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Peran Usaha Kuliner Lokal dalam Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Karyawan: Studi Kasus Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul

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ABSTRACT

The study purpose was to analyze the role of Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul in improving the welfare of its employees in Kelurahan Mendahara Ilir, Kecamatan Mendahara, Kabupaten Tanjung Jabung Timur. This study explores how a single small-scale food business can significantly contribute to the economic and social well-being of its workers, particularly in rural areas with limited employment opportunities. The focus is on income stability, working environment, and the indirect social benefits gained by the employees.

Materials and methods. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data were gathered from in-depth interviews with employees and the business owner, while secondary data included relevant documents and local employment statistics. The analysis used interactive techniques involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The selection of Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul as the research site was based on its consistent employment of local labor and its established reputation within the community.

Results. Click here and insert your text. Click here and insert your text. Click here and insert your text. The findings indicate that Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul provides a reliable monthly income ranging from Rp1,200,000 to Rp1,800,000 per employee, along with daily incentives and meal allowances. The work atmosphere is characterized by a strong sense of kinship, flexibility, and mutual respect. While formal social security programs like BPJS are not yet available, employees report increased financial independence, skill development, and improved quality of life due to stable employment.

Conclusions. Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul plays a meaningful role in elevating employee welfare through stable income, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for informal learning. This case demonstrates how small local enterprises can serve as effective agents of community-based economic development.

Keywords: Employee welfare, Income, Work environment, Culinary business

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INTRODUCTION

A country's economy is highly dependent on the economic activity of its people(Bhudianto, 2012). Increased economic activity will impact the availability of various life necessities and the opening of wider job opportunities. In this context, providing employment is a strategic way to reduce unemployment, which continues to rise in line with population growth. Although Indonesia is known as a country with abundant natural resources, the challenge of distributing and managing this potential equitably remains a complex issue(Christian et al., 2022). Prosperity is a life goal desired by every individual and family. Prosperity encompasses not only material aspects but also a person's ability to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. One way many people achieve this prosperity is by establishing or working in a business(Sofyan, 2017). The existence of businesses, both small and large, plays a crucial role in absorbing labor and generating income for the community(Syafaat et al., 2025). The reciprocal relationship between business owners and

employees is vital: business owners need labor to carry out operations, while employees depend on the business to earn a decent living(Zasriati, 2022).

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of fairness in the treatment of workers or employees. In the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) recommends that workers be fed and clothed and not burdened with work beyond their capabilities. The values of justice, responsibility, and compassion in Islamic teachings are the foundation for building harmonious and humane working relationships(Mu, 2023). This demonstrates that economic activity is not solely about profit, but also about ethics and social responsibility towards workers. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the Indonesian economy. MSMEs have proven resilient, even during the economic crisis of 1998, this sector survived, while many large businesses went bankrupt. MSMEs are the backbone of the national economy, creating significant employment opportunities and providing income for many families. The government officially regulates and recognizes the importance of MSMEs through Law Number 20 of 2008, which classifies businesses based on their size and capacity(Hapsari, 2019).

One MSME that has developed in Mendahara Ilir Village, Mendahara District, is Uda Nasrul Restaurant. This restaurant promotes local culinary concepts and leverages its strategic location near the terminal as a business opportunity. With its menu of regional specialties and affordable prices, this restaurant attracts a large number of customers, both from within and outside the region. In its operational practices, Uda Nasrul Restaurant employs several employees with a salary system that is adjusted based on length of service. Despite its small scale, this business has been able to make a significant contribution to improving the welfare of the surrounding community, particularly by creating job opportunities for women and those without permanent employment. Research into the role of Uda Nasrul Restaurant is important because it can illustrate how MSMEs not only contribute to local economic growth but also directly impact the well-being of their employees(Sapriandi et al., 2025). The existence of MSMEs like this provides a concrete solution to addressing social issues such as unemployment and poverty at the local level.

This research focuses on analyzing the role of the Uda Nasrul Restaurant MSME in improving the welfare of its employees. The researcher limited the scope to employee income, work systems, and the socio-economic impacts of this restaurant's existence on the surrounding community. This study was conducted specifically in Mendahara Ilir Village, Mendahara District, using a qualitative descriptive approach to gather in-depth information.

METHOD

Study participants

The participants in this study were individuals directly involved in the operational activities and management of Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul, located in Kelurahan Mendahara Ilir, Mendahara Subdistrict, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency. To ensure the relevance and depth of data collected, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique, deliberately selecting informants based on their direct connection to the focus of the study. Study participants were categorized into three main groups. First, the owner of Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul served as the primary informant, given their comprehensive understanding of the restaurant's strategic direction, internal management, and financial impact on employees. Second, restaurant staff—including cooks, waitstaff, and cleaning personnel—provided firsthand accounts of workplace conditions, income levels, and any changes in their personal well-being since joining the restaurant. Third, local administrative officials or community leaders contributed external perspectives on the broader social and economic effects of the restaurant's operations within the local community. These informants were selected because of their direct experience and contextual knowledge, both of which were essential for addressing the core research questions—particularly those concerning the role of this culinary enterprise in improving employee well-being.

Study organization

This research was designed as a qualitative field study, focusing on Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul as a single case subject. The approach aims to comprehensively explore how the restaurant's economic activities contribute to the well-being of the individuals employed within it. By narrowing the scope to one specific culinary enterprise, the study seeks to capture in-depth insights into the lived experiences of workers and the broader social and economic implications of the business. The research was carried out in several stages. During the preparation stage, the researcher developed a detailed proposal and determined Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul as the focal point of the study. Key informants were identified at this stage, particularly the restaurant owner and the staff directly involved in daily operations, such as cooks, servers, and cleaners. The data collection stage involved direct observation of the restaurant's operational environment. This included monitoring working hours, workplace atmosphere, and the nature of interactions between the owner and employees. In-depth interviews were conducted with both the owner and all participating employees to gather personal narratives and perspectives. In addition, relevant documents were reviewed—such as the business history, available payroll records, and demographic information about the workforce—to complement and validate interview data. In the analysis and reporting stage, data analysis was conducted in parallel with fieldwork, enabling the researcher to refine the research focus in real time based on emerging findings. Conclusions were drawn through careful synthesis of data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The study was carried out over a period of eight months, covering instrument development, field data collection, thematic analysis, and the preparation of the final report.

Statistical analysis

Given the qualitative nature of this study, data analysis does not utilize quantitative statistical tools but instead relies on descriptive interpretation grounded in field findings(Agius, 2013). The analysis adopts the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three interconnected components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. In the data reduction phase, information gathered from interviews, observations, and documentation is selectively condensed to emphasize key aspects of how Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul influences employee well-being—such as improvements in income, job stability, and work satisfaction. These findings are then presented narratively and thematically, supported by direct quotations from informants, workflow diagrams, and employee profile tables. Conclusions are drawn by identifying emerging patterns or tendencies, particularly regarding whether employee earnings have increased, whether the restaurant has provided stable employment, and whether workplace relationships contribute to a healthy and productive environment. To ensure the validity of findings, triangulation of sources and methods was conducted by cross-referencing interview results, field observations, and documentary data(Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Mendahara Ilir Sub-District is an administrative area located on the eastern coast of Jambi Province, strategically situated at the estuary of the Batanghari River. Covering approximately 10,540 hectares, this region features diverse topography and natural resources that support local livelihoods. It borders Sinar Kalimantan Village to the west, Lagan Ilir Village to the east, the Berhala Strait to the north, and Sungai Tawar Village to the south. Its muddy coastal land and rich mangrove vegetation present potential for both environmental conservation and marine-based economic activities such as fisheries and ecotourism(Fia et al., 2024).

The community in Mendahara Ilir is known for its heterogeneous yet harmonious social structure, shaped by a blend of ethnic groups and cultures since the settlement was established around 1950. Economic activities primarily involve natural resource-based occupations such as fishing, farming, and small-scale entrepreneurship. Administratively, the area has transitioned from a traditional village to a formal sub-district in 2008, supported by a governance structure consisting of the village head, local officials, and neighborhood leaders (RW and RT). This structure has fostered more

participatory and equitable development, providing a foundation for sustainable social and economic management.

Uda Nasrul Restaurant plays a significant role in providing employment opportunities for local residents in Mendahara Ilir. Many workers, previously unemployed, now earn regular monthly income. One employee noted, "I used to just help my parents, but now I earn my own monthly income." This steady income helps meet basic needs such as food, children's education, and healthcare. Field observations indicate that workers perform tasks with discipline and responsibilities are fairly distributed. Basic salaries range from IDR 1,200,000 to IDR 1,800,000 per month, depending on role and tenure. Salaries are paid punctually and serve as a crucial household financial pillar. Employees also receive overtime pay, daily sales bonuses, and free lunch. One worker shared, "When sales are good, the bonus helps me buy more groceries for home." Work enthusiasm tends to peak near the end of the month and during holiday seasons, aligning with increased income potential.

Workers also gain hands-on experience in essential culinary business skills through informal mentorship from the owner and senior staff(Way et al., 2025). Many initially lacked cooking or customer service experience, but now manage these tasks independently. One employee stated, "I didn't know how to serve customers before, but now I'm comfortable working the register or taking orders." Observations noted task rotation, giving all employees diverse work experiences. The relationship between the owner and employees is built on mutual respect and a familial atmosphere. Workers are allowed to take leave for emergencies without fear of job loss. "If we have family matters, we can request leave as long as someone can cover," said one employee. This open and supportive environment enhances employee loyalty and motivation. Both the kitchen and dining area operate in a relaxed, collaborative setting.

However, gaps remain in social security provisions. Most employees do not yet receive BPJS Health or Employment Insurance, primarily due to limited business resources. "We don't have BPJS, so we have to pay medical costs ourselves," one worker complained. Despite good intentions from the owner, long-term welfare programs require external support, such as government-sponsored management training or capital assistance. Employee income at Uda Nasrul Restaurant is relatively stable. Although monthly wages of IDR 1,200,000–1,800,000 are low compared to regional minimum wage standards, they are considered sufficient for basic needs in Mendahara Ilir. This aligns with Arifin (2021), who found that rural MSME workers value income stability over high wages. Stability allows for better household financial planning.

Additional incentives such as daily bonuses tied to sales and meal allowances further support employee income. These rewards positively influence work motivation and job satisfaction. For instance, a permanent staff member named Khairi reported earning up to IDR 100,000 in bonuses on busy days. This performance-based incentive system is simple yet effective, as also found in Sari and Nugroho (2019), though not all MSMEs can maintain such schemes due to fluctuating business income. The provision of free meals during workdays demonstrates the owner's concern for employees' basic needs. This benefit not only reduces financial burdens but also strengthens employee loyalty. The owner stated that providing food is a form of social responsibility within their financial means. Unlike most MSMEs that only offer base salaries, this practice mirrors findings by Sulastri (2020), highlighting the importance of non-monetary benefits in enhancing job satisfaction in small enterprises.

Nevertheless, income limitations still hinder long-term and emergency financial resilience. Without social security, employees must rely on family loans or side jobs in urgent situations. This dependence reflects ongoing economic vulnerability. Rahmawati (2022) also noted that most MSME culinary workers lack access to formal labor protections. Although the owner is empathetic, limited capital hinders the provision of essential social security. Fluctuating income due to external variables—such as customer volume—also affects monthly earnings. Sales bonuses depend on

exceeding revenue targets, which may be unachievable during slow business periods. Despite this, base salaries are paid consistently, even in low seasons, unlike many MSMEs that reduce wages when revenue declines (Wibowo, 2018). Uda Nasrul Restaurant's consistent salary payments reflect a commitment to sustainable employment relationships.

The restaurant's contribution to employee well-being extends beyond financial aspects to include social and skill development. Workers participate in various tasks, from service and inventory to basic financial management, fostering learning by doing as discussed in local development literature by Todaro and Smith (2017). MSMEs are not only job providers but also platforms for practical skill formation. The owner intentionally creates a learning environment to encourage future self-reliance among staff. Unlike some MSME owners who retain workers to prevent competition, this approach reflects upward economic mobility potential. Hutabarat (2021) observed that MSME workers given learning opportunities tend to develop stronger entrepreneurial aspirations than those performing repetitive technical tasks.

Flexibility in work arrangements and familial relations between owners and employees are unique advantages rarely found in the formal sector. The absence of bureaucratic hurdles for leave requests fosters a human-centered work environment, contributing to emotional security and long-term loyalty. Lestari and Putra (2020) emphasized that emotional closeness in small businesses significantly impacts employee retention—even without formal contracts or social guarantees. Nonetheless, the lack of formal social security remains a critical gap. Despite the owner's care and provision of some benefits, the absence of BPJS or employment insurance highlights a disparity between good intentions and structural limitations. Similar findings were reported by Nuraini (2022), noting that many MSMEs are excluded from national social protection systems due to lack of information, administrative capacity, and funding.

Uda Nasrul Restaurant contributes to the local economy through multiplier effects. It not only provides jobs for local residents but also boosts demand for local raw materials such as rice, vegetables, and fish sourced from traditional markets. This activity generates a microeconomic cycle that benefits multiple stakeholders. A 2020 study by Indonesia’s Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs found that MSMEs integrated into local networks tend to generate broader economic impacts than those focused solely on internal profit. Therefore, Uda Nasrul Restaurant should be seen as part of a sustainable local economic ecosystem.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, employee income at Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul is relatively stable, with a fixed salary paid regularly each month, supplemented by daily bonuses and meal allowances. Although the income is not yet considered high and does not fully cover long-term or emergency needs, it is sufficient to meet basic daily necessities such as food, transportation, and children’s education expenses. For some employees who previously lacked steady employment, the presence of this eatery has had a significant impact on household economic stability. Moreover, the business owner consistently pays salaries and provides incentives, which fosters a sense of financial security and increases employee motivation.

Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul also plays an important role in enhancing employee well-being, both economically and psychologically. A familial work environment, the owner’s direct attention to employee needs, and opportunities for learning through involvement in daily operations create a workplace conducive to personal and professional growth. While limitations remain in the provision of social security and formal work facilities, the owner's efforts reflect a strong commitment to employee welfare. Therefore, it is recommended that the management of Rumah Makan Uda Nasrul begin to consider providing basic social protection, along with support from local government in the form of training and mentoring, so that labor welfare-oriented business practices can be developed more broadly and sustainably.

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