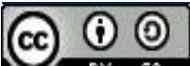


## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

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DATE	ABSTRACT
Accepted: Revised: Published:	<i>This research aims to formulate a competitive marketing strategy for Mixue Merdeka, a franchise store under PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara, operating in the saturated food and beverage (FnB) market of Lhokseumawe, Aceh. Despite Mixue's strong brand presence and affordability, the store's sales and ROI have underperformed due to intense competition and franchisor-imposed limitations on pricing and product innovation. The study employs a qualitative-dominant approach, combining semi-structured interviews with internal stakeholders and consumers, competitor observations, and RFM-based customer segmentation. Internal analysis using the Marketing Mix and VRIO frameworks revealed strengths such as experienced management and high customer satisfaction but identified challenges, including limited innovation authority and underutilized digital channels. External analysis via PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces highlighted opportunities such as digital adoption and localized marketing, alongside threats like hypercompetition and price sensitivity. SWOT and TOWS matrices were used to align internal and external factors, leading to strategic recommendations focused on market penetration and product modification. The proposed 8Ps marketing mix includes enhancing product experiences, optimizing pricing transparency, leveraging the store's prime location, and improving promotional tactics. Additional strategies emphasize crew training, process efficiency, physical evidence upgrades, and performance monitoring. This research provides an actionable marketing strategy to address Mixue Merdeka's competitive challenges, with future studies recommended to evaluate long-term impacts on customer loyalty and ROI.</i>
	<b>KEYWORDS</b> <i>Marketing Strategy, Market Penetration, Product Modification, Competitive Differentiation, Experience Innovation.</i>
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## INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) serve as one of the pillars of the national economy, as they account for approximately 99% of the total business units in Indonesia. According to the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, MSMEs contribute over 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb nearly 97% of the total workforce in the country. The data below illustrate the dominance of MSMEs in contributing to GDP, supported by the increasing number of MSMEs in Indonesia, which shows a linear growth pattern, as depicted in the accompanying chart (Budiman, 2025).

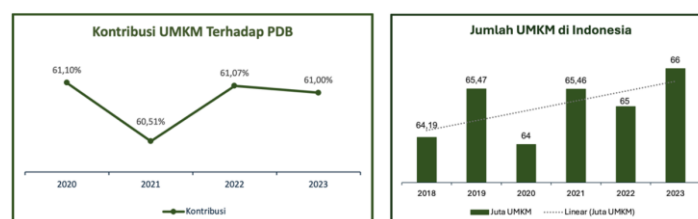
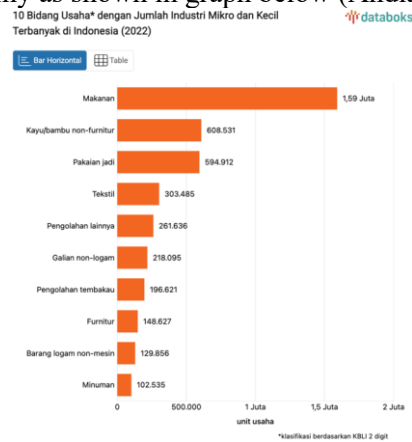


Figure 1. MSMEs Dominance in GDP Contribution and Growth (Budiman, 2023)

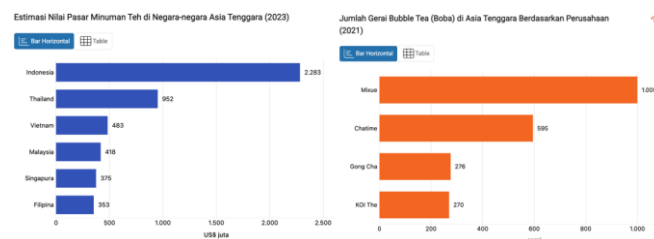
## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

If this MSMEs in Indonesia broken down into more specific classifications, based on the two digit Klasifikasi Baku Lapangan Usaha Indonesia (KBLI) classification, the food and beverage (FnB) industry plays a significant role in dominating the number of MSMEs industries in Indonesia. According to Databoks, this sector comprises the largest proportion of micro and small enterprises, reflecting its critical role in the national economy as shown in graph below (Ahdiat, 2023).



**Figure 2. Food and Beverages Sector's Contribution in Indonesia's Micro and Small Industries 2022 (Databoks, 2023)**

The data presented above indicate the high intensity of MSME activities in the FnB sector in Indonesia. According to Databoks, Indonesia holds a significant market value in the FnB industry, one notable example is the country's dominance in the bubble tea market. As shown in the data below, Indonesia has the highest market value for bubble tea products in Southeast Asia. One of a leading brand in this segment, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, has established itself as the franchise with the largest number of outlets across the region, as illustrated in the following graph (Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian, 2024).



**Figure 3. Market Value of Indonesia's Tea Beverages in Southeast Asia 2023 and Number of Indonesia's Bubble Tea Outlets in Southeast Asia 2021(Databoks, 2022)**

Moreover, this Chinese FnB franchise, Mixue, has surpassed two major American franchise chains, McDonald's and Starbucks, in terms of store count, making it the largest franchise network in the world. As of September 30th 2024, the brand operated 45.302 franchise outlets globally, exceeding McDonald's 43.077 locations and Starbucks's 40.199 stores. From Mixue's 45.000 outlets, approximately 40.000 are located in China, while Indonesia stands as the largest international market, contributing 2.667 stores to its global expansion (Journal of Creative Student Research, 2023).

Nearly 3.000 Mixue outlets established in Indonesia by 2024, demonstrate the brand's rapid expansion since its entry in 2020. Rather than opening these outlets independently, Mixue has adopted a franchise system, allowing Indonesian entrepreneurs to become business partners in the brand's nationwide expansion (Gangele et al., 2023; Chakrabarty, 2024). As recognized, Indonesia's cities are classified into several tiers based on economic factors such as per capita expenditure, population size, internet penetration, provincial GDP growth, and population density. Mixue and its franchise partners have successfully opened outlets across all city tiers in Indonesia, including city in tier one, two, and three. One of Mixue's franchise partner, PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara, has opened outlets in tier 3 cities, including Bengkulu, Banda Aceh, and Lhokseumawe (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2018; Universitas Yapis Papua, 2021). Based on interviews with the PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara's Shareholders, Board of Commissioners, and Board of Directors (BoD), their motivation for entering these tier 3 markets was to reach untapped consumer segments and become the first Mixue store or at

least early adopter market entrants. Their strategy involves targeting locations where potential demand aligns with their market expectations (Cascade Strategy, 2024). By securing a monopoly in tier three cities, they can generate higher returns compared to entering major tier one cities where intense competition leads to market fragmentation and reduced profit potential and this is already evident from the historical performance of several Mixue stores owned by this company.

Indeed, the franchise model presents significant advantages, allowing partners to leverage a well-established brand for relatively quick profitability rather than building a new brand from scratch. However, the franchise system also poses challenges and risks for its partners, such as PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara. One key limitation is the restricted autonomy of franchise partners, as they operate under the legal authority of an external brand owner. In Mixue's case, all decisions regarding standard operating procedures (SOPs), product offerings, pricing, and material supply providing are exclusively determined by PT Zhisheng Pacific Trading, franchisor or the company that holds the Mixue brand license in Indonesia. Consequently, franchisees such as PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara are limited to executing central SOPs and focusing primarily on marketing efforts (Rahadian, 2017).

As part of its franchise policy, PT Zhisheng Pacific Trading requires partners to independently manage marketing strategies for their respective outlets. This provides franchisees with the flexibility to innovate and tailor marketing initiatives to their local market conditions. So that, when performance issues arise, franchisees have limited avenues for intervention beyond marketing strategies (Suriani & Kuncoro, 2018). Currently, PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara is experiencing underperformance sales in several of its Mixue outlets. Given the constraints imposed by the franchise framework, the company's primary recourse is to implement targeted marketing efforts to address these challenges. Thus, an effective and adaptive marketing approach is essential to improving store performance and sustaining business growth within this franchise case.

This research has two questions that need to be answered, including: How is the current internal and external condition of Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe? How is the suitable marketing strategy to enhance Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe's competitive advantage?

The objectives for this research are: To analyze the current internal and eksternal condition of Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe. To deveadvantage?table marketing strategy to enhance Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe's competitive advantage. This research is focused on developing a marketing strategy to enhance the competitive advantage of Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe in response to strong marketing strategy is essential to establish a competitive advantage for a highly substitutable product, as it struggles to retain customers (Pahlevi, 2022). The scope and limitations of the study are outlined as follows. Develop a marketing strategy to enhance Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe's competitive advantage by analyzing existing strategies and market conditions. Majority based on qualitative methods, consist interviews with PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara's management, competitor and customer that support with the other relevant data. The analysis is based on data collected only from 2024, aligning with the store's operational timeline Limited to Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe, excluding other similar stores.

## METHOD

In this study, the research design served as a comprehensive blueprint guiding the investigation, outlining the steps, methods, and analytical tools used to address the research questions and objectives. The process began by identifying a specific business issue that required investigation, followed by defining the research questions and objectives to focus the study. A theoretical foundation was established through a review of relevant literature, leading to the formulation of a conceptual framework linking theory to the research problem. Data collection involved primary methods—interviews and observations for context-specific insights—and secondary sources from academic literature and industry reports to support the findings. Data analysis employed a qualitative thematic approach to identify patterns, using a deductive method that aligned findings with established theories. The analysis included familiarization with data, coding, theme generation, and validation through participant quotations to ensure rich interpretation. Additionally, a limited quantitative component was applied for statistical validation, notably in market segmentation via cluster analysis. To enhance credibility, triangulation was used to cross-verify data from multiple sources. This combination of thematic analysis and triangulation ensured reliable, contextually grounded insights to inform effective marketing strategies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Environmental Analysis

#### Internal Analysis

##### Existing Marketing Mix

##### Products

Mixue Merdeka offers a wide range of products categorized into four main segments that consist of Fresh Ice Cream, Tea, Coffee, and Fruity Beverages. MR, The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara as the official franchise partner, the majority of bestselling products consistently come from the Fresh Ice Cream category. At the top of the list there is O-Choco Lucky Sundae, followed by the Boba Sundae, and the classic Vanilla and Chocolate Mixue Ice Cream Cones. In addition, several beverages from other categories have also proven to be strong performers, including the Fresh Squeezed Lemonade, Ice Cream Latte, and the popular Brown Sugar Boba Milk Tea.



Figure 4. Best Seller Menu Data of Mixue Merdeka Store (Author, 2025)

Based on interviews with MR, The COO, the company is acknowledged that the quality of Mixue Merdeka's products, including the taste and the texture, is considered superior when compared to their competitors. Among all ice cream outlets in Lhokseumawe, Mixue Merdeka's ice cream is frequently quality, which serves as a complementary value to the product itself. So that in this context, service is not just an additional element, it is an integral component of the overall customer experience and plays a critical role in sustaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, this limitation has led the company to focus strategically on what it can control (Rahadian, 2017). In service focused businesses, especially in food and beverage, the delivery and surrounding experience are inseparable from the core product and play a significant role in customer satisfaction. According to MR The COO, this strategic focus has led the company to invest in service-based initiatives that differentiate Mixue Merdeka from its competitors. For example, a mini playground was developed in a semi outdoor area at the front of the store, making the storefront more visually appealing and inviting for families and children, one of the key customer segments. This initiative not only enhances the customer experience but also gives consumer a reason to choose Mixue Merd praised for having the softest texture, offering a more enjoyable sensory experience to customers. But as a franchise partner, the company has limited authority over product development and composition, as all decisions related to products fall entirely under the control of Mixue's central management (Cascade Strategy, 2024). Given this policy, the company as franchise partner focuses its efforts on maximizing service eka over competing ice cream outlets (Dergisi, 2017).

Despite the various strengths that have been previously outlined, MR The COO explained Mixue Merdeka faces several obstacles and areas for improvement that must be addressed to maintain and enhance its competitive edge. One of the main challenges stems from its centralized supply chain policy, in which nearly all raw materials and ingredients are sourced exclusively from the central headquarters. This dependency means that the availability of certain menu items is highly contingent upon consistent and timely deliveries from the center. Recognizing the risks associated with this dependency, the company has proactively implemented preventive measures by increasing inventory rounding and expanding stock capacity. These steps aim to mitigate the impact of potential ingredient shortages or supply chain disruptions, which have occurred in the past, that could be impacted to the store's sales.

##### Price

Pricing plays a critical role in shaping consumer perception and purchasing behavior. Based on an interview with MTA, The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of PT Ciptautama Waralaba Nusantara, it

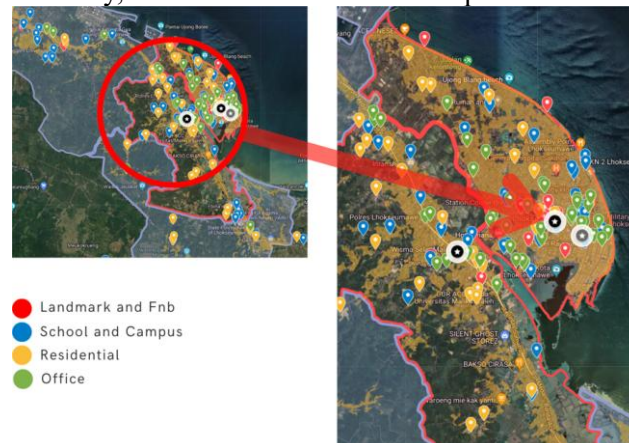


## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

was confirmed that product pricing adheres strictly to central regulations set by Mixue's head management. The core product offerings are priced within an affordable range of approximately IDR 8,000 to IDR 22,000, excluding optional toppings and Mixue's merchandise price. This pricing strategy aligns with Mixue's broader positioning as a cost leadership brand, making it attractive to budget conscious consumers in Lhokseumawe and similar markets. While the company as franchise partner has no authority to alter product prices, it strategically leverages complementary services to enhance value and generate additional revenue. For example like the Making Ice Cream Experience program, which is designed for schools and group visits. The program offers participants a bundled experience that includes product tasting, ice cream making activities, and additional services and facilitation by crew store. These services are priced inclusively, adding perceived value without disrupting the brand's affordable image. Mixue Merdeka also implements promotional strategies like bundling offers and time limited discounts are occasionally introduced to boost revenue while ensuring the cost of goods sold (COGS) remains within healthy margins to sustain profitability. These targeted price tactics serve not only to increase short term sales but also to strengthen long term customer retention in a highly competitive market.

### *Place*

The place component of the marketing mix refers to how and where a business delivers its product or service to its target customers. MR The COO said the company made a calculated move by securing one of the most prominent and central locations in the city. Situated on Jalan Merdeka, Lhokseumawe's main two way arterial road, the store enjoys high visibility and accessibility, supported by its proximity to major intersections and a traffic turn around point. Most notably, it is located directly across from two of the city's key landmarks called Islamic Center and Lapangan Hiraq, according to Sofiyanto (2024) as central hubs and iconic public spaces within Lhokseumawe. These locations naturally attract high foot traffic and offer the store sustained exposure to both local residents and visitors. The store itself occupies a double unit shophouse, allowing for a spacious dine in area and enhanced by proper parking facilities, an important consideration in increasing consumer convenience and supporting prolonged visits. Additionally, Mixue Merdeka benefits from being situated in a retail cluster alongside other prominent food and beverage brands in Lhokseumawe such as KFC, Pizza Hut, Atakiri Ramen, Recheese Factory, and Petro Dollar Coffee Shop shown below.



**Figure 5. Detail Potential Location of Mixue Merdeka STORE (Author, 2025)**

In terms of product distribution, MR The COO explained Mixue Merdeka offers multiple service formats beyond dine in. Consumers could choose for takeaway or orders through digital food delivery platforms such as GoFood and GrabFood, indeed only these two online applications are currently available in Lhokseumawe. A particularly unique element of the local market is the presence of Laju, an informal third party ordering service that operates via WhatsApp. Unlike app based services, Laju does not charge administrative fees to the business, but customers typically incur a high enough delivery fee ranging from IDR 10,000 to IDR 15,000 for short distances. Although, this alternative has proven still effective in Lhokseumawe's context, offering customers a low tech but reliable way to access the store's offerings remotely (Czinkota et al., 2021; Okegbemiro et al., 2022; Walikota Lhokseumawe, 2025).

### *Promotion*

## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

Based on the internal insights gathered from Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe, promotion plays a central role in shaping consumer interest and driving store performance. The company strategically utilizes digital platforms including Instagram and WhatsApp as its primary promotional channels that shows in picture below, each serving a distinct function. Instagram is leveraged for broad based interaction and mass information dissemination, while WhatsApp is employed for more personalized, targeted engagement. This dual channel strategy planed to help the store balance reach and relevance promotion deliver. But according to Store Manager ZM, its execution is still limited. She noted, “we’re heading in that direction, but it’s not fully optimized yet. The WhatsApp is still used mainly for general broadcasts, not for personalized reminders, and Instagram engagement remains unstable.” This indicates a need for stronger personalization and more consistent social media interaction to maximize promotional impact.

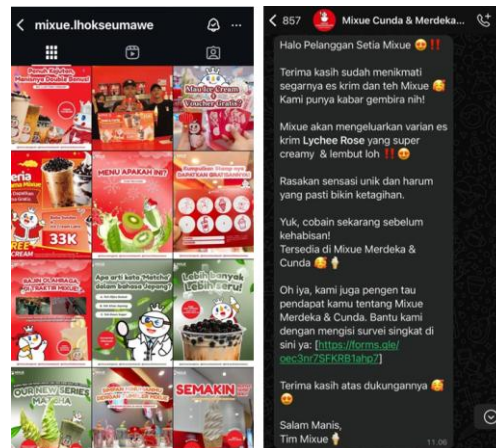


Figure 6. Existing Channel Promotion of Mixue Merdeka Store (Author, 2025)

In terms of promotional strategies, the data reveals that repeated campaigns, limited time offers, and wide-reaching communication tend to be the most effective. Consumers respond more positively to high value promotions such as loyalty member program, giveaways, buy one get one offers, and those must tie to bestselling menu items, the example existing promotion shows below. These types of promotions not only attract consumer attention but also create a sense of urgency and make the offer feel more exclusive and worthwhile, which are crucial in a highly substitutable market like ice cream and beverages.

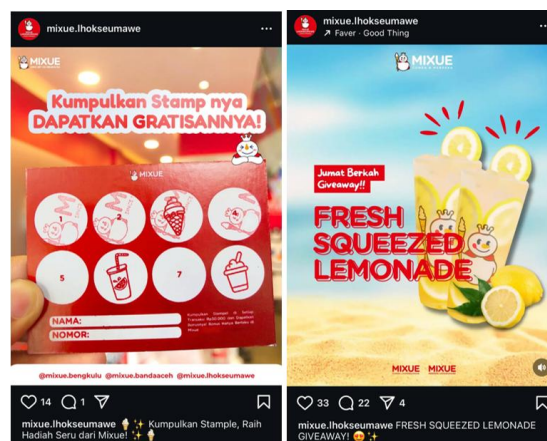


Figure 7. Best Seller Menu Data of Mixue Merdeka Store (Author, 2025)

Moreover, like promotion campaign showed above, the company has implemented a lifetime loyalty member card program as a long-term retention initiative. This program aims to build customer loyalty by offering ongoing incentives that reward repeat purchases over time. “We also usually have monthly promotions from our side, and sometimes we also get additional campaigns from the Mixue central at the national level,” explained the Store Manager. The combination of regular local promos and centrally driven national initiatives create a layered promotional approach that keeps the store visible and relevant to consumers. From these, the promotional strategy of Mixue Merdeka reflects a thoughtful

## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

balance between short term sales stimulation and long-term customer retention. By tailoring its promotional efforts to both behavioral trends and channel characteristics, the company ensures that its marketing communication remains effective, targeted, and aligned with its store's goals.

### *People*

The people element is essential for enhancing customer experience and ensuring service quality at Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe. The Store Manager emphasizes empowering the crew through structured training and daily monitoring to uphold standard operating procedures. This approach ensures consistent service and high-quality menu offerings. In addition to training, the store prioritizes creating a comfortable dining environment with clean, well-presented spaces to foster customer satisfaction and repeat visits. To maintain service consistency, Mixue Merdeka employs various internal strategies, including daily checklists for staff accountability and the Crew of the Month program to motivate high performers. Monthly evaluations and workflow experiments are conducted to identify improvement areas, while a goal-based performance approach using Objectives and Key Results (OKR) is being introduced to enhance operational effectiveness, albeit in its early stages.

### *Process*

The process element focuses on optimizing supply chain operations at Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe. Initially, the store projected raw material needs for two weeks, but after recent supply delays from the franchisor, the COO noted a shift to maintaining a longer buffer for greater resilience. The company aims to complete each product order in under 60 seconds, supported by automated tools like an automatic sugar dispenser, topping measurer, and ice cream machine, enhancing efficiency during peak hours and reducing human error. Additionally, the store offers multiple ordering channels, including dine-in and popular delivery services like GrabFood and GoFood, along with various payment methods such as cash and QRIS, ensuring convenience for customers. Post-purchase, contact details are printed on receipts for easy communication regarding issues, reinforcing the commitment to service quality and building customer trust. This comprehensive approach enhances the overall transaction experience, making it seamless and reliable.

### *Physical Evidence*

Physical evidence is crucial in shaping customer perception and reflecting the brand identity at Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe. The COO highlights the use of ACP walls and premium materials to create a clean, modern look that distinguishes the store from competitors. This fresh, minimalistic design enhances the dining experience and reinforces product quality. Additionally, merchandise plays a significant role in the physical evidence strategy, with attractively designed tumblers aimed at children priced between Rp7,000 and Rp88,000. The rapid sell-out of these items during the store's opening indicates strong consumer interest and effectiveness in reinforcing brand presence. However, since merchandise is limited to central Mixue offerings, the store focuses on optimizing sales and enhancing customer experience through visual elements and store aesthetics, allowing for greater flexibility in creating a distinctive environment.

### *Performance*

The performance element of the marketing strategy at Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe emphasizes product and service consistency. The Store Manager notes the use of a performance monitoring form to ensure that crew members adhere to established standards, contributing to operational reliability and building consumer trust. This structured approach helps the store consistently meet customer expectations. Customer feedback further supports this focus, with Mixue Merdeka achieving a 4.4 out of 5 satisfaction rating on Google Maps from 17 reviews, highlighting positive sentiments regarding taste consistency, affordability, and friendly service. Although the sample size is small, it indicates favorable consumer perceptions. To enhance this feedback loop, accessible channels for customer input and complaints are essential for ongoing improvement.

### *VRIO Analysis*

Based on the VRIO analysis, Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe displays a variety of strategic strengths and limitations across financial, human, material, and non-material resources. First the

financial aspect, the company secures operational continuity through the availability of capital for raw materials, ensuring a lead time of one until two weeks from Jakarta to Sumatera. This plays an essential role in maintaining product availability. The CFO said, “securing capital for raw materials is something competitors have also manage, it is a basic operational need, but what really sets us apart is our long term investors.” The ability to obtain significant initial funding and use it effectively to support project rollout and store operations reflects a level of trust, investor confidence, and managerial credibility that is uncommon in similar businesses because unlike standard funding mechanisms, this investment relationship is not easily replicated.

In the human resource theme, the company operates with a well-established structure, from back-office operations, mid-level management, and frontline crew, that supports smooth daily functioning. Likewise, having well trained store management and service staff ensures high service standards and contributes to operational stability. However, both of these elements are common across most franchise operations and do not provide unique differentiation. One area that shows untapped strategic potential is the company’s implementation of the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) system. This performance-oriented management tool is still relatively uncommon in the Lhokseumawe industry and its ability to align teams around measurable goals presents clear value. Nevertheless, since the system is not yet fully optimized in the organization, CHRO explained “the system definitely has strong potential, but we have not fully use it yet, so its impact is still limited for now,” it holds promise as a future advantage if better executed.

For material resources, the store’s strategic location is a standout asset with strong foot traffic, high visibility, and given its proximity to other major FnB brands. This location is not only commercially attractive but also difficult for competitors to imitate. It has been effectively utilized to strengthen store exposure and drive consistent customer flow, contributing to a long-term strategic edge. The dine in environment, which includes a spacious layout and dedicated children’s playground, adds experiential value that appeals particularly to family-oriented customers. While this feature is less common among local competitors, but COO notes “honestly, it could be replicated with relative ease by other competitors,” so this is only a temporary advantage. Also, the use of modern equipment to improve efficiency and consistency in service reflects best practices in the industry but is no longer as a unique asset because competitors employ similar technologies.

In the category of non-material resources, brand affiliation with Mixue central itself provides a benefit. This brand equity has been deeply established and is difficult for emerging competitors to emulate which positioning it as a long-term strategic advantage. In contrast with the store operational, while helpful for monitoring and efficiency, are widely accessible and do not offer distinct strategic value added by the COO “tools like Google Workspace and CCTV are helpful for oversight, but widely accessible and not really give a strategic edge.” Also, the partnerships with delivery platforms like GrabFood, Gojek, and Laju, which are now standard across the industry. A more novel feature lies in the store’s interactive customer experience, such as the Making Ice Cream existsing program This initiative adds personalized engagement and differentiation in the short term, but its replicability over time limits its ability to serve as a lasting advantage. For further clarity, the following table summarizes the detailed results of the analysis.

**Tabel 1. VRIO Analysis Result (Author, 2025)**

Theme	Resources				Competitive Implications	
		Valuable	Rare	Inimitable	Organized	
Financial	Enough capital for raw materials (lead time Jakarta-Sumatra)	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> Only meets basic obligations, ensuring raw material procurement and product availability, a capability all competitors have
	Loyal investors for initial capital expenditure	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>Sustained competitive advantage</b> Capital from investors effectively and efficiently supports the better project’s step, but for similar businesses it’s challenging due to the need for trust, competence in management, and the ability to utilize it for greater results like company achieved



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Human Resources	Organizational structure supports smooth operations	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> While effective, it does not provide a unique competitive advantage, resulting in standard a must performance
	Well-trained management until crew store	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> Support operational factors to maintain cost and understand how to boost sales of product, but actually it is just a standard that good management have
	Use of OKR system	✓	✓			<b>Unused competitive advantage</b> The OKR system is valuable for achieving goals quickly, rare in Lhokseumawe's industry, and hard to imitate due to the need for building new habits. But, the company is still learning and has not fully organized or optimized the system
Physical	Spacious dine-in and playground	✓	✓			<b>Temporary competitive advantage</b> The added value like spacious dine-in and playground attracting children makes Mixue Merdeka over competitors, while rare but it is also easy to replicate
	Located in the heart of Lhokseumawe	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>Sustained competitive advantage</b> Supported by map from RuangRibu, offers strong sales potential, and surround not yet saturated, hard for competitors to replicate the surrounding location and build positioning like Mixue
	Equipment for food and service	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> Equipment supports consistency and efficiency in service, but similar available in other businesses and is replicable by competitors
Non-Physical	Manual SOP for consistency and efficiency	✓	✓			<b>Temporary competitive advantage</b> Tools useful to track sales, but it is a must in and every competitor has it
	Weekly evaluation and performance improvement	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> The Mixue brand provides recognition, trust, attracting loyal customers not only for the service but the emotional feel they build. The brand is valuable because it enables the product itself
	Use of Instagram and TikTok to engage	✓				<b>Competitive parity</b> While useful for reduce cost and maintain revenue, these tools are now must and easy to imitate, leading to normal performance
	Promotion and marketing experience	✓	✓	✓		<b>Sustained competitive advantage</b> Unique drive in experience like ice cream making experience to boost user curiosity only at Mixue Merdeka but it could be replicated in short or long term

### External Analysis

#### PESTEL Analysis

The political landscape significantly influences Mixue Merdeka in Lhokseumawe, particularly through local government regulations. A key policy, outlined in Peraturan Walikota Lhokseumawe Nomor 18 Tahun 2017, mandates that businesses close during Maghrib prayer time and restricts operating hours during Ramadan, which poses challenges to maximizing sales during peak periods. To adapt, the company must exhibit flexibility in operations, scheduling, and marketing strategies to engage customers and minimize losses during these restricted hours. Additionally, fiscal policy changes, such as a recent increase in VAT to 12%, have impacted consumer purchasing power, resulting in a 23% drop in sales. Although sales rebounded after the VAT was retracted, the situation highlights that consumers, especially those in the middle-income segment, prioritize essential needs over discretionary spending, putting pressure on non-essential products like those offered by Mixue. Economically, factors such as inflation, interest rates, and global trade tensions are projected to affect the company's performance. While the impact has not yet been significant, concerns regarding a potential economic downturn could influence consumer behavior, prompting a shift toward prioritizing basic necessities over lifestyle products. As daily expenses rise, consumers are becoming more selective with their purchases, focusing on value for money and critically evaluating price and quality. This cautious approach to spending underscores the sensitivity of consumer demand to macroeconomic trends, which directly affects Mixue's ability to sustain consistent sales.

## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

The sociocultural aspect significantly impacts Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe, as social media trends shape consumer preferences for visually appealing products. Cultural events, like Eid Al Fitr, drive demand, particularly in Lhokseumawe, where residents enjoy Mixue products during celebrations. This contrasts with cities like Banda Aceh, where sales decline during the holiday due to cultural migration. Additionally, a growing health consciousness prompts some consumers to limit sugary products, leading the store to consider offering adjustable sweetness levels. In terms of technology, Mixue leverages social media for promotions and engages customers. Digital tools streamline operations, allowing for remote management and real-time performance monitoring. The rise of online ordering platforms like GoFood and GrabFood reflects changing consumer preferences for convenience and digital payment options, enhancing brand visibility. Environmentally, the company promotes sustainability through reusable merchandise, like branded tumblers, to reduce plastic use and enhance brand loyalty. This aligns with growing consumer awareness of environmental issues, prompting Mixue to consider strategies that reinforce its commitment to sustainability. Legally, halal certification is crucial in Indonesia, particularly in Lhokseumawe, ensuring compliance and building consumer trust. Adhering to safety and regulatory standards is essential for maintaining confidence and long-term success, especially in the age of social media, where negative perceptions can spread quickly.

Tabel IV. 2 PESTEL Analysis Result (Author, 2025)

Theme	Key Statement	Result Interpretation
Political	Local government restriction Local restrict effect operating hours such as during Maghrib and Ramadan, impacting peak sales periods	Promotional schedules and store operations should adjust to shorter active hours with focused peak time strategies.
	Increasing VAT regulation VAT increases could led to sales drops, showing price sensitivity in non-essential spending.	Offer value driven bundles and clearly state tax inclusive pricing to assure customers no extra charges, even if VAT increases
Economic	Inflation, spending shift to essentials Rising prices and lower income cause consumers to prioritize essential goods over lifestyle items.	Emphasizing perceived value through dine in experience, helping maintain customer interest despite reduced spending flexibility
	Cultural demand peaks Market sensitive with local cultural especially Eid Al-Fitr, contrasting with decreased sales in cities affected by urban migration like Banda	Plan regional and seasonal promotions aligned with cultural celebrations to maximize visibility and demand during peaks season
Sociocultural	Health-conscious trends, sugar reduction Consumers reduce sugar intake and prefer healthier options, impacting demand for products like Mixue	Offer more healthy options, such as adjustable sugar levels, and explore strategies to meet preferences for healthier indulgences
	Social media trends and visual appeal Consumers highly responsive to visually unique products that align with social media trends	Mixue should continuously develop trend driven innovation visuals to align with digital behavior and boost social sharing
	Digital reporting and supervision Cloud tools and remote monitoring improve store operation efficiency	Continue adopting digital tools to streamline reporting, monitoring, and staff coordination.
Technological	Online ordering. cashless payment Consumers now expect digital payments	Strengthen digital presence with online ordering options and consistent branding across social platforms.
	Social media and digital promotion Instagram, TikTok, and other social media essential for promotions, visibility, engagement, and influencing purchase through reviews and	Mixue must maintain a strong and consistent digital presence with trend driven and platform specific content
Environmental	Eco conscious consumer behavior Eco conscious behavior is rising. reusable items like merchandise tumbler align with sustainable expectations	Promote reusable merchandise tumbler and introduce incentives for sustainable choices to boost eco-friendly appeal
Legal	Halal certification and legal store status Legal compliance and halal status are essential to consumer trust, especially in Lhokseumawe	Ensure visible compliance and consistently promote halal certification to reinforce trust

### Porter's Five Forces Analysis

The competitive dynamics at Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe can be analyzed through Porter's Five Forces, revealing significant challenges and opportunities. The threat of new entrants is moderate to high, as lower operational costs in Lhokseumawe and the lack of proximity regulations facilitate market entry. Competitors, like Cooler City, have capitalized on gaps, such as during raw material shortages, demonstrating that timely differentiation can yield market traction. Supplier power is high

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due to Mixue's dependence on a central supplier for core ingredients, which has resulted in operational vulnerabilities, especially during supply shortages that drastically affected sales. This dependency limits the company's autonomy and flexibility in managing supply chain risks. On the demand side, buyer power is strong; despite Mixue's brand strength, customer loyalty is highly price-sensitive. Customers can easily switch to competitors if prices rise or promotions lack appeal, forcing Mixue to implement frequent discounts and offers that strain profit margins. The threat of substitutes is also high, as consumers can readily opt for similar products from competitors, diminishing the loyalty program's effectiveness. Lastly, industry rivalry is moderate to high, marked by early market saturation and the rapid entry of competitors. Although no new entrants have emerged recently, the market remains unpredictable and open to growth, necessitating strategic agility from Mixue Merdeka. Overall, the competitive landscape requires the company to navigate significant forces, emphasizing the need for adaptive strategies to maintain its market position.

Tabel IV.3 Porter's Five Forces Analysis Result (Author, 2025)

Theme	Key Statement	Result Interpretation
Threat of New Entrants	Big capital but affordable startup costs in Lhokseumawe Opening a store typically requires an investment until around IDR 1 billion, but Lhokseumawe offers a financial advantage due to significantly lower rental prices, around IDR 80 million/ year, compared to IDR 150-200 million in Java for similar sized spaces.	Moderate to High While opening a store requires significant capital, the relatively low rental costs in Lhokseumawe make it a financially attractive
	No supporting regulation Mixue does not enforce a minimum distance between stores, which may lead to competition among partners. Other brands also cannot be controlled either, as there are no government regulations on this matter	location However, the absence of both brand imposed and government regulations regarding store proximity can lead to tighter competition that could not be controlled.
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	Challenges for new competitors but it will succeed if the company let its guard down New entrants face the challenge of winning over customers loyalty and awareness. But still could be succeed for instance, Cooler City took advantage of Mixue's ingredient shortage in 2024 by launching a clean, attractive store with offerings Mixue lacked, like snack items and four ice cream variants, positioning themselves as a fresh alternative	More worst, new competitors still have opportunities to succeed by identifying market gaps and offering differentiated products even if its hard but proven for example by Cooler City's strategic entry during Mixue's supply shortage in last year.
	No alternative raw material supplier options Alternatives are limited to items like lemon and Oreo cookies, all other materials must be bought from the Mixue's central management, or company could face penalties.	High The bargaining power of suppliers is very high in this case. The company is fully dependent on Mixue central for nearly all raw
	High impact of raw material shortages The shortage had a major impact, from June to September 2024, sales dropped significantly until 301% decreasing because of this issue from Mixue's central management.	materials, with limited flexibility and no alternative sources due to the regulation. This strong control allows the supplier to dictate terms, and any disruption directly impacts the
Bargaining	Strategy to reduce supplier dependency with big capital Due to a binding contract with Mixue central for raw material supply, company could only attempt to mitigate the issue by increasing its rounding inventory, but this requires significant capital.	company's operations and revenue. The company has minimal leverage, and mitigation efforts like increasing inventory are costly and not easily sustainable.
	Strong presence of established brands Big brands have a strong appeal to consumers, who are more likely to choose well known names like Mixue for consistent taste and service quality.	High While established brands like Mixue attract customer loyalty through consistent quality,
Power of Buyers	Price sensitive customers with strong influence Customers are highly sensitive to price changes and have significant influence over product pricing and promotional decisions.	customers remain highly price sensitive and exert strong influence over pricing and promotions.
Threat of	Low level of case and cost switching Customers can easily switch to competitors because switching costs are minimal, and simple cheaper promotions like can strongly influence customer decisions	High Competitors can easily attract buyers with simple promotions. While the company's loyalty program helps retain customers, it
Substitutes	Strategy to maintain product appeal against substitutes The company uses a customer loyalty program to encourage repeat purchases and retain customer interest.	may not be enough to fully counteract the strong influence of substitute products in a highly price sensitive market.
	Lot of number similar competitors There are currently two Cooler City outlets, one Momoyo, and one Mixue from the	Moderate to High

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	other franchise partner exclude company in a mall, which is unlikely to be considered a direct competitor.	
The intensity of industry	Fast growth in number of competitors In 2024 already emerge four similar competitor in only at range of fourth month Mixue Merdeka opening but no new competitors have emerged since middle of 2024, likely due to Lhokseumawe being a small city with limited market size	Although the number of new competitors has stabilized since middle 2024 due to limited market size in Lhokseumawe, the early surge in similar businesses shows the market's competitiveness. The unpredictable growth of
rivalry	Uncontrolled industry growth Food and beverage industry, especially in ice cream and beverages section is industry that could be still growing either from local or global company, making competitive rate could not be predicted	the food and beverage industry, especially in ice cream and beverages, keeps competition pressure high. The company what to efforts to stay competitive but sustaining an edge remains challenging.
	Company's effort to stay competitive is quite hard The company maintains quality, uses loyalty programs, and relies on Mixue central's new promotions and menu items to attract and retain customers.	

### Marketing Strategy Formulation

#### SWOT and TOWS Analysis

The formulation of marketing strategy recommendations in this chapter begins with the structured identification and categorization of key result from previously conducted analyses above into four strategic dimensions consist of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats then coded to serve as the foundation for developing appropriate strategic responses using the TOWS matrix. Through this method, the strategies proposed are directly designed to be both relevant and actionable. Following is a detail of the SWOT elements generated, which will be further elaborated and matched in the next section.

Tabel IV.6 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat List (Author, 2025)

Theme	Key Statement	Result Interpretation
Threat of New Entrants	Big capital but affordable startup costs in Lhokseumawe: Opening a store usually requires an investment of around IDR 1 billion, but in Lhokseumawe the rental cost is much cheaper, around IDR 80 million/year compared to IDR 150–200 million in Java.	Moderate to High: Low rental costs in Lhokseumawe provide financial benefits. However, the absence of a strong brand image + minimum distance regulation between stores can trigger uncontrolled competition. New competition can be successful with product differentiation, such as the Cooler City strategy when Mixue experiences a shortage of material supply in 2024.
	No supporting regulation: There is no minimum distance regulation between shops → competitions can eat each other.	Just like above, the potential for competition is out of control.
	Challenges for new competitors but it will succeed if the company lets guard down: New competitors face customer loyalty challenges, but they can succeed if Mixue is caught off guard (e.g. Cooler City launches an alternative product).	New competitions still have a chance of success if they are able to read market needs and offer differentiation.
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	No alternative raw material supplier options: Mandatory raw materials from Mixue center, except lemon & Oreo cookies.	High: Full dependence on central Mixue, with no other alternative → the supplier's leverage is very strong.
	High impact of raw material shortages: Supply shortage in 2024 (Jun–Sep) → a 30% decline in sales.	The impact is huge on operations and revenue.
	Strategy to reduce supplier dependency with big capital: Mixue can only reduce dependence with large investments (large stock).	An expensive strategy, difficult to sustain.
	Strong pressure of established brands: Strong pressure from big brands to maintain supply.	The company has minimal leverage.
Bargaining Power of Buyers	Big brands have strong influence: Consumers prefer big brands with consistency of taste and service.	High: Consumers remain price sensitive, Mixue's brand loyalty helps, but there is still a lot of pressure.

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	Price sensitive customers with strong influence: Consumers are very price sensitive, influencing purchasing decisions.	Strong pressure from buyers.
Threat of Substitutes	Competitors can easily attract with promotions: Competitors can easily attract consumers with small promotions.	High: Mixue's loyalty exists, but the market is very price sensitive.
	Loyalty program may not be enough: Mixue's loyalty program helps, but it may not be enough when there are cheaper substitute products.	High risk of losing consumers.
The intensity of industry rivalry	Rapid and unpredictable industry growth: The rapid growth of the ice cream & beverage industry, with new competitors every year.	Moderate to High: Many new players → fierce competition. There is a need for product differentiation & cost efficiency.
	Highly competitive with limited differentiation: All products are similar, only slightly different variants.	The competition is getting more intense.
	Mixue has advantage of quality control & central management: Mixue excels in quality & central control.	This advantage is a shield, but it is not always enough in a price-sensitive market.

Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
O1: Unique cultural regulations encourage localized marketing	T1: Mandatory closures at certain times may limit sales hours
O2: Remain or low VAT could revive spending	T2: Lower interest in non-essentials due to selective spending
O3: Social media trends increase and impulse buying	T3: Community Treat Seekers consumer shows signs of decline
O4: Event and seasons sensitive market	T4: Public distrust quickly if legality or safety is questioned
O5: Rise of online platforms like GoFood and GrabFood expands reach	T5: New entrants' threat
O6: Increasing consumer attention to eco-friendly brands	T6: High bargaining power of suppliers
O7: Consumer need attractive promos like buy 1 get 1, upsizing, and bundling with best seller menus	T7: High bargaining power of buyers
O8: Adjusting sweetness could attract health-conscious buyers	T8: High threat of substitutes
O9: Near landmarks increase exposure and product completeness	T9: High intensity of industry rivalry
O10: Positive market growth in online ordering but little slow	T10: Menu lacks variety compared to competitors
O11: High level FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) marketing from review, social media, and word of mouth	T11: Competitors offer larger sizes of menu, aggressive promotions, innovation like WhatsApp-based order
O12: Personalized and targeted service could differentiate brand experience	T12: Competitors use viral channels like TikTok more effectively
O13: Branding stuff well received, especially for children, like merchandise, mascot, etc.	T13: Treat offerings less appealing than competitor like Cooler City
	T14: Apart from children, merchandise is considered too basic for some consumer

Following the SWOT identification above, a TOWS matrix analysis was conducted to formulate strategic alternatives by leverage existing advantages, address internal challenges, capitalize on market potential, and mitigate external risks. The resulting matrix presents a comprehensive set of strategies based on Mixue Merdeka's current conditions. However, these strategies are not yet optimal for direct implementation for solving focused problem, as they remain broad and unfocused. Therefore, a filtering process will be conducted next to refine the strategy formulation, focusing specifically on the core issues faced by Mixue Merdeka which is its competitive advantage. This research will include a detailed breakdown of prioritized strategic directions to ensure they are more targeted, relevant, and applicable to the company.

Tabel IV.7 SWOT TOWS Matrix Formulation (Author, 2025)

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
S1. Experienced management in finance, HR, material, and store daily operation	W1. Added reliance on key initiatives (KPI) during peak execution
S2. Having local menu items during significant periods	W2. Limited menu variety compared to competitors
S3. Strong brand loyalty	W3. Lower attractiveness in bigger-size packaging



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S4. Prime locations with high visibility & traffic	W4. Weak visibility for branding & awareness
S5. Established supplier relations with SOPs	W5. New branches slow in developing brand image
S6. High brand awareness	W6. Weak industry fit in premium/mid-premium
S7. Aligned product choices with popular items	W7. Very low brand positioning in Grab & GoFood apps
S8. Strong social media presence	W8. Low visibility/engagement in Google Maps
S9. Strong word-of-mouth influence	W9. Weak franchise management & long SOP training
S10. Seasonal & event-based performance	W10. Weak in online order promo & bundling
S11. Innovative bundle products	W11. Low ticket size contribution, unattractive long term
S12. Diversification to F&B & health trends	W12. Outreach not specific & personalized
S13. Strict franchise structure	
S14. SOP ensures consistency	
S15. Strong ingredient management	
S16. Higher product variety	
S17. Efficient operation process	
S18. Strong recall & repeat purchase esp. students	
<b>Opportunities (O)</b>	<b>Threats (T)</b>
O1. Local regulations encourage localized marketing	T1. Mandatory closures limit sales hours
O2. Low VAT could revive spending	T2. Lower interest in non-essentials
O3. Social media trends & impulse buying	T3. Decline of “Community Treat Seekers”
O4. Event & seasonal sensitive market	T4. Public distrust if legality/safety questioned
O5. Growth of GoFood & GrabFood	T5. New entrants
O6. Rising attention to eco-friendly brands	T6. High bargaining power of suppliers
O7. Need for promos (buy 1 get 1, bundling)	T7. High bargaining power of buyers
O8. Adjusting sweetness for health buyers	T8. High threat of substitutes
O9. Locations near landmarks boost exposure	T9. High industry rivalry
O10. Market growth in online orders	T10. Menu lacks variety vs competitors
O11. High FOMO from reviews/social media	T11. Competitors offer larger menus & aggressive promos
O12. Personalized service could differentiate brand	T12. Competitors strong in viral TikTok marketing
O13. Branding (mascot, merchandise) popular with children	T13. Treat offerings less appealing vs Cooler City
	T14. Merchandise too basic for non-children
<b>WO Strategies (W + O)</b>	<b>WT Strategies (W + T)</b>
W1, W2 → O1, O2: Localized marketing & VAT benefit to reduce reliance & menu gap	W1, W2 → T1, T2: Improve execution efficiency to minimize closure & spending impact
W3, W4, W5 → O3, O4: Improve packaging & branding visibility with seasonal promos	W3, W4 → T3, T4: Enhance visibility to maintain “treat seekers” trust
W6, W7, W8 → O5, O6: Strengthen digital presence in GoFood/GrabFood + eco branding	W5, W6 → T5, T6: Speed up branch image + premium fit to face entrants & supplier power
W9, W10 → O7, O8: Better franchise training & online promo bundling	W7, W8 → T7, T8: Boost online presence to manage buyer power & substitutes
W11, W12 → O9, O10, O11: Personalized targeting to boost online growth & FOMO marketing	W9, W10 → T9, T10: Improve franchise training & promos to counter rivalry & menu weakness
All W → O12, O13: Personalization & mascot branding to offset long-term weakness	W11, W12 → T11, T12, T13, T14: Personalization + viral marketing to counter competitor promos & weak merchandise

### Ansoff Matrix

After generating a full set of strategic alternatives through the TOWS matrix, as discussed in the previous section, the next step requires filtering and prioritizing strategies that directly address the core issues faced by Mixue Merdeka. To define the most relevant strategic direction, this chapter applies the Ansoff Matrix as a guiding tool. The Ansoff framework allows for the classification of each strategy based on two key dimensions including product development and market expansion. Using the nine box Ansoff Matrix model, each strategy is assessed by the internal company justification through a scoring system that reflects the degree of change in product and market.

Product scores are assigned as follows 0 for existing products, 1 for modified products, and 2 for entirely new products. Meanwhile, market scores are determined as 0 for existing segments, 1 for new segments within the same market, and 2 for entirely new markets. These two dimensions form a matrix of nine strategic directions, a product score of 0 and market score of 0 results in a Market Penetration strategy, which aims to increase sales of current products within the existing customer base. A 0–1 combination leads to Targeted Penetration, reaching new segments using existing products. A 0–2 pairing defines Market Development, where existing products are introduced to new markets. On the other hand, a 1–0 score indicates Light Product Development, enhancing the product for current users,

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while 1–1 leads to Product Extension, and 1–2 results in Segment Expansion. Then, if the product is entirely new which is score 2, the strategies shift toward more innovative directions to Innovation Reposition 2–0, New Segment Offering 2–1, and Diversification 2–2, the most aggressive form of market growth. The following detail scoring for Mixue Merdeka's case.

Tabel IV.8 Strategy Scoring based on Ansoff Marix Analysis (Author, 2025)

TOWS Code	TOWS Strategy	Product Score	Market Score	Marketing Direction
S1, O1, O4	Create seasonal-based promotions or localized events	0	2	Market Penetration
S5, S9, S12, O7	Maximize prime location with real-time multichannel promos to boost walk-ins through consumer-preferred deals like buy 1 get 1, upsizing, best seller bundling	0	2	Market Penetration
S6, S12, O2	Expose affordable with tax inclusive prices	0	1	Market Penetration
S7, O5, O10	Provide proper online and third-party orders to tap into growing but gradual online order demand	0	3	Market Expansion
S12, O6	Promote eco-friendly initiatives through multichannel outreach to attract sustainability-minded consumers	0	3	Market Development
S12, S15, O8	Target kid-driven buyers by promoting low sugar options to parents via multichannel reminders	0	1	Market Penetration
S7, O9	Explore partnerships with nearby F&B outlets to complement offerings, leveraging landmark proximity for exposure and added value	0	1	Market Penetration
S8, S17, S20, O11	Enhance social media and apply hashtag campaigns, playgrounds, and kids-friendly design to deliver distinctive differentiation	0	2	Market Penetration
S12, O12	Personalized service with data-based alternative differentiation	0	1	Market Penetration
S1, S2, O1	Local investment into innovation in dine-in experiences less risky, handle by capable management to maintain stability despite increasing responsibilities	0	1	Market Development
S8, S17, S20, O11	Utilize micro influencers via social media to drive positive review trends	1	0	Product Modification
S12, O12	Run internet WhatsApp-based ordering and direct delivery service	1	0	Product Modification
S12, S15, O8	Expand low sugar options in seasonal packages, playgrounds, and experiences to make kid-friendly feel based on feedback and reduce buyer bargaining power	1	0	Product Modification
S7, S8, O13	Strengthen consumer brand quality recall by seasonal multichannel reminders to reengage community treat seekers, reduce substitution threats, and strengthen loyalty through mascot quality, value, service, and dine-in experience	1	0	Product Modification
S18, S19, T4	Highlight information for greater consumer communicating halal certification, hygiene, and product safety assurances	0	1	Market Penetration
S5, S7, T7	Conduct product survey on performance and innovation, then refine based on insights	0	1	Market Development
S10, S11, T8	Reduce cost and supplier bargaining power by producing noncentral items like water cups and ice, lowering supplier risk while keeping menu items like extra water or ice central	0	1	Market Development
S13, S14, T5	Franchise SOP and policies for new entrants to drive suppliers and service	0	1	Market Development
S12, S16, T10	Create flexible, innovative product experiences to overcome limited menu variety	1	0	Product Modification
S8, S17, S20, T12	Strengthen social media campaigns to compete with TikTok competitor virality	0	1	Market Development
S18, T4	Conduct consumer surveys on safety certification	0	1	Market Development
S8, S9, S17, T11	Focus on online platforms like WhatsApp to strengthen viral penetration	0	1	Market Expansion
W1, W3, O4	Optimize execution strategy by aligning F&B to seasonal demand	0	1	Market Development
W2, O6	Extend menu items to new eco-friendly categories to attract eco-conscious demand	1	0	Product Modification
W3, O4	Introduce bigger-size packaging as seasonal promo bundle	1	0	Product Modification

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W7, O5	Raise visibility by adjusting pricing and promos in Grab/GoFood	0	1	Market Development
W10, W3, O7	Improve online promotion bundling	1	0	Product Modification
W11, W12, O11	Increase specific targeting via Google Maps (CV) to expand FOMO marketing	0	1	Market Development
W12, T9	Adopt OKR practices on each consumer-targeted segment	0	1	Market Development
W5, W6, T5	Improve store branding and premium positioning to face competitors	0	1	Market Development
W7, W8, T7	Leverage better brand positioning in digital apps to reduce buyer bargaining power	0	1	Market Development
W9, W10, T9	Improve franchise SOP training and online promos	0	1	Market Development
W11, W12, T11	Improve personalization and customer engagement with WhatsApp ordering	0	1	Market Development
W13, T13	Improve treat innovation with mascot packaging, theme personalization, and toppings	1	0	Product Modification
S13, S14, T14	Enhance product visual and mascot packages, reduce presentation weakness	1	0	Product Modification
W1, W5, T2	Reinforce visual campaigns to recover consumer selective spending	0	1	Market Development

Based on the strategic classifications outlined above, the following graph illustrates the proportion of marketing strategy directions defined through the Ansoff Matrix scoring process. The majority of strategies over 71% is the direction of market penetration, indicating a strong emphasis on maximizing current product offerings within existing customer segments. The second most common direction is product modification for over 15% of the total strategies. Meanwhile, strategies related to market expansion and market development each contribute a much smaller share, at just 6.3% respectively. These proportions clearly indicate that the primary strategic direction for Mixue Merdeka's case lies in market penetration. However, the second high portion of product modification, when combined with market penetration represents more than 87% of all proposed strategies. This reinforces the importance of not only retaining and growing within the current market but also making incremental product improvements to strengthen customer interest. Moreover, as previously justified in earlier analyses, innovation remains essential in building a sustainable competitive advantage, especially given Mixue Merdeka's franchise limitations case. Therefore, the next section will focus exclusively on strategies that align with these two marketing directions including market penetration and product modification. These approaches are considered the most relevant and applicable to Mixue Merdeka's current condition.

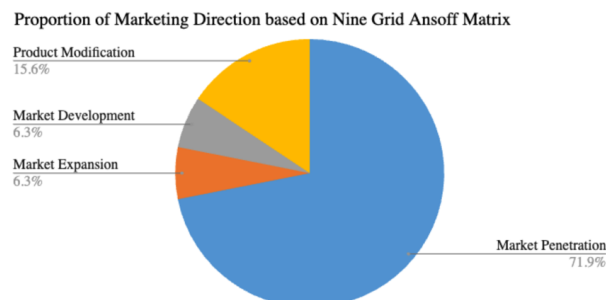


Figure IV.7 Distribution of Strategy Marketing Direction (Author, 2025)

To validate the qualitative analytical direction of this research, that shows the emphasis on market penetration and product modification as strategic levers for enhancing competitive advantage, relevant empirical evidence from existing literature was reviewed. Based on the study by Okegbemiro (2022), market penetration has been shown to significantly impact business performance in the FnB industry. Using a regression model with a sample of 491 employees from FnB firms, the study reported a coefficient of  $\beta = 0.932$  ( $t = 47.129$ ,  $R^2 = 0.835$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), concluding that market penetration

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strategies, such as promotional pricing, customer acquisition, and intensified distribution, directly enhance growth rate and strengthen competitiveness with the result shows below.

### Business Solution

In line with the conceptual framework used to address the identified problem, the proposed solution is formulated through a marketing strategy approach that is both relevant and implementable. This is operationalized through the development of a new competitive marketing mix, designed to align with current market dynamics and consumer expectations. The following outlines the strategic solutions proposed for each element of the mix.

Tabel IV.9 New Marketing Mix Summary (Author, 2025)

Marketing Direction	Marketing Mix	TOWS Code	Proposed Marketing Strategy
Market Penetration	Product	W7, O12; S3, S4, S5, T2, T7; W1, W5, T8, T14; W10, T3, T9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain product &amp; service consistency to protect market fit and support long-term connection</li> <li>- Drive sustainable differentiation through product form fit aligning with design in dine-in experience, hot core product, or service bundle segmentation needs, and continuously innovating the customer experience</li> </ul>
Product Modification	Price	S6, S12, O2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maximize synergy with promotional strategy to adjust price under fixed pricing menu</li> <li>- Strengthen value perception as the most smart value choice through strategic communication and relevant offers</li> </ul>
Market Penetration	Place	S7, O9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance store physical comfort accessibility to support high volume repeat visits</li> <li>- Maximize strategic location advantages through nearby dine-in F&amp;B partnership-based bundling initiatives</li> </ul>
Market Penetration	Promotion	W8, O10; W2, T14; O9, O11, O3, O1, O7; S12, S6, O2; S5, S6, O2; W12, T11; W3, S12, O7; W5, W6, T10; S11, O4; S8, S15, O8; S12, S10, O11, S12; S18, S19, T5, T8; S6, T6, T7; S14, T12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build trust &amp; credibility by delivering transparent &amp; consistent product communication</li> <li>- Increase purchase demand by offering price - based with high perceived value promotions- Personalize promotions based on consumer behavior, family routines, and multichannel means to provide contextual relevance</li> <li>- Optimization &amp; integration promotion channel</li> </ul>
Market Penetration	People	S8, S17, S20, O12; W2, O6; W4, O8; S1, S2, O12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen service consistency and upselling skills</li> <li>- Support higher margin service by targeting premium audience</li> <li>- Ensure standard service execution &amp; innovation readiness at management level</li> </ul>
Market Penetration	Process	W3, O8, O12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure a smooth transaction experience by continuously improving delivery value and improving upselling execution through relevant bundling packages or value-added transaction offers</li> </ul>
Product Modification	Physical Evidence	S8, S17, S20, O12; S13, T13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop engaging dine-in areas that cater for family and other community needs while enhancing physical appeal</li> </ul>
Market Penetration	Performance	S18, S19, T5, T7, T8; S1, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14; W7, W10, W11, O12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide accessible complaint and feedback media to improve performance</li> <li>- Maximize standardization in taste, and service quality while actively showcasing store performance excellence</li> </ul>

As summarized above, the proposed marketing strategies for each element of the marketing mix are derived from a TOWS based analysis, which has been refined using the Ansoff Matrix to define

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appropriate strategic directions. These strategies also integrate insights from previous highlight, including a comparative review of Mixue Merdeka's current marketing mix. The result is a set of actionable and context specific recommendations for each element, presented as a cohesive business solution below.

### **Product**

Mixue Merdeka's menu and best-selling products align well with consumer preferences, showcasing a strong product-market fit. Signature items like Mixue Ice Cream Cones and Sundaes are praised for their taste and value, and the brand is known for its friendly, consistent service. However, in a saturated market with competitors like Momoyo and Cooler City offering broader product varieties and larger portions, this alignment alone is insufficient for sustaining a competitive advantage. To thrive, Mixue Merdeka must embrace innovation through market penetration and product modification strategies. Market penetration relies on the store's strengths in product quality and service consistency, with many repeat customers visiting frequently, particularly during family outings. However, reliance on a single supplier for raw materials poses risks; disruptions could affect menu availability and customer satisfaction. Strengthening inventory forecasting and operational buffers is crucial. Additionally, enhancing the dining experience by improving comfort and layout can create a more inviting atmosphere for families and community members. For product modification, Mixue Merdeka should focus on enriching the overall experience rather than altering the core menu due to franchise restrictions. Engaging with the community through school visits and local partnerships can position the store as a social hub. Optimizing the dining area with playgrounds and activity zones transforms dessert outings into family events. Furthermore, enhancing product visual appeal through themed toppings and attractive presentations can boost social media presence, encouraging impulse purchases. By prioritizing high-quality, innovative experiences that resonate emotionally, Mixue Merdeka can strengthen brand loyalty and capture online trends. Ultimately, balancing operational consistency with creative service enhancements will allow Mixue Merdeka to evolve from a transactional brand into a lifestyle destination that meets consumer expectations.

### **Price**

Although Mixue Merdeka could not set its own prices due to franchise control, it must optimize the synergy between fixed pricing and strategic promotions. The price range of Rp8.000 to 22.000 is widely perceived as fair and affordable, supported by strong product quality and dine in service. While competitors like Cooler City and Momoyo offer more variety or larger portions, Mixue retains an edge in ice cream quality and overall experience. As a cost leader, Mixue reduces operational costs using advanced equipment without compromising quality. So that Mixue Merdeka should shape consumer perception that Mixue Merdeka represents the most "smart value" choice, where the enjoyment they receive, both in taste and experience that unmatched by similarly priced competitors or more premium options like cafes, which often appear affordable upfront but add hidden taxes or deliver less value. Then Mixue Merdeka should consistently communicate its tax inclusive pricing through multichannel platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok to enhance transparency and revive consumer spending confidence. The price element is important because its is highly influential factor in purchase decisions so Mixue Merdeka need strengthen perceived value through creative promotions and complementary offerings with paired adjusted price promotion strategy such as bundling and upsizing or even added value services like loyalty programs, and personalized dine in experiences could reinforce Mixue Merdeka's position and sustain its competitive advantage in price driven market landscape that will be detailed next in promotion element section.

### **Place**

Place element refers not only to where a product is sold, but also how easily and comfortably consumers could access it. At Mixue Merdeka, this aspect is particularly strong based on analysis result. The Mixue Merdeka store is consistently ranked as the most accessible among competitors, supported by its prime physical location. Strategically located along a major two-way road, Mixue Merdeka sits across from the Islamic Center and Lapangan Hiraq as Lhokseumawe's landmark and shares visibility with several established FnB brands with strong dine in traffic. This positioning creates an opportunity to further optimize Place strategy through collaborative bundling with nearby outlets. For instance, Mixue Merdeka could partner with nearby coffee shops like Petro Dollar, located directly beside the store, to create collaborative menu bundles, where Mixue Merdeka's ice cream is included as the dessert component. In this arrangement, if a customer orders the bundled set while dining at the partner FnB,



the Mixue team would prepare and deliver the ice cream directly to the partner's dine in area. This model enables cross brand value creation while remaining fully compliant with franchise restrictions, as no external products are sold or served within the Mixue outlet. Beyond location, the ease and comfort which consumers could access the store, supported by well-organized parking and a comfortable dine in layout, further reinforces Mixue Merdeka's strength in the Place element. Respondents consistently rate the parking area highly for being clean, neat, and functional, despite minor heat related concerns which have already been addressed in the product strategy. These combined factors in physical access and local partnership potential enable Mixue to sustain high purchase frequency, especially among dine in oriented consumers like this.

### **Promotion**

To enhance its competitiveness in a saturated and value-conscious market, Mixue Merdeka must leverage promotions not merely to announce offers but as a strategic tool to translate product value into consumer action. With pricing and product structures largely fixed by the franchisor, promotions become the key lever for stimulating demand, building loyalty, and personalizing customer experiences. Mixue Merdeka's consumers are both price sensitive and emotionally responsive to trustworthy promotions, necessitating transparent communication about halal certification, hygiene standards, and inclusive pricing. Peer reviews and digital recommendations play a critical role in driving trial and repeat purchases. Customers respond well to attractive deals like buy one get one offers and bundling programs, which can enhance perceived value despite core product and pricing restrictions. For instance, a "Secret Menu" bundling concept could evoke curiosity and impulse visits without altering base products. Furthermore, promotions should align with consumer routines and cultural moments, utilizing geo-targeted messaging to offer limited-time deals to nearby customers. Adding small, high-perceived extras, such as free water, can foster a sense of care without incurring additional costs. Personalized loyalty programs communicated through social media can engage community segments, while interactive events, like ice cream-making sessions for children, can strengthen emotional connections. Effective channel optimization is crucial; TikTok should feature trend-based content, Instagram needs to improve consistency and visual appeal, and WhatsApp should serve as a personalized communication platform. In-store staff must be trained to deliver promotional messages clearly and consistently. Ultimately, Mixue Merdeka's promotion strategy should be attractive, timely, and integrated across channels, ensuring all campaigns resonate with the audience. By adopting this holistic, behavior-driven approach, Mixue Merdeka can transform promotions into a powerful engine for loyalty and growth.

### **People**

The People element refers to everyone involved in shaping the customer experience, from frontline crew to upper management. At Mixue Merdeka, crew performance is generally strong, marked by friendliness and efficiency, but key improvements are needed to ensure consistency during peak seasons, strengthen personalized upselling, implement structured reward systems, and enhance workflow management. To improve personalized service, crew should be trained to upsell through tailored suggestions, such as topping recommendations, sweetness adjustments particularly for health conscious parent or targeted customer segments, active inform currently promos like bundling or add ons that could enhance upselling strategy. This enhances both customer connection and sales effectiveness. Then for maintaining service quality during peak periods requires operational systems that support performance under pressure. This includes better crew scheduling and real time workflow oversight to prevent quality drops during high traffic. Also reward system, like a Crew of the Month program, should be reinforced to boost motivation and service consistency, allowing Mixue to outperform competitors who rely solely on pricing promotions. On the management side, Mixue must continue leveraging investor support and goal driven leadership to explore dine in innovations, while staying responsive to aggressive competitor moves such as upsized portions, discounts, or WhatsApp based delivery. A focused, agile management team is crucial for translating strategy into consistent frontline execution. Together, these efforts ensure Mixue Merdeka's people element remain a core competitive advantage, capable of delivering excellent, personalized service consistently, while adapting quickly to both customer needs and market shifts.

### **Process**

The transactional process at Mixue Merdeka quite smooth and convenient, with customers consistently reporting clear menu displays, efficient service, and diverse payment options that have to

be maintained and updated to stay competitive. Despite this strength, one notable gap lies in the passive role of staff during transactions, particularly in recommending promotions or menu combinations suited to customer preferences. To address this, Mixue Merdeka should have clear SOPs for excellent selling interaction and daily promo based transaction targets to ensure crew contribute more actively to value communication at the point of sale. Meanwhile operationally, Mixue Merdeka could further strengthen efficiency by reducing reliance on external suppliers for noncentral materials. By using in house ice machines and Reverse Osmosis (RO) water filtration systems, the store minimizes recurring costs for ice cube and drink water, the two of the largest contributors to beverage related expenses. These systems not only lower costs but also increase operational independence. However, they must be properly maintained to avoid breakdowns that could lead to costly external purchases. This integrated process strategy reinforces Mixue's cost leadership while sustaining quality and customer value.

#### **Physical Evidence**

In the 8Ps marketing mix, physical evidence covers tangible brand touchpoints, like store layout, ambience, and merchandise, that shape consumer experience. At Mixue Merdeka, enhancing this element is key to supporting market penetration by creating a space that feels relevant, appealing, and engaging. Improvements should focus on two areas consist of merchandise and dine in environment. While merchandise is provided by the franchisor, but its visibility could be maximized, especially for items popular among children, this is to reinforce brand recall. For the dine in space, enhancements should cater families and also the other community-based segments, through flexible layouts that support gatherings, school visits, and the other occasions to making the space socially inclusive. Also dine in visual need to be upgraded such as adding more aesthetic Instagramable spot, brighter lighting, live music, and mascot activities could increase in store appeal and help the brand stand out. Together, these elements turn Mixue Merdeka into more than just a product stop, it becomes a welcoming community space that supports repeat visits and strengthens connection.

#### **Performance**

Performance refers to how well a store consistently delivers its promise, through product quality, service, operational reliability, and overall customer satisfaction. At Mixue Merdeka, this includes maintaining stable taste, fast service, and comfortable store environment, which have been central to its positive reputation. To sustain and improve this, Mixue must go beyond internal standards and regularly conduct surveys on customer satisfaction, preferences, complaints, and competitor comparisons. This helps identify not just what is working, but what needs to be adapted, such as resolving dine in heat complaints or improving facilities for family and community-based consumers. At the same time, benchmarking against competitors is key, especially in areas like portion sizes, promo intensity, and delivery convenience. Then the excellent performance must also be visible and shareable. Mixue should encourage more online reviews and expose positive feedback to reinforce trust. By actively using performance insights to guide service improvements and innovation, Mixue Merdeka could strengthen loyalty, stand out from similar offerings, and remain competitive in a market where small differences in execution make a big impact.

### **Implementation Plan and Justification**

This section presents the implementation plan for the proposed strategies solution that were developed in the previous chapters. Each proposed marketing strategy is broken down into clear action items, assigned to specific departments (PIC), and scheduled according to a quarterly timeline. The implementation plan outlines not only the strategic urgency but also the justification and coordination required for successful execution across different aspects of the marketing mix. Where possible, this plan is designed to reflect the actual operational capacity and has been aligned with internal feedback and company internal stakeholder input to ensure practicality and effectiveness. The full set of implementation actions is summarized in the following table.

Tabel IV.9 Detail Implemtatin Plan Markeitng Staretgy Proposed (Author, 2025)

Marketing Mix (7P's)	Proposed Marketing Strategy	Strategy Category	PIC	Action Plan	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Product	Menjaga kualitas produk & layanan secara konsisten, memberikan rasa aman & pengalaman	Quality Consistency	Product Manager	Product quality standard control, routine review of SOPs, supplier	✓	✓	✓	✓

Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

	pelanggan jangka panjang			audits, employee training				
Product	Diferensiasi berkelanjutan lewat inovasi produk inti, bundling, dan inovasi experience dine-in	Innovation	Marketing Manager	Market trend research, new menu trials, innovative promos, seasonal menu launches	✓	✓	✓	✓
Price	Maksimalkan sinergi strategi promosi untuk menyesuaikan harga dengan fixed pricing menu	Pricing	Finance & Marketing	Price elasticity analysis, promo bundling, value for money communication	✓	✓		
Price	Perkuat persepsi value produk sebagai smart value choice	Branding	Marketing Manager	Value communication campaigns, price perception surveys, collaboration with KOLs		✓	✓	
Place	Tingkatkan aksesibilitas fisik store untuk mendukung repeat visit volume tinggi	Distribution	Store Manager	Addition of store facilities, evaluation of strategic locations, partnerships with local tenants	✓		✓	
Place	Manfaatkan lokasi strategis dekat landmark dengan bundling partnership F&B	Partnership	Business Development	Collaboration with F&B tenants, location-specific bundling packages, joint promos		✓		✓
Promotion	Bangun trust & kredibilitas melalui komunikasi transparan & konsisten	Branding	Marketing & PR	Brand education through social media, article publications, press releases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotion	Tingkatkan demand lewat price-based promo dengan persepsi value tinggi	Sales	Marketing	Discount promos, seasonal packages, cashback vouchers		✓	✓	
Promotion	Personalisasi promosi berbasis perilaku konsumen & channel multikanal	Digital Marketing	CRM & Marketing	Database segmentation, targeted ads, personalized email/SMS	✓		✓	
Promotion	Optimalkan & integrasikan seluruh kanal promosi	Omni-channel	Marketing & IT	WhatsApp ordering integration, loyalty app, promo analytics dashboard		✓		✓
People	Perkuat konsistensi service & kemampuan upselling staff	Training	HR & Store Manager	Regular training program, roleplay upselling, KPI service staff	✓		✓	✓
People	Support service premium untuk segmen high margin	Premium Service	Marketing & HR	Premium service training, service differentiation, exclusive membership		✓		✓
Process	Pastikan smooth transaction dengan peningkatan delivery value & promo upselling	Operations	Operations Manager	Order flow optimization, POS & app integration, add-on promos	✓	✓		✓
Physical Evidence	Kembangkan area dine-in ramah keluarga & komunitas	Store Development	Store Manager	Redesign interior, kids-friendly area, merchandise spot		✓	✓	

## Proposed Marketing Strategy to Enhance the Competitiveness in a Mixue Franchisee Store (Case Study: Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe)

Performance	Sediakan media komplain & feedback yang mudah diakses	Customer Care	Customer Service	Feedback channels (WA, app, email), complaint analysis, quick response	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance	Maksimalkan standarisasi rasa, kualitas layanan, & tampilan excellence store performance	Quality Assurance	QA Manager	Standard audit, mystery shopper, publicise store performance		✓		✓

## CONCLUSION

This study developed a competitive marketing strategy for *Mixue Merdeka Lhokseumawe* in a highly competitive and rapidly growing food and beverage market. Although the store demonstrated strengths such as quality products, affordable pricing, and a pleasant dining environment, these were insufficient to guarantee customer loyalty, underscoring the need for a stronger strategy. Using a structured conceptual framework and analytical tools like the Marketing Mix, VRIO, SWOT, PESTEL, and Porter's Five Forces, the research identified key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, including limited innovation, low digital visibility, intense competition, and rising consumer expectations. Based on consumer interviews and competitor analysis, the proposed marketing strategy—built on the STP approach and refined through TOWS and Ansoff matrices—emphasized market penetration and product modification through the 8Ps framework, focusing on product differentiation, value perception, accessibility, and promotion, alongside improvements in people, process, physical evidence, and performance to boost service and brand engagement. Future research is suggested to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of these strategies on customer loyalty and business performance in *Mixue Merdeka*.

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