

Analysis of Creativity and Innovation in Pop-Up Cafe Businesses Perspective of Islamic Business Ethics

Nuryani¹, Noremilia²

¹Faculty of Sharia, Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Darussalam Martapura, Jl. Perwira Tanjung Rema, Indonesia.

081250521872, nuryani@iaidarussalam.ac.id.

²Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Antasari Banjarmasin, Jl. Jendral A. Yani KM 4.5, Indonesia. 089526259411.

Corresponding author

²noremiliaa07@gmail.com.

Abstract: The phenomenon of pop-up cafes represents a form of business innovation that has become increasingly popular among young entrepreneurs, offering a temporary concept with aesthetic appeal and unique consumer experiences. Creativity in spatial design and innovation in digital marketing strategies are essential elements that strengthen the competitiveness of this business. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, all forms of creativity and innovation must be evaluated to ensure alignment with the principles of justice ('adl), honesty (amanah), and avoidance of gharar (excessive uncertainty) that may cause harm. This study aims to analyze the creativity and innovation of pop-up cafe businesses from the perspective of Islamic business ethics. The research employs a qualitative approach with a library research method, reviewing literature including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical fiqh books on muamalah, and contemporary literature on Islamic business ethics, creativity, and entrepreneurship innovation. The results indicate that creativity in pop-up cafe businesses includes aspects of spatial design, product concepts, and consumer experiences, while innovation encompasses service development, digital marketing strategies, and flexible operational models. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, all these aspects comply with the principles of justice ('adl), honesty (amanah), and prohibition of gharar, provided they do not involve fraud, waste, or consumer exploitation. Thus, creativity and innovation oriented toward *maslahah* (public benefit) can serve as the foundation for developing pop-up cafe businesses that are just, sustainable, and prosperous (*falah*).

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Islamic Business Ethics, Pop-Up Cafe.

Introduction

The development of the business sector in the era of globalization and digitalization has shown rapid and dynamic growth. Advances in information technology and changes in modern consumer lifestyles have led to various forms of innovation in the entrepreneurial landscape (Putri, 2023). The culinary sector is one of the industries experiencing significant expansion, as it is not only related to fulfilling basic human needs but also intertwined with lifestyle, aesthetics, and social experiences. Within this context, the emergence of pop-up cafés serves as a manifestation of creativity and innovation, reflecting the ability of young entrepreneurs to adapt to market trends and ever-changing consumer preferences.

Pop-up cafés are temporary businesses that operate in specific locations for a limited period while presenting thematic concepts and unique designs (Maspul, 2024). This flexibility makes pop-up cafés particularly attractive because they allow business owners to test new ideas, introduce new products, or conduct brand collaborations with relatively efficient operational costs (Rezky et al., 2025). Supported by digital marketing strategies, especially through social media, pop-up cafés capitalize on public enthusiasm for novelty and exclusivity (Andeyan, 2024). Thus, creativity and innovation become key determinants of success, covering spatial design, consumer experience, and brand communication strategies (Permana et al., 2023).

However, behind the rapid growth of these creative businesses, ethical concerns arise. In practice, some business owners prioritize visual aesthetics and excessive promotions without adhering to principles of honesty and fairness (Sulastri & Fakhrudin, 2024). Certain marketing strategies may even involve elements of *gharar* (uncertainty) or *tadlis* (deception), such as creating false scarcity or urgency to boost sales (Riza et al., 2024). Additionally, the temporary nature of pop-up cafés may lead to *israf* (wastefulness), particularly when decorative materials or resources are used solely for aesthetic purposes without long-term benefit (Masruroh et al., 2024). These issues highlight the importance of aligning business creativity and innovation with Islamic ethical principles.

In Islamic perspective, economic activities are not solely aimed at material gain but must also be grounded in moral and spiritual values (Syam & Masyhuri, 2025). Principles such as justice (*‘adl*), honesty (*amanah*), and the avoidance of *gharar* form the foundation of ethical and fair business transactions (Prestywi, 2022). These principles do not restrict innovation; rather, they guide creativity to ensure alignment with *maslahah* (benefit) and *falah* (prosperity) (Meydiana dan Cahyono, 2020). Therefore, developing pop-up café businesses within the framework of Islamic business ethics enables a balance between commercial objectives and moral responsibility toward consumers and the environment.

Growing public awareness of halal and ethical products indicates that the application of Islamic values in modern business practices is increasingly relevant. Pop-up cafés that operate in accordance with Islamic business ethics not only retain aesthetic and innovative appeal but also build public trust through transparency and social responsibility (Ahmad, 2021). This presents an opportunity for Muslim entrepreneurs to demonstrate that creativity and innovation can coexist with Sharia principles grounded in justice and sustainability.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the forms of creativity and innovation in pop-up café businesses and evaluate their conformity with Islamic business ethics. The findings are expected to provide both conceptual and practical insights for business practitioners to

develop innovative, competitive, and Sharia-oriented business models that promote benefit and blessings for all stakeholders.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design, which generates findings that cannot be obtained through statistical procedures or quantitative methods, but rather through observation and interpretation of meaning behind particular phenomena (Nurrisaa, F., Hermina, D., & Norlaila, 2025). The research setting was primarily based in libraries and online academic sources, as these environments provide access to a wide range of relevant scientific references.

The primary data sources consisted of the Qur'an, Hadith, classical fiqh literature on *muamalah*, and journals that directly address creativity and innovation within the framework of Islamic business ethics. Meanwhile, secondary data sources included books, scholarly articles, and previous studies related to the topic. Data collection was conducted using the literature study (library research) method, which involves a systematic review of theoretical references and academic works to construct a solid conceptual foundation for the issues examined (Sari, 2020). The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, which includes examining, interpreting, and synthesizing information from multiple sources to construct meaningful conclusions (Sofwatillah, 2024).

Results and Discussion

1. Forms of Creativity in Pop-Up Café Businesses

Creativity in pop-up café businesses is the result of a combination of innovative thinking, sensitivity to consumer trends, and the ability to adapt to limited space and resources (Muna & Subawa, 2022). Based on the reviewed literature, there are three main dimensions of creativity found in pop-up café operations: spatial design, thematic concepts, and consumer experience innovation.

First, spatial design plays a crucial role in attracting visitors. Creative design is not solely

oriented toward aesthetics, but also toward spatial efficiency and environmental sustainability. Many pop-up cafés transform unused areas such as yards, parking lots, or vacant interior spaces into artistic and comfortable environments (Maspul, 2024). The use of recycled materials, soft lighting, and modular decorations that can be rearranged reflects not only an innovative spirit but also an awareness of sustainability. This aligns with the eco-creative business trend, in which environmentally friendly practices form part of the brand's identity (Rezky et al., 2025).

Second, thematic and product concepts represent another significant expression of creativity. Pop-up cafés frequently introduce temporary themes such as Japanese minimalist cafés, nostalgic coffee corners, or local artisan spaces that collaborate with local brands (Kusumo, 2022). The menus often include limited-edition or seasonal items, such as signature drinks available only for a short period. This approach fosters a sense of exclusivity among consumers, which consequently increases loyalty and public interest. Within the modern experience economy, value is not measured solely by taste quality, but also by atmosphere, social interaction, and the narrative accompanying the consumer's experience.

Third, creativity is also reflected in consumer experience design. Pop-up café owners create immersive interactions using music, aroma, lighting, and instagrammable decorations (Andeyan, 2024). These strategies not only help attract new customers but also strengthen branding through social media engagement. In the digital era, every customer has the potential to become a brand ambassador by sharing their experiences through photos, videos, and online reviews (Syam & Masyhuri, 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, these forms of creativity are considered permissible (mubah) as long as they remain grounded in moral values and do not violate principles such as justice ('adl), honesty (amanah), and avoidance of wastefulness (israf). Islamic ethics does not oppose aesthetics or innovation; instead, it guides them so that creativity generates benefits (maslahah). This is supported by the Qur'anic verse in Surah Al-Isra' 27:

إِنَّ الْمُبَدِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ
كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of Satan, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord.”

Thus, creativity in the design and conceptualization of pop-up cafés can be considered ethical as long as it is directed toward generating benefit, supporting sustainability, and avoiding any form of deception or unrealistic representation that may mislead consumers (Sulastri & Fakhrudin, 2024).

2. Innovations in Services, Marketing, and operational Models

Innovation is an integral component of the development and sustainability of pop-up café businesses. Based on the literature review, innovation in this sector can be categorized into three major areas: service innovation, digital marketing strategies, and flexible operational models (Prestywi, 2022).

First, service innovation is evident through the use of technology to enhance efficiency and consumer convenience (Andeyan, 2024). Digital ordering systems using QR-code menus, cashless or contactless payments, and digital loyalty programs integrated through mobile applications have become distinctive features of modern cafés. These innovations provide convenience for customers while reducing physical contact, which is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, such innovations are considered positive because they support the principles of ease (taysir) and public benefit (maslahah 'ammah), as long as they do not involve elements of deception or misuse of personal data (Subhan, 2020).

Second, innovation in digital marketing strategies plays a major role in shaping the brand image and attractiveness of pop-up cafés. Business owners rely on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) to create aesthetic, viral, and curiosity-provoking visual content. One commonly used strategy is the limited time offer, a time-bound

promotion designed to encourage consumers to make immediate purchases. However, from the perspective of Islamic business ethics, such strategies must be carefully evaluated to ensure that they do not involve gharar (excessive uncertainty) or tadlis (deception). Promotional information must represent the true condition of the product and must not create a false impression of scarcity (Cahyono, 2020). This aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's statement: "Whoever deceives is not one of us." (HR. Muslim).

Third, flexible and efficient operational models are also a distinctive feature of innovation in pop-up cafés.

By adopting a temporary business model, entrepreneurs can test market potential in various locations without incurring long-term rental costs (Raditya et al., 2023). This strategy allows for capital efficiency and better risk management. However, within Islamic business ethics, such flexibility must still uphold employee rights, fair wages, and responsibility toward business partners. The principles of justice ('adl) and trustworthiness (amanah) must guide the relationships between business owners and all parties involved in operational activities (Syam & Masyhuri, 2025).

Tabel 1. Ethical Evaluation of Innovation Practices in Pop-Up Café Businesses

Innovation Aspect	Description	Evaluation Based on Islamic Business Ethics
Spatial Design	Aesthetic, thematic, modular	Ethical if it avoids israf and supports sustainability
Product Concept	Limited-edition menus, brand collaborations	Ethical if transparent and beneficial (maslahah)
Marketing Strategy	Digital promotion, viral content	Ethical if it avoids gharar and tadlis
Service Model	Digital ordering, personalized services	Recommended if it ensures fairness and convenience
Operational Flexibility	Temporary locations, cost efficiency	Ethical if fair to workers and consumers

Overall, the findings indicate that creativity and innovation in pop-up café businesses can operate consistently with Islamic business ethics, provided they are accompanied by moral awareness, social responsibility, and an orientation toward maslahah (public benefit). Islam, as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin, does not reject modernity, technology, or human creativity. Instead, Islam offers broad space for innovation as long as it remains within ethical and spiritual boundaries. In Islamic thought, economic activities are not solely aimed at material gain, but also serve as forms of worship and social contribution (Suryani et al., 2022). Therefore, creativity and innovation within pop-up café businesses must be oriented toward achieving a balance among economic profit (profit), social welfare (people), and environmental sustainability (planet).

The principle of maslahah acts as an essential link between creativity and spirituality. Every

innovative idea in business should be directed toward benefiting society and the environment, rather than merely satisfying short-term consumer desires or market-driven trends. In the context of pop-up cafés, the implementation of maslahah is reflected through practices such as the use of locally sourced ingredients, empowerment of nearby micro and small enterprises (MSMEs), and the adoption of environmentally friendly, reusable materials. Through these efforts, business activities not only create economic value but also reinforce social and ecological values. This represents the concrete integration of ethics and innovation as taught in Islam: economic gain must always remain connected to barakah (blessing).

Furthermore, innovation within Islamic economic practice must align with the primary objectives of maqashid al-shariah. First, Hifz al-Mal (preservation of wealth) requires efficient resource management, avoidance of wastefulness (israf), and transparent, fair financial governance. For pop-up

café operators, this means prioritizing long-term financial sustainability and social responsibility toward partners and employees. Second, *Hifz al-Nafs* (preservation of life) mandates that all aspects of the business consider the safety, comfort, and well-being of workers and consumers. An ethical café is not only visually appealing and comfortable, but also safe in terms of hygiene, food handling, and fair working conditions. Third, *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (preservation of the environment) is increasingly relevant in an era marked by ecological crises. Environmentally conscious innovations—such as biodegradable packaging, reduced plastic waste, and the use of renewable energy—represent practical applications of *maqashid al-shariah* within creative business models.

Creativity grounded in Islamic values also encompasses a deep spiritual dimension. When entrepreneurs innovate with sincere intention to provide benefits and avoid harm, their business activities are considered acts of worship. Islamic business ethics teaches that real success is not measured solely through sales figures or market expansion, but through the extent to which the business provides value to society and maintains balance in life. In this context, pop-up cafés that operate with honesty (*amanah*), justice (*'adl*), and social responsibility can become ideal business models for young Muslim entrepreneurs seeking to be modern yet ethical.

Additionally, the application of Islamic business ethics strengthens consumer trust, a crucial asset in today's fast-paced digital marketplace (Subhan, 2020). Modern consumers evaluate products not only based on taste and price, but also on moral integrity and sustainability. Cafés that practice fairness in pricing, honesty in promotion, and environmental responsibility tend to gain stronger reputations and customer loyalty. Thus, ethics is not a constraint on creativity—but rather a differentiating value that distinguishes honest businesses from trend-driven ventures lacking long-term commitment.

Creativity and innovation aligned with Islamic principles have long-term positive impacts on sustainable economic development. Islam emphasizes equitable distribution (*al-'adl*) and balance (*tawazun*) throughout all economic

activities. Therefore, creative businesses like pop-up cafés should not pursue individual growth alone; they should also promote economic inclusion through collaboration with local producers, small service providers, and surrounding creative communities (Masruroh et al., 2024). In this way, pop-up cafés function as participatory economic spaces that foster social solidarity and strengthen community-based economies.

In conclusion, creativity and innovation guided by Islamic values do not merely generate financial gain but also contribute to comprehensive well-being (*falah*). Muslim entrepreneurs must integrate ethical principles into marketing strategies, product design, and business relationships. Eco-friendly, sustainable, and just business models demonstrate not only adherence to Islamic values but also responsiveness to modern consumers who increasingly prioritize moral and sustainable consumption.

Thus, Islamic business ethics should not be viewed as a restriction on creativity, but rather as a moral compass that guides innovation toward blessing and prosperity. When ethics, aesthetics, and sustainability are harmoniously integrated, businesses such as pop-up cafés become not only symbols of modern lifestyles but also manifestations of Islamic values that are adaptive, inclusive, and visionary. This demonstrates that modern business practices can coexist harmoniously with Islamic teachings without sacrificing spirituality or social responsibility.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that creativity and innovation in pop-up café businesses can be developed in accordance with the principles of Islamic business ethics. Creativity in spatial design, product concepts, and consumer experience, as well as innovation in services, digital marketing, and flexible operational models, is considered ethical as long as it does not involve elements of deception, wastefulness, or exploitation. The application of the values of justice (*'adl*), honesty (*amanah*), and the avoidance of *gharar* serves as an essential foundation for

maintaining balance between business profitability and moral responsibility. By orienting business practices toward *maslahah* (public benefit), pop-up cafés have the potential to become business models that are fair, sustainable, and imbued with *falah* (holistic prosperity and blessing).

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