

The Effect of Operational Efficiency on Café Performance

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Abstract: This study focuses on the problem of operational efficiency which is often an obstacle in improving café performance, especially in Café Hitado and Café Distro in Serdang Bedagai. Suboptimal operational efficiency often hinders the café's ability to reduce costs, increase productivity, and maintain competitiveness amidst tight industry competition. This study aims to analyze the effect of operational efficiency on café performance through various aspects such as stock management, service, and human resource management. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with management and staff, and documentation of operational records and sales reports. Data analysis was carried out through the process of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions to identify patterns and relationships between operational efficiency and café performance. The results of the study show that operational efficiency in Café Hitado and Café Distro improves customer service and satisfaction. Café Hitado prioritizes the preparation of interactive materials and events, while Café Distro focuses on personal communication and friendliness. This strategy supports customer loyalty, positive reputation, and competitive business performance in a dynamic market.

Keywords: Cafe Performance, Operational Efficiency, Service and Human Resource Management, Stock Management

A. Introduction

In the increasingly competitive cafe industry, entrepreneurs are required to not only serve quality products, but also to implement operational efficiency to improve business performance. Cafes are one of the business segments that are experiencing rapid growth in Indonesia, with the number of cafes continuing to increase, reaching more than 100,000 units throughout the archipelago by 2023 (Lating & Zulfikar, 2023). However, even though demand for cafes continues to grow, many entrepreneurs still face challenges in managing operational costs and maximizing profits. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on the effect of operational efficiency on performance in cafes, to provide insight for entrepreneurs in increasing their competitiveness (Alfatiha & Budiarmo, 2020).

Operational efficiency covers various aspects, such as stock management, speed of serving, and quality of service (Raisida Salwa, 2023). Previous studies have shown that good operational efficiency can significantly affect company performance. According to research from (Sihombing et al., 2022), operational efficiency has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn improves business performance. In addition, research by (Yusuff, 2022) found that better performance can be achieved through the implementation of effective operational efficiency practices, including in resource management and cost control. In addition, (Simatupang, 2022) also emphasized the importance of efficient raw material management to reduce waste and increase profitability.

The selection of Café Hitado as the object of research is based on the unique concept offered by this café, namely a combination of café experience with local cultural elements. Café Hitado is known to be able to combine traditional and modern atmospheres harmoniously, creating an experience that is different from other cafes in Serdang Bedagai. Visitors can enjoy coffee while feeling the nuances of local culture reflected in the decoration, menu, and atmosphere of the café, making it a unique attraction. This concept is not only attractive to coffee lovers, but also to those looking for a unique and authentic experience that emphasizes local cultural values. This uniqueness is what makes Café Hitado have strong competitiveness and is relevant to be studied in the context of the development of the culinary industry in Serdang Bedagai.

On the other hand, Café Distro offers a different approach by emphasizing modern and contemporary concepts, often with an eco-friendly touch. This café is designed to attract a younger customer group, especially those who care about environmental issues and sustainability (Aulia & Nasution, 2023). With a stylish interior and the use of eco-friendly materials, Café Distro creates a comfortable and modern atmosphere. This focus on sustainability and environmental themes is the main attraction that sets it apart from other cafés, while reflecting the global trend in the café industry that is increasingly emphasizing eco-friendly concepts. With different target markets and unique business strategies, choosing Café Distro as a research object will provide interesting insights into how modern and sustainable concepts can influence consumer preferences in Serdang Bedagai. Based on this analysis, this study examines the Influence of Operations on Performance at Café Hitado and Café Distro in Serdang Bedagai.

Cafe Operations

Efficient and well-organized cafe operations can significantly increase business growth. When all aspects of operations, from staff management, serving, to stock management run smoothly, the customer experience will also be more positive. Fast service, a comfortable atmosphere, and quality products will increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, efficient operations reduce wasted time and costs,

which ultimately increases profit margins. With optimal operations, cafes can retain customers, attract new customers, and expand their business scale sustainably (Rismaeka & Susanto, 2021).

The performance of a cafe with optimal business management certainly plays a major role in increasing business growth (Anthony et al., 2019). When a cafe is able to run operations with high efficiency, from resource management, customer service, to product quality, this will create a satisfying experience for customers (Hasan & Hamid, 2021).

Revenue Theory states that revenue is the gross inflow of economic benefits arising from the ordinary activities of a company during a given period, resulting in an increase in equity, except for those relating to contributions from equity owners. In this context, revenue or sales results are calculated based on net sales transactions excluding VAT and shipping reimbursement (Warren et al., 2014). Meanwhile, Cost Theory emphasizes the importance of cost control in company operations to achieve efficiency and profitability. The costs incurred must be managed in such a way as not to reduce the company's profit margin (Supratman et al., 2022).

The concept of operational efficiency relates to how a business can optimize the use of existing resources be it labor, raw materials, or time to produce maximum output at minimal cost. According to this efficiency involves managing stock, production, distribution, and various processes that support daily operations. When a business is able to run its operations efficiently, the company will be able to reduce waste, reduce production costs, and speed up the completion time of products or services. According to (Fawzy et al., 2023), operational effectiveness ensures that the business focuses not only on efficiency, but also on achieving the desired business goals. Effectiveness includes how well the company can meet customer needs and expectations, and the extent to which the output produced is in accordance with established quality standards. The optimal combination of operational efficiency and effectiveness allows businesses to grow sustainably, improve their reputation in the eyes of customers, and strengthen their position in the market. When companies operate efficiently and effectively, business growth is driven not only by cost reductions but also by increased customer satisfaction, which ultimately increases long-term revenue and profits (Santosa & Ratnasari, 2022).

Cafe Performance

Cafe performance can be measured through several key indicators such as customer satisfaction levels, performance, customer loyalty, and cafe reputation. Customer satisfaction levels are one of the key factors influencing the success of a cafe business. According to (Tawakkal et al., 2021) when customers are satisfied with the service, quality of food and drinks, and a comfortable atmosphere, they tend to return and recommend the cafe to others. Meanwhile, Nadya Venska Gunawan., et al (2003)

defines this increase in customer satisfaction as directly proportional to increased income, because satisfied customers will make more purchases and spend more time in the cafe, which ultimately increases sales volume.

In addition, customer loyalty and café reputation also play a major role in supporting business growth. Customer loyalty creates a stable and repeat customer base, which can help cafés maintain revenue despite increasingly fierce competition. A good café reputation, both through word of mouth and online reviews, can also attract new customers, ultimately expanding market share. By maintaining café performance in these aspects, business growth can be sustainable, creating long-term relationships with customers, and ensuring the success of the café in the longer term (Arif & Ekasari, 2021).

Effective cafe operations include several important aspects such as service quality, speed of serving food and drinks, cafe cleanliness, efficiency of raw material stock management, and human resource (HR) management. According to (Baskoro & Mahmudah, 2021) good service quality creates a positive experience for customers, which increases satisfaction and loyalty. The speed of serving food and drinks is also important because customers tend to appreciate fast and efficient service, especially in busy environments. Cafe cleanliness not only increases customer comfort but also builds a positive reputation that is crucial for attracting and retaining customers.

In addition, efficiency in managing raw material stock and HR management plays an important role in maintaining operational stability and preventing waste (Abdul Malik Ahmad Arrasyid, 2022) . Efficient stock management ensures the availability of the right raw materials without excess or shortage, which can reduce operational costs (Yanti et al., 2023) . According to (Safitri & Anggraini, 2024) good HR management, including employee training and motivation, ensures consistent and satisfactory service. By optimizing all aspects of these operations, the café can improve overall performance, which in turn will significantly drive business growth.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach that includes documentation and interview observation. Qualitative methods are research approaches used to understand social phenomena, human behavior, or human interactions comprehensively through exploration and interpretation of non-numerical data. This method focuses on revealing the meaning, experience, views, and understanding of individuals or groups in a particular context. Qualitative research often involves data collection through participant observation, document analysis, or field analysis.

Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the purpose of this study is to understand how operational efficiency can affect work productivity consistently in both research objectives, namely Cafe Distro and Cafe Hitado. This approach was chosen because it

is able to dig up in-depth information about how the two cafes manage their operations effectively to achieve optimal performance. The data used in this study were obtained through direct observation at the cafe location, in-depth interviews with management and staff, and documentation in the form of operational records and sales reports that can provide an overview of operational efficiency. The informants in this study consisted of 2 people, namely Aldy Syahputra, owner of Cafe Distro and Rizky Saragih, owner of Cafe Hitado. In the data analysis process, the methods used are reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. At the reduction stage, data that has been collected from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation will be sorted and filtered to take parts that are relevant to this study. Furthermore, data presentation is carried out in the form of a systematic narrative description, which makes it easier for researchers to see patterns and relationships between operational efficiency and cafe performance.

Research conducted (Novita, 2023) at Kafe Candu Kopi Pekanbaru tested the relationship between customer loyalty and the quality of food, service, and cafe, using customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. The results showed that although the quality of food and service provided by the cafe had a significant effect on customer loyalty, the quality of food and service provided by the cafe did not have a significant effect. Customer satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between customer loyalty and cafe atmosphere. Another study conducted by Prattian (2023) at Able Coffee Semarang tested the effect of cafe atmosphere and location on customer loyalty using customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. The results showed that the atmosphere and location of the coffee shop had a positive effect on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction.

C. Results and Discussion

Operational efficiency plays an important role in determining the quality of service provided by a cafe. With efficient management, from the provision of raw materials to the distribution of tasks to staff, cafes can provide faster and more precise service to customers (Ni Wayan Novi Budiasni & Gede Tista Widiartana, 2023). For example, the preparation of raw materials carried out in advance ensures that the process of serving food and drinks is shorter. This helps reduce customer waiting time, thereby increasing their satisfaction with the service provided.

Time Management

Time management is also key to maintaining smooth operations in a café. By properly scheduling staff, each task can be carried out without any significant delays. Effective shift work allocation helps ensure that the café continues to operate smoothly even if an employee is absent. When specific tasks, such as cooking, serving, and cleaning, are carried out according to a predetermined schedule, customers tend to experience a smoother and more comfortable experience (Ningrum et al., 2022).

In addition, clear division of labor between staff creates better coordination between them. When each staff understands their respective roles and responsibilities, the potential for errors or omissions can be minimized. Thus, consistent service quality can be maintained. Customers not only assess the taste of food and drinks, but also their overall experience, including the attitude of the staff and the atmosphere of the café (Ramdani et al., 2023).

Organized preparation of raw materials also affects operational efficiency. By ensuring that all raw materials are available and ready to use, the café can avoid situations where customer orders cannot be fulfilled. Customers who feel that their needs are well met will tend to feel satisfied and even loyal to the café. This loyalty is one indicator of the café's success in providing optimal service.

Based on the interview results at Café Hitado and Café Distro, operational efficiency in both cafes involves time management, clear division of staff tasks, and planned preparation of raw materials. All of these aspects are interrelated and contribute to a better customer experience. With this approach, Café Hitado and Café Distro have succeeded in providing fast, accurate, and satisfying services, which ultimately increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.

At Café Hitado, time management is seen from how raw materials are prepared since the afternoon. Chicken, for example, is marinated in the afternoon so that in the evening it can be fried directly according to order. The same thing is done with fried rice seasoning that has been prepared in advance. This approach ensures shorter customer waiting time, which is one of the important indicators of service quality. In contrast, at Café Distro, the food and beverage serving procedure is designed to be as fast as possible so that customers do not get bored waiting. This strategy shows an awareness of the importance of speed in meeting customer expectations.

Staff Task Allocation

Staff task division is also part of operational efficiency in both cafes. At Café Hitado, each staff has a clear job description, such as baristas who focus on making coffee, chefs who cook the menu, and waiters who deliver orders and clean tables. This ensures that there is no overlapping of responsibilities, which can hinder the cafe's operations. On the other hand, Café Distro implements an organized shift system to avoid vacant positions, especially if there are staff who are unable to attend. With this system, the cafe can continue to operate smoothly without reducing the quality of service.

Thorough raw material preparation and efficient stock management have been shown to have a significant impact on operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Research by (Putra & Seminari, 2020) revealed that good stock management and timely raw material preparation can speed up the service process, reduce customer

waiting time, and avoid running out of materials, which directly impacts customer satisfaction. This is similar to the approach taken by Café Hitado and Café Distro, which ensure raw materials are available before operations begin and maintain material availability efficiently.

Cleanliness and tidiness are also factors that affect customer experience and business reputation. According to research conducted by (Badrul Laili, 2021), cleanliness that is well maintained during operations can provide more comfort for customers and improve their perception of the quality of the cafe. This is also in line with the policies implemented by Café Hitado and Café Distro, where each staff is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their work area at all times. Thus, cleanliness not only contributes to comfort but also to a positive image in the eyes of customers.

Service quality related to customer satisfaction has indeed been proven to be a major factor in creating loyalty, as observed at Café Hitado and Café Distro. Research by (Triuspita et al., 2023) shows that fast service and a comfortable atmosphere significantly increase customer satisfaction, which makes them more likely to return. This is also in line with research by (Purnomo & Septiana, 2022) which found that positive interactions between staff and customers, including friendly attitudes and warm greetings, have a major influence on creating customer loyalty in the cafe and restaurant sector.

This approach also strengthens the emotional connection between customers and the cafe, which according to research by (Marlina & Wufon, 2021) is one of the important elements in building customer loyalty. Kurniawan explained that the emotional connection formed through positive interactions can make customers feel appreciated, which ultimately increases the likelihood that they will continue to visit and recommend the place to others.

Competitive pricing strategies also play a role in building customer satisfaction. Café Hitado, for example, sets prices that are not much different from the surrounding stalls, so that customers feel they are getting value for money. Meanwhile, Café Distro emphasizes the importance of added value from service and a comfortable cafe atmosphere, although price management is often a challenge.

In addition, both cafes have unique ways to maintain their reputation among customers and the community. Café Hitado, for example, offers additional experiences such as movie nights to attract loyal customers. Meanwhile, Café Distro uses social media as a platform to communicate with customers and handle feedback or complaints. This approach not only increases customer engagement but also helps maintain a positive image of the cafe in the public eye. In summary, the findings can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Comparison of Hitado Café and Distro Café

Aspect	Café Hitado	Café Distro
Time Management	Preparation of raw materials is done since noon (example: chicken is marinated, fried rice with spices is prepared beforehand).	Food and beverage serving procedures are designed for speed to shorten customer waiting times.
Staff Task Distribution	Job description is clear: barista focuses on coffee, chef cooks, waiter delivers and cleans tables.	The shift system is organized to avoid empty positions, maintaining smooth operations.
Raw Material Preparation	Raw materials are prepared early, ensuring that materials are available when operations begin.	Raw material preparation is also carried out efficiently, but with greater emphasis on serving speed.
Cleanliness	Cleanliness is well maintained during operations, creating comfort and a positive image.	Staff are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the work area at all times, maintaining customer comfort.
Service Quality	Focus on fast service and a comfortable atmosphere, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.	Positive interactions between staff and customers, friendly attitudes create strong emotional connections.
Pricing Strategy	Competitive prices with surrounding stalls, providing value for money.	Emphasize added value through service and a comfortable atmosphere, although price is often a challenge.
Innovation & Reputation	Additional experiences such as watching together to attract loyal customers.	Utilize social media to communicate and handle complaints, maintain a positive image in the public.

Overall, the operational efficiency implemented at Café Hitado and Café Distro shows that time management, clear division of staff tasks, and organized preparation of raw materials are the main keys to creating a satisfying customer experience. Although these two cafes have different approaches in several aspects, both have managed to maintain fast, precise, and efficient service quality. Staff involvement in maintaining cleanliness, as well as a focus on emotional relationships with customers, also strengthen customer loyalty which is an important factor in long-term success. Thus, these two cafes provide valuable lessons in the importance of good operational management, which not only affects efficiency, but also customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Café Hitado and Café Distro's strategies to increase customer loyalty and maintain reputation

To increase customer loyalty, cafes can implement various strategies that have proven effective. One of them is maintaining service quality and creating a comfortable atmosphere. According to research by Rahman and Purnamasari (2021), consistent service quality and a supportive atmosphere have a significant influence on customer loyalty in the cafe and restaurant sector. This helps customers feel appreciated and encourages them to come back.

In addition, the implementation of competitive prices is also an important factor. A study by (Setiawati et al., 2020) revealed that customers tend to be more loyal to cafes that offer value according to the price they pay. Thus, cafes that implement a wise pricing strategy can retain customers while attracting new customers.

Good communication with customers through a community-based marketing approach is also an effective strategy. Research from (Djatola & Hilal, 2023) found that direct interaction with customers, both online and offline, can increase customer trust and engagement. This strengthens the relationship between customers and businesses, creating higher loyalty.

Café Hitado and Café Distro have different but complementary approaches in increasing customer loyalty and maintaining reputation. Both realize the importance of providing good quality service to customers. At Café Hitado, service quality is emphasized through speed of serving and fulfilling customer needs. They believe that by understanding customer needs personally, customers will feel satisfied and tend to return. On the other hand, Café Distro emphasizes maximum service by ensuring that food, drinks, and the cafe atmosphere can meet customer expectations.

Serving time management is an important strategy implemented by both cafes. Café Hitado manages time by preparing raw materials since noon, so that when orders come, the food can be served immediately. This process makes operations more efficient and customers do not have to wait long. Café Distro also adopts a similar procedure, ensuring fast serving so that customers remain comfortable and do not feel bored waiting. Both of these approaches show how operational efficiency can improve customer experience and drive loyalty.

Cleanliness and tidiness are also top priorities at both cafes. At Café Hitado, cleanliness is a shared responsibility between the owner and staff, with routine steps such as cleaning barista equipment at closing and ensuring the kitchen and dining areas are ready for use the next day. Café Distro has a similar approach, with staff instructed to maintain cleanliness at all times, including cleaning their respective work areas before closing. A clean and tidy environment not only increases customer comfort but also reinforces the cafe's positive image.

Task management and staff schedules at both cafes are designed to ensure operational efficiency. At Café Hitado, each staff member has a clear job description, such as a barista who focuses on making coffee or a chef who takes care of food. Meanwhile, at Café Distro, staff management is carried out through a shift system, so that operations continue smoothly even if there are staff who are absent. This clear division of tasks supports the overall performance of the team, creates a conducive working atmosphere, and provides a better experience for customers.

The method for assessing customer satisfaction levels is also implemented by both cafes (Yafiz & Marliyah, 2017). Café Hitado assesses customer satisfaction through the frequency of repeat visits, assuming that returning customers are satisfied with the services and products provided. Meanwhile, Café Distro relies on direct observation of customer expressions and responses, as well as direct communication such as gratitude from customers. This approach helps both cafes understand customer needs more deeply and make improvements according to the feedback received.

Customer loyalty building strategies are also a major focus. At Café Hitado, activities such as watching together (nobar) are held to create a unique experience that can attract customers back. Café Distro places more emphasis on interpersonal communication with customers, such as welcoming customers in a friendly manner and having casual conversations. Both of these strategies create a more personal relationship between customers and the café, which ultimately increases customer loyalty.

In maintaining their reputation, both cafes use an approach that has been proven effective based on recent research. Café Hitado, which prioritizes customer needs, creates a more personal experience, which has an impact on loyalty and a positive image. According to research conducted by Wijayanti and Prasetyo (2023), responsive service that meets customer expectations can strengthen a business's reputation, increase satisfaction levels, and encourage customers to return. This also supports the statement that customer satisfaction is directly related to a positive brand image.

On the other hand, Café Distro utilizes social media as an effective communication tool with customers, which is in accordance with the findings of research by (Triuspita et al., 2023). They found that using social media to interact directly with customers improves the relationship between businesses and consumers, and provides an opportunity to quickly correct deficiencies (Yanti et al., 2023). By utilizing social media, Café Distro not only maintains relationships with customers but also increases their engagement, which in turn supports a good reputation in the eyes of the public.

Overall, the strategies implemented by Café Hitado and Café Distro not only increase customer loyalty but also have a positive impact on operational performance. Loyal customers tend to return and recommend the café to others, which ultimately increases revenue. A good reputation, supported by quality service and effective communication, creates customer trust and a strong competitive position in the market. This shows how a holistic approach to café management can lead to long-term success.

D. Conclusions

Early preparation by Café Hitado, such as arranging raw materials since noon, has been proven to significantly reduce customer waiting time. This not only improves operational efficiency but also provides a faster and more comfortable experience for customers. On the other hand, Café Distro relies on fast serving procedures and organized staff shift management to speed up the service process, so that customer waiting time can also be reduced. To increase customer loyalty, Café Hitado holds interactive events such as watching together which provide a fun experience and increase customer engagement. Meanwhile, Café Distro prioritizes personal communication and staff friendliness to build closer relationships with customers. Both cafes also maintain cleanliness and ensure positive interactions between staff and customers, which contributes to a positive reputation in the community and makes customers feel appreciated. The policy implications that can be applied are the importance of increasing investment in more efficient raw material preparation management, as well as more structured staff and cleanliness management. This strategy not only supports operational efficiency but also increases customer satisfaction and strengthens the competitiveness of both cafes in an increasingly dynamic market.

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