
Strategic Competitiveness Framework for Fish-Based Street Food Enterprises: An Integrated Analysis of Micro-Business Sustainability in Emerging Markets

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the competitive strategies implemented by the Fish Sempol micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) owned by Mrs. Ayu Anika Putri, strategically located in the Tepi Laut waterfront area of Tanjungpinang. The primary objective of this research is to identify and analyze the competitive strategies employed to confront the challenges posed by modern culinary competitors, particularly dim sum and contemporary trendy snacks that have gained substantial popularity among younger consumer demographics. Employing a qualitative descriptive methodological approach, this research utilizes comprehensive data collection techniques including structured interviews, systematic observations, and documentary analysis. The findings reveal that this business possesses significant competitive advantages including distinctive flavor profiles, highly affordable pricing structures, and strategic geographical positioning. Conversely, the enterprise faces considerable challenges encompassing fluctuations in raw material procurement costs, intensified market competition, and suboptimal utilization of digital marketing platforms and social media channels. Based on comprehensive PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces framework, and Key Success Factors evaluation, this study recommends strategic interventions including product innovation initiatives, enhanced digital promotional strategies, and collaborative partnerships with suppliers to ensure business stability and sustained competitive advantage in the dynamic culinary marketplace

Keyword: PESTEL Analysis; Porter's Five Forces Analysis; Key Success Factors

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute a fundamental component of Indonesia's economic infrastructure and national development strategy. According to comprehensive data compiled by the Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM Republik Indonesia (2024) the current MSME population has reached approximately 64.2 million business units, contributing substantially to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 61.07%, equivalent to 8,573.89 trillion Indonesian Rupiah. The multifaceted contribution of MSMEs to Indonesia's economic architecture encompasses their remarkable capacity to absorb up to 97% of the available national workforce and account for approximately 60.4% of total investment capital. Nevertheless, despite these

impressive statistics, the contemporary MSME sector in Indonesia continues to encounter numerous systemic challenges and operational constraints. The Indonesian government has proactively implemented various comprehensive support programs designed to strengthen MSME capabilities, including the MSME Marketing Digitalization initiative and the People's Business Credit (Kredit Usaha Rakyat/KUR) program (Ridha et al., 2024).

Business enterprises containing economic activities generate substantial contributions to Indonesia's economic ecosystem (Sofyan, 2017). MSMEs have been long recognized as an integral component of Indonesia's economic landscape and have consistently demonstrated significant contributions toward more substantial economic growth, enhanced productivity levels, and increased income generation. Understanding the mechanisms through which MSMEs support economic growth trajectories can facilitate the formulation of more effective policy frameworks to assist this sector in achieving its full potential capacity. Therefore, it is anticipated that through comprehensive understanding of MSME dynamics, stakeholders can systematically identify potential challenges confronting MSMEs and develop appropriate pathways to address these obstacles. This discourse also examines the economic conditions and evolutionary growth patterns of MSMEs in Indonesia over time, which can subsequently assist the nation in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth benefiting all Indonesian citizens.

According to Law Number 20 of 2008 concerning MSMEs, there exist specific criteria for defining MSME categories. Micro enterprises refer to productive economic activities owned by individuals or business organizations that meet the requirements specified in this legislation. Conversely, small enterprises constitute productive economic activities that are independently operated by individuals or business entities that do not qualify as subsidiaries or branches of medium or large enterprises, fulfilling the requirements stated in the legislation. Medium enterprises represent productive economic activities that are independent and self-sustaining, conducted by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or components of larger or smaller enterprises, with asset values or annual revenues conforming to the provisions established in the legislation.

Despite their significant contributions, MSMEs continue to face serious challenges and systemic barriers. One of the largest demographic groups experiencing lower economic conditions comprises the general population, including small-scale businesses, street vendors, and mobile merchants (Prasetyo & Kistanti, 2020). Over the past several decades, extensive research has documented persistent challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These challenges include inadequate financial capital and limited access to external financing, which hinder business growth (Simba et al., 2024; Widnyana et al., 2021), insufficient human resource quality, which constrains the development of organizational competencies and competitive advantage (Alexandro, 2025), limited technological capabilities that impede innovation adoption and digital transformation initiatives (Augustie et al., 2025), ineffective marketing performance, particularly in leveraging digital marketing strategies (Wu et al., 2024), and low operational efficiency arising from deficiencies in technical capabilities and business process management (Kurniati & Rahayu, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic progressively exacerbated this situation and created unprecedented challenges. According to research conducted by Tairas (2020), traditional MSMEs faced substantial challenges including raw material distribution disruptions, cash flow difficulties, and decreased consumer

demand. To support the MSME sector during this critical period, the government subsequently implemented numerous intervention programs, including direct cash assistance, reduction of final tax rates under Government Regulation 46 from 1% to 0.5%, and Cash Assistance for Street Vendors, Small Shop Owners, and Fishermen (Ridha et al., 2024).

One of the rapidly developing MSME sectors is the culinary industry segment. Culinary businesses tend to be highly dynamic because they continuously adapt to evolving consumer taste preferences and market trends. Even simple products can become new trends if they align with market preferences and consumer demands. A concrete example is the Fish Sempol business owned by Mrs. Ayu Anika Putri, which has successfully attracted consumer attention, particularly among younger demographics, due to its savory taste profile, highly affordable pricing at only Rp1,000 per skewer, and easy accessibility in crowded public areas, specifically at Tanjungpinang Public Sea (TPL). Based on interview results conducted on September 19, 2025 at 20:00 WIB, Mrs. Ayu Anika Putri explained that the initial business concept emerged from the desire to create a simple fish-based snack that could be enjoyed by all demographic segments. She also conveyed that sales experience significant increases every weekend due to the high volume of visitors in the waterfront area.

However, popularity does not guarantee immunity from challenges and competitive pressures. Culinary MSMEs such as Mrs. Ayu Anika Putri's Fish Sempol business continue to face obstacles including fluctuations in raw material prices (fish, flour, and seasonings), intense competition with similar snack products, shifts in fast food consumption trends, and competitors selling comparable products. Therefore, in-depth analysis utilizing the PESTEL framework, Porter's Five Forces model, and Key Success Factors (KSF) is necessary to comprehensively understand the business position and formulate appropriate strategic responses (David & David, 2017; Porter, 2008; Whittington et al., 2020). Consequently, the Fish Sempol MSME owned by Mrs. Ayu Anika Putri in Tanjungpinang can enhance competitive advantage while simultaneously maintaining business sustainability amid dynamic market conditions.

Based on this background context, this research focuses on three primary research questions: (1) What internal and external factors influence the Fish Sempol culinary MSME in the Tepi Laut area of Tanjungpinang? (2) What are the results of PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces analysis, and KSF analysis regarding the competitive advantage of the Fish Sempol MSME? (3) What competitive strategies can be formulated to enable the Fish Sempol MSME to survive and develop amid culinary competition? In alignment with these research questions, the objectives of this study are: (1) To identify internal and external factors affecting the Fish Sempol MSME; (2) To analyze the competitive advantage of the Fish Sempol MSME through PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, and KSF frameworks; (3) To formulate appropriate competitive strategies to enhance the competitive advantage and sustainability of the Fish Sempol MSME.

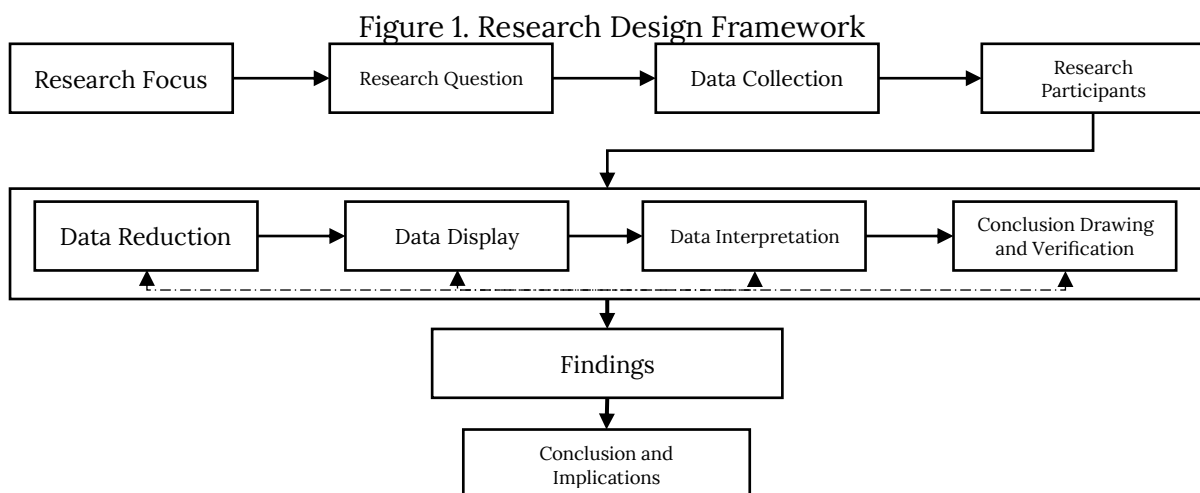
This research is expected to provide significant contributions to the development of management science, particularly in the study of competitive strategies in the culinary MSME sector. For practitioners, this study can serve as valuable consideration material for MSME actors in developing survival strategies amid modern culinary business competition. For students, this research can become a reference or teaching material for students who want to understand MSME business strategies in practical, real-world contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative descriptive methodological approach. According to Sugiyono (2019) qualitative descriptive research aims to comprehensively understand phenomena experienced by research subjects by describing them in words and language appropriate to natural contexts. Meanwhile, qualitative research focuses on efforts to understand the meanings behind actions, experiences, and human interactions in depth (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). By utilizing a qualitative approach, researchers can study information in depth from business owners or customers regarding strategies, tactics, and challenges being implemented. This method also enables researchers to examine external factors (PESTEL), competitive intensity (Porter's Five Forces), and key success factors (Key Success Factors) more comprehensively and holistically (David & David, 2017; Porter, 2008; Whittington et al., 2020).

The research object is the Fish Sempol culinary MSME, located in Tepi Laut, Tanjungpinang. The selection of this research object is based on its high popularity among the general public and its competitive pricing structure. Primary data, which consists of results from covert observations at the culinary location and conversations with the owner and several customers, forms the primary data source for this research. Secondary data is derived from books, academic journals, online articles, and internet summaries discussing MSMEs, PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces, and Key Success Factors frameworks.

Additionally, systematic observations were conducted to covertly observe business activities, ranging from production processes to sales transactions and interactions with buyers. These multiple data collection techniques ensure triangulation and enhance research validity. Data analysis was performed by organizing information based on three main analytical frameworks. PESTEL analysis was used to identify external factors encompassing political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal dimensions (Whittington et al., 2020). Porter's Five Forces was utilized to determine competitive intensity levels through analysis of new product development threats, bargaining power of employees and suppliers, and industry rivalry dynamics (Porter, 2008). Key Success Factors (KSF) identified critical success factors for the MSME, including product quality, innovative menu offerings, strategic location advantages, competitive pricing structures, and effective promotional strategies (David & David, 2017).



Source: (The author's own research, 2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interview results with the business owner, conducted on September 19, 2025 at 20:00 WIB, it was revealed that the initial business idea emerged from the desire to create a simple fish-based snack that could be enjoyed by all demographic segments and socioeconomic classes. This business gained public recognition due to its distinctive taste profile, highly affordable pricing structure, and strategically advantageous sales location in the Tepi Laut waterfront area of Tanjungpinang, which experiences high pedestrian traffic and visibility.

However, in its operational management, this business continues to face various challenges including raw material price fluctuations, competition with modern culinary products such as dim sum and grilled sausages, and limitations in digital promotional capabilities and social media marketing effectiveness.

1. Analysis of External Factors Using PESTEL Framework

- a. Political Factors; Government support for the MSME sector has been reasonably adequate through various programs including the People's Business Credit (KUR) initiative and entrepreneurship training programs sponsored by governmental agencies. These political support mechanisms create a favorable regulatory environment for small business development (Prasetyo & Kistanti, 2020).
- b. Economic Factors; Increases in raw material prices, particularly fish and wheat flour, significantly impact production costs and profit margins. Economic volatility in commodity markets creates pricing pressures that affect business sustainability and profitability (Kadeni & Srijani, 2020).
- c. Social Factors; Consumers tend to be attracted to contemporary trendy foods and modern culinary innovations, necessitating continuous product innovation to maintain consumer interest and market relevance. Demographic shifts and generational preferences influence consumption patterns (Candra & Zulkarnain, 2024).
- d. Technological Factors; Utilization of social media platforms remains relatively low, despite the potential for these platforms to serve as highly effective promotional tools reaching wider audiences. Digital transformation opportunities remain underexploited in the current business model (Pratiwi et al., 2020).
- e. Environmental Factors; This business pays attention to the cleanliness of the sales area to maintain customer trust and comply with health and safety standards. Environmental consciousness contributes to brand reputation and customer loyalty (Ilmi, 2021).
- f. Legal Factors; There are no significant licensing obstacles because this business operates on a small scale and operates in accordance with local regulatory requirements. The informal nature of the business structure provides operational flexibility while maintaining legal compliance (Prasetyo & Kistanti, 2020).

2. Porter's Five Forces Analysis

Porter's Five Forces analysis was conducted to evaluate the industry's competitive structure and identify external factors that may influence business sustainability and performance. This analysis provides insights into the level of competitive pressure arising from new entrants, suppliers, buyers, substitute products, and rivalry among existing competitors. A summary of the analysis results is presented in the following table 1.

Table 1. Porter's Five Forces Analysis

Force	Level	Analysis
Threat of New Entrants	High	The culinary street-food industry exhibits relatively low entry barriers and modest capital requirements, enabling new competitors to enter the market easily. This condition increases market competition and reduces the sustainability of competitive advantages
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	Moderately High	Suppliers possess considerable bargaining power due to fluctuations in the prices of key raw materials, such as fish and wheat flour. Limited supplier alternatives and supply chain dynamics can increase procurement costs and affect business profitability
Bargaining Power of Buyers	High	Customers have strong bargaining power because they can easily switch to alternative snack products with minimal switching costs. The availability of numerous competitors offering similar products further strengthens buyer influence
Threat of Substitute Products	High	Substitute products, including grilled sausages, dim sum, and other modern snack alternatives, present significant competition. These products attract similar customer segments, particularly younger consumers, making product differentiation essential
Intensity of Competitive Rivalry	Very High	Competition among existing vendors is intense due to the large number of businesses operating in the same geographic area and offering similar products. Market saturation in strategic locations intensifies rivalry and necessitates differentiation strategies

Source: (Data analysis, 2026)

Based on the Porter's Five Forces analysis, the snack food culinary industry faces a high level of competitive pressure due to the significant threat of new entrants, strong bargaining power of buyers, substantial threat of substitute products, and intense rivalry among existing businesses. In addition, the relatively high bargaining power of suppliers, driven by fluctuations in raw material prices, further exerts pressure on business profitability. These conditions indicate that business success largely depends on the firm's ability to differentiate its products, maintain consistent quality, and foster customer loyalty in order to sustain a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market (Friend & Zehle, 2009; Grant, 2016; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

3. Key Success Factors Analysis

The success of the Fish Sempol business is influenced by several critical factors including distinctive savory taste characteristics, affordable pricing structures, rapid service delivery, and strategic location advantages in high-traffic areas. However, improvements are necessary in digital promotional aspects to enable the business to reach broader consumer segments and expand market penetration beyond the immediate geographical area. Leveraging digital marketing channels and social media

platforms could significantly enhance brand visibility and customer acquisition (David & David, 2017).

Product innovation represents a fundamental strategic imperative. Adding flavor variants or different product forms can maintain attractiveness for younger consumer segments who seek novelty and variety. Menu diversification strategies can capture broader market segments and increase customer retention rates[16]. Digital marketing capabilities require substantial development. Active promotion through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok can exponentially increase brand awareness and customer engagement. User-generated content and influencer partnerships could amplify marketing reach cost-effectively (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Partnership arrangements with suppliers merit strategic attention. Establishing long-term cooperative agreements can stabilize raw material pricing and ensure consistent supply availability, reducing operational uncertainty and improving margin predictability (Thompson et al., 2020).

Based on the analysis results, several strategic interventions are recommended to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the Fish Sempol MSME. First, product innovation should be continuously pursued through the introduction of new flavor variants and alternative product forms to maintain attractiveness among younger consumer segments who tend to seek novelty and variety. Product differentiation and continuous innovation are important drivers of competitive advantage because they enable businesses to respond to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics (Whittington et al., 2020).

In addition, the business should expand its marketing efforts through digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Active engagement on social media can increase brand visibility, broaden market reach, and attract potential customers beyond the immediate geographical area. The use of visually appealing content, customer testimonials, and interactive promotional campaigns can strengthen customer engagement and improve brand recognition among target consumers (Tabroni et al., 2025). Furthermore, digital marketing capabilities have become increasingly important for MSMEs in enhancing marketing effectiveness and business performance in competitive environments (Verhoef et al., 2021).

From an operational perspective, establishing long-term partnerships with reliable raw material suppliers is essential to ensure supply continuity and reduce the impact of price fluctuations. Strong supplier relationships contribute to supply chain resilience, operational performance, and business sustainability, particularly for SMEs that often face resource limitations and market uncertainties (Dza et al., 2024; Tarigan et al., 2021). Collaborative relationships with suppliers also support greater flexibility and responsiveness in managing supply disruptions. At the same time, improving financial management practices through systematic recording of revenues and expenditures will provide more accurate information regarding profitability and production costs. Effective financial management enables business owners to make more informed decisions, improve resource allocation, and enhance long-term organizational performance (Melania & Handayani, 2023).

Furthermore, maintaining consistent product quality remains a critical success factor. Standardized production procedures, regular quality control, and employee training can help ensure that customers receive the same level of quality in every purchase, thereby strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty. Consistent quality is recognized as a key determinant of customer retention and sustainable competitive advantage (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Finally, the strategic waterfront location should be

leveraged more effectively through improved signage, enhanced visibility, and optimized operating hours during peak visitor periods. Strategic location advantages can increase customer accessibility, improve purchasing convenience, and ultimately contribute to higher sales performance and stronger market positioning (Porter, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, the Fish Sempol MSME owner possesses several competitive advantages that enable business sustainability, including distinctive taste characteristics preferred by consumers, affordable pricing structures accessible to broad demographic segments, and strategically advantageous sales location in high-traffic waterfront areas. Nevertheless, this enterprise also confronts significant challenges including raw material price fluctuations creating cost pressures, competition with contemporary trendy snacks appealing to younger consumers, and suboptimal promotion through digital media channels limiting market reach. The integrated analysis utilizing PESTEL framework, Porter's Five Forces model, and Key Success Factors evaluation demonstrates that with appropriate strategic interventions, this MSME can maintain competitive positioning and achieve sustainable development in the local culinary marketplace.

Based on these research findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders. First, digital promotional activities should commence actively utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to introduce products to wider audiences and build brand awareness. Second, product innovation initiatives should add flavor variations or new menu items to maintain attractiveness for consumers, particularly younger demographic segments seeking novelty. Third, collaborative partnerships with suppliers should establish long-term agreements to stabilize raw material pricing and ensure reliable supply chains. Fourth, simplified financial management systems should systematically record expenditures and revenues to facilitate monitoring of profit margins and production costs, enabling informed strategic decisions.

The findings of this research contribute significantly to academic understanding of competitive strategies in the culinary MSME sector while providing practical insights for business practitioners navigating competitive market environments. Future research could explore the effectiveness of specific digital marketing interventions, analyze consumer perception dynamics, or investigate scaling strategies for successful street food businesses transitioning to formal restaurant formats. Longitudinal studies tracking the implementation of recommended strategies could validate their effectiveness and identify contextual factors influencing success outcomes.

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