

ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES OF LOCAL MSME CULINARY BUSINESSES IN DEALING WITH CHANGING CONSUMER TRENDS

Yeni Fatiha Firhatun Ni'mah¹, Muhammad Fathnu Chusain²

^{1,2}, Sekolah Tinggi Islam Kendal, Indonesia

Email : yenifat01@gmail.com¹, fathnuchusain@gmail.com²

Diterima: 16 September 2026

Direvisi: 27 September 2026

Diterbitkan: 30 September 2026

Abstract :

The rapid growth of Indonesia's culinary industry has intensified competition among local micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). This study aims to analyze the adaptive business strategies implemented by traditional culinary MSMEs to remain competitive amid changing consumer trends, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach supported by a literature review and interview data, this study identifies innovation and digitalization as the primary drivers of market competitiveness. The findings reveal that although traditional foods continue to hold significant cultural value and maintain consumer appeal, many MSMEs face challenges in adopting digital technology due to limited digital literacy, human resources, and access to digital platforms. Practical strategies for addressing these challenges include the use of simple and user-friendly digital tools, capacity building through training, and collaborative support from local governments. Product innovation also plays a crucial role, particularly through transforming traditional foods into modern-style desserts without eliminating their cultural identity. This fusion approach combines local authenticity with modern presentation and flavors, enabling MSMEs to expand their market reach while preserving traditional values. Ultimately, adaptive strategies that integrate technology, cultural identity, and consumer-oriented innovation can strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of local culinary MSMEs in the modern culinary industry.

Keywords : *Culinary MSMEs, Digital Technology, Consumer Trends*

الملخص:

أدى التطور السريع لصناعة الطهي في إندونيسيا إلى زيادة حدة المنافسة بين المشروعات المتناهية الصغر والصغيرة والمتوسطة المحلية تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل استراتيجيات الأعمال التكيفية التي تطبقها هذه المشروعات في مجال الطهي التقليدي للحفاظ على قدرتها التنافسية وسط تحول اتجاهات المستهلكين، لا سيما بين جيل الألفية وجيل زد. وباستخدام منهج وصفي نوعي مدعوم بمراجعة الأدبيات وبيانات المقابلات، حددت الدراسة الابتكار وتُظهر نتائج البحث أنه على الرغم من أن التحول الرقمي كعاملين رئيسيين يعززان القدرة التنافسية في السوق الأطعمة التقليدية لا تزال تتمتع بقيمة ثقافية عالية وتفضيل كبير لدى المستهلكين، فإن العديد من المشروعات تواجه عقبات في تبني التكنولوجيا نتيجة لمحدودية المعرفة الرقمية، والموارد البشرية، والوصول إلى المنصات الرقمية. وتشمل الاستراتيجيات العملية للتغلب على هذه العقبات استخدام أدوات رقمية بسيطة وسهلة الاستخدام،

كما يلعب الابتكار في وبناء القدرات من خلال التدريب، بالإضافة إلى الدعم التعاوني من الحكومات المحلية المنتجات دورًا حيويًا، لا سيما من خلال تحويل الأطعمة التقليدية إلى حلويات ذات طابع عصري دون المساس بهويتها الثقافية. ويجمع نهج 'الدمج' هذا بين الأصالة المحلية وأسلوب العرض والمذاق الحديث، مما يُتيح للمشروعات توسيع نطاق سوقها مع الحفاظ على قيمها التقليدية. وفي النهاية، فإن الاستراتيجيات التكميلية التي تدمج بين التكنولوجيا، والهوية الثقافية، والابتكار الموجه نحو المستهلك، كفيلة بتعزيز استدامة الأعمال والقدرة التنافسية للمشروعات الصغرى والمتوسطة في المشهد العصري لصناعة الطهي

الكلمات المفتاحية: المشروعات الصغرى والمتوسطة في مجال الطهي، التكنولوجيا الرقمية، اتجاهات المستهلكين.

Abstrak :

Perkembangan pesat industri kuliner di Indonesia telah meningkatkan intensitas persaingan di antara pelaku usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM) lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi bisnis adaptif yang diterapkan oleh UMKM kuliner tradisional untuk tetap kompetitif di tengah pergeseran tren konsumen, khususnya di kalangan milenial dan Generasi Z. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang didukung oleh tinjauan literatur dan data wawancara, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi inovasi dan digitalisasi sebagai faktor utama yang mendorong daya saing pasar. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun makanan tradisional masih memiliki nilai budaya serta preferensi tinggi di kalangan konsumen, banyak UMKM menghadapi kendala dalam mengadopsi teknologi akibat keterbatasan literasi digital, sumber daya manusia, dan akses terhadap platform digital. Strategi praktis untuk mengatasi hambatan tersebut meliputi penggunaan alat digital sederhana dan mudah digunakan, peningkatan kapasitas melalui pelatihan, serta dukungan kolaboratif dari pemerintah daerah. Inovasi produk juga berperan penting, terutama melalui transformasi makanan tradisional menjadi dessert bergaya modern tanpa menghilangkan identitas budayanya. Pendekatan fusion ini menggabungkan keaslian lokal dengan penyajian dan cita rasa modern, sehingga memungkinkan UMKM memperluas pasar sekaligus mempertahankan nilai-nilai tradisional. Pada akhirnya, strategi adaptif yang mengintegrasikan teknologi, identitas budaya, dan inovasi yang berorientasi pada konsumen dapat meningkatkan keberlanjutan usaha dan daya saing UMKM dalam lanskap industri kuliner modern.

Kata Kunci: *UMKM Kuliner, Teknologi Digital, Tren Konsumen*

INTRODUCTION

Innovation and competitiveness are important factors for the sustainability of a business in the midst of ever-evolving industry changes. In Indonesia itself, the culinary industry is experiencing very rapid growth, making it one of the most potential and competitive entrepreneurial sectors today. (Afrietal et al., 2025) The culinary industry in Indonesia in recent years has grown rapidly as evidenced by the many new shops, restaurants, and cafes with various foreign food concepts and menus. Changing lifestyles are increasingly dynamic and driving demand not only for food, but also for exciting dining experiences (Bisnis et al., 2025).

However, the existence of traditional culinary in the midst of the rise of modern food requires a more adaptive marketing strategy to remain able to compete in a wider market. (Inesta, Afdion & Program, 2025) The results of this

study indicate that Generation Z shows a strong appreciation for the sustainability values contained in traditional foods, thus forming a positive attitude towards local culinary consumption. However, the study also found that there is a gap between actual attitudes and behaviors, where these positive preferences have not been fully converted into consistent purchasing decisions. These findings show that Generation Z's interest in traditional culinary is still maintained. (Kristia 2024)

However, on the other hand, most traditional culinary business actors have not been able to optimize the use of technology in their business activities, both in terms of marketing, service, and digital payments. This condition causes some consumers, especially generation Z who prioritize ease of access to information, speed of service, ease of ordering, flexibility of payment methods, and practicality in transactions, tend to turn to other business actors who have provided digital-based services. (Rahayu, 2025) This condition raises questions about how Indonesia can maintain and redevelop its traditional culinary in the midst of globalization. This influence can be seen from the rise of international restaurants and franchises as well as the dominance of global culinary content in digital media. (Ali, 2025)

Culinary business factors in Indonesia such as product quality, price, business atmosphere, and menu innovation that follow trends have a great influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Without strategic planning based on market research, it is difficult for culinary businesses to survive and compete sustainably. (Maurisni, 2025) Minister Meutya Hafid emphasized that MSME actors who have been integrated with the digital ecosystem make a significant contribution to the total MSME transactions in Indonesia. However, the results of the analysis show that the space for digital MSME development is still very wide, both in terms of technology utilization, expanding market access, and increasing the capacity of business actors. This shows that digital adoption has not reached the optimal level, so a strategy is needed to strengthen and accelerate digital transformation in the MSME sector.

This research (Triana, Ika 2025) is in line with previous studies that show that digitalization plays an important role in improving the performance of MSMEs. Research on F&B MSMEs in Bekasi proves that the use of digital payments is able to speed up transactions and increase business efficiency. In contrast to the study, this study not only highlights the aspect of digital payment, but also examines the preferences of the younger generation towards traditional culinary, adaptive marketing strategies, and the level of digital adoption as factors that affect the competitiveness of traditional culinary in the modern era. (Triana & Lestari, 2025)

This research is in line with the latest literature study (Marsya Aulia Rizkita 2025) which emphasizes that digital marketing strategies cannot be applied uniformly, but must be adjusted to local cultural values (cultural adaptation). Research on MSMEs in Java shows that a digital approach that is sensitive to cultural context can increase business competitiveness and sustainability. This emphasizes that for traditional culinary actors, adaptive strategies are not only limited to technology adoption, but also the integration of digitalization with cultural identity to remain relevant and in demand by consumers. (Aulia et al., 2025)

The difference with this study is that previous studies focused on the effectiveness of cultural adaptation in the digital strategy of MSMEs in general, while this study specifically examined the preferences of the younger generation towards traditional culinary, while at the same time attributing the findings to the digital readiness of business actors and the adaptive marketing strategies needed to maintain the competitiveness of traditional culinary in the midst of modern industrial competition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe and understand in depth how traditional culinary MSMEs apply adaptive strategies in dealing with changing consumer trends, especially among millennials and Generation Z. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture social dynamics, adaptation patterns, and cultural contexts that encompass the innovation and digitalization processes carried out by business actors.

Meanwhile, research data was obtained through observations, interviews, news from various media, as well as findings obtained from relevant scientific articles, including indexed journals, books related to entrepreneurship and MSME digitalization, and reports from official institutions. Through this search, the researcher collected relevant literature related to culinary industry trends, young consumer behavior, digital marketing, and traditional culinary product innovation. The use of this method also aims to strengthen the theoretical foundation while comparing field findings with the latest research, especially publications in 2022–2025.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Culinary as Cultural Identity and Media Representation

Culinary is an important element in the culture of a society. Food not only meets basic human needs, but also reflects the identity, history, and values that live in the community. With the advancement of communication and media technology, the way people see, appreciate, and enjoy culinary has

changed dramatically.(Nugroho et al., 2025) The media often represents local cuisine through narratives about authenticity, tradition, and cultural heritage. News about regional foods often highlight the history, traditional manufacturing methods, and its relationship to a community's cultural identity. For example, rendang from Indonesia and sushi from Japan are often positioned as symbols of national pride and cultural icons.(Okta et al., 2025)

The preservation of local cuisine that has been passed down from generation to generation is an important aspect in culinary development in the modern era. This research shows that the main challenge lies in the ability of business actors to keep up with technological advances without neglecting traditional recipes, typical processing techniques, as well as local knowledge related to regional cuisine. Through the implementation of modern marketing strategies, local culinary can be preserved as well as introduced more widely as a valuable cultural heritage.(Kitiah et al., 2024) However, many MSMEs face digitalization obstacles in the form of low digital literacy, limited human resources, and access to technology, so that the use of digital platforms is not optimal. This is in line with research findings in various regions that technology adaptation is still a challenge for business actors.(Bahits & Wulansari, 2025)

Digitalization Barriers in Traditional Culinary MSMEs

Efforts to digitize MSMEs can be carried out through increasing adequate digital literacy, utilizing e-commerce platforms, and active support from local governments.(I et al., 2024) This approach is strengthened by the adoption of easy-to-use digital applications so that business actors do not feel intimidated by technology. The application *of the principles of usability and ease of use* encourages MSMEs to start using digital tools effectively, such as transaction applications, promotions, or recording systems.(Dinda Artya HamidahCooperative, 2024)In addition, the integration of technologies such as e-commerce, fintech, and business process transformation has been proven to improve operational efficiency, customer engagement, and expand market reach. However, the success of its implementation depends heavily on the managerial capacity and digital literacy readiness of business actors. (Purinda & Rahayu, 2025)

Based on the results of field observations, researchers found that some local culinary MSMEs still face various obstacles in adopting digital technology. Of the four MSMEs observed, one of them is Kukusan MSMEs. Business owners revealed that the main obstacle faced is the unavailability of a digital payment system. These limitations cause some potential consumers to cancel their purchases because they do not have an alternative payment method other than cash. (Djauhari, 2026)

In addition, in Mi Ayam's MSMEs, researchers found that these

businesses have not taken advantage of application-based food ordering services, such as GrabFood and ShopeeFood. The business owner said that not a few potential consumers who are in a location that is quite far away ask about the availability of delivery services through the digital platform. However, because these services are not yet available, some consumers choose not to make purchases. (Interview with Kamidah, 2026)

Similar findings were also found in MSMEs selling crackers. Based on the results of interviews, business owners have not used digital platforms such as Google Maps to list the location of their businesses. As a result, many people, especially newcomers, do not know the existence of the business. This condition is an obstacle considering that the surrounding area is experiencing quite rapid settlement development with the addition of housing complexes and new rental houses. The absence of business location information on digital platforms causes the market potential of the surrounding community to not be optimally utilized. (Interview with painem, 2026)

Overall, the findings show that the barriers to digitalization in MSMEs are not only limited to the digital payment aspect, but also include the use of online ordering services and the optimization of digital media to increase business visibility. The low adoption of this technology has the potential to reduce sales opportunities, limit market reach, and reduce the competitiveness of MSMEs amid changes in consumer behavior that increasingly rely on digital technology to find information and make purchases.

To deal with limited human resources and low understanding of technology, MSMEs can take advantage of simple technology such as Google Sheets, Google Drive, or other applications that are easy to learn. (Changgriawan & Zulaikha, 2025) With the support of training and mentoring, business productivity can increase without complex systems. This gradual approach makes digital adaptation more realistic and effective, so that MSMEs are able to compete in the modern era. (Akbar & Amir, 2024)

In addition to the role of digitalization, innovation-based modern culinary trends are also growing rapidly. Many MSME actors create new products by combining local elements and global trends, to efforts to adapt traditional foods into contemporary desserts that are more attractive to young consumers. This research focuses on how the modification of traditional foods, both in terms of taste, appearance, and packaging, can produce modern dessert products without losing their original cultural identity (Made et al., 2022). This proves the ability of business actors to take advantage of market opportunities and adjust to consumer tastes, especially the younger generation as the main segment. Based on the results of the interviews, product innovation is an important strategy to increase competitiveness. Business actors understand that

consumers are now more selective in making choices, so product quality, packaging, and customer experience are aspects that must be considered. (Rosmayati et al., 2025)

The principle of providing convenience in Islam has relevance to the efforts of culinary MSME actors in adapting to changing consumer trends and behavior. The Prophet PBUH said, *"يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا"* which means *"Make it easy and do not make it difficult, give good news and do not make people run"* (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). The hadith contains the principle to provide ease of interaction with others, which in the context of business can be applied through easy, fast, and in accordance with consumer needs.

Changes in consumer trends today show that there is an increasing need for ease in obtaining products, placing orders, making payments, and getting information about a business. Therefore, culinary MSME actors need to adapt through the use of technology, the application of these various facilities is not only a strategy to increase consumer comfort and satisfaction, but also reflects Islamic values in providing convenience to others. Thus, the ability of MSMEs to adapt to changing consumer needs can be seen as a form of effort in creating services that are more effective, accessible, and still in accordance with Islamic business ethics principles. (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari>)

Culinary Innovation Trends and Changing Preferences of Young Consumers

Innovation in traditional Indonesian cuisine is an important strategy to survive amid the influence of globalization and changing consumer tastes, especially the younger generation. The combination of traditional elements and modern touches is increasingly in demand, influenced by the city's lifestyle, exposure to global culture, technology, and increased purchasing power. However, consumers still demand authentic taste and form, so that innovation is accepted as long as it does not lose its cultural value. This shows that food is not only consumed for taste, but also for experience, memory, and cultural identity. (NFaridhotul, 2025)

The approach to modifying traditional foods through "fusion food" that blends modern techniques, appearance, or presentations with local ingredients and flavors allows adaptation to global and modern tastes without having to sacrifice cultural roots in flavor or basic ingredients. (Kusnedi et al., 2025) As explained in the study Culinary Fusion In Transforming Traditional Recipes For Modern Tastes, the transformation of traditional recipes such as soto, satay, or fried rice can be done by combining new elements (e.g., more modern presentation, additional ingredients, new culinary techniques) so that the dish becomes more attractive to the younger generation and urban consumers, while still maintaining the characteristics of Indonesia. Indonesian consumers generally still consider traditional versions Authentic and natural, but modern transformations on traditional foods are acceptable as long as the modifications

do not erase authentic values such as local flavors and ingredients. Thus, thoughtful modifications that respect traditional essence while embracing modern preferences can be an effective strategy for culinary actors to expand the appeal of products without losing cultural identity.(Krisprimandoyo5), 2022)

From an Islamic perspective, innovation in food products is basically allowed as long as it still pays attention to the principles of halal and the goodness of the product. This is in line with the words of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 168: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا" which means "O people! Eat from the food that is lawful and good that is found on earth." The verse emphasizes that the food consumed must not only meet the halal aspect, but also must have an element of *tayyib*, which is good, clean, and suitable for consumption. Thus, innovations such as the development of flavor variants, adjustment of size and shape, the use of more attractive packaging, and the creation of new culinary combinations can be carried out as long as they do not eliminate *the halal and tayyib* character. This strategy allows local MSMEs to keep up with the development of consumer tastes while maintaining sharia values in their business activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the success of traditional culinary MSMEs in dealing with changes in consumer trends is greatly influenced by the ability to adapt through innovation and digitalization. Although traditional foods still have a strong appeal in the eyes of the public, business actors need to develop more modern marketing strategies, especially to reach millennials and Gen Z. Digitalization has proven to provide significant benefits for operational efficiency and market expansion, but there are still obstacles in the form of low digital literacy and limited resources. A gradual approach through the use of simple and easy-to-learn technology can help MSMEs effectively start digital transformation.

In addition, product innovation through the modification of traditional foods into a more modern form without losing their authentic value is an important strategy in increasing competitiveness. Consumers can embrace the modernization of traditional foods as long as local cultural elements, flavors, and basic ingredients are maintained. This shows that culinary is not only a product of consumption, but also part of cultural identity and experience. Thus, an adaptive strategy that combines digitalization, product innovation, and cultural preservation can be the key to the sustainability of culinary MSMEs amid the dynamics of modern industrial changes.

REFERENCES

- Afrizal, M., Virginia, G. A., Margareta, A., Fitri, N. L., Arista, C. D., Novitasari, F. R., & Ferara, W. A. (2025). *Scripta Economica : Journal of Economics , Management , and Accounting Strategi Pengembangan dan Pemasaran Cheezy Chix Roll sebagai Produk Kuliner Kreatif*. 1(2).
- Akbar, T., & Amir, H. (2024). *Exploring Strategic Adaptation in MSMEs during the Digital*. 01(2), 2–5.
- Ali, M. (2025). *Dinamika Tren Kuliner Asing dan Tantangan Pelestarian Kuliner Tradisional di Indonesia*. 3(3), 137–147.
- Aulia, M., Winarno, A., Suwono, H., Ahmad, N., & Nik, N. (2025). *Journal of Open Innovation : Technology , Market , and Complexity Integrating cultural adaptation in digital marketing strategies: Enhancing competitiveness and sustainability in MSMEs of Java , Indonesia*. 11(May).
- Bahits, A., & Wulansari, R. (2025). *DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS AND SALES PERFORMANCE OF MSMEs IN THE*. 5(1).
- Bisnis, D., Publikasi, J., Manajemen, I., Balimema, S. G., Stella, U., & Sumba, M. (2025). *Analisis Sistem Persaingan Bisnis Kuliner Dapur Sumba*. 4.
- Changgriawan, S. M., & Zulaikha, E. (2025). *Overcome Challenge Digital Literacy Of UMKM Garment Industry Through Approach Collaborative And Technology Simple : Study CST UMKM Case*. 13(2).
- Dinda Artya HamidahCooperative, T. (2024). *Strategies for Improving Digital Literacy Through The Use of Digital Technology by Small and Medium Enterprises Assisted by The Cooperative and SME Service Office of Yogyakarta Special*. 02(06), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.63901/ijebam.v2i6.91>
- I, R., Utomo, B., & Setiyono, Y. Y. (2024). *Leveraging Digital Technology in Micro SMEs to Enhance Indonesia ' s Economic Prosperity*. 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.55960/jlri.v12i3.985>
- Inesta, Afdion, Y. P. R., & Program. (2025). *Analisis Sterategi Bertahan UMKM Kuliner Tradisional Di Tengah Gempuran Franchise Di Kota Makassar*. 01(06).
- Kembangkan UMKM Digital, Menkomdigi Siap Tingkatkan Konektivitas. (2024).
- Kitiah, Y. M., Wardaya, S., & Nopianti, H. (2024). *Kuliner Tradisional Pendap dalam Pusaran Kuliner Kekinian*.
- Krisprimandoyo5), E. H. S. R. M. D. A. (2022). *DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCT INNOVATION*. 2022(3).
- Kristia, K., Kovács, S., & Erdey, L. (2024). *Discover Sustainability Generation Z ' s appetite for traditional food : unveiling the interplay of sustainability values as higher order construct and food influencers in Indonesia*. *Discover Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-024-00714-4>
- Kusnedi, R., Elsty, K., Irfan, M., Hariyanto, L., Choesrani, D. Z., & Nurhasanah, A. (2025). *Culinary Fusion In Transforming Traditional Recipes For Modern Tastes*. 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v13i1.3084>
- Made, N., Dwi, A., Yanti, K., Tanius, B., Widani, N. N., & Pramudia, H. (2022). *TRADISIONAL INDONESIA MENJADI FUSION DESSERT DECONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL INDONESIAN*. 5.
- Maurisni, P. (2025). *Strategi perencanaan bisnis dalam usaha kuliner untuk*

- memenuhi preferensi konsumen lokal di pasir pengaraian.*
- NFaridhotul Nadhiroh¹, Oktavia Regita Ramadhani², Fera Kurnianingsih³, Youlanda Ayuni Wulandari⁴, Mohamad Deka Saputra⁵, R. H., & Akuntansi, E. (2025). *Neraca Akuntansi Manajemen, Ekonomi*. 20(4).
- Nugroho, A. Y., Herryani, H., Yulianto, S., Pradapa, F., Cendekia, U., Indonesia, M., Indonesia, U. A., Tinggi, S., Ambarrukmo, P., Semarang, U. S., Artikel, I., & Education, J. (2025). *PERSPEKTIF MEDIA DALAM MENGONSTRUKSI CITRA KULINER*. 13(2).
- Okta, A., Naim, A., & Elmi, N. (2025). *STRATEGI EFEKTIF DALAM MENINGKATKAN DAYA SAING*. 4(April).
- Purinda, A. D., & Rahayu, F. (2025). *Digital Technology-Based Business Innovation Strategies to Increase the Competitiveness of SMEs in Indonesia*. 1(September).
- Rahayu, S. (2025). *Strategi Pemasaran Sosis Solo : Analisis Perilaku Konsumen Dan Upaya Pengembangan Di Era Modern*. 01(04).
- Rosmayati, I., Akuntansi, P., Ekonomi, F., & Garut, U. (2025). *Analisis Peluang Bisnis Kuliner Dalam Mendorong Daya Saing UMKM di Kabupaten Garut*. 2(4).
- Triana, I., & Lestari, N. S. (2025). *Transformation of Food and Beverage MSMEs in the Digital Era*. 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.21512/becossjournal.v7i2.11990>