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The Effect of Product Differentiation on Competitive Advantage in Chicken Geprek Businesses in Montong District

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the effect of product differentiation on competitive advantage among chicken geprek businesses in Montong District, Indonesia.

Methodology: A quantitative associative survey design was applied to 95 owners and employees selected through purposive sampling method. Product differentiation and competitive advantage were measured using eight five-point Likert items. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, corrected item-total correlation, Cronbach's alpha, residual normality tests, the Glejser test, simple linear regression, t-test, F testing, and the coefficient of determination.

Results: All questionnaire items were valid, and both constructs were reliable (Cronbach's alpha=.695 and .689). Product differentiation had a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage ($B=.271$, $t=2.852$, $p=.005$); the model was significant ($F=8.135$, $p=.005$) and explained 8.0% of the variance.

Conclusions: Product differentiation contributes positively to competitive advantage, although its explanatory power is modest and competitiveness also depends on service, price, promotion, digital capability, market orientation, and operational consistency.

Limitations: The study used one predictor, purposive sampling, and respondents connected to businesses in and around Montong. Therefore, the findings should not be automatically generalized to all culinary enterprises or regions.

Contributions: This study provides local evidence of differentiation in chicken geprek microenterprises and identifies practical priorities involving signature products, consistent quality, menu design, packaging, delivery, and digital communication.

Keywords: *Chicken Geprek, Competitive Advantage, Culinary Business, Microenterprise, Product Differentiation*

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1. Introduction

Micro, small, and medium enterprises contribute to employment, local income, and market diversity; however, their survival depends on their ability to respond to changing customer preferences and competitive pressure. Small firms commonly face limited resources, technological constraints, and weak strategic capabilities, which increase the importance of focused innovation and market adaptation ([Prasanna, Jayasundara, Ekanayake, Rajapakshe, & Abeyrathne, 2019](#)). In recent years, the business environment has become increasingly dynamic owing to rapid technological development, changing consumer lifestyles, and intensifying market competition. Consumers are no longer satisfied solely with functional products and increasingly evaluate products based on uniqueness, experience, convenience, and perceived value ([Zainal & Aprilia, 2026](#)). Consequently, small businesses must respond more quickly to market changes, despite operating with limited financial, technological, and human resources.

The ability to recognize evolving consumer preferences and translate them into attractive product offerings has become essential for maintaining business continuity. This situation encourages microenterprises to move beyond operational survival toward strategic competitiveness through continuous product improvement and customer-oriented innovation ([Indaryati, Gunawan, & Sari, 2026](#)). The culinary sector presents particularly intense competition because products can be imitated quickly, and customers can compare alternatives through physical outlets and digital platforms. Technology and social media allow small businesses to reach wider markets, but they also make competing prices, menus, visual presentations, reviews, and service quality more transparent ([Chatterjee & Kar, 2020](#)). Chicken geprek businesses illustrate this problem because the basic product is widely available, relatively simple to produce, and commonly offered in combination with fried chicken, chili sauce, rice, and side dishes.

Moreover, the increasing popularity of online food delivery applications has intensified competition among culinary businesses because consumers can easily compare menus, prices, ratings, delivery speeds, and customer reviews before making purchasing decisions. Digital platforms have reduced geographical barriers while simultaneously increasing competitive pressure among businesses that offer highly similar products ([Shofi, Kholilurrohmah, & Marsono, 2025](#)). In this environment, businesses that fail to communicate their product's distinctive characteristics often struggle to attract consumer attention and encourage repeat purchases. Therefore, differentiation is no longer limited to physical product attributes but also includes visual branding, customer experience, packaging quality, digital presentation, and consistent service delivery throughout the purchasing process ([Chatterjee and Kar, 2020](#); [Ghazwani, & Alzahrani, 2024](#)).

Studies of chicken geprek enterprises in Indonesia have shown that business feasibility and sales improvement depend on menu development, price suitability, location, promotion, and operational discipline ([Andini, Syahrizal, & Sudharyati, 2024](#); [Latip, & Kusumawati, 2024](#)). Businesses that rely only on basic products may be forced to compete mainly through lower prices. Product differentiation offers another strategic path by creating meaningful differences in taste, quality, menu variety, appearance, packaging, portion design, and a distinctive product identity ([Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022](#)). Competitive advantage refers to a business's capacity to create superior value and maintain a more favorable market position than its competitors. The resource-based view explains that advantage is stronger when capabilities and resources are valuable, difficult to imitate, and effectively organized ([Barney & Hesterly, 2021](#)). In small culinary businesses, product knowledge, signature recipes, consistent quality, creative presentation, and customer relationships can become strategic resources when they are developed continuously, rather than copied temporarily.

From a strategic management perspective, sustainable competitive advantage emerges when firms successfully integrate tangible and intangible resources into organizational capabilities that competitors cannot easily replicate. For small culinary enterprises, intangible assets, such as brand reputation, customer trust, local market knowledge, creativity, and accumulated operational experience, often become more valuable than physical assets alone. Continuous learning from

customer feedback, experimentation with new menu concepts, and the ability to adapt products to changing market preferences further strengthen the firm's strategic position. Consequently, competitive advantage should be viewed as a dynamic process of continuous value creation, rather than a static outcome achieved through a single innovation ([Barney and Hesterly, 2021](#); [Fabrizio, Kaczam, de Moura, da Silva, da Silva, & da Veiga, 2022](#)).

Previous research has generally linked innovation, differentiation, and strategic capabilities to stronger performance and competitive outcomes. Business strategy and innovation can improve competitive advantage ([Farida & Setiawan, 2022](#)), while dynamic capabilities help small firms adjust their resources as markets change ([Fabrizio et al., 2022](#); [Rodrigues, Franco, Silva, & Oliveira, 2021](#)). The effect is not always large because competitive advantage also depends on market orientation, service, digital access, financial discipline, and quality of execution across business activities. Although previous studies consistently acknowledge the importance of innovation and differentiation, empirical evidence remains mixed regarding the magnitude of their contribution to competitive advantages among micro and small culinary businesses. Many studies have investigated manufacturing firms, technology-based enterprises, and broader groups of small businesses, whereas evidence focusing specifically on traditional and local food businesses remains relatively limited.

Furthermore, differences in regional market characteristics, consumer preferences, competitive intensity, and business scale may influence the contribution of product differentiation to competitive positioning. These contextual differences highlight the need for localized empirical studies that examine differentiation strategies within specific culinary markets, thereby providing practical recommendations that are directly applicable to local entrepreneurs in the culinary field. This study focuses on chicken geprek businesses in the Montong market area and tests whether product differentiation positively influences the competitive advantage. The study used 95 respondent records and a focused model containing one predictor and one outcome. This study contributes an empirically grounded assessment of differentiation in a local culinary setting, along with practical implications for product design, communication, delivery, and adaptive business management.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis/es Development

2.1 Product Differentiation

Product differentiation is the design of relevant differences that allow customers to recognize a product as more valuable or suitable than competing alternatives. Differentiation can be achieved through quality, features, variety, design, packaging, reliability, and the experience surrounding the product ([Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022](#)). [Porter \(1985\)](#) positioned differentiation as a basic competitive strategy because distinctive value can reduce direct price comparisons and provide customers with a clearer reason to choose. Differentiation in the culinary business must be visible and repeatable. A unique chili sauce is not strategically valuable when the taste changes from one order to another. Menu variety is ineffective when ingredients are frequently unavailable. Attractive presentation also loses its value when the delivery damages the product. Therefore, product differentiation combines creativity with operational consistency and resource coordination ([Rubio & Sastre, 2024](#)).

In small culinary enterprises, product differentiation requires a strong understanding of customer preferences and market positioning. Differentiation strategies become more effective when businesses identify specific attributes valued by consumers and consistently communicate these advantages through product quality, branding and customer interaction. Furthermore, differentiation should not be understood only as product innovation but also as the ability to create a distinctive market identity that strengthens customer recognition and loyalty. Firms that successfully integrate innovation, customer knowledge, and strategic positioning are more likely to develop sustainable competitive advantages ([Moon, & Kim, 2022](#); [Sipos, Rideg, & Lukovszki, 2025](#)).

2.2 Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is the ability to create superior value, attract customers, and sustain a position that competing businesses cannot easily match. The resource-based view emphasizes the

strategic use of knowledge, routines, relationships, and capabilities rather than dependence on physical assets alone ([Barney & Hesterly, 2021](#)). Dynamic capability research further explains that firms must identify market changes, reconfigure resources, and renew offerings to preserve their advantages in changing environments ([Fabrizio et al., 2022](#)). Competitive advantage among small firms is reflected in their unique offerings, customer value, market responsiveness, ability to compete, and sustained consumer attraction. Studies have shown that business agility, innovation, and market-driven strategies support stronger competitive positions among small enterprises ([Amadasun & Mutezo, 2022](#); [Yusuf et al., 2023](#)). Innovation becomes more effective when it is aligned with a clear competitive strategy rather than being implemented as an isolated menu change ([Farida & Setiawan, 2022](#)).

In the context of small culinary businesses, competitive advantage is influenced by the firm's ability to build customer trust, maintain consistent performance, and adapt to environmental changes. Because small enterprises often operate with limited resources, strengthening their competitive advantage requires efficient resource utilization and the development of capabilities that support long-term market survival. Businesses that combine innovation, operational flexibility, and customer-oriented strategies are more capable of maintaining differentiation and responding to competitive pressures. Therefore, competitive advantage represents not only the achievement of short-term superiority but also the continuous process of creating and sustaining value in dynamic markets ([Teece, 2018](#); [Vieira, Rua, & Arias-Oliva, 2023](#)).

2.3 Relationship between Product Differentiation and Competitive Advantage

Product differentiation can strengthen competitive advantage by creating a perceived value that is not available from similar sellers. Unique quality, menu options, presentation, and product identity make comparison less dependent on price and help the business occupy a clearer position in the customer mind. Entrepreneurial small firms improve their market performance when innovation is connected to competitive strategy and customer needs ([Rubio Andrés et al., 2024](#)). This relationship also depends on the supporting capabilities. Marketing innovation improves differentiation when a business understands its customers and converts that knowledge into an appropriate offer ([Sipos et al., 2025](#)). Creativity and business independence can contribute to competitive advantages among small enterprises, although technology and organizational capacity influence the strength of the results ([Setyaningrum et al., 2023](#)).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of product differentiation in creating competitive advantages depends on how well businesses transform distinctive features into customer-perceived value. Differentiation strategies that are recognized, trusted, and consistently delivered are more likely to generate customer loyalty and strengthen the market position. For small culinary enterprises, integrating product innovation with digital communication, customer engagement, and continuous improvement can enhance the sustainability of their competitive advantages. Therefore, differentiation should be viewed as a comprehensive strategic approach involving product attributes, market understanding, and organizational capabilities rather than merely introducing new product variations ([Maran, Liegl, Moder, Kraus, & Furtner, 2021](#); [Styvén, Näppä, Mariani, & Nataraajan, 2022](#)).

2.4 Research Hypothesis

In the culinary business sector, intense competition requires businesses to develop strategies that enable them to create unique value and maintain a strong market position. Product differentiation allows businesses to distinguish their offerings from competitors through differences in taste, quality, menu variety, appearance, packaging, and customer experience. For chicken geprek businesses, which generally offer similar core products, differentiation can become an important strategy to attract consumers, increase perceived value, and strengthen customer preference. A distinctive product identity can reduce consumer comparison based solely on price and support the development of competitive advantage. Therefore, businesses that successfully implement product differentiation are expected to achieve a stronger competitive position in the market. Based on this argument, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H_{1i} : Product differentiation has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage among chicken geprek businesses in the Montong market

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Setting

This study used a quantitative associative survey design. Quantitative research converts concepts into measurable indicators and uses statistical analyses to test proposed relationships ([Creswell & Creswell, 2023](#)). This study examined chicken geprek businesses operating in the Montong District and the surrounding market area connected to Montong.

3.2 Population, Respondents, and Sampling

The population comprised owners, managers, and employees involved in active chicken geprek businesses in the study area. The final dataset contained 95 respondents. Purposive sampling was applied because the questionnaire required participants who understood product decisions, menu characteristics, operating practices, and local competition. Eligible respondents were directly involved in the business, familiar with the products and competitors, and completed the questionnaire. The sample size was adequate for a simple regression model containing one predictor and exceeded the common minimum recommendations relative to the number of questionnaire items ([Hair et al., 2019](#)).

3.3 Variables and Measurement

Product differentiation is an independent variable. It was measured using four items: product quality, menu variety, attractive presentation, and distinctive product characteristics. Competitive advantage was the dependent variable and was measured using four items covering uniqueness compared with similar businesses, consumer benefit and satisfaction, ability to compete, and consumer attraction. All items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data were obtained through questionnaires, and observation and documentation were used as supporting procedures. Data analysis was performed using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). The analysis included respondent profiling, descriptive statistics, corrected item-total correlation, Cronbach alpha, residual normality tests, the Glejser test, simple linear regression, the t-test, the F-test, and the coefficient of determination. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

The respondent profile shows a relatively balanced gender composition and a strong concentration in the productive age group. Most respondents were employees, and almost half were connected to businesses that had operated for one to three years.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	49	51.6
	Women	46	48.4
Age	Under 20 years	16	16.8
	20 to 30 years	43	45.3
	31 to 40 years	28	29.5
	Over 40 years	8	8.4
Business age	Under 1 year	19	20.0
	1 to 3 years	46	48.4
	4 to 6 years	17	17.9

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Over 6 years	13	13.7	
Business location	Montong	32	33.7
	Montong Sekar	22	23.2
	Talun Village	12	12.6
	Jetak Montong	12	12.6
	Outside Montong	17	17.9
Position	Employee	70	73.7
	Owner	25	26.3

Table 1 shows men represented 51.6% of the respondents, and women represented 48.4%. The largest age group was 20–30 years (45.3%). Businesses operating for one to three years formed the largest business age group at 48.4 percent. Employees accounted for 73.7% of the respondents, indicating that much of the information came from individuals directly involved in daily operations.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the research variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Category
Product differentiation	95	6	18	12.01	2.808	Adequate
Competitive advantage	95	5	17	11.98	2.686	Adequate

Table 2 shows the product differentiation obtained a mean total score of 12.01, equivalent to approximately 3.00 per item. Competitive advantage obtained a mean total score of 11.98, which is equivalent to approximately 3.00 per item. Therefore, both variables were classified as adequate rather than strong.

Table 3. Mean scores of the research indicators

Item	Indicator	Mean	Category
$X_{i.1}$	Product quality is better than competitors	3.02	Adequate
$X_{i.2}$	The business provides varied menu options	2.98	Adequate
$X_{i.3}$	Product presentation is attractive	3.03	Adequate
$X_{i.4}$	The product has distinctive characteristics	2.98	Adequate
$Y_{i.1}$	The business is more unique than similar businesses	2.99	Adequate
$Y_{i.2}$	The product provides benefits and satisfaction	2.98	Adequate
$Y_{i.3}$	The business can compete with other chicken geprek sellers	2.97	Adequate
$Y_{i.4}$	The product attracts consumer interest	3.04	Adequate

Table 3 shows attractive product presentation recorded the highest product differentiation mean of 3.03. Menu variety and distinctive characteristics recorded the lowest mean score of 2.98. Consumer attraction recorded the highest competitive advantage mean at 3.04, while the ability to compete recorded the lowest mean at 2.97. The results indicate that visual appeal is slightly stronger than the uniqueness needed to create a durable competitive position.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

Table 4. Validity test results

Item	Indicator	Corrected item total correlation	p value	Result
X _{1.1}	Product quality	0.517	<0.001	Valid
X _{1.2}	Menu variety	0.485	<0.001	Valid
X _{1.3}	Product presentation	0.459	<0.001	Valid
X _{1.4}	Distinctive characteristics	0.455	<0.001	Valid
Y _{1.1}	Business uniqueness	0.517	<0.001	Valid
Y _{1.2}	Consumer benefit and satisfaction	0.498	<0.001	Valid
Y _{1.3}	Ability to compete	0.371	<0.001	Valid
Y _{1.4}	Consumer attraction	0.514	<0.001	Valid

Table 4 shows every item produced a positive corrected item-total correlation and a p-value below 0.05. Therefore, all items were retained as valid measures of their respective constructs.

Table 5. Reliability test results

Variables	Cronbach alpha	Criterion	Result
Product differentiation	0.695	Above 0.60	Reliable
Competitive advantage	0.689	Above 0.60	Reliable

Table 5 shows the Cronbach alphas were 0.695 for product differentiation and 0.689 for competitive advantage. Both values exceeded the adopted threshold of 0.60, indicating acceptable, but moderate internal consistency.

4.4 Regression Assumption Tests

Table 6. Regression assumption test results

Test	Statistic	p value	Interpretation
Kolmogorov Smirnov residual normality	0.072	0.679	Residuals are normally distributed
Shapiro Wilk residual normality	0.986	0.412	Residuals are normally distributed
Glejser unequal variance test	t value: negative 0.308	0.759	No unequal residual variance

Table 6 shows the Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests produced p values above 0.05, which supports residual normality. The Glejser test produced a p-value of 0.759, indicating no evidence of unequal residual variance. Therefore, the model satisfied the assumptions used in this analysis.

4.5 Simple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Test

Table 7. Regression and hypothesis test results

Component	Estimate or value	Test statistic	p value	Interpretation
Constant	8.721	7.435	<0.001	Statistically significant
Product differentiation	0.271	2.852	0.005	Positive and significant

Component	Estimate or value	Test statistic	p value	Interpretation
Overall regression model	F value: 8.135		0.005	Model is significant
Correlation	R: 0.284			Positive relationship
Coefficient of determination	R squared: 0.080			8.0 percent explained
Adjusted coefficient	Adjusted R squared: 0.071			Adjusted explanatory power

$$\text{Competitive Advantage} = 8.721 + 0.271 \text{Product Differentiation} \quad (1)$$

Table 7 and Formula 1 shows the positive coefficient indicates that a one-unit increase in the product differentiation score is associated with a 0.271 unit increase in the competitive advantage score. The t value of 2.852 and p value of 0.005 support H_1 . The F-test confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant. Product differentiation explained 8.0 percent of competitive advantage variation, while 92.0 percent was associated with factors outside the model.

4.6 Discussion

The results demonstrate that product differentiation positively and significantly influences competitive advantage in the studied chicken geprek businesses. The direction of the coefficient confirms that stronger quality, menu variety, presentation, and distinctive characteristics are associated with a stronger ability to create uniqueness, consumer value, market competitiveness, and attraction. This result supports the differentiation principle, which states that customers need a meaningful reason to choose one seller over another (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022; Porter, 1985). The effect was statistically significant but was practically limited. An R-squared value of 0.080 means that product differentiation explains only a small part of the variation in competitive advantage.

This finding is reasonable because competitive advantage is a system-level outcome. It is influenced not only by the product but also by service quality, price consistency, location, delivery reliability, promotional reach, employee capability, financial resources, and customer relationships. Dynamic capability studies similarly emphasize that advantages result from the coordinated renewal of resources rather than an isolated initiative (Fabrizio, Kaczam, de Moura, da Silva, da Silva, & da Veiga, 2022; Rodrigues, Franco, Silva, & Oliveira, 2021). The item results provide a more specific interpretation of the data. Product presentation achieved the highest differentiation mean, suggesting that businesses have begun using visual appeal as a competitive tool. Menu variety and distinctive product characteristics received the lowest scores. An attractive presentation can stimulate interest, but it is relatively easy for competitors to copy. Durable differentiation requires a signature taste, consistent ingredient standards, recognizable packaging, exclusive combinations, and operational routines that competitors cannot quickly reproduce (Barney & Hesterly, 2021).

Consumer attraction was the strongest competitive advantage indicator, whereas perceived ability to compete was the weakest. This pattern indicates that products can attract initial attention without necessarily establishing a strong market presence. Businesses must convert attention into repeat purchases, trust, and sustained value. Competitive strategy and innovation create stronger market performance when connected to customer needs and implemented consistently (Farida, & Setiawan, 2022; Rubio, & Sastre, 2024). These findings are consistent with research on small-enterprise competitiveness. Amadasun and Mutezo (2022) showed that market-driven strategies support the competitive growth of small firms. Yusuf, Surya, Menne, Ruslan, Suriani, and Iskandar (2023) found that business agility supports competitive advantage among small enterprises, while Sipos, Rideg, and Lukovszki (2025) emphasized the importance of marketing innovation from a

resource-based perspective. These studies indicate that differentiation is useful when supported by market knowledge and the capacity to respond quickly.

[Ammaridho and Shofi \(2024\)](#) offer a directly relevant comparison of the snack retail sector. Their results showed that product, promotion, price, physical evidence, and process contributed to sales, whereas location and employees did not show the same partial effect. The implication for chicken geprek businesses is that product uniqueness should be supported by clear pricing, persuasive promotion, clean physical presentation, and reliable ordering processes. Product differentiation alone cannot compensate for weak execution across customer experiences. Research by [Shofi, Ammaridho, and Putra \(2025\)](#) on GrabFood delivery efficiency further strengthens this operational interpretation. Delivery speed, order accuracy, driver conduct, and food condition were identified as important elements of customer satisfaction. Therefore, chicken geprek businesses that sell through delivery platforms must preserve the differentiated experience after the product leaves the outlet. Packaging should protect the texture, sauce placement, temperature, and presentation so that digital delivery does not weaken the value promised by the product.

Digital communication is also required to make differentiation visible. [Shofi et al. \(2025\)](#) found that relevant influencers, trustworthy content, reviews, tutorials, and creative visual formats can attract attention and support sales. [Ghazwani and Alzahrani \(2024\)](#) similarly showed that social media information and knowledge sharing can support small-firm growth through innovation. Chicken geprek sellers can apply these insights through short product videos, preparation stories, customer reviews, menu comparisons, and clear explanations of the signature features. The respondent profile shows that 45.3 percent were aged 20 to 30 years. [Rosada and Shofi \(2025\)](#) found that demographic and psychographic segmentation, visual promotion, and direct interaction through Instagram and TikTok are important for reaching younger consumers. Although the present respondents were business actors rather than customers, the age profile suggests that many operational participants were familiar with digital culture. This capability can be directed toward more precise market segmentation and stronger communication of differentiated products to consumers.

Long-term competitiveness also requires adaptive and financial discipline. [Shofi \(2026\)](#) found that food and beverage small enterprises in Tuban build resilience through working capital flexibility, price and procurement adaptation, digital transactions, and interpreting market signals. Therefore, product differentiation should be evaluated against cost, ingredient availability, consumer response, and cash flow. A creative menu that is difficult to produce consistently or generates weak margins will not sustain a competitive advantage. The low explanatory power also suggests several priorities for future research. Market orientation, service quality, price fairness, digital capability, brand trust, customer satisfaction, operational agility, and financial resilience may explain the additional variation. [Setyaningrum, Kholid, and Susilo \(2023\)](#) showed that creativity and business independence can contribute to competitive advantage, while technology capacity may alter the relationship. Therefore, a broader model would provide a more complete explanation of the competitiveness of the local culinary sector.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

Product differentiation has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage among chicken geprek businesses, as represented in the 95 respondent dataset. The regression coefficient was 0.271, t-value was 2.852, and p-value was 0.005. Therefore, the research hypothesis was supported. Product differentiation explained 8.0 percent of the competitive advantage variation. The results confirm that quality, menu variety, presentation, and distinctive characteristics matter, but they are not sufficient as a single explanation of competitiveness. Product presentation and consumer attraction were the strongest indicators, whereas distinctive product characteristics and perceived ability to compete required greater improvement.

5.2 Research Limitations

The model contained only product differentiation as a predictor and was based on respondents connected to the chicken geprek businesses in the Montong market area. The business location

profile also included respondents from surrounding areas; therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as a census of all businesses physically located in the Montong District. The use of purposive sampling limits the statistical generalization.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Chicken geprek businesses should develop a clear signature product by creating distinctive sauce recipes, maintaining consistent flavors, using recognizable packaging, and offering menu combinations that are difficult for competitors to imitate. Menu variety should be expanded selectively by considering consumer preferences, production consistency, ingredient availability, cost efficiency, and potential profit contribution. Product presentation should also be maintained for both dine-in and delivery services by ensuring that packaging preserves texture, temperature, sauce placement, and visual appeal. Promotional activities should emphasize the unique value of differentiated products rather than relying mainly on price discounts. Customer reviews, preparation videos, menu comparisons, and collaborations with local creators can be utilized to increase product credibility and consumer awareness. Furthermore, business owners should integrate differentiation strategies with other operational aspects, including pricing, service quality, order accuracy, delivery speed, employee capability, and financial management, to ensure that the overall customer experience reflects the value offered. Future research should consider additional variables such as service quality, price fairness, digital capability, market orientation, brand trust, customer satisfaction, business agility, and financial resilience. Broader geographical coverage and verified field data are also recommended to improve the generalizability and accuracy of future findings.

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