

Implementation of lean canvas in Frillato Choco's startup business in facing business competition in Greater Kediri

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to design a business model for Frillato Choco, a chocolate processing startup in Greater Kediri, which is still managed conventionally and faces challenges such as limited marketing channels and a lack of differentiation. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with case study methods and lean canvas analysis tools, this study maps out nine key elements of a business model to improve Frillato Choco's competitiveness. The results show that lean canvas is effective in helping businesses understand customer needs, formulate solutions, and develop efficient marketing strategies. It is recommended that Frillato Choco implement the lean canvas continuously, develop new chocolate snack products, and shift its marketing focus from Shopee to TikTok Shop to reach a wider market.

Keywords: Lean Canvas, Startup Business, Business Model, Frillato Choco, Business Competition

INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage industry is one of the strategic sectors that contributes significantly to Indonesia's economic growth. According to the Central Statistics Agency (Kurniawan, 2020), this sector recorded a GDP of Rp1.23 quadrillion, making it the highest among other industrial sectors. Amidst increasing domestic consumption and purchasing power, the chocolate sub-sector has become one of the leading products with high potential for development, both by large companies and start-ups. Chocolate is not only popular among all age groups, but also continues to undergo innovation in terms of form and presentation, including as gift products, contemporary snacks, and even foods based on local wisdom.

This condition opens up great opportunities for startups in the chocolate processing sector, including in the Greater Kediri area, East Java. One of the startups that has emerged is Frillato Choco, a homemade chocolate manufacturer that provides product customization services for various purposes. However, Frillato Choco faces serious challenges in business management, such as limited marketing channels, suboptimal communication strategies, and a lack of strong differentiation compared to innovative local competitors. Amid increasingly fierce business competition, the need for a structured and adaptive business model has become urgent for startups to survive and grow. In the context of startups, a deep understanding of customer preferences and the formulation of a unique value proposition are key to creating a sustainable business model that is able to compete on the basis of differentiation (Muharram & Alfamur, 2024).

Amidst increasingly dynamic consumer trends, there has been a shift in consumption values from merely fulfilling functional needs to fulfilling emotional and symbolic needs. Food and beverage products, especially chocolate, are not only consumed for their taste, but also as a medium of expression, gifts, and part of a lifestyle. This is in line with the

emergence of various chocolate gift products, hampers, and customized chocolates that offer a personalized experience for consumers. Innovation in the form, design, and packaging of products has become an added value sought after by the market, especially by young people who are very active on social media. Therefore, businesses are required to not only offer delicious products, but also products that are meaningful and aesthetically pleasing.

In response to these challenges, the Lean Canvas approach was chosen as a strategic tool. Lean Canvas is a modification of the Business Model Canvas (BMC) designed specifically for startups by Ash Maurya. Unlike BMC, which is more suitable for large companies, Lean Canvas focuses on simplifying important elements such as Problem, Solution, Unique Value Proposition, Channels, Revenue Streams, and so on. This model allows entrepreneurs to quickly identify core problems, design solutions, and test business feasibility in a practical and focused manner.

Several previous studies have proven the effectiveness of Lean Canvas in designing and developing startup business models. Previous research on the healthy food startup HealthyTips shows that Lean Canvas is able to accurately map consumer needs through segment analysis and specific solutions (Arinatha et al., 2023). Similarly, another study revealed that the application of Lean Canvas at Kafe Tadashi Kohi succeeded in increasing business competitiveness through the restructuring of value propositions and strengthening service differentiation (Jauhar et al., 2024). Another study also emphasizes how Lean Canvas, when combined with a design thinking approach, can produce innovative business models that are responsive to market needs (Raka Mahesa Pradhana et al., 2022).

Although many previous studies have discussed the application of Lean Canvas in the culinary business, there has been no research specifically examining its use in chocolate processing startups in the Greater Kediri area. However, this region has unique market characteristics and local competitors that are quite aggressive in product innovation. These conditions create a research gap that forms the basis for the urgency of this study. By using Frillato Choco as a case study, this research aims to make a real contribution to the development of a startup business model based on the Lean canvas approach in a local context.

This research aims to design a business model for Frillato Choco using the Lean Canvas approach to strengthen business competitiveness in Greater Kediri. The primary focus is on mapping crucial elements such as Problem & Solution, Unique Value Proposition, and Channels, which are relevant to addressing the internal and external challenges faced by Frillato Choco. Thus, this research is expected to produce a business strategy that is applicable, measurable, and oriented towards business sustainability.

The urgency of this research lies in the fact that many startups in the chocolate processing sector lack a strong and strategic business model foundation. By applying the Lean Canvas, this research not only provides practical benefits for Frillato Choco but also contributes theoretically to the development of startup business models in the creative food sector. Furthermore, this article can serve as a reference for MSMEs and other researchers in understanding the application of the Lean Canvas as a business transformation tool in the era of digital competition.

Therefore, the presence of a business model that can map consumer needs, offer a strong value proposition, and adapt to market trends is a key requirement for building the

competitiveness of chocolate-based MSMEs. The simple yet comprehensive Lean canvas model is highly relevant to help businesses like Frillato Choco navigate market challenges while developing sustainable growth strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Institutional setting

The *institutional setting* refers to the broader environment in which a business operates, including formal and informal rules, norms, and structures that shape organizational behavior and decision-making (Scott, 2014). Institutions provide both opportunities and constraints that influence entrepreneurial actions, innovation, and business performance (North, 1990). In the context of startups, institutional factors such as regulatory frameworks, access to financing, market infrastructure, and local culture play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of strategic tools like the Lean Canvas (Aidis et al., 2008).

In emerging economies, including Indonesia, institutional environments are often characterized by dynamic policy shifts, limited market data, and informal networks that influence entrepreneurial decision-making (Tambunan, 2019). In Greater Kediri, institutional factors such as local government support for MSMEs, ease of business licensing, and the growth of digital marketplaces contribute significantly to the competitiveness of startup businesses like Frillato Choco. The institutional setting, therefore, acts as an external moderating factor that can strengthen or weaken the impact of Lean Canvas implementation on competitive advantage.

The Lean Canvas, as a strategic tool, focuses on aligning internal decision-making with external opportunities by identifying customer problems, market segments, and key metrics (Maurya, 2012). However, the success of implementing Lean Canvas depends not only on internal managerial decisions but also on the surrounding institutional support and governance mechanisms. A well-structured institutional setting reduces uncertainty, encourages transparent contracts, and provides legitimacy for startups to scale their operations (North, 1990; Scott, 2014).

Agency theory

Agency Theory explains the relationship between principals (owners) and agents (managers or employees) within organizations, focusing on how information asymmetry and goal divergence can create inefficiencies (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In startups like Frillato Choco, founders often play dual roles as both principals and agents, responsible for strategic decisions, resource allocation, and implementation of business models.

Applying Agency Theory to the implementation of Lean Canvas provides a theoretical lens for understanding how internal coordination and decision-making align with external institutional constraints. When the institutional environment supports transparent governance, it reduces agency problems such as moral hazard or adverse selection allowing startup teams to implement Lean Canvas elements more effectively (Eisenhardt, 1989). Conversely, weak institutional frameworks can exacerbate agency conflicts by limiting access to reliable market information and increasing uncertainty in contractual relationships (Peng & Heath, 1996).

Thus, institutional settings interact with agency dynamics: strong institutions promote accountability, reduce opportunism, and provide clearer incentives for startup

founders and teams to pursue long-term goals (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003). For a food startup such as Frillato Choco operating in Greater Kediri, institutional support like food safety regulations, MSME training programs, and local entrepreneurship networks can strengthen the agency alignment within the business and facilitate effective Lean Canvas implementation.

Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The implementation of Lean Canvas has a positive effect on Frillato Choco's competitive advantage.

H2: Institutional setting positively moderates the relationship between Lean Canvas implementation and competitive advantage.

H3: A supportive institutional setting reduces agency problems and enhances the effectiveness of Lean Canvas implementation in achieving better strategic alignment.

These hypotheses align with previous findings that institutional strength mediates and moderates strategic entrepreneurship outcomes (Peng, 2002; North, 1990).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study design, aimed at designing a business model for Frillato Choco through the Lean Canvas framework. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics within emerging startup businesses that have yet to establish a stable business structure (Safrudin et al., 2023).

The research was conducted on-site at Frillato Choco, a chocolate-based startup located in Bangkok Village, Gurah District, Kediri Regency. The conceptual framework of this study refers to the Lean Canvas model developed by Ash Maurya, which consists of nine key components: Customer Segments, Problem, Solution, Unique Value Proposition, Channels, Revenue Streams, Cost Structure, Key Metrics, and Unfair Advantage (Raharjo et al., 2024).

The researcher used this framework as an analytical tool to map out the actual conditions of Frillato Choco and to design a more structured, innovative, and competitive business model. The research was conducted over a period of four months, from March to June 2025.

Data collection was carried out through direct observation of the company's operations, marketing processes, and customer interactions. In addition, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with seven key informants, consisting of the business owner, marketing team, and both active and potential customers. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the 5R criteria — *Relevance*, *Recommendation*, *Rapport*, *Readiness*, and *Reassurance* — to ensure that the participants were truly relevant and possessed authentic experiences related to the research topic.

Tabel 1. Matrik Data/Informasi Yang diKumpulkan dari Informan

| No | Informant Category | Informan | Informant Role | Data Collected |
|----|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
|----|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Key informants: | Owner/management team of Frillato Choco | Memberikan informasi terkait strategi bisnis, tantangan, <i>value promotion canvas</i> , dan model <i>lean canvas</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Business strategy b. Challenges faced c. Lean canvas depiction d. Value canvas depiction |
| 2 | Supporting informants | Marketing team | Provide operational information regarding sales and consumer feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Direct interaction with consumers b. Consumer feedback regarding the product |
| 3 | Additional informants | Active and potential customers | Provide validation data regarding consumer problems and expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consumer problems regarding the product b. Consumer expectations c. Validation of consumer problems and expectations |

Source: Researcher, 2025

RESULTS

This study involved seven informants, consisting of the business owner, the marketing team, and five active and potential customers. The selection of informants employed the 5R technique (*Relevance, Recommendation, Rapport, Readiness, and Reassurance*) to ensure that each informant had a direct connection to the research topic and could provide relevant and credible data regarding Frillato Choco's business practices in Greater Kediri.

Tabel 2. Deskripsi Informan

| No. | Informant Description | Name | Age (years) | Occupation | No. |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-----|
| 1 | Owner | Hanik Umiroh | 40 | Owner of Frillato | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------|----|---------------------|---|
| 2 | | | | Choco | |
| 3 | Marketing Team | Delfi | 22 | Customer Service | 2 |
| 4 | Customer 1 | Zainul Sadoni | 23 | Student, Freelancer | 3 |
| 5 | Customer 2 | Mahya Aulia | 23 | Student | 4 |
| 6 | Customer 3 | Ayu Neira | 21 | Student | 5 |
| 7 | Customer 4 | Indah | 25 | Employee | 6 |
| | Customer 5 | Claudia | 20 | Employee | 7 |

Source: *Researcher, 2025*

Hanik Umiroh (40 years old) is the owner of Frillato Choco and served as the main informant in this research. She provided a comprehensive overview of the business background, strategies, operational challenges, and the process of developing the business model using the Lean Canvas approach. Hanik explained that Frillato originated from an idea to create more personal and emotional gifts through custom chocolate products packaged in an exclusive design.

Delfi (22 years old) works as a marketing staff member and customer service representative at Frillato Choco. She is directly involved in managing social media accounts, processing orders, and interacting with customers daily. Delfi provided valuable insights into customer characteristics, frequent complaints, and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, particularly through Instagram and TikTok.

Zainul Sadoni (23 years old), a student and freelancer from Kediri City, is one of Frillato's active customers. He shared that Frillato is an appealing gift option due to its customization feature and aesthetic presentation. Zainul frequently purchases Frillato products as birthday and graduation gifts.

Mahya Aulia (23 years old), a student from Kepung, Kediri, is also an active customer attracted to Frillato's packaging and aesthetic value. She stated that Frillato's gifts feel more personalized, as they can be customized with the recipient's name and special occasions.

Ayu Neira (21 years old), a student from Kediri City, chooses Frillato because it aligns with the gifting trends among young people. She appreciates the chocolate quality and design but also hopes for a loyalty program for returning customers.

Indah (25 years old), an employee from Gurah, Kediri Regency, is a potential customer who discovered Frillato through social media and is considering purchasing it as a gift. She offered feedback on the ease of ordering and suggested the addition of snack products.

Claudia (20 years old), a factory employee from Gurah, is another potential customer who learned about Frillato through TikTok. She is interested in the custom gift concept and suggested that Frillato expand to more interactive marketplaces, such as TikTok Shop, while also diversifying its light snack product range.

All seven informants were interviewed through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, conducted both in person and online. The interviews were held over several sessions to explore informants' perceptions, needs, and expectations regarding Frillato Choco's products. The information gathered from these diverse informants formed a critical foundation in developing an accurate and targeted Lean Canvas business model for Frillato Choco.

This study aims to design a business model for Frillato Choco using the Lean Canvas approach to strengthen its business competitiveness in the Greater Kediri region. Frillato

Choco is a startup business specializing in handmade chocolate products, located in Bangkok Village, Gurah District, Kediri Regency. Its main products are custom chocolate gifts designed for various purposes such as birthdays, weddings, graduations, and other special occasions. Although Frillato Choco offers advantages in terms of visual appeal and taste quality, the business still faces several challenges, particularly in business management due to the lack of a structured business model and optimized marketing strategy.

In this research, the Lean Canvas design was developed through stages of observation and in-depth interviews with the owner, marketing team, and both active and potential customers. The collected data were analyzed and implemented into the nine key blocks of the Lean Canvas, namely: Customer Segments, Problem, Solution, Unique Value Proposition, Channels, Revenue Streams, Cost Structure, Key Metrics, and Unfair Advantage. First, in the Customer Segments block, the findings indicate that Frillato Choco serves two primary customer groups: college students and young employees aged 20–25 years. These customers tend to purchase Frillato products as emotional and personalized gifts. This segmentation is crucial for determining marketing strategies and product development directions.

Second, in the Problem block, three main customer issues were identified: the perception of high prices, limited product variation for daily consumption, and products melting easily during delivery. These issues were confirmed through data triangulation between interviews with the owner and customers and supported by documentation data. Third, the Solution block highlights Frillato's strategic responses to these challenges, including offering two product versions (standard and premium), developing practical and affordable chocolate snack products, and improving packaging systems to prevent melting during shipping, as well as providing replacement guarantees for damaged products. Fourth, the Unique Value Proposition (UVP) of Frillato lies in its custom product services, aesthetic and premium packaging design, and distinctive chocolate taste with a wide variety of flavors. This unique value positions Frillato strongly in the emotional and personalized gift market.

Fifth, under the Channels block, Frillato utilizes multiple distribution channels, including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Shopee, and word of mouth. A key finding from this research is that most customers discover Frillato through TikTok and Instagram, rather than online marketplaces like Shopee. This indicates that Frillato's distribution and promotion strategies should align with consumers' preferred media platforms. The use of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram has proven effective in reaching younger audiences due to their visual storytelling and emotional engagement features (Purnamasari, 2025).

Sixth, in the Revenue Streams block, Frillato's main sources of income include custom chocolate sales, greeting cards, and hamper boxes. These revenue sources show that Frillato is not merely selling products, but also selling the gifting experience.

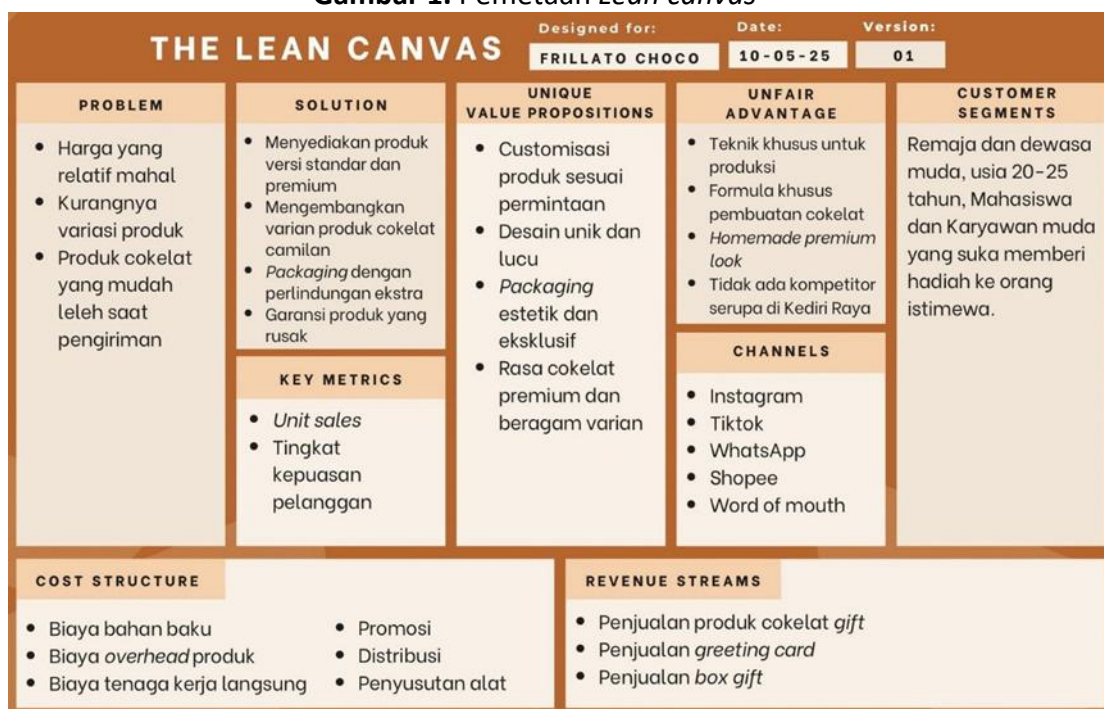
Seventh, the Cost Structure includes raw material costs, overhead (packaging and stickers), direct labor, promotion, distribution, and equipment depreciation. This structure is essential to assess operational efficiency and long-term business sustainability.

Eighth, the Key Metrics used by Frillato are sales volume and customer satisfaction levels based on testimonials. These indicators allow the business owner to monitor performance periodically and make data-driven improvements.

Lastly, Frillato's Unfair Advantage includes special production techniques, the owner's proprietary flavor formula, premium homemade aesthetics, and the absence of direct local competitors offering similar services in Greater Kediri. These advantages provide Frillato with a strong competitive edge that is difficult to replicate.

The overall mapping of Frillato Choco's nine Lean Canvas blocks is presented in Figure 1 below.

Gambar 1. Pemetaan *Lean canvas*



Source: Researcher, 2025

The figure summarizes the final design of Frillato Choco's business model in a systematic and concise manner. The Lean Canvas approach has proven effective in helping business owners understand customer needs, identify unique product values and advantages, and formulate problem-solving and distribution strategies efficiently. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the research objective has been achieved namely, designing Frillato Choco's business model using the Lean Canvas approach to enhance its business competitiveness. This model provides a practical and adaptive strategic direction, making it highly suitable for startups facing intense local market competition.

The design of Frillato Choco's business model through the Lean Canvas approach demonstrates that this framework can serve as a strategic tool for structuring the development path of emerging businesses in a practical and organized manner. Each element within the nine Lean Canvas blocks not only maps the current business condition but also provides a logical foundation for future business decision-making.

Customer Segments

The findings indicate that Frillato Choco has two primary consumer groups: college students and young employees aged 20–25. Both segments exhibit emotional and personal consumption tendencies, particularly in gift-giving contexts. This suggests that Frillato should not be positioned merely as a snack provider but as a brand offering symbolic and emotional experiences. Consequently, marketing strategies should emphasize not only the product itself but also the story and meaning behind chocolate gifting.

Problem

The main problems identified include perceptions of high prices, limited snack variety, and the risk of chocolate melting during delivery. While some customers perceive that quality justifies the price, psychological barriers remain for price-sensitive new buyers. The lack of product variation also limits market expansion from the "gift" category to "daily snack" consumption. Delivery issues though improved remain an area requiring continuous attention, especially if Frillato plans for geographical expansion.

Solution

In response, the Solution block presents strategies aligned with market expectations. Offering two product versions (standard and premium) not only addresses price sensitivity but also broadens the customer base. Developing lighter chocolate snacks such as sticks and crisps opens new market penetration routes toward more casual and spontaneous consumers. Improvements in packaging and damage guarantees show Frillato's responsiveness to customer feedback and adaptation in operational design.

Unique Value Proposition (UVP)

Frillato's UVP represents one of the strongest blocks in the model. Product customization, aesthetic packaging design, and premium taste combine to create clear differentiation in consumers' minds. Interview findings revealed that customers buy Frillato products not only for taste but for visual appeal, gifting meaning, and exclusivity, which competitors lack. This strengthens Frillato's position as a high-involvement product, where purchase decisions are influenced by emotional and aesthetic factors.

Channels

TikTok and Instagram dominate Frillato's customer acquisition channels, reinforcing that younger audiences respond better to visual and storytelling content. Word-of-mouth marketing from satisfied customers also demonstrates natural referral effects driven by service and product quality. Meanwhile, Shopee as a marketplace remains underutilized, suggesting that Frillato has yet to maximize its digital distribution potential. Future strategies should integrate emotional content marketing with platforms that support instant transactions.

Revenue Streams

Revenue generated from bundled products (gift boxes, greeting cards, and customized chocolates) indicates that Frillato sells not just a product, but an experience. This requires maintaining consistent quality not only for the main product but also for its complementary elements—design, packaging, and personal messages.

Cost Structure

The cost structure is dominated by raw materials and premium packaging, consistent with the product's positioning. However, emphasis on digital promotion still needs to be strengthened, especially to expand customer reach and retention.

Key Metrics

From a business evaluation perspective, key metrics such as sales volume and customer testimonials serve as useful starting indicators. However, Frillato should consider incorporating additional metrics like repeat order rate, social media engagement rate, and customer acquisition cost to gain a sharper insight into channel effectiveness and customer loyalty.

Unfair Advantage

Frillato's unfair advantage lies in its hard-to-replicate competitive strengths—its aesthetic production techniques, distinctive flavor recipes, and premium yet homemade image. Customers noted that they have not found similar products in the Greater Kediri region, positioning Frillato as a pioneer in the local custom gift chocolate segment. This advantage must be preserved and strengthened through consistent brand positioning strategies.

Overall, these findings align with Ash Maurya's Lean Canvas theory, where each block functions as an interconnected strategic map. The research also supports prior studies indicating that Lean Canvas helps startups identify core problems and formulate concrete solutions (Mahendra, 2022). Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Jauhar et al. (2024), emphasizing the importance of Unique Value Proposition and effective distribution channels in enhancing startup competitiveness. Therefore, the Lean Canvas design serves not only as an analytical tool but also as an implementative guide for developing market-oriented, customer-focused, and differentiation-driven growth strategies. Through this approach, Frillato Choco is on the right track to becoming a resilient startup within the increasingly dynamic food and beverage industry.

DISCUSSION

Discussion 1

This section discusses the findings related to the first research focus, namely the implementation of the Lean Canvas approach in designing Frillato Choco's business model to enhance competitiveness in the Greater Kediri area. The discussion does not merely describe the collected data but interprets it in the context of existing theories, prior studies, and practical implications.

The analysis reveals that applying the Lean Canvas framework enables Frillato Choco to identify core business problems, segment target markets effectively, and develop strategies that align with customer expectations. This supports the argument of Maurya (2012), who stated that the Lean Canvas is a strategic tool designed to simplify and accelerate business model formulation for startups through a visual, problem-solution-based approach.

The findings also align with Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), emphasizing that a structured business model framework allows businesses to clearly define their value proposition, customer relationships, and key resources. For Frillato Choco, this means leveraging its unique value custom chocolate gifts with emotional appeal to strengthen brand identity and differentiate itself from competitors.

From an institutional perspective, Frillato's business context reflects the importance of adaptive strategies in small enterprises facing dynamic competition. The implementation of Lean Canvas facilitates more data-driven decision-making and resource efficiency, consistent with Blank and Dorf (2012), who argue that startups must continuously test and validate assumptions to achieve sustainable growth.

Thus, the first discussion highlights that Lean Canvas serves not only as a business design framework but also as a diagnostic tool that enables Frillato Choco to adapt its operations and marketing strategies to a rapidly changing market environment.

Discussion 2

The second discussion focuses on the implications of Lean Canvas implementation for Frillato Choco's competitive advantage within the local business ecosystem of Greater Kediri. Again, this section does not reiterate research data but interprets the theoretical significance and strategic meaning of the findings.

Based on the analysis of the Lean Canvas blocks, Frillato Choco's unique competitive position arises from its customized product offerings, premium packaging, and emotional branding, which align with the Unique Value Proposition (UVP) framework. This finding is in line with Kotler and Keller (2016), who noted that differentiation based on emotional and experiential values can create sustainable customer loyalty.

The study also found that digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram play a crucial role in enhancing visibility and engagement among young consumers, supporting the perspective of Tuten and Solomon (2020) that social media marketing serves as a vital component in establishing brand awareness and interactive relationships in modern business environments.

In addition, Frillato's ability to maintain quality while managing costs efficiently reflects the balance between value creation and operational control proposed by Porter (1985) in his theory of competitive advantage. Frillato's use of personalized services and emotional storytelling strengthens its position as a local brand with distinct emotional resonance, making it less vulnerable to price-based competition.

Overall, the second discussion emphasizes that the Lean Canvas approach not only helps startups like Frillato Choco organize their internal processes but also enhances strategic agility and differentiation, enabling them to maintain competitiveness in an increasingly saturated market.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully designed a business model for **Frillato Choco** using the **Lean Canvas** approach as an effort to enhance the competitiveness of a startup in the chocolate processing sector in Greater Kediri. The research results show that the Lean Canvas approach can practically and strategically map nine key business elements from identifying customer segments, formulating problems and solutions, structuring a unique value proposition, selecting effective distribution channels, to strengthening a distinctive competitive advantage. The business model designed in this study not only addresses the current needs and challenges of Frillato Choco but also provides a structured and adaptive strategic direction for future business development in response to market dynamics.

The novelty of this study lies in the contextual application of Lean Canvas to a handcrafted chocolate-based custom gift startup in a non-metropolitan area (Greater Kediri). Unlike previous studies, which have mostly examined Lean Canvas implementation in digital startups, this research fills the literature gap by highlighting the potential of local startups based on creative products and personalization, characterized by emotional and relationship-based markets. The resulting business model demonstrates that Lean Canvas

can be flexibly adapted to small businesses rooted in local cultural values and regional consumer preferences.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study can be directly implemented by Frillato Choco's owner as a guideline for short and medium-term business development. The Lean Canvas design allows business owners to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies, product development, and market expansion systematically. Meanwhile, from a theoretical perspective, this study broadens the application of Lean Canvas in the creative-based MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) sector and reinforces its position as an adaptive strategic framework to address startup challenges across different geographic and industrial contexts.

This study offers significant practical and theoretical contributions. Practically, the Lean Canvas model designed in this research can be applied by other startup owners, particularly in the customized food and beverage sector. The model helps business owners understand specific customer needs, formulate strategic solutions, and identify unique product propositions and competitive advantages that are difficult to imitate. Lean Canvas also enables entrepreneurs to quickly validate business ideas through structured experimentation and learning. The findings reaffirm that Lean Canvas is an effective tool for developing customer-driven business strategies, especially in local non-metropolitan markets such as Greater Kediri.

Theoretically, this research expands the contextual use of Lean Canvas, which has been predominantly applied to digital startups or large-scale urban businesses. In the case of Frillato Choco, Lean Canvas proves adaptable for creative and personalized MSME startups. This enriches the literature on micro-level strategic management and opens up future research opportunities for integrating Lean Canvas with other frameworks such as Customer Development or Design Thinking in local contexts (Maurya, 2012).

However, this study has certain limitations in terms of its geographical scope and methodological approach. The focus on a single startup case in Greater Kediri restricts the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the qualitative approach used in this study primarily describes perceptions and initial mappings, without quantitatively testing the impact of Lean Canvas implementation on business performance indicators such as revenue growth or customer satisfaction.

Therefore, it is recommended that future studies adopt a quantitative approach with a broader population, covering various MSMEs in the food and beverage sector across other regions. Furthermore, integrating Lean Canvas with digital marketing strategies or customer validation approaches could be an interesting direction for future research, particularly in measuring the effectiveness of content-based and digital distribution strategies such as TikTok Shop and Instagram Reels.

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