

Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices in Traditional Food-Based MSMEs: A Case Study of CV Riang Java Food

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ABSTRACT

This study explores entrepreneurial marketing (EM) in traditional food MSMEs through a case study of CV Riang Java Food, analyzing how EM bridges cultural preservation and digital innovation. Using qualitative methods (interviews, observations, document analysis), we examine EM practices through MSME constraints, traditional values, and innovation adoption. Findings show effective community-based EM (e.g., Karang Taruna sales force) but limited digital adoption hinders growth. The study contributes the concept of "cultural ambidexterity" for balancing heritage and modernization. Results suggest hybrid strategies (digital storytelling, localized CRM) could enhance traditional MSMEs competitiveness, offering practical insights for businesses and policymakers in Indonesia's digital economy.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, effective marketing strategies are essential for business sustainability and growth, especially in the traditional food sector. Aligned with result from Melany et al., (2024) demonstrated how multi-stakeholders impact integrated marketing and product innovation in enhancing marketing success. Entrepreneurial marketing practices, which combine innovative and adaptive approaches with a strong community orientation, have become increasingly important for MSMEs facing the dual challenges of intense competition and digital transformation (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Research on Entrepreneurial Marketing, MSMEs, and innovation is highly important because it addresses how small and medium enterprises, especially those in traditional sectors, can adapt and thrive in an increasingly dynamic business environment. Traditional MSMEs often face significant challenges, such as limited resources and resistance to change, making it essential to explore how entrepreneurial marketing strategies—marked by creativity, flexibility, and innovation—can empower them to overcome obstacles and seize new opportunities. This topic has attracted considerable attention from researchers around the world, reflecting its global relevance and the widespread recognition of MSMEs as key drivers of economic growth and innovation. It showed as displayed figures on below.

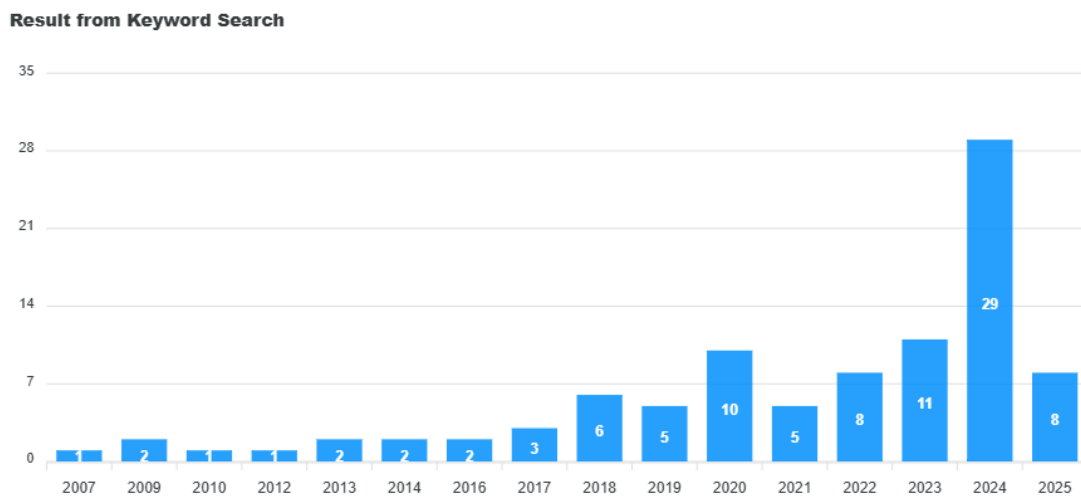


Figure 1. Research Trend with *Keyword* : Entrepreneurial, Marketing, MSMEs

This figure presents the annual growth of research publications on these topics indexed in Scopus over recent years. Typically, such a figure would show a steady increase in the number of publications, reflecting growing scholarly interest in MSME marketing, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Peaks in publication numbers may coincide with significant events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened the need for MSMEs to adopt innovative marketing strategies and digital solutions.

2023). This is echoed at CV Riang Java Food, where, despite occasional use of social and mass media, digital marketing and e-commerce integration remain suboptimal.

The importance of embracing entrepreneurial marketing practices for MSMEs is underscored by recent literature. Digital marketing skills, for instance, are proven to increase MSME revenues by up to 35% within a year by enhancing product visibility and market reach (Jatmiko et al., 2025). Moreover, the use of sales force strategies – particularly those that leverage local youth organizations (Karang Taruna) – not only expands market access but also strengthens community bonds and brand loyalty (Sukemi et al., 2023). Direct marketing, utilizing personalized communication through channels such as WhatsApp and email, has also been shown to significantly boost repeat purchases and customer engagement (Octaviyanti, 2024).

The gap between potential and practice at CV Riang Java Food highlights the broader issue facing traditional food MSMEs: the need to modernize marketing strategies while preserving cultural heritage and community values. This research is therefore significant in the context of MSME marketing, as it addresses how entrepreneurial marketing can be effectively implemented in traditional food businesses to achieve sustainable growth.

Although CV Riang Java Food has achieved considerable success in product innovation and market expansion, it has not fully optimized modern marketing strategies, particularly in digital and direct marketing. The main problems identified include:

- Limited professional sales force and structured sales training;
- Inactive or underutilized digital marketing channels;
- Absence of a systematic direct marketing approach and customer relationship management;
- Challenges in scaling up production and distribution to meet increasing demand.

These issues are not unique to CV Riang Java Food but are representative of broader challenges faced by traditional food-based MSMEs in Indonesia.

This study is crucial for several reasons. First, it provides an in-depth case analysis of entrepreneurial marketing practices in a traditional food-based MSME, offering insights that can be generalized to similar enterprises. Second, it contributes to the enrichment of marketing theory by exploring the integration of community-based, digital, and direct marketing strategies within the unique context of traditional food businesses. Third, the findings have practical implications for policymakers, practitioners, and MSME owners seeking to enhance competitiveness, adapt to digital transformation, and preserve culinary heritage.

As highlighted by S. Widyaningrum, “The transformation of marketing strategies in MSMEs, especially those rooted in local wisdom and traditional products, requires not only technological adaptation but also the empowerment of local actors and the preservation of cultural values” (Widyaningrum, 2025). This research aligns with such perspectives, aiming to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation in MSME marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explores entrepreneurial marketing practices in traditional food-based MSMEs, focusing on CV Riang Java Food as a case study. The theoretical framework integrates four key concepts: **Entrepreneurial Marketing**, **MSMEs**, **Traditional**, and **Innovation**. Each concept is grounded in contemporary literature and tailored to the context of traditional food businesses.

Entrepreneurial Marketing

Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) is a dynamic approach that combines creativity, adaptability, and resource efficiency to address market challenges (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Unlike conventional marketing, EM emphasizes proactive risk-taking, customer-centricity, and leveraging limited resources, a critical strategy for MSMEs with constrained capital (Breit et al., 2024). Recent studies highlight EM's role in digital transformation, where MSMEs utilize social media and e-commerce to enhance visibility and customer engagement (Jatmiko et al., 2025). For traditional food businesses like CV Riang Java Food, EM fosters community-based strategies, such as collaborating with local youth groups (*Karang Taruna*) to expand market reach (Sukemi et al., 2023).

MSMEs

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of Indonesia's economy, contributing 61% of GDP and employing 97% of the workforce (INDEF, 2023). However, MSMEs face challenges such as limited access to capital, outdated technology, and low digital adoption. Research indicates that only 33.6% of Indonesian MSMEs leverage digital marketing, hindering their competitiveness (INDEF, 2023). For traditional food MSMEs, these challenges are compounded by the need to preserve cultural authenticity while modernizing operations. Studies suggest that integrating EM practices such as direct marketing via WhatsApp (Octaviyanti, 2024) can bridge this gap, enabling MSMEs to scale sustainably.

Recent literature underscores the importance of EM as a driver of MSME performance. Melany et al. (2024) highlight that multi-stakeholder involvement in integrated marketing and product innovation directly enhances marketing success for MSMEs. EM practices, which emphasize proactive opportunity seeking, customer intimacy, and risk management, have been shown to increase resilience and adaptability in the face of external shocks (Sarma et al., 2022).

Traditional

The "Traditional" dimension refers to the cultural heritage and local wisdom embedded in products like *gathot* and *thiwul*. Traditional food MSMEs must balance authenticity with market demands, a concept termed "*cultural ambidexterity*" (Widyaningrum, 2025). For example, CV Riang Java Food's success stems from its ability to innovate while maintaining traditional recipes and empowering local farmers (Profil CV Riang Java Food, 2023). Melany et al. (2024) argue that multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving farmers, artisans, and marketers is vital to preserving tradition while enhancing product appeal. As showed researched from Widyaningrum et al. (2025) founded by a home-

based entrepreneur from wide variety of traditional breads and delicious cakes to the local community as a private business demonstrates that combining product innovation, effective marketing strategies, and a commitment to quality ascan transform a local MSME into a successful and customer preferred business.

Innovation

Innovation in traditional food MSMEs encompasses product diversification, process efficiency, and digital adoption. Jatmiko et al. (2025) found that MSMEs adopting digital tools (e.g., e-commerce) increase revenues by 35% annually. As mentioned from Christian et al. (2025) "Product innovation significantly enhances SME performance", which as reflected in innovation from traditional food to modern by transform to instant product even go international. For CV Riang Java Food, innovation could involve automating production to meet demand or using Instagram Reels to showcase cultural stories (Sukemi et al., 2023). However, innovation must align with community values; as Widyaningrum (2025) notes, "Preserving cultural identity requires innovation rooted in local wisdom."

The interplay of these concepts forms a cohesive framework could be showed as figure 1 below :

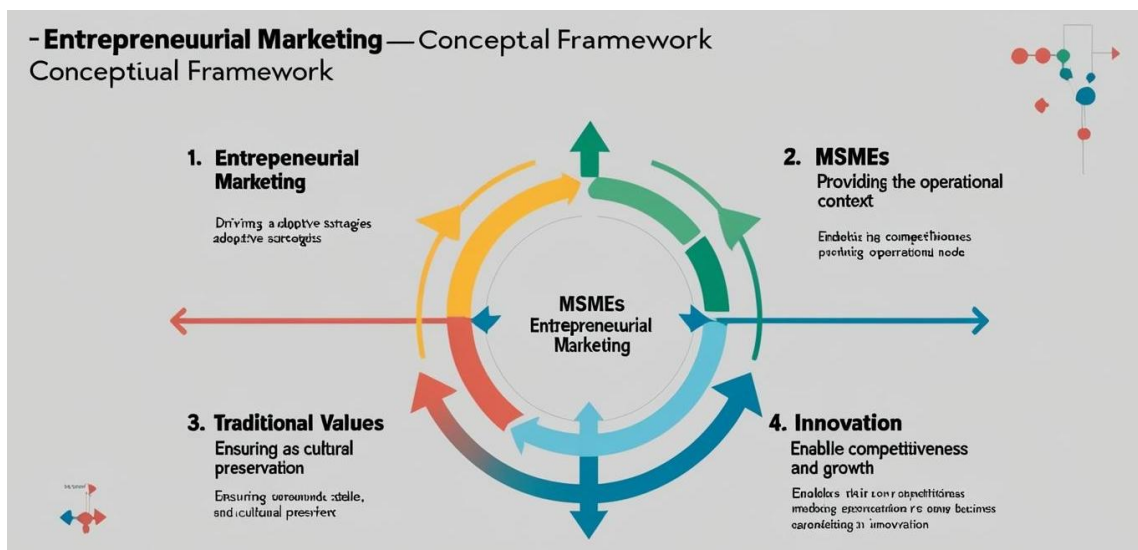


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices in Traditional Food-Based MSMEs

Figure 3 in the Conceptual framework represents a visual synthesis of how the four key concepts **Entrepreneurial Marketing, MSMEs, Traditional, and Innovation** interconnect to shape marketing practices in traditional food based MSMEs like CV Riang Java Food. Below is a description of the figure and its components:

1. Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM)

- Acts as the **core driver**, combining creativity, adaptability, and resource efficiency.

- Connects to **MSMEs** (operational context) and **Innovation** (tools for growth).
- 2. **MSMEs**
 - Represents the **business context** (e.g., limited resources, local impact).
 - Influenced by **Traditional** values (cultural roots) and enabled by **Innovation** (digital tools).
- 3. **Traditional**
 - Embodies **cultural heritage** (e.g., recipes, community ties) (Widyaningrum, 2025).
 - Balanced with **Innovation** to avoid commodification while modernizing (Melany et al., 2024).
- 4. **Innovation**
 - Includes **digital adoption** (e.g., social media, e-commerce) and **process improvements** (Jatmiko et al., 2025).
 - Supports **Entrepreneurial Marketing** strategies (e.g., direct marketing via WhatsApp).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative case study approach to explore entrepreneurial marketing practices in traditional food based MSMEs, with a focus on CV Riang Java Food. The qualitative case study method is chosen to gain an in depth understanding of real world marketing strategies, challenges, and innovations as experienced by the enterprise. This approach allows for the exploration of complex phenomena within their context and is suitable for capturing rich, detailed insights (Yin, 2017).

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises all stakeholders involved in the marketing and management processes of CV Riang Java Food, including owners, marketing staff, and selected members of the local youth organization (Karang Taruna), also agent/sellers who engaged in sales activities. The sample is selected purposively to ensure the inclusion of key informants who possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding the entrepreneurial marketing strategies employed by the company. The sample consists of:

- The owner and founder of CV Riang Java Food
- 1 member of Marketing staff
- Two representatives from the local youth organization involved in sales
- Two representatives from agent/distributor as seller.

This purposive sampling ensures that the data collected reflects a comprehensive view of the marketing practices from multiple perspectives within the company.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using multiple qualitative techniques to ensure triangulation and data validity:

1. **Interviews** (Primary Data):
 - **Semi-structured interviews** with key informants (open-ended questions).
 - Topics: Marketing strategies, digital adoption, community involvement, challenges.
2. **Document Analysis** (Secondary Data):
 - Company profiles, sales reports, social media content.
 - Government/MSME reports (e.g., INDEF, 2023).
3. **Observation**:
 - Field visits to assess production, packaging, and direct customer interactions.

RESEARCH RESULT

This chapter presents empirical findings on how CV Riang Java Food implements **entrepreneurial marketing (EM)** through the lens of **MSMEs, traditional values, and innovation**. The results are structured around the Conceptual framework (Figure 3) and reveal tensions between cultural preservation and modernization.

1) Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices

a) Resource-Driven Creativity (EM in MSMEs)

CV Riang Java Food exemplifies resource constrained EM by leveraging community networks (e.g., *Karang Taruna* youth) as low-cost sales forces. However, this approach lacks:

- Digital integration: 95% of sales rely on offline channels (bazaars, word-of-mouth).
- Structured training: Agents receive no formal training in digital tools or customer analytics.

Table 1. Resource Allocation vs. Market Reach

Resource	Usage	Outcome
Community labor	Local distribution	40% local sales growth (2023)
Limited capital	No paid ads or SEO	Only 5% digital sales

Quote from Owner: *"We prioritize human connections over technology, but this limits scalability."*

b) Proactive Risk-Taking

The business experiments with product diversification (e.g., instant *thiwul* variants) but avoids risks in digital transformation (e.g., no e-commerce investment).

2) Tradition-Innovation Tension

a) Cultural Authenticity (Traditional)

The brand's identity hinges on Javanese heritage, reflected in:

- Product storytelling: Highlighting traditional recipes in packaging.
- Community rituals: Annual "Gathot Festival" to engage local farmers.

Challenge:

- Digital disconnect: Social media accounts (@riangjavafood) are inactive, missing opportunities to modernize cultural narratives (Figure 4).

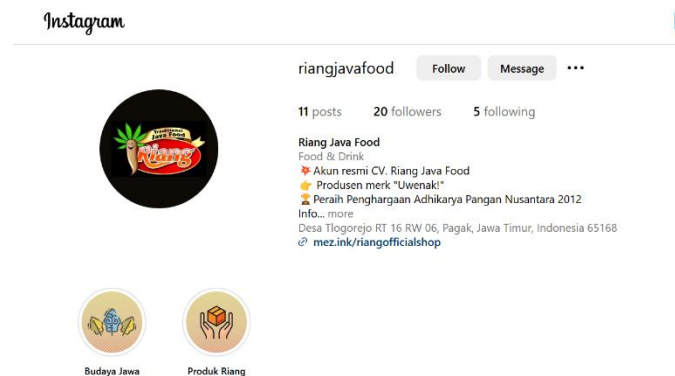


Figure 4. Dormant Instagram Account

b) Innovation Barriers

Innovation is production-centric (e.g., hygienic packaging) but marketing-lagging:

- Underused tools: WhatsApp broadcasts lack personalization; no CRM exists.
- Agent dependency: Delegating digital marketing to agents fragments branding.

Data:

- 80% of customers are aged 40+, preferring offline purchases.
- Youth market (<30 years) remains untapped due to weak digital presence.

3) MSME-Specific Challenges

a) Scaling Dilemmas

The business faces classic MSME constraints:

- Production vs. marketing trade-off: 70% of profits reinvested in production, leaving minimal budget for digital campaigns.
- Supply chain fragility: Climate-dependent cassava sourcing disrupts scalability.

b) Policy Gaps

Despite government "UMKM Go Digital" programs, CV Riang Java Food lacks access to subsidized digital tools and export market training.

4) *Synthesis: EM in Traditional MSMEs*

EM at CV Riang Java Food is **tradition-anchored** but **innovation-hesitant**, creating a paradox:

- Strengths: Cultural authenticity, community trust.
- Weaknesses: Digital aversion, missed youth markets.

Therefore could be summarized on table 2 below :

Table 2. Tradition vs. Innovation in EM Practices

Aspect	Traditional Approach	Innovation Opportunity
Sales Force	Karang Taruna (offline)	Gamified agent training app
Storytelling	Oral history at festivals	Instagram Reels with cultural content
Customer Data	Manual records	WhatsApp CRM + analytics

DISCUSSION

This study interprets the research findings through the theoretical lens of entrepreneurial marketing (EM), MSME constraints, cultural preservation, and innovation adoption. The discussion aligns with the framework in Figure 3 and contextualizes CV Riang Java Food’s practices within broader academic debates.

Entrepreneurial Marketing as a Survival Strategy for MSMEs

The study reveals that CV Riang Java Food adopts resource-driven EM to navigate MSME challenges.

- **Community-based sales force:** Leveraging *Karang Taruna* aligns with EM’s emphasis on frugality and social capital (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, the lack of digital integration contrasts with Jatmiko et al.’s (2025) finding that digital tools boost MSME revenues by 35%.
- **Trade-offs:** The owner’s prioritization of production over marketing reflects MSMEs’ capital constraints (INDEF, 2023), but limits scalability.

Theoretical Implications: EM in traditional MSMEs must balance improvisation (e.g., human networks) with structured modernization (e.g., CRM systems).

Tradition vs. Innovation: A Cultural Paradox

a) Cultural Anchoring as Competitive Advantage

CV Riang Java Food’s adherence to Javanese culinary traditions strengthens its brand authenticity, supporting Melany et al.’s (2024) argument that traditional narratives enhance product appeal. For example:

- Festivals and oral storytelling foster emotional connections with older demographics.
- Handmade production aligns with global trends favoring "heritage branding" (Widyaningrum, 2025).

b) Innovation Resistance

Despite these strengths, the business resists digital adoption due to:

- Fear of cultural dilution: Owner delegates digital marketing to agents to avoid "inauthentic" branding.

- Generational gaps: 80% of customers are aged 40+, reinforcing offline habits.

MSME-Specific Barriers to Digital Transformation

The findings underscore structural challenges faced by traditional food MSMEs:

Table 3. Evidence with Academic support

Barrier	Evidence from CV Riang Java Food	Academic Support
Limited digital literacy	No dedicated social media team	INDEF (2023): Only 33.6% of Indonesian MSMEs use digital marketing
Supply chain fragility	Climate-dependent cassava sourcing	Sukemi et al. (2023): Rural MSMEs face production instability
Policy gaps	No access to subsidized digital tools	Kemenkop UKM (2023): 70% of MSMEs lack mentorship.

Reconciling Tradition and Innovation

The study identifies cultural ambidexterity (Widyaningrum, 2025) as a critical framework for CV Riang Java Food:

Proposed Strategies:

1. Hybrid storytelling: Use Instagram Reels to showcase traditional production processes with modern edits (e.g., AR filters of Javanese farmers).
2. Community-centric digital tools: Develop a WhatsApp CRM with localized language and payment options.
3. Policy advocacy: Partner with universities to lobby for MSME-tailored digital subsidies.

Theoretical Contribution: This aligns with Kotler and Armstrong’s (2018) Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), emphasizing consistency across traditional and digital channels.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Entrepreneurial Marketing as a Survival Strategy*
 - CV Riang Java Food successfully leverages community-based EM through its *Karang Taruna* sales force, demonstrating how MSMEs can maximize limited resources. However, the lack of digital integration limits scalability and growth potential.
2. *Tradition as a Competitive Advantage, but Innovation is Lagging*
 - The company’s strong cultural branding (e.g., traditional recipes, local storytelling) differentiates it in the market. However,

reluctance to adopt digital tools risks losing younger consumers and global opportunities.

3. *MSME-Specific Barriers Hinder Growth*
 - Structural challenges, including digital literacy gaps, supply chain vulnerabilities, and limited policy support, restrict the business from fully modernizing its marketing strategies.
4. *Cultural Ambidexterity is Essential for Sustainability*
 - The study confirms that traditional MSMEs must balance heritage preservation with strategic innovation to remain competitive (Widyaningrum, 2025).

Practical Recommendations

1) For MSMEs CV Riang Java Food

A. Strengthen Digital Marketing Efforts

- Revive and optimize social media (Instagram, TikTok) with:
 - Weekly content (e.g., behind-the-scenes production, customer testimonials).
 - Collaborations with micro-influencers in the food and cultural niche.
- Launch an official e-commerce store (Shopee, Tokopedia) with consistent branding and promotions.

B. Enhance Sales Force Capabilities

- Provide digital sales training for *Karang Taruna* agents, covering:
 - Basic social media marketing.
 - Customer relationship management (CRM) via WhatsApp Business.
- Introduce performance incentives (e.g., bonuses for online sales conversions).

C. Implement a Hybrid (Online + Offline) Customer Engagement Strategy

- Develop a simple CRM system (Google Sheets or low-cost tools like Zoho CRM) to track customer preferences and buying habits.
- Use WhatsApp Broadcasts for personalized promotions (e.g., discounts for repeat buyers).

D. Diversify Product Offerings for Younger Markets

- Introduce ready-to-eat snack versions of *gathot* and *thiwul* with modern packaging.
- Explore subscription box models for urban customers seeking traditional foods.

2) For Policymakers and Supporting Institutions

A. Expand Digital Training Programs for Rural MSMEs

- Partner with universities and tech companies to provide:
 - Free workshops on social media marketing.
 - Mentorship for e-commerce adoption.

B. Improve Access to Financial and Logistical Support

- Offer subsidized digital tools (e.g., CRM software, SEO training).
- Facilitate export readiness programs for traditional food MSMEs.

C. Strengthen Supply Chain Resilience

- Provide climate-smart farming training for cassava suppliers.

- Develop local food processing hubs to stabilize raw material supplies.

3) For Future Research

- Comparative studies between multiple traditional food MSMEs to identify best practices.
- Longitudinal research tracking digital adoption impacts over 5+ years.
- Generational transition studies in family-run MSMEs to assess innovation adoption barriers.

CV Riang Java Food embodies the potential of traditional MSMEs in the digital age, but its long-term success depends on strategic modernization without losing cultural roots. By implementing these recommendations, the business can bridge the gap between tradition and innovation, serving as a model for similar enterprises in Indonesia and beyond.

- **MSMEs:** Prioritize digital literacy and customer data utilization.
- **Government:** Enhance policies supporting rural MSME digitalization.
- **Academia:** Conduct further research on culturally sustainable EM models.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Study Limitations

1. Single-Case Study Design

- **Limitation:** Findings from CV Riang Java Food may not be generalizable to all traditional MSMEs due to unique contextual factors (e.g., Javanese cultural dominance, cassava-based products).
- **Mitigation:** Future studies should include comparative cases (e.g., *batik* MSMEs, Sumatran traditional food producers) to identify cross-industry patterns.

2. Temporal Constraints

- **Limitation:** Data collection (2023–2025) may not capture long-term digital adoption trends or post-pandemic market shifts.
- **Mitigation:** Longitudinal studies tracking the same MSMEs over 5–10 years could reveal evolutionary pathways.

3. Generational Bias in Data

- **Limitation:** Interviews skewed toward older stakeholders (owner, farmers) may overlook youth perspectives on digital innovation.
- **Mitigation:** Future research should include Gen Z/Millennial employees or consumers to assess intergenerational differences.

4. Policy Implementation Gap

- **Limitation:** While policy barriers were identified, the study did not evaluate specific government programs' effectiveness (e.g., *UMKM Go Digital*).
- **Mitigation:** Collaborate with policymakers to analyze real-world policy impacts through mixed-methods approaches.

Future Research Directions

1. Cultural Ambidexterity in Digital Transformation

- Research Question: How can traditional MSMEs balance heritage preservation with disruptive technologies (e.g., AI, blockchain for supply chains)?
 - Method: Ethnographic action research, partnering with MSMEs to co-design hybrid strategies.
2. Gender Dynamics in Traditional MSMEs
 - Research Question: Do female-led traditional food MSMEs adopt entrepreneurial marketing differently than male-led ones?
 - Method: Cross-sectional survey of 100+ Indonesian MSMEs, stratified by gender and sector.
 3. Glocalized Digital Platforms
 - Research Question: Can locally adapted digital tools (e.g., Bahasa Indonesia-first marketplaces) accelerate EM adoption?
 - Method: A/B testing platform usability with rural vs. urban MSMEs.
 4. Climate Resilience and EM
 - Research Question: How do climate-vulnerable MSMEs (e.g., cassava farmers) innovate marketing strategies during supply shocks?
 - Method: Case studies of MSMEs in climate-affected regions (e.g., drought-prone East Java).
 5. Generational Transitions
 - Research Question: How does leadership succession (e.g., from Boomers to Millennials) impact EM practices in family-run MSMEs?
 - Method: Multi-generational interviews and historical business data analysis.

Tools for Advancing Research

To address these gaps, future studies could leverage:

- Digital ethnography: Analyze social media behaviors of traditional MSMEs.
- Big data: Scrape e-commerce/platform data to track digital adoption rates.
- Policy simulations: Model the impact of hypothetical subsidies on MSME growth.

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