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## Identity Commodification as a Strategy for Acehnese Culinary Business Development: A Comparative Analysis of Indonesia and Egypt

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### Abstract

*Ideally, identity commodification can be an effective strategy in the development of the culinary business by utilizing local cultural and religious values as an attraction for consumers. However, in reality, significant challenges arise in the implementation of this strategy, especially related to cultural diversity and the dynamics of the global market. This study aims to analyze the application of identity commodification in the development of Acehnese culinary businesses, and compare it with the approach applied in Egypt. This article is a field study using a qualitative approach. The methodology employed includes descriptive analysis and comparative study. The research findings show that Aceh has successfully utilized its local identity, which is deeply rooted in Islamic culture, as an appealing culinary business strategy, with a strong halal guarantee even without official halal certification. A comparison with Egypt shows that, although both leverage cultural and religious identity, Aceh emphasizes the diversity of local cultures*

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*combined with religious values, while Egypt focuses more on preserving the authentic Arab-Islamic culinary traditions and history.*

**Keywords:** *Commodification, Business Strategy, Culinary, Aceh, Egypt*

## **Abstrak**

Idealnya, komodifikasi identitas dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif dalam pengembangan bisnis kuliner dengan memanfaatkan nilai-nilai budaya dan agama lokal sebagai daya tarik bagi konsumen. Namun, dalam realitasnya, tantangan besar muncul dalam penerapan strategi ini, terutama yang berkaitan dengan keberagaman budaya dan dinamika pasar global. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan komodifikasi identitas dalam pengembangan bisnis kuliner Aceh, serta membandingkannya dengan pendekatan yang diterapkan di Mesir. Artikel ini merupakan studi lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Metodologi yang digunakan mencakup analisis deskriptif dan studi komparatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Aceh telah berhasil memanfaatkan identitas lokal yang kental dengan budaya Islam sebagai strategi bisnis kuliner yang menarik, dengan jaminan halal yang kuat meskipun tanpa sertifikasi halal resmi. Perbandingan dengan Mesir menunjukkan bahwa meskipun keduanya memanfaatkan identitas budaya dan agama, Aceh lebih menekankan keberagaman budaya lokal yang dipadukan dengan nilai-nilai religius, sementara Mesir lebih fokus pada pelestarian tradisi kuliner Arab-Islam yang autentik dan sejarahnya. Kata

**Kata Kunci:** Komodifikasi, Strategi Bisnis, Kuliner, Aceh, Mesir

## **Introduction**

Business is an essential aspect of human life, serving as a means to fulfill economic needs. In modern society, business has expanded into various sectors, including trade, services, manufacturing, and the creative industries (Griffin, Ricky W. & Ebert, 2013; Griffin, 2017; Sancoko et al., 2015; Studi et al., 2013). One of the most attractive business sectors is the culinary industry, which continues to grow due to the fundamental nature of food and beverages as human necessities. Moreover, the culinary business is popular among entrepreneurs because of its potential profitability and scalability, ranging from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to large-scale operations (Baharun & Niswa, 2019b).

Culinary businesses are not merely about selling food and beverages; they also carry cultural and regional identity. Each region has distinctive culinary characteristics that serve as a unique attraction for both locals and tourists. For instance, Yogyakarta is known for gudeg, Medan for bika Ambon, and Padang for sanjai chips. Similarly, Aceh has a rich culinary heritage, including Sabang's Pia Cake, Meuredu's Ade Kak Nah, and Langsa's shrimp paste, soy sauce, and tauco (Asnita & Agustinar, 2022) (DPMG Banda Aceh, 2021). These culinary traditions

not only reflect cultural heritage but also serve as effective marketing strategies for business owners (J. Cole, 2024; Partarakis et al., 2021).

The growth of the culinary business in Aceh is influenced by various factors, such as increased tourism, digital marketing advancements, and heightened awareness of local culinary products. Ideally, these factors should contribute to economic strength for SMEs, enabling Acehnese culinary products to gain national and international recognition. Additionally, the strong influence of Islamic values in Acehnese cuisine can serve as a competitive advantage, differentiating its culinary identity in the global halal market (Simanjuntak et al., 2021).

However, the reality is that Aceh's culinary industry faces numerous challenges, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to reduced consumer purchasing power and changes in consumer behavior, resulting in financial difficulties for many culinary businesses. Marketing, distribution, and product innovation have become more challenging, necessitating creative strategies to attract customers. One strategy gaining traction is *identity commodification*—the process of transforming cultural and regional identity elements into marketable commodities to enhance culinary business appeal (S. Cole, 2007; Mardatillah et al., 2019).

A similar phenomenon is observed in Egypt, where the culinary industry is highly competitive. Cities like Cairo and Alexandria host numerous restaurants and cafes that incorporate Islamic identity into their business models. Many Egyptian restaurants emphasize strict halal certification, Islamic architectural elements, and Arabic branding to attract Muslim consumers. Moreover, like Aceh, Egypt's culinary businesses faced significant disruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, businesses that adapted by integrating Islamic identity into their marketing strategies were able to sustain themselves and even grow post-pandemic (Recuero-Virto & Valilla Arróspide, 2024), (Gaul, 2022).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to identify how SMEs in Aceh utilize Acehnese or Islamic identity as a strategy for culinary business development, describe how Acehnese cuisine represents Islamic identity in its products and marketing, and analyze how *identity commodification* functions as a post-pandemic business development strategy in Aceh. By addressing these objectives, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for culinary entrepreneurs in leveraging cultural and religious identity in their business strategies. Furthermore, this study contributes to academic discourse on culinary business development and *identity commodification*, while also offering practical implications for policymakers and business practitioners.

## Literature Review

The study of "*Identity Commodification, Acehnese Cuisine, Indonesia, and Egypt*" is not a new discourse. Various researchers have already discussed and even published works on this topic. Agung, (2017), in his work "*Commodification and Business Development Strategy*," discusses how commodification can be used to shape market identity and influence business strategies. The similarity between Agung's work and this study lies in the concept of commodifying cultural elements for business growth. However, Agung focuses more on industry strategies in

general, whereas this research narrows the scope to Acehnese culinary businesses, specifically analyzing the intersection of cultural heritage and business development. This distinction highlights the local Acehnese context, which has not been extensively discussed in Agung's study.

Furthermore, Kitiarsa (2018), in his book "*Globalization and Identity in the Culinary Business*," examines the impact of globalization on local culinary businesses, emphasizing the role of identity commodification in adapting traditional cuisine to global markets. The similarity with this research lies in its focus on the culinary business and the adaptation of traditional identity. However, Kitiarsa's study takes a broader global perspective, discussing various culinary traditions, whereas this research emphasizes the specific context of Acehnese cuisine, compared to the culinary phenomenon in Egypt. Therefore, this study offers a more localized analysis by highlighting regional identity while presenting it within a global comparative framework (Indonesia and Egypt).

Irham Amir and Elisa (2022), in their publication "*Cross-Border Shuttle Trade Indonesia and Egypt: Challenges and Solutions*," have excellently discussed practical solutions relevant to improving trade relations between the two countries, emphasizing the importance of supportive policies and integration between related sectors. The similarity with the author's study lies in the use of identity as a tool to introduce and develop business potential, although in different contexts. Both see the importance of identity factors—whether cultural or economic identity—to create appeal and competitiveness in the global market. The difference lies in the author's focus, which is more directed towards the Acehnese and Egyptian culinary sectors as cultural commodities, while Irham and Elisa's work examines trade between the two countries within a broader context.

Based on the observations above and a review of various other works, no study has specifically examined the commodification of identity in Acehnese culinary businesses within the context of a comparison with Egypt as conducted in this research. Although some previous studies have addressed the theme of identity commodification in business or the culinary industry, none have directly explored how Islamic identity in Acehnese cuisine is utilized as a business strategy and compared to similar phenomena in Egypt. Therefore, this article is unique and remains original in the academic discourse.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which combines the study of identity commodification with a comparative analysis between Indonesia and Egypt in the culinary business sector. This study not only highlights how cultural elements and Islamic identity play a role in Acehnese culinary businesses but also offers a comparative analysis with similar phenomena in Egypt, providing broader insights into how Islamic identity can be adapted and commercialized in culinary businesses in two countries with different cultural contexts. This perspective has not been widely explored in previous research, making this study a significant academic contribution to the field of cultural economics and identity-based culinary business development.

## **Research Methodology**

This article is a field study using a qualitative approach. The methodology employed includes descriptive analysis and comparative study. This research was conducted in several key locations in Aceh, including Sabang, Banda Aceh, Pidie, Matang, and Langsa, which are known for their diverse traditional Acehnese cuisine. Data collection involved on-site observations at culinary businesses, in-depth interviews with business owners, religious leaders, community figures, and culinary enthusiasts, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs). Additionally, a documentation study was conducted to complement the primary data obtained from informants. A triangulation technique was applied to enhance data credibility by combining various sources and collection methods while analyzing the findings through historical, conceptual, Islamic law, and economic perspectives.

Furthermore, data collection in Egypt was carried out by an Egyptian researcher who also contributed as an author in this study. The research in Egypt focused on the commodification strategies of traditional foods within the tourism and culinary business sectors, which were then compared to similar phenomena in Aceh. By examining how Egypt adapts and commercializes its cultural identity in the global culinary industry, this study provides a broader comparative perspective, enriching the understanding of how Islamic identity in cuisine can be leveraged as a business strategy in two countries with different cultural contexts.

## **Islamic Identity Presented Through Acehnese Culinary Practices**

Islamic identity has become an important aspect in the culinary business practices in Aceh, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Business owners not only maintain culinary traditions but also integrate Islamic values into various aspects of their businesses. Restaurants, coffee shops, and traditional cake producers in Aceh use this strategy to attract customers, build trust, and strengthen cultural heritage. Islam is not only a spiritual identity but also a guiding principle in business operations that reflects local culture. The application of Islamic values in the culinary business in Aceh can be seen in various forms, ranging from halal policies to the provision of worship facilities. All of this demonstrates that religious values are an integral part of the sustainability of the culinary business in Aceh.

Lem Bakrie Restaurant serves as a concrete example of how Islamic identity is applied in Aceh's culinary business. The family heritage tied to the restaurant's name reflects the importance of cultural values and traditions in its operations. Signature dishes like Kuah Pliek U and Sie Reuboh not only showcase culinary diversity but also have social meaning within the Acehnese community. In addition to ensuring the halal status of ingredients, the restaurant accommodates prayer times by temporarily closing during Friday prayers and providing worship facilities for customers. This practice shows that Islam is not just a moral guide but also part of a business strategy that attracts Muslim customers. The implementation of Islamic values in this business not only enhances customer trust but also strengthens the character of a Sharia-based business.

According to Reza, one of the employees at Lem Bakrie Restaurant, blessings are the main principle in running this business. Honesty in pricing,

friendliness in service, and cleanliness in the establishment are the standards applied in daily business operations. Commitment to these Islamic principles not only attracts Muslim customers but also creates a distinctive cultural experience for tourists. The maintained quality of food and service based on Islamic ethics makes this business increasingly popular across different demographics. The success of this Islam-based culinary business shows that this approach can be a sustainable strategy. As a result, many other business owners in Aceh are beginning to apply similar principles in their businesses. The Islamic values applied in Aceh's culinary business strengthen competitiveness and preserve regional cultural identity (Reza, interview, 2024).

Meanwhile, Kopi Khop in Banda Aceh maintains the tradition of serving coffee in a unique way originating from Meulaboh, West Aceh. This method of serving provides an authentic coffee drinking experience and helps preserve the distinctive Acehnese coffee culture. This tradition not only attracts local customers but also becomes an attraction for tourists who want to learn more about Acehnese culture. In addition to serving coffee in the traditional way, Kopi Khop also serves as a cultural discussion space, regularly hosting discussions about Aceh's history and art. The shop's interior is decorated with characteristic ornaments such as songket fabric and Islamic calligraphy, creating an atmosphere that strengthens local and religious identity. Thus, Kopi Khop is not only a place to relax but also a social interaction center that reinforces the sense of togetherness in Islam. This uniqueness has made Kopi Khop widely known and a model of how culinary businesses can play a role in preserving culture.

According to Aan Risnanda Vahlevi, the owner of Kopi Khop, the application of Islamic values in his business is reflected in the principles of price transparency, cleanliness, and the obligation for employees to perform prayers on time. A mosque facility is also provided so that customers can feel comfortable worshipping, making this coffee shop not only a gathering place but also a supporter of religious practices. The awareness of the importance of Islamic values in business reflects the commitment of Aceh entrepreneurs to maintain a balance between economics and religion. This shows that Islam is not only a spiritual guide but also a business ethics model that can enhance customer loyalty. By emphasizing Islamic values, Kopi Khop has successfully built a positive image that aligns with Acehnese culture. This approach also creates a more inclusive business environment, where all customers feel respected and comfortable. Therefore, Kopi Khop is an example of a successful culinary business that combines Islamic values and local culture (Aan Risnanda Vahlevi, interview, 2024).

Specifically in Aceh Market, traditional Acehnese cake business owners preserve ancestral recipes to maintain the authentic taste passed down through generations. Cakes like Timphan and Adee are not just food but also part of tradition, especially during Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. In the production process, business owners always ensure that the ingredients used are in accordance with halal principles. This aims to maintain customer trust and uphold Islamic values in the culinary business. Aceh's identity is also reflected in the product packaging, which uses songket motifs and narratives about the history of the cakes. In addition to attracting tourists, this strategy also serves as an educational tool about Acehnese culture for customers from outside the region.

This effort not only enhances the competitiveness of local products but also introduces the Islamic culture embedded in Acehnese cuisine.

Social media is utilized as a marketing platform and educational medium for culinary business owners in Aceh to introduce their products to the wider public. Business owners often share content that not only promotes products but also provides insights into the history of Acehnese cuisine and the Islamic values embedded in it. Through this strategy, Aceh's culinary businesses can reach more customers, including the younger generation who are active in the digital world. The use of social media also allows for direct interaction with customers, making it possible to receive feedback and apply it to business development.

Furthermore, digital platforms help increase business transparency by displaying customer reviews that build trust. Thus, the integration of technology into Islam-based culinary businesses in Aceh becomes a key factor in the sustainability of the venture. This strategy demonstrates that Islamic identity in culinary businesses can be strengthened through innovation without abandoning traditional values. By combining Islamic identity and Acehnese culture in business strategies, entrepreneurs not only preserve traditional heritage but also build a competitive advantage in the increasingly modern market.

### **The Commodification of Identity in Business: A Strategic Approach in Aceh**

The commodification of identity in business in Aceh is a phenomenon that leverages local cultural values as part of marketing strategies to attract consumers. In the context of Aceh, cultural identity, which is closely tied to Islam, serves as a key element used to differentiate products in the market. Businesses in Aceh often utilize cultural and religious symbols to create appeal, such as in culinary products that emphasize the theme of halal certification, a value considered highly important in Aceh's society, which adheres to Sharia law.

This approach is highly beneficial, as the people of Aceh tend to trust products that are linked to their cultural identity. Trust in the halal status of products becomes a crucial asset for business owners. Acehnese specialty foods and beverages often find a strong market both locally and beyond, as they are perceived as more authentic and halal (Baharun & Niswa, 2019). This creates a closer relationship between businesses and consumers, with Acehnese cultural identity serving as a guarantee of quality that is trusted by the community.

One example of this commodification of identity can be found in culinary businesses such as Kopi Khop AAN, which capitalizes on Aceh's identity as its main selling point. Even though they do not always have official halal certification, consumers often assume that Acehnese products inherently meet halal standards. This demonstrates how the commodification of Acehnese identity plays a role in influencing consumer behavior, with religious values tied to Aceh's cultural identity being a key factor in product trust (Aan, Interview, 2022). However, a major challenge faced by many businesses in Aceh is obtaining official halal certification. The process of acquiring a halal certificate or necessary production permits, such as PIRT (Home Industry Food Production Permit), often requires significant time and cost. Nonetheless, many entrepreneurs remain committed to

maintaining product quality, even without official certification, as Aceh's identity itself is often sufficient assurance for many consumers.

Beyond the culinary sector, the commodification of identity can also be observed in Aceh's Islamic banking sector. Many Acehnese people have transitioned from conventional banking to banks that offer Sharia-based financial services. This illustrates that products carrying an Islamic identity have the potential to attract a larger consumer base, as they align with the religious values held in high regard in Aceh. With the growth of Islamic banking, the people of Aceh can conduct economic activities with greater confidence, free from concerns about violating religious principles (Hidayat, 2021). Not only in banking, but Aceh's tourism sector also relies on the commodification of identity to attract visitors. By positioning Aceh as a religious tourism destination, many tourism entrepreneurs incorporate Islamic values as a primary attraction. Various tourism products, such as halal tourism and Acehnese cuisine, use this local identity to draw both domestic and international tourists. This demonstrates that a cultural identity deeply intertwined with Islam can serve as a strengthening factor in the appeal of tourism-related products.

The culinary sector also utilizes social media to promote products that emphasize Acehnese identity. Many culinary businesses, such as Socolatte, rely on digital platforms to introduce their products. This helps them reach a broader audience, even internationally. Social media provides opportunities for Aceh-based businesses to showcase their locally rooted cuisine and build a loyal consumer community (Musawir, Interview, 2022). Socolatte, for instance, successfully sustained its business during the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing social media as its primary marketing tool. The business owners recognized the importance of maintaining connections with consumers despite physical restrictions on their storefront. Consequently, digital platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp were used to continuously promote products and facilitate transactions, enabling customers to enjoy Acehnese cuisine without having to visit the establishment in person.

The commodification of identity in Acehnese business extends beyond just the products being sold; it also encompasses the experience offered to consumers. Businesses that incorporate Acehnese identity must ensure that they provide an authentic experience aligned with cultural values. This is not only about the use of religious or cultural symbols but also about how the experience reflects the authenticity of that identity in every product and service offered (Wahyu, 2020). However, a major challenge for businesses is maintaining product integrity so that identity is not merely exploited for commercial gain. Today's consumers are more critical of products that appear to exploit identity without delivering a genuine experience. Businesses in Aceh need to ensure that the commodification of identity does not become solely a marketing strategy that misrepresents the true cultural values of Aceh (Mardatillah et al., 2019).

Therefore, transparency in production processes and business management is crucial. Businesses rooted in Acehnese identity must ensure that their products meet the promised quality standards. This will strengthen consumer trust and build greater loyalty. Sustaining product quality and consistently upholding Acehnese cultural values are key factors in achieving long-term business success

(Salim, 2020). On a broader scale, with increasing awareness of sustainability and responsible consumption, businesses in Aceh can also leverage their cultural identity to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable products. By introducing products that not only highlight cultural identity but also consider social and environmental impacts, Aceh-based businesses can access larger markets while actively contributing to global issues such as sustainability and ethical consumption.

### **Islamic Identity Commodification as a Culinary Business Development Strategy in Aceh**

The commodification of Islamic identity in the culinary business in Aceh has become an effective strategy for attracting consumers and enhancing the competitiveness of local products. Islamic identity plays a crucial role in building public trust in the quality and halal status of the products offered. By utilizing halal certification and Sharia-based values, business owners can create a unique appeal for Muslim consumers who are increasingly selective in choosing food that aligns with Islamic teachings (Al-Khayyat & Abu Amrieh, 2023; Salim, 2020). The presence of a halal label also functions as a marketing instrument that guarantees quality, expediting purchasing decisions without requiring further verification.

In Aceh, as a region implementing Islamic law, the commodification of Islamic identity is not limited to the halal aspect of food but also encompasses business ethics based on Islamic values. Principles such as honesty, fairness, and blessings serve as fundamental elements in business management. Entrepreneurs are not solely profit-oriented but also focus on social responsibility and community benefits (Mardatillah et al., 2019). The application of Islamic economic principles continues to grow, in line with the increasing public awareness of the importance of conducting transactions that adhere to Sharia principles. This development also impacts the expansion of the Islamic financial sector, such as Sharia banks and halal investments, which are gaining widespread interest.

The post-pandemic digitalization boom has also significantly influenced the transformation of Aceh's culinary business. The use of digital technology, such as social media and e-commerce platforms, has become an essential tool for expanding market reach and increasing product visibility. Business owners who can optimize these technologies can compete more effectively in both domestic and international markets. The Islamic identity embedded in Aceh's culinary products adds value to digital marketing efforts, as many Muslim consumers prefer products that guarantee halal status and compliance with religious values.

Despite these advantages, several challenges remain. One of the primary hurdles is the halal certification process, which is often considered a barrier for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). High costs and complex administrative procedures pose major obstacles for business owners seeking official certification (Belk, 2020). On the other hand, there is a common perception among the public that all traditional Acehnese foods are inherently halal, reducing the urgency for certification. This situation potentially hampers market expansion to foreign countries, especially those with strict halal certification regulations.

Moreover, not all business owners have the capacity to adapt to digitalization. Many still struggle to utilize technology for marketing and product distribution. A lack of readiness to embrace technological changes can lead to stagnation in business growth, particularly for small businesses that still rely on conventional marketing methods (Thompson, 2012). Therefore, training and mentoring in digital transformation are urgently needed to enhance the competitiveness of local entrepreneurs in the modern era. The strong presence of Islamic identity also enables Aceh to develop broader business strategies. In the context of globalization, Acehnese cuisine has significant potential to compete in international markets while preserving cultural identity and Islamic values (Porcheddu, 2022). Educating entrepreneurs on business principles modeled after the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is a crucial step in fostering a sustainable business ecosystem. This approach not only focuses on profit-making but also incorporates aspects of blessings and social responsibility.

However, the commodification of Aceh's culinary identity also carries potential negative impacts. If not managed wisely, this process could lead to excessive commercialization, diminishing the authenticity of traditional culinary practices passed down through generations. Uncontrolled commercialization may shift the original values of traditional foods, reducing them to mere market commodities without considering the cultural essence behind them (Lumbreras, 2019; Belk, 2020). Hence, maintaining a balance between economic exploitation and cultural preservation is essential. This phenomenon is also observed in traditional foods from other regions, such as Malay cuisine in Riau. Entrepreneurs in these areas face similar challenges in maintaining cultural authenticity amidst globalization. They must adapt to global market demands without losing the essence of traditional cuisine. In the context of Aceh, business owners must also innovate in product development while upholding Sharia values and local traditions.

The commodification of Islamic identity in Aceh's culinary business affects not only the economic sector but also holds significant social and cultural dimensions. The sustainability of this practice depends on how business owners balance innovation with the preservation of traditions. By maintaining production methods that align with Islamic values and local culture, Acehnese culinary products can continue to have strong appeal in both national and international markets (Thompson, 2012). The active involvement of local communities is also a crucial factor in ensuring that this commodification process continues to benefit society. Engaging the community in production, distribution, and promotion helps create a more inclusive and sustainable business ecosystem.

As a result, the economic benefits generated from the culinary business are not only enjoyed by a handful of major business players but also contribute positively to the overall welfare of the wider society. In the long run, the commodification of Islamic identity can serve as an effective strategy to strengthen the competitiveness of Acehnese cuisine, provided it is approached correctly. Entrepreneurs must be able to manage their businesses based on Islamic principles, enhance product quality, and continuously adapt to technological developments. This strategy will help maintain business relevance in the era of

globalization while reinforcing Aceh's identity as a region that upholds Islamic values.

### **Comparison of Identity Commodification in Culinary Business Development: A Case Study of Egypt and Indonesia**

The commodification of identity in culinary business development has become an increasingly relevant topic in this era of globalization. This process refers to the transformation of cultural elements and local identities into marketable products, aimed at attracting both domestic and international markets. In the culinary world, the commodification of identity can involve the use of cultural, historical, and religious elements in the marketing of culinary products. This article will compare the application of identity commodification in the culinary business between Egypt and Indonesia, with a particular focus on the Aceh context, and identify the similarities and differences in the strategies used by both countries in the development of identity-based culinary industries.

Egypt, as a country with a long history of Islamic and Arab civilization, has a very strong approach in connecting cultural and religious identity with culinary business development. The commodification of culinary identity in Egypt is closely tied to the authenticity and continuity of Islamic and Arab cultural heritage. Many Egyptian restaurants and culinary products highlight historical and religious elements, such as the use of traditional recipes dating back to ancient Egyptian civilization, as well as foods associated with Islamic values. Koshari and Ful Medames are examples of foods that are often promoted not only as local dishes but also as symbols of Egypt's long-standing civilization that continues into the present day (Hegazy, 2018). In this regard, the commodification of identity aims not only to satisfy market preferences but also to introduce and preserve Egypt's broader cultural and religious values.

On the other hand, Indonesia, with its very high cultural diversity, adopts a more flexible approach in adapting its cultural identity for commercial purposes, particularly in the culinary sector. The commodification of culinary identity in Indonesia blends various cultural influences, ranging from local traditions, Islamic influences, to colonial legacies. In Aceh, as one of the provinces with a strong Islamic influence, culinary commodification is very much linked to Acehnese Islamic identity. Traditional dishes such as Mie Aceh and Kari Kambing are often promoted by emphasizing the strong Islamic values of Aceh, while maintaining universal appeal by adapting flavors to suit international tastes (Lubis et al., 2019). This illustrates how Aceh adopts a strategy that combines cultural authenticity with global market trends.

The comparison between Egypt and Indonesia in the context of culinary identity commodification can be seen in how both countries utilize religious values in their culinary products. Egypt emphasizes the continuity of Islamic and Arab traditions in its cuisine, with a focus on foods that have been integral to Egyptian civilization. In contrast, Indonesia, particularly Aceh, emphasizes the diversity of cultural influences reflected in its cuisine. In Aceh, the commodification of culinary identity involves blending Malay, Islamic, and historical influences from the Indian Ocean trade routes (Seti et al., 2012). This diversity provides an opportunity to

attract various market segments, both domestic and international, with differing tastes and preferences.

While Egypt and Indonesia adopt different approaches, both utilize their cultural and religious strengths in marketing their culinary products. Both governments also support the development of the culinary business with policies that back halal food exports, particularly to countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Dinar Standard, 2020). In this context, culinary identity commodification becomes an effective strategy to bridge domestic and international markets, with religious values serving as a key attraction, especially for the global Muslim market. In Aceh, local culinary products are increasingly promoted as part of halal tourism, emphasizing not just taste but also deep religious values (Asnita & Agustinar, 2022).

The implementation of culinary business development strategies in both Egypt and Indonesia also demonstrates how both countries use the culinary sector to build national identity. In Egypt, cuisine serves as a means to introduce Islamic and Arab culture to the world, while in Indonesia, cuisine not only symbolizes cultural diversity but also serves as a means to introduce a moderate Islamic identity. In Aceh, while culinary commodification is heavily influenced by Islam, it also takes into account the rich and diverse local culture, making Acehnese culinary products appealing to both tourists and the international market (Zeghal, 1999).

In terms of marketing, both Egypt and Indonesia, particularly Aceh, use branding focused on cultural and religious heritage to attract Muslim tourists and international markets. Egypt, by highlighting dishes such as Koshari and Ful Medames, utilizes historical and cultural narratives to create an authentic image that appeals to global markets, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. In Aceh, culinary products like Mie Aceh and Kari Kambing are promoted not only as traditional dishes but also as symbols of Acehnese Islamic identity, with flavor adaptations to cater to global tastes (Igel et al., 2015).

The culinary market development strategies employed by both Egypt and Indonesia also share similarities in terms of international collaboration, particularly with Islamic countries. In this regard, both countries leverage government policies to support halal food exports to countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and North African nations. The commodification of culinary identity, with a focus on cultural and religious values, enables Egypt and Indonesia to establish broader distribution networks and improve the competitiveness of their culinary products in the global market.

Despite these similarities, the key difference between Egypt and Indonesia in terms of identity-based culinary business development lies in how each country presents its culture to the international market. Egypt places more emphasis on reinforcing the Islamic and Arab traditions within its cuisine, while Indonesia, particularly Aceh, highlights the diversity of cultural influences in its culinary offerings (Hegazy, 2018). Thus, Egypt focuses on strengthening its established cultural identity, while Indonesia, particularly Aceh, emphasizes innovation and adaptation to create a broader appeal in the global market.

Overall, the comparison between Egypt and Indonesia in terms of the commodification of identity in culinary business development illustrates how both

countries utilize cultural and religious elements to enhance the appeal of their culinary products. While their approaches differ, both have successfully created culinary products that not only reflect their cultural identities but also attract international interest. In Aceh, the commodification of culinary identity reflects a fusion of Islamic traditions, local culture, and global influences, creating significant opportunities for sustainable culinary business development.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the commodification of identity plays an important role in the development of the culinary business in Aceh. The local identity, which is deeply intertwined with Islamic values, particularly in terms of food halalness, becomes a major attraction for consumers both in the domestic and international markets. The uniqueness of Acehnese cuisine, which blends religious, cultural, and local traditions, as well as the application of this identity in culinary business branding, instills confidence in consumers that the culinary products in Aceh are guaranteed halal, even without official halal certification. This indicates that Aceh's identity, with its strong cultural roots, serves as an effective and appealing marketing strategy, especially for Muslim consumers.

When compared to Egypt, Indonesia, in general, has a more diverse cultural influence, whereas Aceh has a very distinct characteristic that focuses more on religious and cultural aspects, making it unique within the context of Indonesian cuisine. The commodification of identity in Aceh, as a unique part of Indonesia, shows an approach that is both different and similar. Egypt emphasizes the continuity of authentic Arab-Islamic culinary traditions, while Aceh, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, highlights the diversity of local cultural influences combined with strong religious values. Aceh, with its strong Islamic culture and local traditions, offers cuisine that not only emphasizes authenticity but also adapts to global trends.

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