

## INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION: STRATEGIES OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY MSMES AROUND STIE GANESHA TO ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS IN THE DIGITAL ERA



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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the role of product innovation and strategic collaboration in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the online food delivery business around STIE Ganesha. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 25 SME actors selected based on criteria such as minimal technology usage (e.g., WhatsApp Business) and experience collaborating with other SMEs. The findings reveal that menu innovation based on local trends, inter-SME collaboration for logistical efficiency (e.g., shared delivery fleets), and the use of simple technologies like WhatsApp broadcast lists significantly enhance business visibility and customer loyalty. Key challenges include limited access to technology training and reliance on third-party platforms, which impact profit margins. This study recommends developing a collaborative ecosystem involving academia, government, and business actors to strengthen SME capacity through locally tailored business incubation programs and technical mentoring.

**Keywords:** Product Innovation, SME Collaboration, Simple Technology, Customer Loyalty, Digital Ecosystem.



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### INTRODUCTION

The development of the online food delivery business around the STIE Ganesha campus is influenced not only by the high demand from students and the surrounding community, but also by increasingly complex competitive dynamics. Unlike previous studies that focused on market and operational analysis, this article explores innovative strategies and collaboration as keys to MSME success. Preliminary data indicate that 60% of MSMEs in this area failed to survive after 18 months due to their inability to adapt to

changing consumer preferences and high operational costs (Wachyuni et al., 2024).

The rising popularity of online food delivery services around STIE Ganesha reflects a dynamic ecosystem with unique demographic characteristics-dominated by students, faculty, and staff aged 18–35 who have high mobility and a preference for instant solutions (Thi Phuong Anh & Rajah, 2022). Although the market potential is considerable (estimated at 500–700 daily transactions within a 1 km radius), only 30% of local culinary MSMEs are able to survive beyond two years, highlighting a gap between market opportunities and operational capabilities (Yasirandi & Thanasopon, 2023).

This gap reveals systemic challenges, such as fluctuating demand patterns. Students prioritize affordable prices (IDR 10,000–25,000 per serving) and fast service (<30 minutes), while campus employees value menu variety and nutritional quality. Peak demand occurs during lunch (12:00–13:30) and dinner (18:00–20:00), with 40% of orders coming from local dishes like nasi campur and mie ayam. However, only 15% of MSMEs analyze transaction data to optimize inventory or staffing, resulting in inefficiencies such as 8–12% daily food waste and mismatches between supply and demand (Damayanti et al., 2023). Other operational barriers include fragile supply chains-60% of MSMEs rely on a single supplier, making them vulnerable to delays and price fluctuations-and dependence on third-party platforms that charge commissions of 15–25%, further eroding already thin profit margins (Rachman & Kurniawati, 2022; Al Vonda, 2020).

Research shows that hybrid models (combining third-party platforms and in-house delivery teams) can increase profitability by up to 22% through cost efficiency and quality control (Sabilaturrizqi & Subriadi, 2024). However, adoption of this model remains low due to limited financial literacy and access to technology. Digital marketing efforts are also limited: although 85% of MSMEs use social media, only 25% employ data-driven strategies such as targeted ads or personalized promotions. Interactive content (such as cooking videos and testimonials) has the potential to triple engagement, but creative resource constraints remain a challenge (Fajrillah et al., 2020). Fragmentation also persists due to minimal collaboration in bundling packages or loyalty programs. The absence of regulation exacerbates the situation, leading to price wars and inconsistent hygiene standards-30% of MSMEs operate without home-industry certification (PIRT), putting consumer trust at risk.

A triple helix synergy (academia, government, MSMEs) is urgently needed to build sustainable models, such as risk management training and tax incentives (Fajarwaty & Jukes, 2022) (Al Vonda, 2020)

The development of online food delivery businesses around the STIE Ganesha campus is driven not only by high demand from students and the community, but also by increasingly complex competition. Unlike previous studies that mainly highlighted market and operational aspects, this article examines innovative strategies and collaboration as keys to MSME success. Initial data show that 60% of MSMEs in this region failed to survive after 18 months due to inability to adapt to changing consumer preferences and high operational costs (Wachyuni et al., 2024). However, the 25% of MSMEs that survived implemented hybrid models, such as combining online platforms with direct ordering via social media, as well as collaborating in raw material procurement.

This research addresses three main questions: How does product innovation based on local trends affect customer loyalty? What is the impact of collaboration among MSMEs on logistics efficiency and operational costs? And how can simple technology enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing?

Previous studies emphasized the role of restaurant ratings over price in consumer choices (Elverda et al., 2023) and cited last-mile inefficiencies as a primary cause of failure (Nurrahman et al., 2024; Saefullah et al., 2023). However, existing SWOT analyses have not included external factors such as campus-specific dynamics. There remains a gap in micro-market research, especially in campus ecosystems with seasonal demand spikes and budget-conscious spending patterns (below IDR 15,000). Earlier recommendations also tend to be generic and less relevant to the resource constraints of MSMEs (Tafsiruddin et al., 2024).

The uniqueness of this study lies in its campus-based focus, combining consumer analytics with operational ethnography to produce applicable strategies. Proposed innovations include a Dynamic Pricing Calculator (demand-based pricing), a Collaborative Delivery Network (shared

logistics), and customizable Content Templates for digital promotion. By addressing both theoretical and practical gaps, this research aims to equip MSMEs with the tools to face challenges and thrive in the competitive online food delivery sector.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with an explanatory sequential design to understand the innovation and collaboration strategies of online food delivery MSMEs around STIE Ganesha (Thompson et al., 2020).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 MSME actors selected purposively based on the following criteria:

1. Utilizing at least basic technology (such as WhatsApp Business) in their business operations.
2. Having experience in collaboration with other MSMEs (for example, sharing raw material suppliers or delivery fleets).
3. Operating for at least one year to ensure business sustainability.

The interviews focused on three main aspects:

1. Product innovation processes (e.g., menu development, response to consumer trends).
2. Collaboration mechanisms between MSMEs (such as joint logistics or co-promotions).
3. Challenges in utilizing simple technology for marketing and operations.

Additional data were obtained through participatory observation at business locations to directly observe production processes, consumer interactions, and the implementation of logistics collaboration. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis with the help of NVivo 12 software to identify patterns, contexts, and relationships between themes. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation (confirming interview results with field observations) and member checking (verifying data interpretation with participants) (Sugiyono, 2020).

This study also integrates document analysis of order histories, MSME social media content, and collaboration records to enrich the context of the findings. The qualitative approach was chosen to explore in-depth perspectives of business actors regarding adaptation dynamics in a competitive market and structural barriers in optimizing collaboration potential (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on primary data collection, this study involved 20 MSME actors in the food and beverage sector with online delivery services operating around STIE Ganesha. Among them, the majority of respondents were male, totaling 17 individuals, while only 3 were female. The types of businesses operated were quite diverse, ranging from main dishes such as duck chicken rice, ayam penyet, chicken noodle with meatballs, and fried rice, to snacks like batagor, kebab, martabak, ketoprak, and Padang satay. Some entrepreneurs also offered beverages such as fruit juice, mixed ice desserts, and fruit soup. Most participants utilized digital platforms like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood as the primary channels for marketing their products. The number of employees varied widely, from businesses run solely by the owner without additional staff to those employing up to 25 people. Several small MSMEs were independently managed by their owners. The trade names used generally reflected the products sold, such as "King's Batagor," "Lokasari Juice 3," and "Ketoprak Cirebon Reyhan." This data indicates a diversity of business types and highlights the important role of online delivery platforms in supporting MSME business activities in the area.

**Table 1.** Data Respondent

No	MSME Actors	Type of Business	Brand	Online Service	Number of Employees
1	Rizal	Batagor	King's Batagor	Gofood, Grabfood, Shopeefood, Dll.:	25
2	Rohman Soni	Roti Bakar Dan Pisang Keju	Pisang Keju Bang Reza	Gofood, Grabfood,	-
3	Andra	Ayam Penyet	Ayam Penyet Cabe Ijo Puta	Gofood, Grabfood	4

No	MSME Actors	Type of Business	Brand	Online Service	Number of Employees
4	Agung	Ayam Bakar Dan Soto Ayam	Wardeng Ayam	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	-
5	Fayaz	Juice Dan Sop Buah	Lokasari Juice 3	Gofood	2
6	Hasbi	Kebab, Burger, Mayam,Hotdog	Malika Kebab Legoso Raya	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	6
7	Tegar	Ketan	Ketan Susu Harapan Jaya	Grabfood,Shoopefood	
8	Pak Ade	Kue Dongkal	Dongkal	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	
9	Rugi	Es Campur, Es Teler, Es Serut	Es Campur Himalaya	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	
10	Rafi	Pisang Ijjo	Go Pisang Ijo	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	
11	Irwan	Bakso Pangsit	Bakso Malang BMC	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	10
12	Abdurrahman	Nasi Ayam Bebek	Ayam Bebek Ngumpet	Gofood,Grabfood, Shoopefood	
13	Arifin	Salad Buah, Buah Potong Dan Juice	Aneka Juice dan Sop Buah Kabita	Grabfood	4
14	NN	Dimsum dan Cilok	Cilok Barokah	Gofood	
15	Agung	Mie Ayam Dan Bakso	Mie Ayam Bakso Agung	Gofood	2
16	Buhya Mukhtar	Sate Padang	Sate Padang Putra Koto	Gofood, Grabfood	1
17	Reyhan	Ketoprak	Ketoprak Cirebon Reyhan	Grabfood,Gofood Shopefood	2
18	Herman	Martabak	Martabak Bangka DMC	Grabfood,Gofood, Shopefood	
19	Arif	Nasi Goreng	Nasi Goreng Mas Arif	Grabfood,Gofood, Shopefood	
20	Andi	Tahu Bulat	Tahu Bulat Enak Rasa	Grabfood,Gofood, Shopefood	1

### Local Trend-Based Menu Innovation

A total of 68% of consumers expressed interest in menus that combine traditional dishes with a modern twist, such as rendang fried rice or es campur with contemporary toppings. MSMEs like “Martabak Bangka DMC” succeeded in boosting sales by up to 40% after introducing a chocolate-cheese martabak variant marketed through Instagram Reels. However, 45% of business owners admitted to struggling with innovation due to limited creativity and lack of access to product development training.

The combination of traditional dishes with modern elements has become an effective strategy for online food delivery MSMEs around STIE Ganesha to attract consumers, especially among students and young employees. As many as 68% of consumers reported being interested in menus like rendang fried rice (a fusion of Padang cuisine and a popular dish) or es campur with trendy toppings (such as boba or shredded cheese). This phenomenon aligns with the study by (Dwityas & Hesti, 2021), which found that cultural nostalgia and product uniqueness are key factors in the preferences of millennial and Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia. Such combinations not only fulfill the need for familiarity but also create differentiation amid intense market competition (Choi, 2020; Adak et al., 2022).

A case study of the MSME “Martabak Bangka DMC” illustrates the success of this strategy. By introducing a chocolate-cheese martabak variant promoted through Instagram Reels, the business managed to increase sales by 40% within three months. Short video content showcasing the martabak-making process with creative visual effects and trending music reached 12,000 viewers, with a 15% order conversion rate. These findings are consistent with research by (Gunden et al., 2020; Hendrianto, 2017), which state that interactive social media content can

triple engagement compared to conventional promotions. Instagram Reels was chosen for its algorithm that supports wide visibility and its low production costs, making it suitable for MSMEs with limited budgets.

However, 45% of MSME owners reported difficulties in developing similar innovations due to two main factors:

1. **Limited Creativity:** Most business owners do not have a dedicated team for product research or menu design. Innovation often relies on spontaneous ideas without in-depth market analysis. As one respondent stated, "We just follow trends on TikTok, but it's hard to create something truly new."
2. **Limited Access to Product Development Training:** Only 20% of MSMEs have participated in formal training on menu innovation or brand management. The majority rely on empirical knowledge, resulting in slow and unstructured product development.

These challenges are reinforced by findings from (Lutfi & Juhdi, 2023), which emphasize that digital literacy and innovation capacity are major obstacles for MSMEs in adopting hybrid strategies. The study also shows that MSMEs with access to technology training can increase productivity by up to 25%, but such training programs are often inaccessible or not tailored to local needs.

A comparison with previous research reveals a significant gap. For example, (Ahmed et al., 2024) found that large urban restaurants successfully use data analytics to identify menu trends, while MSMEs around campuses still rely on informal observation. Moreover, although 85% of MSMEs use social media (such as Instagram), only 25% utilize analytics features to measure campaign effectiveness (Nurrahman et al., 2024). This highlights the need for a more measurable approach to product development.

By overcoming barriers to creativity and training access, MSMEs can expand their product portfolios, not only in response to trends but also as pioneers of innovation in the campus micro-market (Muangmee et al., 2021; Handayani et al., 2020). This study strengthens the argument that combining local wisdom and simple technology is the key to MSME sustainability in the digital era, while also bridging the gap between market potential and operational capacity identified in previous literature (Macías-Rendón et al., 2021).

### **Inter-UMKM Logistics Collaboration**

Collaboration in order delivery among UMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) has been shown to reduce logistics costs by up to 30%. For example, three snack businesses-batagor, kebab, and fruit juice-formed a delivery cluster to share their delivery fleets. This strategy also cut the average order waiting time from 45 minutes to 25 minutes. Such collaboration significantly improves operational efficiency (Weiler & Gilitwala, 2023).

These findings align with various studies and practical implementations of logistics collaboration in Indonesia. For instance, Shipper, a logistics technology company, helped UMKM reduce delivery costs by up to 20% by relocating warehouses closer to markets and integrating inventory management and delivery into a single application. This digital approach strengthens the UMKM supply chain efficiency and supports their accelerated growth (upgrading) in Indonesia.

Moreover, collaboration between the PaDi UMKM platform and the state-owned logistics company GLID demonstrates how synergy between UMKM and logistics providers can open wider market access, including international shipping. This partnership combines speed, competitive pricing, and the reliability of the national logistics network, which is a crucial foundation for UMKM growth (Suhartanto et al., 2019).

However, despite the many benefits, collaboration often faces obstacles, primarily disagreements over cost-sharing and lack of coordination among UMKM players. These challenges are major barriers that must be addressed to optimize collaboration. Studies also indicate that successful collaboration depends heavily on effective coordination systems and clear agreements on cost distribution and responsibilities among involved parties.

Logistics companies such as JNE and KirimAja actively support UMKM collaboration through training programs, mentoring, and providing affordable and reliable delivery services. For example, JNE offers competitive shipping options and business training programs to enhance

UMKM capacity, thereby supporting overall logistics efficiency and UMKM growth (Singagerda et al., 2024).

Collaboration is further strengthened by integrating financial and logistics services, such as the partnership between BNI and PT Pos Indonesia, which provides integrated financing and delivery solutions for UMKM. This approach expands business opportunities and supports business sustainability through combined financial and logistical support (Juliana et al., 2022)

Overall, inter-UMKM logistics collaboration holds great potential to reduce costs, accelerate delivery, and strengthen UMKM market positions. However, the success of such collaboration heavily relies on well-managed coordination and fair cost-sharing (Weiler & Gilitwala, 2023). The implementation of digital technology and support from various stakeholders, including the government and logistics companies, are key to overcoming these barriers and promoting sustainable UMKM growth (Wilujeng, 2023).

Thus, logistics collaboration among UMKM is not only a solution for cost and time efficiency but also a vital strategy to strengthen the Indonesian UMKM ecosystem as a whole (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

### **Utilization of Simple Technology**

WhatsApp Business has become the backbone of marketing for 80% of MSMEs. Features such as broadcast lists and quick replies are used to send daily promotions and respond to customer inquiries. The MSME “Ayam Penyet Cabe Ijo” has even developed a pre-order system using Google Forms to optimize raw material preparation. However, only 12% of MSMEs use basic analytics to track customer preferences.

WhatsApp Business serves as the primary marketing platform for approximately 80% of MSMEs in Indonesia, functioning as a key communication tool that enables business owners to reach customers without spatial or time limitations. Features like broadcast lists and quick replies are intensively used for sending daily promotions and responding to customer queries in real time, thereby strengthening personal relationships between MSMEs and their customers (Dua & Sahu, 2024; Utami et al., 2022; Lakshmi L et al., 2024).

Studies show that WhatsApp Business not only facilitates communication but also enhances operational efficiency for MSMEs. For example, business profiles, product catalogs, and automated messages help MSMEs manage customer interactions more professionally and responsively. This aligns with the Minister of Trade’s statement that WhatsApp Business is an ideal platform for MSMEs in digital commerce activities, as it provides both social media and accessible advertising facilities (Pahlevi & Suhartanto, 2020; Leo et al., 2022).

A concrete example of simple technology utilization is “Ayam Penyet Cabe Ijo,” which developed a pre-order system via Google Forms. This system optimizes raw material preparation, reduces waste risk, and improves customer satisfaction through more organized service. This approach demonstrates how MSMEs can combine simple applications with WhatsApp Business to support their business processes effectively (Tarabieh, 2022; Chivandi et al., 2019).

However, despite the high penetration of WhatsApp Business usage, only about 12% of MSMEs utilize basic analytics to track customer preferences (Fadhilah & Arief, 2023). This is a significant challenge, as the lack of data analytics limits MSMEs’ ability to understand consumer behavior and tailor marketing strategies more accurately. Previous studies also emphasize the importance of marketing digitalization that goes beyond communication, including customer data management to support better decision-making (Dewi & Negoro, 2024; Vallejo & Chinelato, 2024) (Situmorang, 2023).

This limitation indicates the need for more intensive training and assistance so that MSMEs can optimize the analytical features available on digital platforms. Support from the government and digital service providers is crucial to improve MSMEs’ digital literacy, enabling them to leverage customer data to enhance competitiveness and business sustainability (Wareebor et al., 2024; Musyafia et al., 2024).

Moreover, WhatsApp Business helps MSMEs expand their market reach through structured broadcast lists and product catalogs, allowing them to reach more potential customers at low cost. This strengthens MSMEs’ positions in the increasingly competitive digital ecosystem, especially during and after the pandemic, when digital interaction is key to maintaining and growing a business (Saefullah, 2022; Jazuli et al., 2024).

Overall, the use of simple technology such as WhatsApp Business and Google Forms has had a significant positive impact on MSMEs in terms of marketing, communication, and operational efficiency. However, to reach their full potential, MSMEs need to be encouraged to adopt basic analytics and other supporting technologies to better understand their customers and sustainably improve their business strategies (Alalwan, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2020).

Thus, accessible and easy-to-use simple technology has become a crucial foundation for MSME digital transformation, but capacity building in data and analytics utilization remains a primary task to optimally elevate MSMEs to the next level (Rachbini et al., 2024; Macías-Rendón et al., 2021; Saefullah et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

Product innovation and logistics collaboration have proven effective in enhancing the competitiveness of online food delivery MSMEs around STIE Ganesha by significantly reducing costs and accelerating delivery times. However, digital technology adoption remains limited to basic tools such as WhatsApp Business and Google Forms, while the use of data analytics and advanced technologies like AI is still uneven and largely inaccessible to MSME operators. This limitation hinders MSMEs' ability to optimize marketing and business management in a data-driven manner. Therefore, this study recommends the establishment of a collaboration hub by local government to facilitate partnerships among MSMEs, strengthening synergy and collective efficiency. Additionally, training in menu design and data analytics using free platforms such as Google Analytics and Canva should be intensified to improve MSMEs' digital capacity in managing marketing and product innovation. The integration of independent last-mile delivery services is also suggested to reduce reliance on third-party platforms, enabling MSMEs to control the delivery process more flexibly and cost-effectively. Implementing these recommendations is expected to help MSMEs move up the value chain, strengthen competitiveness, and create a more sustainable business ecosystem in the area surrounding STIE Ganesha

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