivery of quality as promised, making this business model difficult to imitate.

This study differs from previous research because it emphasizes the role of intangible knowledge-based assets combined with operational capabilities as the main drivers of sustainability, rather than focusing solely on marketing or financial factors.

Images of Dimsum Goreng Lumer products from Medan city are as follows:



Picture 1. Medan's “Dimsum Goreng Lumer” Product.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, this study concludes that Key Resource management plays a fundamental role in determining operational success and ensuring business sustainability at MSME Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan. The competitive advantage of this business is the result of the synergistic integration of three main resource elements. First, intellectual resources in the form of secret cheese filling recipes and dim sum dough processing techniques are the most valuable intangible assets due to their inimitable nature by competitors. Second, skilled and disciplined human resources in following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) ensure that the taste and quality of the products remain consistent every day. Third, support from physical resources in the form of efficient production equipment enables meeting fluctuating market demand without compromising service speed.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective in the context of micro enterprises. It is proven that SMEs that are able to identify and optimize their internal assets—especially assets that meet the VRIN criteria (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable)—have stronger economic resilience compared to businesses that only focus on price wars. In the case of Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan, 'authentic taste' and 'product quality' serve as the main defense against the intense culinary industry competition in Medan, thereby creating customer loyalty that supports long-term revenue sustainability.

Managerial Implications:

- Culinary MSME actors should not only focus on external marketing but must invest in strengthening the internal foundation⁷⁴.
- Business owners are advised to document knowledge assets (standardizing recipes), increase

HR capacity through training, and perform routine physical asset maintenance⁷⁵.

- Specifically for Dimsum Keju Lumer Goreng Medan, it is recommended to consider Intellectual Property (IP) protection for their brand or unique recipes in the future.

This study has limitations because it uses a single case study approach, so the generalization of the results may be limited to certain cultural and local market contexts. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the research subjects by comparing several similar culinary SMEs or using quantitative methods to statistically measure the direct impact of each Key Resource element on business profitability performance.

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