

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION OF ARAB DESCENT IN THE CITY OF PONTIANAK

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the process of business change of Arab descendants in Pontianak City and find out what factors cause business changes of Arab descent in the city of Pontianak. The subject of this research is Ngabuleh students. The type of research is qualitative. The data collection technique used interview techniques, non-participant observation and documentation. Data analysis with steps, namely data reduction, data display, conclusion and verification. Data validity techniques using triangulation and member check. The results of this study conclude: The business transformation of Arabs in the city of Pontianak has undergone a significant transformation over time. Initially, they were involved in the trade of spices, textiles, and jewelry, as well as opening small businesses in traditional markets. Now, they have expanded into the property, hospitality, education, healthcare, culinary, and e-commerce sectors. The driving factors for this change include globalization, technological advancements, changes in people's lifestyles, and dynamic market demands. Technology plays a crucial role in business transformation, with the application of digital systems for operational management, marketing, and financial transactions. In addition, market development strategies are now more open, leading to expansion into other major cities and penetration of the digital market. The factors that cause the change in business of Arab descent in Pontianak City prioritize the values of honesty, integrity, and family, although adopting the values of innovation and professionalism to adapt to the changing times and technology. Formal education and field experience complement each other in shaping the way of doing business, while changing demographics and technology are forcing businesses to innovate, especially in the face of online consumption trends. Increasingly fierce competition and government policies that support small businesses are important factors, along with the influence of digital lifestyles and Arab culture that emphasize long-term relationships. Macro and microeconomic conditions and economic crises, such as in 1997, teach the importance of product diversification and operational efficiency. The development of information technology has also made it easier for businesses to interact, although the cost and training challenges of employees need to be faced.

Keywords: Business Transformation, Arab Descent

INTRODUCTION

During the arrival of Arabs in the archipelago, trading was the most popular profession. (Berg, 1989) The Arabs' trade interests were influenced by two major factors, namely ancestry and religion. People believe that work is part of worship and fulfilling the commands of Allah SWT and the recommendations of his Messenger Muhammad PBUH. Since ancient times, the majority of the livelihood of the Arab people has been trading, even the Prophet Muhammad since the age of 12 has traded cross-border to Syria and at the age of 25 has been trusted to take care of the trade and succeeded in bringing profits.

All are done on awareness, experience and a clear understanding of the benefits of trading. More concretely, working for Arab merchants is a form of worship and gratitude to do

God's call in managing the resources that have been given to them as a test to become the best servant. (Akhsan, 2023). As the Prophet's answer when asked about the best livelihood is written in the book *Bulughul Maram Bab Buyu'* Hadith no. 782 which reads

عَنْ رِفَاعَةَ بْنِ رَافِعٍ – رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ – أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ – صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ – سُئِلَ: أَيُّ الْكَسْبِ أَطْيَبُ؟ قَالَ: – عَمَلُ الرَّجُلِ بِيَدِهِ، وَكُلُّ بَيْعٍ مَبْرُورٍ – رَوَاهُ الْبُزَّارُ، وَصَحَّحَهُ الْحَاكِمُ.

Means: "*From Rifa'ah ibn Raafi' (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about a good livelihood? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) replied, "A person's deeds with his hands and every trade is blessed."* (HR. Al-Bazzar and authenticated by Al-Hakim) [HR. Al-Bazzar, 9:183; Al-Hakim, 2:10; Ahmad, 4:141. Shaykh Shu'aib Al-Arnauth said that this hadith is seen from another path."

Indonesia in the early 19th century or known as the Dutch East Indies was a connecting area between the western and eastern continents on trade traffic with abundant natural resources. It attracted the attention of other nations to benefit from the region. This economic boost motivated other nations such as the Netherlands and its allies, China and Arabs to pit their fate against each other in the archipelago. The nations that made the trade trip were the Arabs. The majority of Arabs currently living in Indonesia are from Hadramaut, one of the southern Yemeni provinces. Only a small part of them come from other Middle Eastern regions. Coasts throughout the archipelago are the destination of the spread, so many coastal areas have grown into international trade cities. (Safira & Haidar, 2014) One of the destinations for Arabs in Indonesia is the Pontianak Equatorial Earth.

Pontianak is one of the connecting junctions between the districts along the Kapuas and Landak rivers and their tributaries and branches with the states in the South China Sea or the Southeast Asian region. So traders from Europe, China, Singapore, Malay, Bugis, Javanese, Sumatran can be found passing by in the Pontianak market. Traders want to look for diamonds, gold, rattan, gambier, areca nut, copra, gahru, wax, sap, and other forest commodities. This also increases the economic growth of Pontianak, to become the most important city in West Kalimantan. (Departemen et al., 1999). Pontianak was made by the Dutch in Batavia to make Pontianak a free port in 1834 AD. with the intention of wanting to match Singapore as a British free port in Southeast Asia, although the Dutch failed and Pontianak could not be formed to match Singapore, but the effort provided progress in the field of trade in the city of Pontianak. The continued entry of foreign ships into the Kapuas river to trade with Pontianak because of interest in the natural products of West Kalimantan. Likewise, the strategic location of Pontianak in the trade map of West Kalimantan is another attractive factor, especially related to the interior area. (Hasanuddin, 2000).

Arab Hadrami in Singapore is increasingly interested in coming to Pontianak in the midst of these conditions. From the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the hadrami Arabs began to arrive from Singapore to Pontianak in waves in small groups. (De Jonge, 2019) At that time, it is estimated to be the peak of the arrival of the hadrami Arabs to Pontianak and then spread and continue to move to the city of Sintang and there were no difficulties to enter and live in Pontianak, even in West Kalimantan. (Hasanuddin, 2000) The first generation of Arabs in Pontianak were often found trading in adhesive cloths, fabrics, skullcaps, eyeliner, incense, beads, books, jadam, perfumed ma'jun, prayer utensils and others and Arab traders did

not know the trade in wine and alcoholic beverages.(Berg, 1989) This is done not only in the context of trading but also as a means of preaching.

The majority of traders who dominated Sudirman Market in Pontianak City in 1990 were Arab traders. On average, they sell merchandise such as Muslim clothes, mukenah, pious clothes, sarongs, skullcaps, songkok, and the like. Other traders only a few glanced at the goods for sale which were dominated by Arab traders. The reason is that Arab traders in Pontianak have a direct network with distributors of these goods in Jakarta and Surabaya (Bakar & Fatimah, 2018). From 2014 to the present, other traders control the same types of merchandise sold by traders of Arab descent. Fadli, one of the speakers who owns his father's Muslim clothing store, said some traders are in decline, while others are still running their businesses. In the midst of the decline, a number of families of Arab descent were able to transform and develop their businesses, no longer relying on the trade in cloth, books, and the like.

One of the traders of Arab descent who transformed by developing his type of business is the Menara Bookstore owned by Arab descendants which is located at Jl. Hos Cokroaminoto No. 294. The store, which has only sold books since 1977, has begun to expand its business in the last 10 years by adding electronic commodities in the form of computers and accessories. Meanwhile, the business of Arab descent that did not continue was Toko Pelita which is located on Jl. Nusa Indah 2 and sells Muslim clothes. The store ceased operations after the death of the first owner, Sy. Ahmad Abdulrahman Syahab.

Interviews with temporary research sources found that the change in the business of families of Arab descent was caused by several factors, such as the lack of children's desire to continue their parents' business, traditional management, and not following market developments. A similar phenomenon also occurred in Jakarta, regarding the trafficking of Arabs in Jakarta who had difficulty competing with other ethnic traders, which eventually led to bankruptcy. Arab descendants previously dominated the market and a number of types of merchandise in several areas of Jakarta in the 1960s. In these regions, they are known as "Arab materials" or "Arab furniture." This livelihood was still practiced by some Arabs until the early 1990s. However, over time, traders of Arab descent began to face competitors who dominated the two main types of commodities. This phenomenon is reflected in the decrease in the number, even the disappearance, of shops owned by Arabs in various areas of Jakarta.(Zeffry, 2004)

Research on business transformation of Arab descendants has not been widely carried out, especially in Pontianak City. The research that has been carried out only focuses on the history of the arrival of Arabs and the entry of Islam in Pontianak, so that the research that will be carried out by researchers is a novelty. Based on this phenomenon, researchers are interested in researching business transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Transformation

Business transformation is a way or step taken by business actors in maintaining their existence, namely by changing or positioning their business to a field that is considered more profitable. Business transformation is also a process of change which is a form of answering new business challenges. Business transformation is not only related to the company, but the context of business transformation is also related to the broader environment such as the economy locally, regionally and globally (Nurdin, 2008b). Business transformation is the process of changing systems, business processes, and technology across the board to achieve measurable

improvements in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer and employee satisfaction (Rafli, 2023).

Business transformation is a process of strategic change undertaken by an organization to improve performance, competitiveness, and relevance in a dynamic market. This process often includes changes in business models, organizational culture, use of digital technologies, and management strategies. This transformation is carried out to adapt to technological developments, consumer needs, or changes in the global market (Rahmadyah, 2022)

In the digital context, business transformation involves integrating digital technology into all aspects of a company's operations. It aims to increase efficiency, provide added value to customers, and accelerate product or service innovation (Oktaviani, dkk, 2023). Business transformation is a process of strategic change that includes adjusting systems, processes, technologies, business models, and organizational culture to improve efficiency, effectiveness, competitiveness, and relevance in an ever-evolving market. This transformation often involves integrating digital technologies to accelerate innovation, increase added value for customers, and ensure organizational sustainability in an era of disruption.

Business Model Innovation

According to Sasono et al. in Kusnandar et al. (2020), innovation is necessary for organizations to move forward, which is managed through innovation management. Zott et al. in Fauzan et al. (2021) define a business model as a system of activities that determines how a company interacts with customers, partners, and vendors. Subardjo et al. (2022) emphasized that business models must adapt to the times through innovation. Bock in Aini et al. (2021) states that business model innovation supports long-term performance, while Aini et al. (2021) define it as a strategic tool to utilize resources, reduce costs, and create new revenues. These innovations can be in the form of: (1) innovations that follow the market, (2) separate innovations that transform the product or market, and (3) incremental innovations that improve product efficiency and quality.

Amit and Zott (in Fauzan, 2021) emphasize that business model innovation is important to deal with external dynamics full of uncertainty. Osterwalder and Pigneur (in Fauzan, 2021) add that these innovations should be customer-oriented, not just profit-oriented. Wardhana (2023) emphasizes that innovative business models strengthen relationships between stakeholders, creating shared value.

Hai Guo et al. (2022) identified seven indicators of business model innovation: (1) new offerings, (2) new customers and markets, (3) relationships with new consumers, (4) new capabilities, (5) new technologies, (6) new partnerships, and (7) new processes or structures. These indicators help businesses adapt to a dynamic market and improve competitiveness and sustainability.

Entrepreneurship Theory

Before understanding entrepreneurial behavior, it is necessary to first understand the concepts of behavior and entrepreneurship. Behavior, according to Tauzaduhu Ndraha (in Maemunah, 2014), is defined as the activity of an organism that can be observed by other organisms or through research instruments, including verbal reports of conscious subjective experiences. Toha (in Tanjung, 2018) states that behavior is the result of an individual's interaction with his environment, which means that each individual has different behaviors

according to their respective environment. In psychology, human behavior is seen as a complex reaction, influenced by internal and external factors that develop over time.

In the context of entrepreneurship, McClelland (in Suryana, Muhlisin, 2014) describes entrepreneurial behavior as individuals who are moderate in taking risks, have high spirits, and organizational skills. Fadiati (2011) emphasized that entrepreneurial behavior is not just intuition or innate traits, but the results of work based on concepts and theories. Steade (in Lupiyoadi, Hastuti, 2014) identifies five main characteristics of entrepreneurship, namely purposeful (setting goals), persuasive (influencing others), persistent (persistent in achieving goals despite facing difficulties), presumptuous (daring to take risks with innovation), and perceptive (understanding the relationship between choices in achieving goals). Meanwhile, David (in Mudjiarto, 2006) detailed nine characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, such as the drive to achieve, hard work, high responsibility, optimism, and the ability to organize businesses.

According to Miner (in Setiaroni, 2013), there are four types of entrepreneurial personalities: The Personal Achiever who is oriented towards achievement and planning, The Supersales Person who excels in social interaction, The Real Manager who has a leadership spirit and high competitiveness, and The Expert Idea Generator who focuses on innovation and the development of new ideas. Prama (in Ananda & Rafida, 2016) added that the success of a business is influenced by four main factors, namely the courage to dream the impossible dream, the power of consistency, the courage to play with ideas, and openness to various new possibilities. Thus, entrepreneurship can be studied systematically and depends on a combination of character, strategy, and readiness to face challenges.

Business Model

A business model is a method that companies use to run a business in order to survive and generate revenue. According to the PPM Management Team (2012), the business model describes the relationship between the company's excellence and resources as well as the activities carried out to create value and profit. Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010) refer to business models as strategic blueprints that are realized through organizational structures, processes, and systems. Eisenmann (2012) added that a business model is a hypothesis about how a company makes money, including aspects such as products sold, sources of revenue, technology used, dependence on business partners, and cost calculations. Turban (2012) defines it as a method of running a business that allows a company to earn revenue and determine its position in the value chain.

The business model has several main functions as revealed by Eisenmann (2012), namely planning to provide added value through technology, identifying market segments, defining the structure of the value chain, estimating costs and profits, determining positions in the value network, and formulating competitive strategies to maintain the company's advantage.

Paul Timmers (1998) outlines business models in various sectors, including textiles, furniture, and electronics. In the textile industry, raw materials consist of natural fibers such as wool and cotton, as well as artificial fibers such as metal and glass, which determine the processing process until it becomes fabric (Herawati, 2023). Meanwhile, the furniture business includes the production and design of household furniture such as chairs and tables, with wood joining techniques such as butt joints, mitred butt joints, box joints, and pocket joints to improve the strength and aesthetics of the product (Tikno, 2008). In electronic business, e-business utilizes digital technology to increase the efficiency and productivity of companies, not only in

online buying and selling but also internal automation and collaboration with business partners (Turban et al., 2015; Kalakota & Robinson, 1999).

The business model also includes aspects of product architecture, information flow, profit potential, and sources of business income, which are the main factors in the sustainability and development of the business in various sectors.

Family Business

A family business is defined as the utilization of current business practices to meet future needs while maintaining sustainability for future generations (Oudah et al., 2018). Ward and Aronoff (2002) state that a family business is a company managed by two or more family members (Rahadi, 2017). Family business values, which play an important role in the sustainability of the business, are determined by a clear vision and mission (Oudah et al., 2018). There are two types of family enterprises: first, those managed by families with the exception of non-family members; and second, whose entire ownership and management is in the hands of the founding family (Susanto, 2005). Succession in family business includes the transfer of leadership to successors, both from the family and professional managers (Nyoman Marpha, 2012).

The sustainability of a family business is influenced by several key factors. First, succession planning to ensure business continuity and prevent internal conflicts (Oudah et al., 2018). Second, strategic planning that includes the vision, mission, and business objectives (Kumalasari, 2016). Third, corporate governance that adjusts values, principles, and rules in family businesses (Yukselen & Yildiz, 2014). Fourth, effective leadership in directing the company (Oudah et al., 2018). Fifth, the value of a family business that functions to unite the vision and prevent role conflicts (Dewi & Martini, 2016). Sixth, family capital which includes human, social, and financial resources (Oudah et al., 2018). Seventh, family harmony is characterized by open communication and avoiding nepotism (Ungerer & Mienie, 2018). Eighth, the business environment which includes capital, competition levels, and economic and political stability (Performa, 2020).

On the other hand, family businesses can experience disconnection due to the absence of interested successors, non-adaptive management, lack of synergy in capital and distribution, incompatibility with market needs, and lack of innovation (Zeffry, 2004).

Merchant

Traders are individuals or groups who sell goods or services (Yogyakarta, 2009). According to Sadono Sukirno (2016), traders run their business by buying and reselling goods, not for personal needs, but to meet market demand. The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021) defines a trader as an individual who is involved in buying and selling activities. Traders play a role in meeting the primary, secondary, and basic needs of humans, which are categorized into three types. First, wholesalers, which are business actors who buy and sell products in large quantities to retailers, other wholesalers, or industrial companies. Second, the broker, an individual who acts as an intermediary in the transaction of buying and selling without owning the goods, only executes the agreement between the seller and the buyer. Third, agents or trade intermediaries, namely third parties who carry out legal activities related to buying and selling, either on their own behalf or on behalf of others, based on the power of attorney given (Solehah, 2016).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses *the field research method*, where data is collected directly in the field through observations, interviews, and questionnaires to understand the business transformation of Arab descendants in Pontianak. The approach used is qualitative, aiming to dig up information in depth with narrative descriptions. The data source consists of primary data obtained through interviews and observations of traders of Arab descent who have been running a business for 10-20 years, as well as secondary data in the form of documents, print media, and literature. Data collection techniques include unstructured interviews for flexibility in information exploration as well as documentation as supporting data from a variety of written and visual sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in Business Patterns in the Trade Practices of Arab Descendants

The community of Arab descent in Pontianak has a long history dating back to the 18th century, rooted in the trade and spread of Islam. Immigrants from Hadramaut, Yemen, not only trade but also establish Islamic educational institutions and mosques, which became centers of social and religious activities (Ajisman, 2016). Initially, they focused on the trade in spices, textiles, and basic necessities, utilizing an international network that connected Pontianak with the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The use of Arabic names in their business reflects cultural identity and builds consumer trust (Aribowo, 2017).

Over time, modernization and global market dynamics have prompted these communities to adapt to new sectors such as services, property, culinary, and information technology. Digitalization through social media and e-commerce is their main marketing strategy, while collaboration with local communities shows openness to innovation. Despite the transformation in the business field, cultural and religious values are still upheld, reflected in the principles of honesty, trust, and blessing in business. The use of Arabic names in their businesses is also still maintained as a symbol of identity (Aribowo, 2017).

This change in business pattern reflects the social dynamics of Pontianak, which is rich in cross-ethnic and cultural interactions. This encourages innovation and adaptation in various aspects of the economy and business, strengthening the role of communities of Arab descent in the development of cities.

The transformation of businesses of Arab descent in Pontianak reflects adaptation to economic and social dynamics. Initially, they focused on trading spices, basic necessities, textiles, and jewelry (Azra, 2013). Over time, their business expanded into the property, hospitality, education, healthcare, culinary, and e-commerce sectors, demonstrating a response to globalization and technological advances (Widarti, 2010). The use of technology, such as social media and ERP systems, increases their efficiency and competitiveness (Sumihai, 2024; Kurniawan, 2024). According to Carlock and Ward (2001), the balance between tradition and innovation is the key to the growth of family businesses. This transformation is also driven by the younger generation who bring new perspectives (Poza, 2010), as well as shifting people's values and consumption patterns.

Modernity Factors in Business of Arab Descent

1. Values Drawn from Ancestors and Their Relevance to Businesses Today

The main values were inherited by ancestors and are still carried out in the business of Arab descent in Pontianak. The competitive business world, honesty and integrity play a crucial role in building trust with customers, business partners and employees. Businesses run on these

principles are more likely to gain the trust of consumers, business partners, and employees, which in turn increases the loyalty and reputation of the business. In addition, honesty and integrity also contribute to blessings in business. Businesses that operate in accordance with moral and ethical principles will be endowed with business sustainability, halal profits, and harmonious relationships with all stakeholders. (Aql Peduli, 2024).

The application of these values in daily business practices includes transparency in communication, commitment to quality, trustworthy financial management, and maintaining business ethics. These practices ensure that the business is not only profit-oriented, but also on long-term benefits for all parties involved. However, implementing honesty and integrity in business is not separate from challenges. The pressure to achieve profit targets, stiff competition, and the temptation to cut corners are often obstacles. Nonetheless, a commitment to these values will bring long-term benefits and continued success. Islamic religiosity and Islamic value-based sharia branding can improve the performance of micro businesses, which are in line with the values of honesty and integrity of ancestral heritage in building reputation and loyalty (Fedy and Fikri, 2024).

The community of Arab descent in Pontianak, these values are not only inherited as a tradition, but also as an effective business strategy. By maintaining honesty and integrity, they are able to build lasting and mutually beneficial business relationships, which ultimately contribute to the success and sustainability of their business

These values reflect the importance of ethics and long-term relationships in the business world, which is in line with the views of some experts who emphasize the importance of ethics in creating sustainable businesses (Burbano, 2019).

2. Adoption of New Values in Business

A global trend in which businesses need to adapt to technological developments to stay competitive (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2021). Openness to change reflects the importance of flexibility in the face of business challenges. Professionalism is key in running a growing business, where the company focuses not only on profits, but also on the quality of service and good relationships with customers and business partners. With high professionalism, businesses can maintain customer loyalty and expand market reach, even as competition intensifies. This is in line with the opinion of Kaplan and Haenlein (2021), who state that professionalism and the ability to adapt to new technologies are important factors for success in the digital age.

Thus, the value of innovation and professionalism adopted by businesses of Arab descent in Pontianak not only provides short-term profits, but also becomes a foundation for long-term growth. Businesses that are able to combine traditional values with a modern approach will be better prepared to face market dynamics and increasingly fierce competition in the future.

3. The Role of Education and Experience in Shaping a Business

This view is in line with the theory put forward by Kolb (2014), who states that practical experience in doing business is often more valuable than theory alone. Kolb argues that the most effective learning occurs when individuals engage in the process of direct experience, followed by reflection and application of that knowledge in a practical context, experiential learning allows one to connect theory with practice, thus being able to make more informed decisions in the face of various challenges that arise in the business world.

In addition, experience also allows business owners to build skills in responding to market changes, identifying trends, and understanding customer needs more accurately. This is important in a highly competitive business world, where quick and appropriate decisions greatly

determine the company's survival and growth. Therefore, while formal education provides a solid foundation, field experience is key to success in managing and growing businesses.

The importance of this experience can also be seen in the context of lifelong learning, where individuals continue to develop their skills and knowledge through practical experience. Successful businesses are often managed by individuals who have a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained through hands-on experience. Therefore, the integration between formal education and field experience is essential in shaping successful entrepreneurs.

3. Changes in the Pontianak Business Environment

This phenomenon is not only happening in Pontianak, but also in many major cities around the world, where digitalization is increasingly dominating the trade sector. Research by Cohen and Kietzmann (2022) reveals that digitalization brings major changes in the way businesses operate, including in terms of marketing and distribution. The use of social media, *e-commerce*, and mobile apps has changed the way companies interact with customers and promote their products. In this context, businesses that are unable to adapt to digital technology will find it difficult to survive and thrive.

On the other hand, digitalization also opens up opportunities for businesses to expand their markets, as it can reach a wider audience without being bound by geographical restrictions. This is especially relevant for businesses in Pontianak who want to increase their market reach, both locally and internationally. Therefore, the ability to integrate digital technology in business operations is a key factor in determining business success and growth.

Furthermore, digitalization is not only changing the way products are marketed and distributed, but it is also affecting the way companies manage their operations and interact with customers. The use of data and analytics allows companies to better understand consumer behavior and adjust their business strategies more appropriately. In this case, technology gives companies the ability to make more data-driven decisions, which can improve efficiency and effectiveness in business operations.

4. Increasingly Fierce Business Competition

Business competition in Pontianak is increasing with the presence of new businesses and business people from outside the region, so creativity is needed. According to Amabile (2018), creativity in business can affect the success of companies in facing competitive challenges. Businesses that are able to generate new ideas and deliver innovative solutions are more likely to survive and thrive in a highly competitive market. Therefore, thinking creatively and adapting quickly to market changes is an element that cannot be ignored by business people.

In addition, the importance of creativity is also balanced with differentiation strategies that can help businesses maintain their position in the market. Unique differentiation of products and services can create more value for customers and help businesses to stand out in the midst of competition. This is also in line with the findings expressed by Prajogo and Sohal (2016), which show that product innovation and service differentiation can increase the competitiveness of companies in a competitive industry.

However, on the other hand, the entry of players from outside the region can have both positive and negative impacts on local businesses. Although the competition is getting tougher, the presence of new players can also open up opportunities for collaboration and growth together. In a more open market, there is an opportunity to adopt best business practices and expand business networks that can benefit all parties. Therefore, even though competition is

getting tougher, business owners who think creatively and are able to adapt to change can turn those challenges into opportunities to grow.

Businesses are required to not only focus on the price aspect, but also on the aspect of quality and better service than competitors. Porter (2008) stated that fierce competition can encourage companies to innovate and improve the quality of services in order to maintain or improve their position in the market.

Healthy competition is often a driver for companies to be more creative in developing products, improving operational processes, and providing a better customer experience. This leads to quality improvements that not only impact customers, but can also create a sustainable competitive advantage. Porter also explained that a differentiation strategy that focuses on the quality of products and services can help companies survive in a competitive market.

Innovation and improvement of service quality, according to Porter, serve to strengthen the market position and create added value for customers. Therefore, despite the increasing competition, companies that are able to offer higher quality products and services will have the opportunity to maintain customer loyalty and gain market share. In this context, business people in Pontianak are faced with the challenge of not only competing with prices, but also with better quality and value.

5. The Influence of Government Policies on Business

The importance of policies that can support the adaptation of new technologies, which is a key factor in today's business competition. In this context, government policies that facilitate digitalization and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through tax incentives and simplification of business regulations play a major role in accelerating digital transformation and helping businesses to develop more broadly.

This statement is also in line with research by Kuncoro (2020) which emphasizes that economic policies that support digitalization and SMEs can create an environment conducive to business development. Regulations that support the adoption of digital technologies can improve companies' competitiveness, allow them to reach more customers, speed up business processes, and improve operational efficiency. For example, the reduction of administrative barriers in terms of taxes and business licenses allows entrepreneurs to focus more on product development and innovation. Aprullah et al. (2024) highlight the importance of digital technology integration as a driver of growth and wider market reach.

Government policies that favor regional economic development can create a more inclusive business ecosystem. This is very important to maintain the growth of local economic sectors, where the policy can expand the market and reduce economic inequality between regions. With easier and more supportive regulations, businesses of Arab descent in Pontianak can more easily access digital opportunities and expand their market reach, both at the local and international levels.

Research conducted by Gertler (2017) supports this, by showing that government policies that support SMEs, including ease of business licensing, have a positive impact on increasing competitiveness and local economic growth. Ease of access to business licenses allows more entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses, which in turn increases their contribution to the region's economy. In addition, policies that facilitate SMEs can create new jobs, reduce the unemployment rate, and improve people's welfare.

The ease of licensing also opens up opportunities for SMEs to innovate, both in terms of products and business processes, as they are no longer hampered by long and complex

administrative processes. Thus, policies that support the development of SMEs, such as ease of business licensing, are key to creating a more dynamic and sustainable business environment.

6. The Influence of Lifestyle Changes in the Community

A growing consumptive lifestyle affects the market demand for certain products. In response to this, businesses should always update and adapt their products to existing trends. This suggests that rapid lifestyle changes require adaptive responses from business people to maintain the market relevance and competitiveness of their products.

Research by Schneider & Bowen (2019) reveals that lifestyle changes influenced by digitalization and practicality require business people to have high adaptability. Businesses that can adapt to new lifestyle trends will be better able to meet consumer needs and maintain their loyalty. Therefore, a business strategy that is responsive to lifestyle changes is the key to success in maintaining a business's existence, especially in a highly dynamic and competitive market.

7. The Influence of Arabic Culture in Business

This is in line with the view in the literature that a successful business does not only depend on the products or services offered, but also on relationships established with customers and partners who can rely on each other for a long time (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, building and maintaining relationships based on trust and kinship is an integral part of a business strategy that can strengthen the company's competitiveness and sustainability.

Research conducted by Khan & Tan (2020) shows that a business culture that prioritizes good relationships and mutual benefits has great potential in increasing customer loyalty. When a company shows concern for customers and business partners by sharing profits, paying more attention, and maintaining long-term relationships, customers will feel more valued and have a stronger sense of attachment to the company. This has a positive impact on loyalty and, in turn, on increasing the profitability of the company.

This principle is in line with the concept of relationships in marketing that are based on exchanges that are mutually beneficial and create more value for both parties. In the context of businesses of Arab descent in Pontianak, this value of sharing is one of the key factors that support the creation of strong and sustainable relationships, as well as increase the competitiveness of their business in the midst of increasingly fierce competition.

8. The Influence of Macro and Micro Economic Conditions

Macroeconomic factors, such as high inflation, can reduce consumer purchasing power, while tight monetary policy can increase borrowing and operational costs for businesses. Therefore, careful monitoring of macroeconomic conditions is very important to anticipate possible changes that can disrupt business continuity.

Microeconomic factors, such as operational cost management, play a role in determining the smooth running of daily business activities. Wise businessmen must be able to adapt their strategies to the economic dynamics that occur at the micro and macro levels. In line with that, Kotler & Keller (2016) revealed that businesses must be able to adapt to changing economic conditions to maintain business continuity. Flexibility in designing strategies, such as efficient cost management, inflation-responsive pricing settings, and the use of technology to increase productivity, are important steps that businesses need to implement.

This shows that, in order to meet dynamic economic challenges, businesses need to develop strategies that are not only responsive to market changes, but also able to survive in

uncertain economic conditions. By managing these two factors wisely, businesses can ensure their business remains relevant and competitive in an ever-changing market.

9. Facing the Economic Crisis

Operational efficiencies are important to reduce production and operational costs that may increase during a crisis, while a wider distribution network allows products to be more easily accessible to consumers in multiple locations. This shows that businesses that are able to maintain their operational continuity in the midst of economic uncertainty are those that have a strong foundation in risk management.

This approach is in line with the principles of good risk management, where resilience to economic crises requires a strategy of diversification and efficiency in operations. Freeman & Hannan (2019) state that organizations that face crises with diversification and efficiency tend to be more resilient and able to rise faster. By implementing these two strategies, businesses can be more flexible in responding to changing market conditions, especially when facing unexpected crises.

10. The Development of Information Technology in Business Interaction

Online transactions not only save time and operational costs, but also make it easier for customers to make purchases anytime and anywhere. With digital platforms, customers can easily access information regarding products, prices, and promotions offered. In addition, promotions carried out *online* can reach a wider audience through various social media channels, such as Instagram, Facebook, and *e-commerce* platforms, which are the main channels in product marketing.

Information technology also allows suppliers and business people to establish more efficient relationships. The process of communication and delivery of goods becomes faster and more integrated, thereby reducing barriers in the supply chain and speeding up the process of procuring raw materials. In addition, the data generated from *online* transactions also provides valuable insights for businesses to understand consumer trends and purchasing patterns, which can be leveraged for more informed decision-making.

The application of information technology in business is in line with global developments, where digitalization is increasingly dominating almost all aspects of life. According to Laudon & Traver (2021), businesses that do not adapt to the development of digital technology risk losing competitiveness. In contrast, those who are able to make good use of information technology will have an advantage in terms of operational efficiency, market reach, and product innovation.

11. Challenges in Keeping Up with Technological Developments

Investing in human resource (HR) training is essential because technological advancements often require new skills that employees did not previously possess. This is in line with the view of Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014), who stated that adaptation to technology requires investment in training and skill development. They emphasize that companies that do not invest in their human resource development can have difficulty utilizing technology effectively, even if they have advanced technology in place.

Additionally, training can also help employees overcome fear or anxiety about new technologies. Fear of change and lack of understanding of how technology works can hinder the acceptance of technology in the workplace. By providing good training, companies can create an environment that is more open to change and increase employee confidence in using new technologies. Mubarokt, et al. (2018) also found that the development of HR management skills

and training is an important strategy to increase organizational effectiveness in facing the digitalization era

It is also important to ensure that the training provided is relevant and ongoing, as technology continues to evolve rapidly. Therefore, companies must ensure that they have training programs that are accessible on an ongoing basis so that employees can keep up with technological developments. With the right training, companies can not only upskill employees, but can also ensure that they can adapt to the rapid changes in the digital business world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, a conclusion can be drawn:

The transformation of businesses of Arab descent in the city of Pontianak has undergone a significant transformation over time. Initially, they were involved in the trade of spices, textiles, and jewelry, as well as opening small businesses in traditional markets. Now, they have expanded into the property, hospitality, education, healthcare, culinary, and *e-commerce sectors*. The driving factors for this change include globalization, technological advancements, changes in people's lifestyles, and dynamic market demands. Technology plays a crucial role in business transformation, with the application of digital systems for operational management, marketing, and financial transactions. In addition, market development strategies are now more open, leading to expansion into other major cities and penetration of the digital market.

The factors that cause the change in business of Arab descent in Pontianak City prioritize the values of honesty, integrity, and family, even though they adopt the values of innovation and professionalism to adapt to the changing times and technology. Formal education and field experience complement each other in shaping the way of doing business, while changing demographics and technology are forcing businesses to innovate, especially in the face of online consumption trends. Increasingly fierce competition and government policies that support small businesses are important factors, along with the influence of digital lifestyles and Arab culture that emphasize long-term relationships. Macro and microeconomic conditions and economic crises, such as in 1997, teach the importance of product diversification and operational efficiency. The development of information technology has also made it easier for businesses to interact, although the cost and training challenges of employees need to be faced.

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