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The Minang restaurant business ethics: A case study in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

Minang People are one of the famous adventurers and entrepreneurs in Indonesia. One of the efforts that they do is a restaurant. The characteristics of Minang restaurant management is profit sharing. This study shows that there are four characteristics of Minang restaurants, namely type A, type B, type C, and type D. Each type of restaurant represents a variety of business types. There is a relationship between Minang restaurant managers and the consumers, government staff, and suppliers. The violation of business norms committed by Minang restaurant managers is the absence of an employment contract between Minang restaurant managers.

Keywords: Business ethics; Minang; Restaurant; Yogyakarta.

La ética empresarial del restaurante Minang: un estudio de caso en Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Resumen

La gente de Minang representa uno de los aventureros y empresarios famosos de Indonesia. Uno de los esfuerzos que hacen es un restaurante. Las características de la gestión del restaurante Minang son las ganancias compartidas. Este estudio muestra que hay cuatro características de los restaurantes Minang, a saber, tipo A, tipo B, tipo C y tipo D. Cada tipo de restaurante representa una variedad de tipos de negocios. Existe una relación entre los gerentes de restaurantes de Minang y los consumidores, el personal del gobierno y los proveedores. La violación de las normas comerciales cometidas por los gerentes de restaurantes de Minang es la ausencia de un contrato de trabajo entre los gerentes de restaurantes de Minang.

Palabras clave: Ética empresarial; Minang; Restaurante; Yogyakarta.

1. INTRODUCTION

Experts, especially economists, have done studies on the economy, especially business. However, such studies are more focused on human efforts to improve the welfare of outer life only because the emphasis is more on the efforts to look for profit (profit-oriented). Generally, the economists study business problems through a quantitative approach, thus, showing human tendencies in the aspect of increasing income. Besides, the organization of efforts to increase revenue is more directed at the management system, which involves

ways of organizing, beginning from conventional to modern systems. Such studies only reveal descriptive data about individual or group results or incomes. The most distant analysis shows the predictions of the possibilities that occur in the business world in the future. But the inner aspects that are covered in business activities such as decision making on business actions based on conscience, free will related to moral responsibility, the desire to gain as much profit as possible without oppressing others, humanitarian relations between leaders and subordinates receive less attention from the economists. Motivation or encouragement as a stimulus to improve business development is done quite a lot. However, this is only limited to the business interests of the group. Meanwhile, the attitudes and behavior of humans as individual beings who have dignity as particular living creatures with a set of reason and conscience - especially the latter - tend to be neglected.

In addition to being known as resilient Minangkabau people, they are also known as persistent entrepreneurs. One form of business that many of the Minangkabau communities who are living outside their home region is the Restaurant business. In managing the restaurant businesses, the Minang entrepreneurs have unique management, that is, by using a profit-sharing system. This profit-sharing system is an effort to create a sense of togetherness (kinship) between the capital owner and the employee. Through this profit-sharing system, both parties get a proportionate profit sharing, depending on the benefits obtained periodically. A sense of togetherness (Mitsein) is a basic human need. The interpersonal relationships are placed on harmonious, cooperative relationships. This

means that a leader (entrepreneur) needs the presence of other people (subordinates or employees) to develop his business.

On the other hand, employees need to work as a manifestation of self-existence. As Marx points out by the term *homo Faber*, that by working human beings will increase their dignity and status as full human beings (full human). This harmonious relationship can only be achieved when the leadership treatment of employees has ethical norms that are under the principle of kinship, which is the characteristic of the Indonesian people's cultural patterns. Likewise, conversely, there needs to be a sense of togetherness (a sense of belonging, loyalty, solidarity) that employees have towards the company where they work.

The pattern of work relations, as stated above, has been applied in the Minang Restaurant business venture, which is when they use a profit-sharing system to pay their employees. However, over the times, many Minang Restaurants no longer apply the profit-sharing scheme. Then, whether the weekly or monthly salary system as a substitute for the profit-sharing system still puts employees as part of the restaurant business? Are employees again seen as partners by restaurant owners? Do employees always have a sense of belonging to the company even if they are only paid monthly?

These issues will be explored in this study to understand the emergence of business competitions in the current era of globalization. How far Minang restaurants can compete with other modern restaurant businesses, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), California Fried Chicken (CFC), and others. Can the management system implemented

by the Minang Restaurant businesses compete with the modern management system? Can the Minang restaurant business management system integrate harmoniously between work relationships based on ethical norms that are grounded in the nation's culture with efforts to seek maximum profits under economic principles? This research focuses more attention on the problem of patterns of human relations based on ethical norms, not on financial and business principles. Therefore this research is more directed at the philosophical dimension, especially business ethics,

Humans are mostly real beings (*gegenstandlich*), said Marx, meaning that creatures have always found themselves in the world, and at the same time, adjusting the world to their needs, so humans need to work. It is through human work that the world becomes the objectivation of the forces of human nature (MAGNIS SUSENO, 1992). The workplace humans as unique living things because through this work, humans can increase their values and dignity. The human world is always open to the development of creativity. Humans always attempt to be creative, because through creativity, can they fulfill their daily needs to the maximum. MAGNIS SUSENO et al. (1991) assert that almost every human being does one of the jobs to earn a living. Every area of human life - including work - belongs to the area of moral responsibility, as well as the field of work.

Business is one of the fields of work that people have been engaged in since ancient times. From barter trading patterns to the use of currency exchange rates, until the use of credit cards, the world presents a variety of phenomena that attract the attention of humanity.

The business has become a profession. Namely, the work carried out as the main activity to produce a living by relying on specific skills (MAGNIS SUSENO et al., 1991). Today's business world can be seen as a giant network involving various parties, institutions, nations, and countries. Therefore, business development that ignores such a system will only have fatal consequences for the actors themselves.

The business also cannot ignore ethical values as an axiological pillar that supports business activities that have a sense of responsibility. CHOIRUL FUAD YUSUF (1997) presents three main aspects of business ethics. **First**, elements of the relationship or the company's actions towards its work. In this aspect, business people are workers or employees. The main problem in this aspect is the leasing and termination of work, wages, and working conditions, as well as privacy issues. **Second**, elements of the relationship or actions of workers against the company. The business person is the company itself. The main problems are conflicts of interest, confidentiality, honesty, qualifications, and skills training. **Third**, aspects of the relationship or action of the company towards the main business actors. The business person is a material supplier. The main problem is the cost of input and output. If the business actors are consumers, the main problem is the manipulation of prices, quantity and quality of goods, sales, and purchasing strategies. If the business owner is a shareholder/owner/ business partner, then the main problem is the distribution of profits or losses.

The restaurant business is one of the parts of new business to be investigated because the restaurant business involves various layers of

society, both the owners of the capital, employees, and consumers. The role of a food stall or food booth is increasingly apparent due to the growth of the city and other service traffic, which has facets or different dimensions, namely as a place to fill the stomach on a journey (MOCHTAR NAIM, 1987). The restaurant business can no longer be seen as a side business, but a professional business field that requires professional handling as well. The attitude of professionalism in the Minangkabau community is expressed in a proverb that reads: "Hunting in a flat field gets a deer with striped legs, studying insufficiently is like a flower that does not come into bud" (IDRUS HAKIMY, 1994: 4). This means that if someone is trying to achieve success, he/she cannot do it halfway. It shows the attitude of professionalism in every action.

The Minangkabau people's fame is in the restaurant business, which is also known as Padang food stalls. These Minang restaurants do not only serve Minang migrants. Mochtar Naim's research conducted in Jakarta states that 80% of their customers are from other ethnic groups. The attractiveness of the stalls lies not only in the diversity and taste of the side dishes but also in the fast service (1984). Fast service and satisfying customers have become a motto in the Minang restaurant business as in the following proverb: "Gentle in speech, lighthearted and amusing when bantering" (YOSE RIZAL, 1996: 154). It means that friendly and polite attitudes in serving guests are the hallmark of the Minang community in running restaurant businesses, thus attracting the sympathy of the customers.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a combination of a literature study and field study. The literature study is carried out by inventorying philosophers about ethics in general, and then is applied ethics in this case business ethics, and business moral norms contained in the Minangkabau customary law proverbs. The field study is conducted by interviewing the entrepreneurs (Boss), the executors (Tauke), and the employees (the cooks and other members) of the Minang restaurants in Yogyakarta. So that there is a harmony or disharmony between the ideal concept and pragmatic values (those who only seek profits without regard to the employees' ideal). It can also be seen the harmony or disharmony of relationships between the entrepreneurs and the consumers, suppliers of raw goods, fellow restaurant entrepreneurs, and the government.

This research was carried out through the following steps:

1. Data collection, collecting data on the concept of business ethics contained in various kinds of literature, both literature on ethics and literature on the Minangkabau customary-law proverbs.
2. Classification of data, data that had been collected and then classified, so that the characteristics of the business ethics of the Minangkabau community can be identified.
3. Data analysis, the data that had been classified was analyzed, according to the hermeneutic method, which is to understand the Minangkabau customary law proverbs in the paradigm of business ethics.

4. Data interpretation, the data that had been analyzed were then interpreted so that it develops into various possibilities for application in the field.

The analysis of the data research was conducted using hermeneutic-reflexive method as follows: Hermeneutics: Analysis of the Minangkabau customary law proverbs that contain moral and religious norms, raising the philosophical foundations, especially the thoughts about ethics in the Minangkabau customary law proverbs, reflection on the Minangkabau traditional proverbs as well as confronting it with the reality on the fields in the form of interviews with the entrepreneurs and employees of the Minang restaurants in Yogyakarta, and raising the relationship between moral norms in the Minangkabau proverbs with concrete actions of Minangkabau restaurant entrepreneurs based on the principles of business ethics. The reflection is related to the relevance between customary moral norms of the Minangkabau with the practical needs related to restaurant businesses.

3. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In the field of ethics, there are six typologies of ethical systems of thought that are as follows.

First, relativism, which states that ethical decisions are made, based on the principle of need and self-will (self-interest). In this case, there are no universal ethical criteria. Instead, they are based on their cultural background.

Second, utilitarianism, which states that ethical decisions are made, based on results (outcomes) as a result of the decisions. An action is considered ethical if it results in (yielding) the benefit or maximum benefit for most people, so it is based more on profit-loss calculations.

Third, universalism which states that ethical decisions are based on the intent or purpose of action. Someone in the same situation must make the same decision.

Fourth, a system of rights which states that ethical decisions are focused on a single value of freedom, and based on individual rights that guarantee freedom of choice.

Fifth, a distributive justice system which states that ethical decisions emphasize the singular value of justice and guarantee equal distribution of wealth and profits.

Sixth, an eternal legal system which states that ethical decisions are made based on eternal law contained in the scriptures (CHOIRUL FUAD YUSUF, 1997).

Of the six systems above, the Minang restaurant business is closer to the second and fifth systems, namely utilitarianism, which emphasizes the calculation of profit and loss and a system of distributive justice that emphasizes the system of revenue sharing. The results showed that several Minang restaurant businesses in Yogyakarta state that they still carry out the profit-sharing system. The results of interviews conducted by the researchers on several Minang restaurant owners show that this revenue sharing system benefits both parties, both for owners and employees. The advantage for the owner

lies in the intensity and discipline of the work of the members in carrying out their duties. As for the employees, the results system make them feel involved in business activities, so they feel appreciated (respected) and consider the restaurant business as shared property. The higher the company earnings, the greater their income.

SONY KERAF (1991) stated some principles in business ethics or norms that are prevailing in business activities. The principles are closely related to the value system adopted by each community following the culture or view of the underlying life. The principles cover the followings:

Autonomy is the attitude and ability of humans to act on their consciousness about whatever is right to do. An autonomous person is the one who is fully aware of his obligations in the business world. A self-employed person is a person who decides because he realized that that is good (in the concrete situations which he encountered). In this principle of autonomy, the freedom of decision making is considered an act based on the decision done, thus generate a sense of responsibility.

Second, the principle of honesty in the business world involves three aspects, namely: (1) honesty in fulfilling the terms of the agreement and contract, (2) honesty in terms of offering goods and services, (3) honesty in terms of working relationships with companies, so that the strong party (owner) does not deceive and exploit the weak party (labor).

Third, the principle of not doing evil deeds (non-maleficent) and the principle of doing good deeds (beneficence), namely the moral

principle to be kind to others so that other ethical principles can be built, such as; honesty, responsibility, and justice.

Fourth, the principle of justice, that is, the principle that demands to treat others according to their rights.

Fifth, the principle of self-respect means we all have moral obligations to respect ourselves because we are obliged to protect and hold on to our self-respect.

Based on the research results in the field, data obtained from the five principles of business ethics mentioned above, apparently, there is one principle that is ignored, namely the principle of honesty. The first aspect of honesty is in fulfilling the terms of agreements and contracts between Minang restaurant business owners and employees. Based on this research, in the field, there was never a written agreement. Because the business is more to the family relationship, so they tend to ignore written agreements or contracts. The study conducted by MOCHTAR NAIM et al., (1987) showed that the restaurants in the Minang regions itself emphasized that the employees' relationship with the landlord or restaurant manager is not regulated based on labor regulations. As usual, they are bound in the Minang restaurant traditions, or according to the environment itself. There is no binding agreement, in addition to informal provisions that are jointly admitted. An employee works according to the working hours and work fields that have been assigned to him. The second aspect is honesty in terms of offering goods and services. Based on field research, it is rare to find Minang restaurants that put up a price list, so the consumers do not know the exact price per unit of the menu served. Although from

the interviews, they generally said that the list of food prices should be posted. Quite the contrary, the Minang restaurant business in West Sumatra usually put up the list.

The third aspect is honesty in terms of working relationships with the companies so that the strong party (owner) does not deceive and exploit the weak one (labor) related to contract or agreement issues. In the Minang restaurant business layoffs are rare, unless an employee takes an action that is considered detrimental to the company, such as neglect of service to visitors, not friendly or dishonest at work. However, the explicit assertion of mutual rights and obligations between owners and employees will further expedite business activities.

A scheme of reciprocal relations between owners and members, the government, competitor companies, consumers, and suppliers related to business ethics (SONY KERAF, by modifying the responsibility is entirely on the researchers).

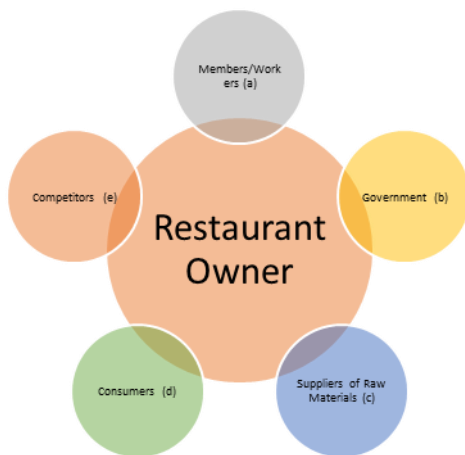


Figure 1: The relationship model of Minang Restaurant Business

This relationship is a relationship between needs and services. Members of workers are the main pillars of the Minang restaurant businesses because they are directly involved with service to consumers.

Based on research in the field, members of the Minang restaurants can be classified based on career paths as follows:

(1) The dishwasher; is considered a lower-level worker because he does not require special skills. Generally, this level is an initial career development to test craft, discipline, and will, to advance to the next career path.

(2) Kitchen Assistant; the main task is to help or serve the chef or cook, for example: cleaning fish, squeezing coconut milk, chopping vegetables, and others related to the provision of dishes in

the kitchen. A kitchen assistant can improve his career to become a chef's assistant if he shows his ability to process seasonings.

(3) Sous Chef; namely, the person who will be in charge of accompanying the cook, and replaces the duties of the cook whenever the cook is unavailable or on leave.

(4) Bar Waiter; a person in charge of preparing drinks for the consumers and is usually experienced, especially in the matter of the taste of beverages and speed in serving.

(5) Waiter or server; the person in charge of serving food to consumers at each table. This attendant also requires specialized skills in bringing a variety of dishes accurately and quickly. This skill requires long practice. This waiter or handyman will determine whether or not the service in the Minang restaurant is good.

(6) Head Chef (chef/cook): is the person in charge of cooking a variety of dishes at the Minang restaurant. The chef is the key to the success of a restaurant business, because of the taste (good or not good) of the food in a restaurant determined mainly by the skills of the cook in managing various spices. Therefore hijacking cooks often happens from one restaurant to another with multiple enticements like bonuses or other facilities.

(7) Tauke (executor); is the person in charge of managing the restaurant directly. He serves as a daily executive. He serves to represent the boss or owner of the Minang restaurant in the business. In the Minang restaurant business, tauke is the highest career path. Therefore not everyone can be a tauke. Some requirements to become a tauke includes: (a) honest, (b) smart, (c) possess skills in the ins and

outs of the restaurant business, (d) generally is one of the relatives of the Minang restaurant owner referred to the store.

In appointing the members (member recruitment), the restaurant owners generally do not determine specific criteria, and the basic requirements are only the will of the worker, especially for the dishwashing worker. However, specific tests are required for the cook (chef): experienced, has expertise in the fields. While tauke, in general, is the person who has emotional (personal) relationships with the restaurant owner, such as a family member.

The career paths set out above affect the payroll system. There are three payroll systems in the Minang restaurant, that is, first, the profit-sharing system, this system is the oldest system that applies in the Minang restaurant business. Distribution of the net income in Minang restaurants using this system is done within 3 or 6 months. Determining the net profit of business for 3 or 6 months for a workforce is based on how many benchmarks are given to him. Mata here is equivalent to the percentage of the parts. The biggest mata is received by the owner, but the numbers of mata do not exceed 20% of all the mata that must be divided between the leader/owner and the employees. After that, the Tauke (head waiter) and the Chef (cook), while the lowest ones are the dishwashers and kitchen helpers (MOCHTAR NAIM, 1987).

Today most of the Minang restaurants, especially the large ones, still implement a profit-sharing system. Second, the payroll system, this system turns up along with the changing of times, business expansion, and encouraged by the increasing number of employees

who are not Minang people. Third, combinations of the two systems. Payment using the profit-sharing system only applies to some workers or employees, especially for the cooks and tauke, while the other members are paid monthly based on the types of work.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it appears there are several forms of violation of business ethics performed by the Minang restaurant businessmen to the consumers, employees, and government.

First: violations of business ethics committed by some Minang restaurant entrepreneurs to the consumers are in the form of not posting the food prices.

Second; violations of business ethics against the employees in a sense that the absence of a clear employment relationship contract between the restaurant entrepreneur and employees, thus making the restaurant employees in a difficult position to claim their rights.

Third; violations of business ethics towards the government in the form of the low interest of Minang restaurant entrepreneurs in tax payments.

But the violation of business ethics by the Minang restaurant business does not rule out the reality that there are some positive values from the restaurant businesses, namely:

First, open employment; the restaurant businesses, in general, require quite a lot of labor, specifically the A and B types. The restaurant businesses are implementing the labor-intense systems

because every consumer must be served the best one can. Thus a lot of workforces are absorbed into the Minang restaurant business.

Second, reviving the economy of nonstaple food crops farmers; because the Minang restaurant businesses generally require a lot of seasoning and various spices, and nonstaple food crops, then this effort help raise the standard of living of the nonstaple food crops farmers. The prices of secondary crops tend to improve. Even certain types of vegetables such as cassava leaves, cabbage, long beans, and cucumbers also raised.

Third, Local own income also increases; because it is obtained through collecting value-added tax from every consumer by 10%, although this consumer tax collection is more successful in the Minang restaurant business A-type and most B-types. The C and D-types are only in the forms of ordinary business tax collection.

Fourth, West Sumatra's regional income has also increased, because most of the profits from Minang restaurant entrepreneurs are sent to the area of origin for various activities such as mosques and prayer rooms constructions, madrassas and Islamic boarding schools, traditional halls, and village head offices constructions.

Fifth, contributions to the environment and local communities provided by Minang restaurant entrepreneurs.

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