

Analysis Michael E Porter's Generic Strategy on Increasing Furniture Products Sales

Devi Fitriani Ramadania ^{1*}, Budi Dharma²

^{1,2}Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

¹042079459@ecampus.ut.ac.id, ²budidharma @uinsu.ac.id

Abstract— *In times of economic instability, such as when the Covid-19 pandemic spreads in Indonesia, furniture companies need the right strategy to compete. Increasing sales during these conditions takes work; therefore, a fairly effective strategy is required through the three-point strategy coined by Michael E Porter, namely cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. This research aims to find a generic strategy suitable for implementation at PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail Informa branch Warung Jambu Bogor. The author chose the in-depth interview research method as a qualitative descriptive analysis technique. They were guided by Michael E Porter's generic strategy theory, namely cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, and focus strategy, as a tool to analyze this research. The results of the research conducted by the author concluded that the focus strategy had more influence on increasing sales of PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail Informa branch Warung Jambu Bogor.*

Keywords: Focus Strategy, Generic Strategy, Increasing Sales, Sales Innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail is a retail company under the Kawan Lama Group and was founded in 2004. This company is engaged in retail sales of household furniture furnishings, interior decorations and the most complete and varied electronic equipment in Indonesia. Informa provides more than 35,000 types of goods in the latest styles and designs for residences, public facilities, and business spaces. This company prioritizes customer needs and tastes by upholding the concept of "innovative and durable designs at affordable prices". A special strategy is needed by companies in facing the very tight world of competition between retail companies to increase the company's turnover so that it continues to develop in the retail world. The challenges were more pronounced when Panderni Covid-19 in 2020 significantly impacted the economy of household equipment retail companies. Based on research by Yona Winata (2021), suffering from Covid-19 has affected decreasing orders and income for 6 Yogyakarta furniture exporting companies, with an average decrease in revenue of 51.18%, resulting in a reduction in workforce of 58.04% in 3 companies [1]. However, it is different at PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail experienced an increase in sales during 2020. The generic strategy of focusing on online sales is one of the company's choices to survive amidst unfavourable economic conditions.

Economic progress in this era of increasingly advanced globalization has increased tight business competition. Based on the thoughts of Mutholib (2017), the current availability of Emerging Global Markets which provide ease of sales and service without having to meet supply (traders) and demand (buyers) when buying and selling transactions are carried out is one of the challenges for domestic producers to be able to

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* Corresponding Author: 042079459@ecampus.ut.ac.id

compete in the face of free market competition [2], [3]. *"Responding to the changes that occur within a short time in the current era of global competition, for companies to survive and be able to improve their ability to compete globally in turbulent conditions, they must formulate strategies that are adaptive and easily adjusted to keep up with sudden changes"* (Hill & Jones, 2012). Every company must be able to adapt to an ever-changing environment so that it can capture market share effectively and efficiently so that it can maintain its existence. The environment cannot be separated from the product or service sector. Producers must continue to develop and change to maintain and keep up with the flow of competition. The company must provide more value to its products and services.

Regarding quality and service, it will impact Consumer's purchasing decisions. Innovative product development and fast and precise decision-making movements are one of the keys. The ability to make the products offered can attract consumers, namely by providing products that have quality according to consumers' needs and requirements, is one way for companies to increase sales.

"Sales is an interaction between individuals meeting each other face to face which is aimed at creating, improving, controlling, or maintaining exchange relationships so that they benefit the other party." [4]. Sales are one thing that needs to be evaluated periodically. Analysis of causal factors or ways to increase sales needs to be carried out by every company. The analysis determines which factors are influential to maximize sales increases so that the company can create the right strategies and solutions to optimize profits. Choosing the right strategy will influence the success of a product. Strategy is a structured and integrated collection of steps or methods created to exploit core competencies (core competencies) to gain competitive advantage (competitive advantage). Strategy is one of the things that needs to be a company's main concern because strategy is one way to determine the company's direction towards effectiveness so that it can determine and adopt the right policies. Strategy is also a model of an organization's ideas or reactions to its environment.

Increasing competition in the business world makes it challenging for a company to implement strategies expected to impact its business significantly. The business sector that will always be sought after by people, especially newly married people, is the furniture business—both small and large-scale furniture businesses. Furniture is one of the necessities in the household. Every family needs home furniture to support daily activities. The fairly tight competition in this business is shown by the large number of market segments of people who choose to run this business. The competition indicates that companies need tactics that can be used to create and innovate a product so that it continues to attract public interest and can balance existing market competition.

PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail is one of the furniture retail companies that maintained and even increased its turnover during the Covid-19 pandemic. The author is interested in analyzing PT Home Center Indonesia Retail's strategies to survive the Covid-19 pandemic. The goal that researchers want to achieve in this research is to find out PT's competitive strategy. Home Center Indonesia Retail uses a generic competitive strategy model to build a competitive advantage and determine PT's obstacles. Home Center Indonesia Retail, from the generic competitive strategy model, was used to find the generic strategy model suitable at PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail.

2. THEORITICAL REVIEW

A generic strategy is an option for many companies to face competition between companies that have business in the same field [5]. This strategy aims to choose the right way to determine the right position and explore a company's advantages. Strategy consists of planning, formulation, and implementation in the company's operational activities to define clear goals [6]. Michael E Porter's Generic Strategy, which consists of a low-cost strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy, is a foundation for

increasing competitiveness for a company[7], [8]. This strategy is one effective way to overcome competitive forces in the business world[9]. In creating an appropriate competitive strategy, two things need to be considered: competitive advantage and product market coverage (competitive scope). According to Michael E Porter, competitive advantage has two sources: excellence in creating low costs (cost leadership) and excellence in producing different products (differentiation) from competing companies[10], [11]. The second is the product market coverage factor (competitive scope), which means that each company is placed in a market with a broad and narrow scope to compete with each other and create its advantages. Low costs and differentiation are the impact of each company's strengths and weaknesses. These two types of competitive advantages are combined to produce three strategies which can later be used to achieve good performance in an industry[12].



Figure 1 Michael E Porter's Generic Strategy (Source: Wijiharjono, 2018)

3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this article, the researcher chose a qualitative method. The qualitative approach is a research method that aims to understand what phenomena are experienced by research subjects. This research is descriptive to produce a more accurate picture of the data. The results of the data that have been collected will be expressed in words and images, not in the form of numbers[13], [14]. Therefore, all the data collected will likely be the key to what has been researched. Using this method, researchers can find descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words from perpetrators who can be observed directly to describe a series of events or population conditions occurring at present.

A research location is a place that indicates where the research will be carried out. This research was conducted at PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail Informa Warung Jambu Bogor branch, located on Jl. KS Tubun No.14 - 16, RT.03/RW.01, Cibuluh, Kec. North Bogor, Bogor City, West Java 16151. The researcher chose the research location by focusing on one branch of PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail is making data collection easier. This research was processed and analyzed using in-depth interview techniques, namely collecting data by asking questions directly to the Store Manager, Duty Store Manager, and Warung Jambu Informa Supervisor[15].

Descriptive analysis is the technical choice for data analysis used in this research. Qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and continues continuously until the data is complete. Activities in data analysis are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions or verification. The research was conducted by direct interviews with parties related to the research title, then interpreting it and putting it into writing linked to the theories associated with Michael E Porter's Porter's Generic Strategy (Poerwandari, 1998). The interview is a series of question-and-answer conversations that lead to achieving certain goals. A researcher chooses a qualitative interview method to learn about the subjective meanings that a group understands regarding the research topic and

intends to explore the issue. In other words, this issue cannot be addressed through different approaches.

"In-depth, formal open-ended interviews are a mainstream stream of qualitative research. Formal qualitative interviews are unstructured conversations with a purpose that usually prioritizes recording and transcribing data verbatim (word for word) and using an interview guide rather than a rigid arrangement of questions. Interview guides consist of general questions or topic charts used at the beginning of meetings to provide structure, especially for novice researchers. The general rule in qualitative interviews is not to impose an agenda or framework on participants; in fact, the purpose of this interview is to follow the participant's wishes. The use of this format is to capture participant's perspectives following the research objectives." Robinson (2000).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Maintaining sales in unstable national economic conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the biggest challenges that must be faced by all companies, especially furniture companies in Indonesia. The products sold are secondary needs, not the main needs of society. Furniture companies need to have a strategy to deal with this. As the iNews Depok Page (2023) reported, Meutia Kamala is a Co-Founder of PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail received the Indonesian Furniture Retail of the Year award at the 2023 Retail Asia Awards awards night in Singapore on Thursday, 15 June 2023. Informa succeeded in implementing a business strategy and creating a marketing campaign that successfully answered customer needs. The approach allows Informa always to maintain its offline sales growth achievements, resulting in an increase in online sales in the last three years. The strategy to increase sales that Informa used through its digital transformation brought it to recognition among furniture companies during the Covid-19 pandemic[16].

The following is a summary of the comparison of Informa Warung Jambu's sales achievements from 2019-2022, as follows:

COMPARE SALES

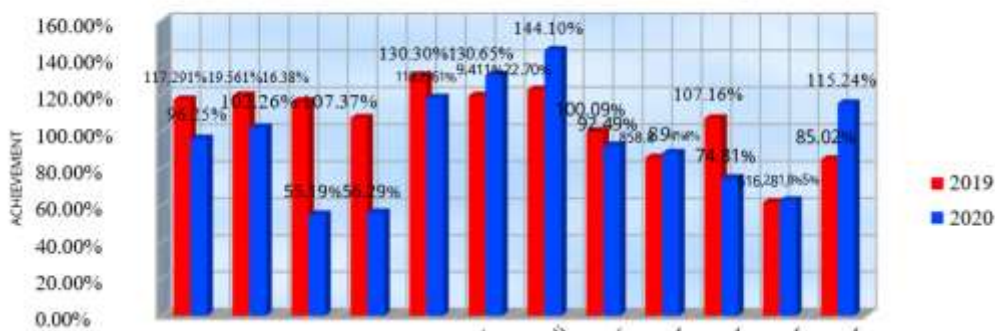


Figure 2 Comparison of Warung Jambu Bogor Sales Informa 2019-2020

The data above shows that Informa Warung Jambu has succeeded in maintaining its previous achievements in 2019, achieving 105.56%, namely IDR 4,211 million, with an initial target of IDR 3,989 million. In 2020, when the pandemic came, the Informa Warung Jambu store remained at 96.86% growth, 8.55%, IDR 4,571 million, with an initial target of IDR 4,720 million. Information can survive when the economy is not doing well that year[17], [18]. From the results of interviews conducted with Supervisors Warung Jambu's information is as follows:

"At the beginning of 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Indonesia, stores and even National experienced shocks that affected sales. The PPKM (Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities) policy in July 2021 made the company create a policy to stop store operations for 20 days. After that, when the PPKM (Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities) policy was implemented, the company adapted

by implementing WFH (Work from Home) with a rotating work system; only 50% of employees came in every day. The company made several adjustments, such as strict employee and customer health protocols, launching new products, adjusting product promotions, and adjusting marketing strategies focused more on online or in-person with each sales customer's loyal customers. It has a big impact on sales. The shop's achievements every month are quite good; in fact, almost every month achieves". (Results of an interview with Mr. Syahrul as Supervisors Junior Series Department on Monday, November 13, 2023)

The following is the generic strategy used by PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail Informa Warung Jambu branch, which includes cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies:

a. Cost Leadership Strategy

Hunger and Wheelen (2003) state that cost leadership or low-cost strategy is the ability of a company or business unit to design, manufacture, and market a product using a more efficient method than its competitors [19]. The following are the results of interviews conducted by researchers, as follows:

"Informa's target market segmentation or coverage is the upper middle class. So our prices have been adjusted to market share. Low cost was not one of the company's choices in selling furniture at that time. Although Informa often issues large promotions and cashback for customers who shop at a certain minimum nominal spend. The store was closed for two weeks, and there was no company income then. The company did not take steps to cut employee salaries during the Covid-19 pandemic; bonuses were still going well. When companies carry out mass layoffs, our company recruits new employees. Companies do not want to sacrifice the welfare of their employees or reduce the quality of goods/services to increase sales. So, companies are not too focused on taking low-cost strategies to stabilize/survive during Covid-19." (Results of interviews with Mr. Nuril as Store Manager Warung Jambu Information on Tuesday, November 14, 2023).

From the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the company does not choose the cost leadership strategy. PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail does not reduce operational costs/goods costs/goods sold. It is proven that the company prioritizes the welfare of its employees, even during critical times for the company. The company has a separate *marketplace*, so PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail is classified as a healthy company.

b. Differentiation Strategy

According to Purnomo and Hari (2007:63), a differentiation strategy is implemented by a company to create something unique or different from its competitors in its industry in various dimensions, generally to attract buyers' interest [20]. A differentiation strategy is one of the company's choices for increasing sales. By highlighting the uniqueness of the product sold, consumers are more interested in buying it. The following are the results of interviews conducted by researchers:

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was the toughest year for all companies, especially furniture companies. However, Informa is trying to explore suitable strategies and keep up with market changes. Informa's use of reward points as a weapon to increase the sales basket's size has also proven effective. For every purchase of goods at Informa, customer members will get reward points equal to the number of transactions. For example, customer A shops for IDR.

34 million, he can get 340 points, of which 1 point is worth IDR. 2,500. So, the customer can get IDR 0.85 million and exchange it for other goods worth that number of points, or it can be a discount on purchases. Plus, the ease of transactions, namely using a virtual account, allows customers to make transactions from home through our best sales intermediaries." (Results of interviews with Mr. Nuril store Manager Warung Jambu Information on Tuesday, November 14, 2023).

The results of the interviews prove that the differentiation strategy is one of the company's choices to increase sales during COVID-19. The company managed very tight competition during times of unfavorable conditions. The use of points *rewards* and improvements in terms of service is one-way customers continue to come.

c. Focus Strategy

According to Muhammad (2004), when society has certain choices and requirements that the company can fulfill and when a competing company cannot or does not try to specialize in the same consumer segment [21]. It could allow other companies to focus and create appropriate strategies. Focus strategy is the main strategy used by PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail at that time. His focus on differentiation succeeded in maintaining sales in 2020. According to the results of interviews with informants, they are as follows:

"Due to adapting to conditions that year, we also carried out WFH by implementing a working system of 1 working day and one day off. Only 50% of the employees standing by in the shop work the same hours. Therefore, the company focuses on selling online by relying on an online shopping application specifically for Kawan Lama group children, namely the Rupa-Rupa application, and conducting WA Blast daily to the customer's contact number. Apart from that, each salesperson is targeted to create three pieces of content to introduce 1 product per 1 video in 1 week. We focus on selling online by combining it with our differentiation strategy. At that time, PT Home Center Indonesia Retail sold its products, namely Hand Sanitizer and Wet Tissue, containing four bottles/pack and sold at IDR 75,000/pack for the first time. It sold very well because that year, there was a shortage of hand sanitizer, and the price also soared. The hand sanitizer that is being sold is trading very well. Many people are even indenting it because there are so many people interested. Matter.

It has even become a sales target to sell 100 bottles per day. "The service provided by our sales is also very different from other furniture companies, where with protective equipment that complies with health protocols, Informa Sales will continue to accompany customers from the moment they arrive until the goods arrive at the customer's home safely." (Results of an interview with Mr. Nuril as Store Manager of Informa Warung Jambu on Tuesday, November 14, 2023).

From the interview above, the focus strategy is the main choice taken by the company. Focusing on its differentiation strategy and online sales is the main way for Informa Warung Jambu to achieve sales exceeding the target set for that year. The company's adjustments to current conditions by presenting health products to prevent the spread of the virus, namely hand sanitizer and wet tissue, prove that the company is smart in taking advantage of existing

opportunities. Adding value and efficiency is one of the main reasons companies implement this strategy.

There were several obstacles during its implementation. The results of interviews conducted with supervisors Junior Series Department Informa Warung Jambu Bogor Monday, November 13, 2023, found that during the Emergency Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) in July 2021 due to the surge in the pandemic at that time. The shop closed for 20 days, which resulted in no company income because all company operational activities stopped. The schedule of delivery and installation of goods *customers* had to be postponed. Even though, at that time, online sales were still being carried out, obstacles occurred on the delivery and installation side. In 2021, sales decreased due to adjustments to Government policy at that time. However, because Informa is classified as a company *season*, for certain months, such as the beginning of the year, Eid, the holiday & new school season, and Christmas and New Year, sales increased significantly and exceeded sales targets.



Figure 3 Comparison of Warung Jambu Bogor Sales Informa 2020-2021

It can be seen from the data above that Informa Warung Jambu Bogor's sales achievement decreased by -23.13%. In 2021, the company only achieved IDR 3,513 million from the initial target of IDR 4,886 million. The sales achievement in July 2021, when the PPKM policy was implemented, was the most challenging point that caused the store's annual achievement to decline. At that time, Informa Warung Jambu Bogor only achieved 37.98%, namely IDR 172 million of the target for that month, which should have been IDR 454 million.

Based on the results of research conducted at PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail at the Informa Warung Jambu Bogor branch, the author concluded that the suitable Generic Michael E Porter strategy model is a focus strategy. Here are the findings:



Figure 4 Porter's Generic Strategy at Informa Warung Jambu Bogor

As explained by Porter, the generic strategy consists of three strategies: 1. Low-Cost Strategy, 2. Differentiation Strategy, 3. Focus Strategy. From the pictures and analysis carried out by the author, it can be seen that the most suitable strategy for PT is Home Center Indonesia Retail branch Informa Warung Jambu, which is a focus strategy. Companies use This focused strategy to build a competitive advantage in a narrower market segment. Researchers analyzed Michael E Porter's generic focus strategy implemented by PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail, especially the Informa Warung Jambu Bogor branch, emphasizes quality and customer satisfaction in the upper-middle-class segment. PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail seeks to understand target customer needs effectively.

What he does is sell products like hand sanitizer and tissue alcoholic beverages. These two products were rare items that customers needed at that time. When a business understands its potential customers' needs, it can create better and more valuable products [7]. Apart from that, focusing on online sales at that time was one of Informa's strategies to maintain customer loyalty in that particular customer group. Use reward points for customer members. It is also an attraction for Informa to increase sales and provide exceptional satisfaction to its loyal customers. According to James Eldring (1980), when a customer is happy, he will strongly associate with a brand and act as a brand ambassador, like free marketing without costs.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data and analysis presented above. Researchers concluded that to increase sales during the Covid-19 Pandemic, PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail Informa Warung Jambu Bogor branch uses Michael E Porter's generic strategy, which includes cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. The primary strategy most suitable to implement is the focus strategy. However, there were several obstacles as a result of government policy at that time, such as the PPKM policy (Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions), which meant that the company had no income for 20 days and caused sales achievements in 2021 to decrease slightly compared to revenue achievements in 2020. The strategy focused on 2020, enabling the company to survive and increase its sales achievements.

Below are some suggestions from the author that can be taken into consideration by PT. Home Center Indonesia Retail branch of Informa Warung

Jambu Bogor is better able to anticipate obstacles that come from outside. Because this can significantly impact company revenue, companies can also further explore and develop differentiation strategies, which will strengthen the position of employees from other competitors. It will dramatically impact on the company's image as a high-performance company. Informa already has its image in consumers' minds as the best furniture company in terms of product quality. It can be used as an innovation for companies to create new products that can reach the lower middle class and continue to innovate according to current developments.

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