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Menu Engineering Strategy in Increasing Menu Popularity and Profitability within the Food and Beverage Services of Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel

Noval Adithya Rahman^{1*}, Lise Asnur², Yogi Hidayat³

¹ Universitas Negeri Padang, Sumatra Barat, Indonesia, nadithyarahman@gmail.com

² Universitas Negeri Padang, Sumatra Barat, Indonesia, lise.asnur@fpp.unp.ac.id

³ Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia, yogi.hidayat@sheraton.com

*Corresponding Author: nadithyarahman@gmail.com

Abstract: This inquiry conceptualizes and evaluates the implementation of Menu Engineering strategy in increasing menu popularity and profitability within the Food and Beverage services of Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel. The empirical urgency of this research stems from significant operational anomalies observed in field sales data, wherein specific menu items dominate sales volume yet yield substandard contribution margins, while high-profit variants experience demand stagnation. To address this misalignment, this descriptive quantitative study adopts the Kasavana & Smith matrix model to systematically classify the product portfolio into four strategic quadrants: Star, Plowhorse, Puzzle, and Dog. The primary datasets analyzed comprise authentic transactional records legally extracted from the Micros Oracle Point of Sales (POS) system for a full year from January to December 2025. The empirical findings throughout the year reveal the performance distribution of culinary products, such as the Angus Burger and Truffle Fries which consistently secure superior quadrant placement, whereas several local dishes require immediate production cost restructuring. Consequently, this study formulates data-driven managerial recommendations, including rigorous portion control standardization for the Plowhorse segment, the optimization of suggestive selling techniques to stimulate the Puzzle category, and inventory rationalization to mitigate material waste in the Dog quadrant, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the hotel's operational gross profit.

Keyword: Menu Engineering Strategy, Menu Popularity, Profitability, Four-Box Analysis, Micros Oracle.

INTRODUCTION

The accelerated growth of the global tourism industry has directly intensified competition within the hospitality sector, particularly in the five-star luxury hotel segment. Amidst fluctuating market dynamics, Food and Beverage (F&B) operations no longer merely serve as an auxiliary amenity; instead, they have transformed into a primary revenue driver crucial to the sustainability of the accommodation business. Nonetheless, volatile raw material costs, dynamic shifts in consumer preferences, and high operating expenses frequently present linear

challenges that distort net profit margins within F&B product management. Consequently, a systematic evaluation instrument is required to ensure that each menu item delivers optimal financial contribution while maintaining market retention.

In the landscape of performance-based management, Menu Engineering emerges as an analytical approach that integrates aspects of cost accounting and marketing psychology. This strategy facilitates management in evaluating the menu portfolio through the interaction of two primary variables: popularity (sales volume) and profitability (gross contribution margin). Through this matrix, each product is classified into four distinctive quadrants: Star (high popularity, high profitability), Plowhorse (high popularity, low profitability), Puzzle (low popularity, high profitability), and Dog (low popularity, low profitability). Empirical evidence demonstrates that proper implementation of menu engineering provides a tactical foundation for management in making decisions regarding price revisions, portion modifications, visual repositioning on the menu card, and the elimination of unproductive products.

As a prominent representation of premium accommodation in the metropolitan area, the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel specifically within its Lobby Lounge outlet—faces demands for an adaptive restructuring of its menu marketing strategy. As a five-star hotel catering to executive and leisure market segments, the variation and performance of the offered menu must reflect a balance between high-quality standards and operational cost efficiency. Empirical phenomena often indicate a misalignment between consumer-favored menu items and the profit margins generated for the company. In the absence of periodic, quantitative data-driven evaluations, managerial decisions regarding retaining or altering the menu composition tend to be intuitive, risking opportunity loss and a structural decline in profitability.

Although numerous studies on menu engineering have been conducted, research contextualizing it within the lobby lounge ecosystem of five-star hotels in Jakarta especially regarding post-pandemic consumer characteristics remains relatively limited. This study aims to address this literature gap by comprehensively analyzing the implementation of Menu Engineering strategies at the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative approach, this study intends to map food menu performance, identify driving factors behind low contributions in specific quadrants, and formulate applicable tactical recommendations. The theoretical contribution of this article is expected to enrich the body of knowledge on F&B governance in hospitality management literature, while its practical contribution can serve as a decision-making instrument for industry practitioners to optimize operational profitability.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach to evaluate the menu portfolio based on sales performance and profitability levels. The research was conducted at the Lobby Lounge outlet of the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel. This location was selected using a purposive sampling method, given that its consumer characteristics represent a premium market segment with menu variations that require periodic structural evaluation.

The data utilized in this study comprise both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were obtained from historical sales records (sales reports), which encompass the sales volume of each food menu item (item share), as well as standard recipe cost sheets to determine the food contribution margin during the research period. Concurrently, primary data were gathered through direct observation of Food and Beverage service operations and structured interviews with the Lobby Lounge management to align the mathematical analysis with actual operational conditions in the field.

Data analysis was performed by applying the Menu Engineering method, adapted from the framework established by Kasavana and Smith. This comprehensive evaluation procedure is executed through three interconnected stages of mathematical calculation.

The first stage begins with determining profitability levels through the calculation of the contribution margin. The individual contribution margin (CM) is determined by subtracting the standard cost of raw materials, or food cost (FC), from the product's selling price (P). The formulation is expressed as follows:

$$CM = P - FC$$

Subsequently, the average group contribution margin is calculated to establish the profitability benchmark, using the following formula:

$$\text{Average CM} = \frac{\text{Total Contribution Margin of All Menu Items}}{\text{Total Number of Menu Units Sold}}$$

A menu item is categorized as having high profitability if its individual contribution margin is greater than or equal to the average contribution margin, and low profitability if its individual contribution margin is less than the average contribution margin.

The second stage involves determining popularity levels using the Menu Mix Share indicator. The popularity level is measured based on the percentage of an item's sales contribution relative to the total menu units sold within its respective category. The popularity benchmark is determined by applying the 70% popularity index formula derived from the average proportional sales, where the popularity threshold formula is expressed as follows:

$$\text{Popularity Threshold} = (1/N \times 100\%) \times 70\%$$

Where N represents the number of distinct menu item variations within a specific category. If the sales percentage of a given menu item is greater than or equal to the established popularity threshold, it is classified as having high popularity; conversely, if it falls below the threshold, it is categorized as having low popularity.

The third stage involves the classification of the Menu Engineering matrix quadrants. Once the profitability and popularity metrics of each menu item have been identified, the data are mapped into a four-box matrix. A menu item is classified as a Star when it exhibits both high popularity and a high contribution margin. Meanwhile, items characterized by high popularity but a low contribution margin are grouped into the Plowhorse quadrant. Conversely, menu items that yield a high contribution margin but demonstrate low popularity fall into the Puzzle category. Lastly, items with both low popularity and a low contribution margin are classified into the Dog quadrant.

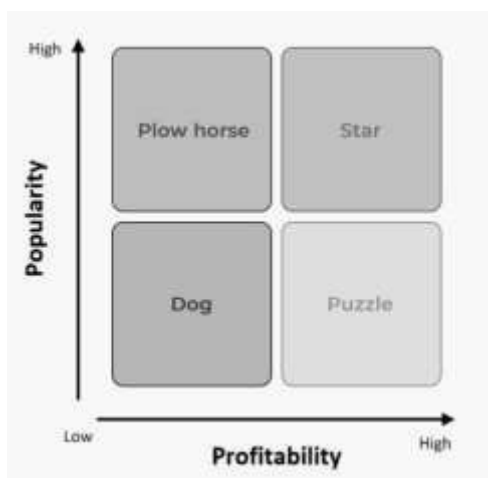


Figure 1. Four-Box Matrix

To provide a systematic overview of the research execution stages, a research framework

has been formulated. Through this framework, the analytical process is conducted sequentially to ensure the validity of the final results. Each phase within the framework is interconnected, wherein the classification outcomes of the Four-Box matrix serve as the primary foundation for formulating tactical recommendations aligned with the operational conditions of the accommodation.

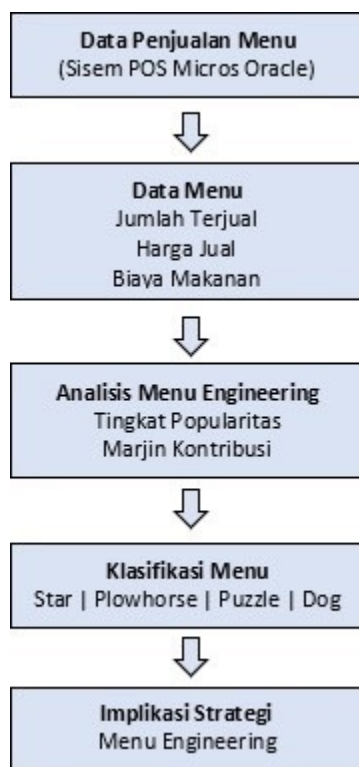


Figure 2. research framework

Narratively, the research workflow initiates with the data input stage, which involves the digital extraction of food menu sales data from the Micros Oracle Point of Sales (POS) system operationally utilized by the hotel. This process subsequently proceeds to the menu variable identification stage, where the raw data from the POS system are categorized into three primary component variables: the number of menu units sold (item share), the selling price per portion, and the food cost (standard recipe cost).

In the following stage, a comparative Menu Engineering analysis is executed by mathematically aggregating these three variables to measure two primary indicators: determining the menu popularity level and calculating the contribution margin. Once these indicators are obtained, the workflow transitions to the menu classification stage to map all food menu items into a distinctive four-quadrant matrix comprising the Star, Plowhorse, Puzzle, or Dog categories. This comprehensive sequence culminates in the managerial output stage (strategic implications), which focuses on formulating tactical operational strategy implications based on the characteristics of each quadrant to optimize the future profitability and popularity of the menu products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To provide a comprehensive and objective overview of product line performance, the Menu Engineering analysis was conducted by aggregating annual sales data and actual costs at the Lobby Lounge of the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel. This annual accumulation approach was implemented to eliminate bias factors resulting from seasonal variations, which frequently occur in five-star hotel operations. Based on the calculations of

total sales volume and average contribution margins over the one-year period, all food menu items were specifically categorized into four primary quadrants.

The discussion initiates with the mapping of menu items in the Star quadrant, which encompasses products demonstrating both high popularity and high profitability. The following table presents the list of food menu items that consistently serve as flagship products, successfully exceeding the annual popularity threshold while delivering a high gross profit contribution to the company:

Table 1. Annual Menu Performance List for the Star Quadrant Category.

Menu Item Name	Number Sold	Food Cost	Sell Price	Item C.M	Menu Cost	Menu Revenue	Total Profit
Angus Burger	129	71.750	205.000	133.250	9.255.750	26.445.000	17.189.250
Bebek Goreng Gandaria	68	69.300	198.000	128.700	4.712.400	13.464.000	8.751.600
Fish and Chips	75	58.800	168.000	109.200	4.410.000	12.600.000	8.190.000
La Galbi	59	105.000	300.000	195.000	6.195.000	17.700.000	11.505.000
Nasi Goreng Buntut	220	76.300	218.000	141.700	16.786.000	47.960.000	31.174.000
Pizza Margherita	89	56.000	175.000	119.000	4.984.000	15.575.000	10.591.000
Pizza Pepperoni	95	60.160	188.000	127.840	5.715.200	17.860.000	12.144.800
Platters	221	54.320	194.000	139.680	12.004.720	42.874.000	30.869.280
Ribeye	54	168.000	480.000	312.000	9.072.000	25.920.000	16.848.000
Siomay Bandung	50	55.440	198.000	142.560	2.772.000	9.900.000	7.128.000
Sop Buntut	339	61.040	218.000	156.960	20.692.560	73.902.000	53.209.440
Spaghetti Bolognese	85	56.000	175.000	119.000	4.760.000	14.875.000	10.115.000
Spaghetti Prawn Aglio e Olio	90	56.000	175.000	119.000	5.040.000	15.750.000	10.710.000
Tenderloin	62	133.000	380.000	247.000	8.246.000	23.560.000	15.314.000
Total	1636				114.645.630	358.385.000	243.739.370

Source: Micros Oracle Point of Sales Data 2025 (processed using Menu Engineering Worksheet).

Subsequently, the analysis maps the menu items within the Plowhorse quadrant, which indicates product characteristics with high popularity but low profitability. The table below summarizes the food menu items that exhibit highly robust sales volume traction among consumers, yet generate individual contribution margins that fall below the hotel's average financial benchmark:

Tabel 2. Annual Menu Performance List for the Plowhorse Quadrant Category.

Menu Item Name	Number Sold	Food Cost	Sell Price	Item C.M	Menu Cost	Menu Revenue	Total Profit
Assorted Indomie	260	27.440	98.000	70.560	7.134.400	25.480.000	18.345.600
Bakwan Jagung	112	23.800	85.000	61.200	2.665.600	9.520.000	6.854.400
Cream of Mushroom	59	33.040	118.000	84.960	1.949.360	6.962.000	5.012.640
Fried Chicken Wings	122	34.300	98.000	63.700	4.184.600	11.956.000	7.771.400
Mie Goreng Jawa	94	57.750	165.000	107.250	5.428.500	15.510.000	10.081.500
Molten Lava	52	24.500	98.000	73.500	1.274.000	5.096.000	3.822.000
Nachos	208	35.840	128.000	92.160	7.454.720	26.624.000	19.169.280

Nasi Goreng Kampung	294	55.300	158.000	102.700	16.258.200	46.452.000	30.193.800
Pempek	104	23.800	85.000	61.200	2.475.200	8.840.000	6.364.800
Pisang Goreng	321	23.800	85.000	61.200	7.639.800	27.285.000	19.645.200
Sate Ayam	158	37.800	108.000	70.200	5.972.400	17.064.000	11.091.600
Selection Ice Cream	65	19.500	78.000	58.500	1.267.500	5.070.000	3.802.500
Singkong Goreng	237	23.800	85.000	61.200	5.640.600	20.145.000	14.504.400
Soto Ayam	92	38.640	138.000	99.360	3.554.880	12.696.000	9.141.120
Tahu Garing	180	23.800	85.000	61.200	4.284.000	15.300.000	11.016.000
The Caesar	97	27.440	98.000	70.560	2.661.680	9.506.000	6.844.320
Tiramisu	63	22.500	90.000	67.500	1.417.500	5.670.000	4.252.500
Truffle Fries	377	23.800	85.000	61.200	8.972.600	32.045.000	23.072.400
Vegetable Samosa	65	27.440	98.000	70.560	1.783.600	6.370.000	4.586.400
Vegetable Spring Roll	121	27.440	98.000	70.560	3.320.240	11.858.000	8.537.760
Total	3081				95.339.380	319.449.000	224.109.620

Source: Micros Oracle Point of Sales Data 2025 (processed using Menu Engineering Worksheet).

In addition, the analysis identifies the menu items within the Puzzle quadrant, representing products with low popularity but high profitability. The following table identifies the menu products that possess high profitability potential per portion, but demonstrate a low sales turnover rate or remain less favored by the market throughout the entire year:

Table 3. Annual Menu Performance List for the Puzzle Quadrant Category.

Menu Item Name	Number Sold	Food Cost	Sell Price	Item C.M	Menu Cost	Menu Revenue	Total Profit
Cheese Platter	5	55.440	198.000	142.560	277.200	990.000	712.800
Chicken Biryani	16	79.800	228.000	148.200	1.276.800	3.648.000	2.371.200
Chicken Katsu Curry	29	58.800	168.000	109.200	1.705.200	4.872.000	3.166.800
Chicken Makhani	12	79.800	228.000	148.200	957.600	2.736.000	1.778.400
Fungi Truffle Pizza	4	69.300	198.000	128.700	277.200	792.000	514.800
Lamb Biryani	3	86.800	248.000	161.200	260.400	744.000	483.600
Lamb Rack	21	100.800	288.000	187.200	2.116.800	6.048.000	3.931.200
Lamb Rogan Josh	19	86.800	248.000	161.200	1.649.200	4.712.000	3.062.800
Lamb Shank Tongsenng	25	86.800	248.000	161.200	2.170.000	6.200.000	4.030.000
Lobster Thermidor	13	107.800	308.000	200.200	1.401.400	4.004.000	2.602.600
Norwegian Salmon	49	83.300	238.000	154.700	4.081.700	11.662.000	7.580.300
Paneer Makhani	6	65.800	188.000	122.200	394.800	1.128.000	733.200
Pepperoni Pizza	2	60.160	188.000	127.840	120.320	376.000	255.680
Quattro Formaggi	1	63.360	198.000	134.640	63.360	198.000	134.640
Roasted Spring Chicken	17	69.300	198.000	128.700	1.178.100	3.366.000	2.187.900
Salmon Garang Asam	46	76.300	218.000	141.700	3.509.800	10.028.000	6.518.200
Striploin	32	133.000	380.000	247.000	4.256.000	12.160.000	7.904.000

Sweet Corn Egg Drop Soup	3	46.281	165.289	119.008	138.843	495.867	357.024
Wagyu and Wine	6	144.628	413.223	268.595	867.768	2.479.338	1.611.570
Total	309				26.702.491	76.639.205	49.936.714

Source: Micros Oracle Point of Sales Data 2025 (processed using Menu Engineering Worksheet).

Lastly, the mapping concludes with the menu items within the Dog quadrant, which reflects product performance characterized by both low popularity and low profitability. The final table details the list of food menu items whose performance falls below both established thresholds (unpopular and unprofitable), thereby acting as a burden on the operational efficiency of the Lobby Lounge:

Tabel 4. Annual Menu Performance List for the Dog Quadrant Category.

Menu Item Name	Number Sold	Food Cost	Sell Price	Item C.M	Menu Cost	Menu Revenue	Total Profit
Avocado Egg White Omelet	4	26.600	95.000	68.400	106.400	380.000	273.600
Ayam Geprek	31	48.300	138.000	89.700	1.497.300	4.278.000	2.780.700
Bakso	41	27.440	98.000	70.560	1.125.040	4.018.000	2.892.960
Buttered Sauteed Vegetable	4	16.240	58.000	41.760	64.960	232.000	167.040
Chicken Satay	3	37.800	108.000	70.200	113.400	324.000	210.600
Coates Fries	6	16.240	58.000	41.760	97.440	348.000	250.560
Dal Makhani	1	41.300	118.000	76.700	41.300	118.000	76.700
Dim Sum Egg York	1	9.492	33.900	24.408	9.492	33.900	24.408
Duck Salad	15	30.240	108.000	77.760	453.600	1.620.000	1.166.400
Egg Benedict	1	30.240	108.000	77.760	30.240	108.000	77.760
Fire Chicken Wing	2	30.800	88.000	57.200	61.600	176.000	114.400
Fish and Avocado Wrap	1	52.500	150.000	97.500	52.500	150.000	97.500
Gado gado	48	30.800	88.000	57.200	1.478.400	4.224.000	2.745.600
Mashed Potato	11	16.240	58.000	41.760	178.640	638.000	459.360
Mix Green Salad	4	16.240	58.000	41.760	64.960	232.000	167.040
Penne Arrabbiata	20	49.600	155.000	105.400	992.000	3.100.000	2.108.000
Salmon Bagel	1	36.750	105.000	68.250	36.750	105.000	68.250
Spinach and Cream	10	16.240	58.000	41.760	162.400	580.000	417.600
The Wonder Salad	15	24.640	88.000	63.360	369.600	1.320.000	950.400
Tom Yum Kung	38	35.840	128.000	92.160	1.361.920	4.864.000	3.502.080
Two Eggs Your Way	12	36.750	105.000	68.250	441.000	1.260.000	819.000
Vegetable Biryani	23	35.840	128.000	92.160	824.320	2.944.000	2.119.680
Wonton Noodle	44	51.800	148.000	96.200	2.279.200	6.512.000	4.232.800
Total	336				11.842.462	37.564.900	25.722.438

Source: Micros Oracle Point of Sales Data 2025 (processed using Menu Engineering Worksheet).

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the cumulative one-year mapping illustrated in Table 1 through Table 4, a dynamic consumption pattern is observed at the Lobby Lounge outlet of the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel. These outcomes not only reflect the culinary preferences of the premium consumer segment but also evaluate the efficiency of the raw material cost structure (food cost) implemented by the management. To optimize total revenue, tactical strategic implications are formulated specifically for each quadrant to provide precise policy directions for operational management.

The initial step focuses on the optimization and retention strategy for the Star quadrant. The menu items listed in Table 1 serve as the financial backbone of the hotel's operations, consistently recording high sales volumes alongside robust profit margins. The presence of items such as the Angus Burger and Bebek Goreng Gandaria indicates that these products possess strong market appeal combined with excellent recipe efficiency. The primary tactical action for this quadrant is quality retention and protection, whereby operational management is required to maintain consistency in flavor, portion control, and plating aesthetics. Given their highly profitable positioning, Star items must be strategically placed within the prime menu space to sustain continuous consumer selection.

Subsequently, attention is directed toward cost restructuring within the Plowhorse quadrant. The empirical phenomena identified in Table 2 demonstrate several products that are highly popular and favored by consumers, yet their profit contribution to the hotel falls below the average benchmark. Items such as Assorted Indomie and Bakwan Jagung frequently suffer from high food costs that erode net profit margins. As an urgent tactical measure, management needs to implement a price and portion re-engineering strategy. Selling price adjustments can be introduced gradually, accompanied by vendor contract renegotiations to secure more competitive wholesale pricing. Additionally, a subtle portion reduction of expensive components can be applied without compromising the perceived value from the consumer's perspective, or by integrating these items into bundling packages with high-margin beverages.

Concurrently, marketing stimulation is required for the Puzzle quadrant to boost the sales performance of less visible products. The menu category in Table 3 exhibits a highly favorable financial profile, generating high contribution margins per portion; however, it remains less favored or rarely ordered by guests, as observed with Chicken Biryani and Chicken Katsu Curry. The fundamental issue within this group is not pricing or cost, but rather low product visibility. Consequently, the recommended tactical action involves market stimulation strategies and active promotion. The Lobby Lounge can leverage menu merchandising techniques, such as embedding distinct visual cues or logos like "Chef's Recommendation" or "Best Seller" on the menu card to capture consumers' psychological attention. Furthermore, implementing suggestive selling programs through service staff (waiters/waitresses) training to actively recommend these items during order-taking is deemed highly effective in driving sales volume.

Lastly, management must take decisive action regarding efficiency and elimination within the Dog quadrant. The food items relegated to the Dog quadrant in Table 4, such as Ayam Geprek and Bakso, act as a burden on the hotel's operational efficiency. These products suffer from weak market demand and fail to yield meaningful profits, thereby inflating inventory holding costs in the kitchen and exacerbating the risk of food waste. Manually and managerially, the most rational recommendation is product elimination during the next menu revision cycle. However, if these items must be retained for historical reasons or to maintain menu variety, management is obligated to execute a comprehensive overhaul (re-branding). This can be achieved by renaming the items to be more appealing, modifying recipes to reduce costs, or lowering the selling price to retest consumer demand sensitivity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the quantitative analysis using the Menu Engineering method aggregated over a full one-year period at the Lobby Lounge of the Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel, it can be concluded that the evaluation based on the four-box matrix effectively maps product line performance comprehensively while eliminating bias driven by seasonal fluctuations. The mapping results indicate that the menu items within the Star quadrant serve as the primary financial driver for the hotel, consistently recording high sales volumes paired with robust gross profit margins. Conversely, menu items in the Plowhorse quadrant face challenges related to high raw material costs (high food cost) despite strong consumer demand, whereas the Puzzle menu group maintains healthy profit margins but remains underoptimized due to low market stimulation. Lastly, items within the Dog quadrant are identified as unproductive products that risk burdening kitchen logistical efficiency and triggering food waste. As tactical measures to optimize total revenue moving forward, hotel management is advised to conduct selective portion restructuring for Plowhorse items, intensify menu merchandising techniques and suggestive selling to boost the popularity of Puzzle items, and decisively execute product elimination for the Dog category.

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