

Analysis of Product Innovation and Pricing in Increasing Competitiveness and Sales: A Case Study of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the importance of product innovation and pricing strategy as two key elements in maintaining the sustainability and increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the traditional culinary sector. The purpose of this study is to analyze how product innovation implemented by the Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME, along with a pricing strategy determined based on quality and production costs, contributes to increased sales. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and literature review. Data are analyzed thematically by identifying patterns from field results and linking them to relevant theories. The results show that product innovation, such as adding topping variations and traditional presentations, provides added value that has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Meanwhile, a pricing strategy that takes production costs and consumer purchasing power into account creates a balance between quality and selling value, and maintains the financial stability of the business. In conclusion, the synergy between product innovation and pricing strategy plays a significant role in increasing the competitiveness and sales revenue of the Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME. This research is expected to be a practical reference for MSME actors in developing relevant business strategies, as well as being a consideration for policy makers in designing MSME coaching and development programs in the culinary sector.

Keywords: Product Innovation, Pricing Strategy, Competitiveness, Sales Growth, MSMEs.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are economic activities undertaken by the majority of Indonesians as a source of income. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (2015) indicates that the percentage of MSMEs in Indonesia reaches 90%, and only 10% are large businesses. Although MSMEs are not large businesses, their role in driving the country's economic sector is undeniable. MSMEs have played a significant role in driving economic growth in Indonesia, with MSMEs contributing 60% of this.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of the Indonesian economy, encompassing the majority of economic actors and contributing significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2023). MSMEs are able to survive despite global pressures due to their flexible, adaptive, and locally based nature (Alyas, 2017). However, limited capital, lack of access to technology, and quality human resources are often major obstacles to strengthening their competitiveness. In the context of the gado-gado culinary business, MSMEs are required to implement two important strategies: product innovation and strategic pricing. Product innovation has been shown to have a significant influence on the competitive advantage of culinary MSMEs (Nu'man, 2023).

Meanwhile, pricing strategy (pricing intelligence) has proven to be a competitive advantage for MSMEs. Research by Sinambela (2021) concluded that both product innovation and pricing intelligence significantly influence MSME competitiveness. The use of social media as a marketing channel has also been shown to strengthen the impact of product innovation on sales, particularly in a family-owned coffee business in Bogor that effectively utilizes Instagram's product design and promotional features (Andini et al., 2022). Furthermore, a digital-based innovation management model has been shown to increase operational efficiency and competitiveness in culinary MSMEs (Prima & Aditiya Pratama, 2025).

Research in Cianjur found that digital marketing strategies and product quality have a positive effect on the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs; although service innovation is not always effective without proper synergy (Hanifah, 2024). The implementation of innovative SOPs, environmentally friendly packaging, and branding has also been shown to strengthen operational efficiency and brand image in food MSMEs (Jocelyn et al., 2024). Initial observations of gado-gado MSMEs in Makassar City indicate sales stagnation caused by a lack of product innovation and the use of conventional pricing strategies. Many businesses have not explored new product variants, creative packaging, or pricing strategies

based on consumer value or psychology such as discounts, promotional packages, or price adjustments at specific times.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the extent to which product innovation and pricing strategies can increase competitiveness and sales at the Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME on Jalan Pendidikan, Makassar City. Specifically, this study focuses on identifying various forms of product innovation implemented, such as the development of menu variants, packaging displays, and customer service approaches. In addition, this study also aims to evaluate the pricing strategies used by business actors, both from the perspective of cost-based, value-based, and consumer psychology approaches. More in-depth, this study will examine the effect of the combination of product innovation and pricing strategies on increasing business competitiveness and sales volume. Through this research, it is hoped that the most effective strategies can be found in attracting consumer interest, maintaining customer loyalty, and improving business sustainability amidst increasingly competitive culinary markets.

The results of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for gado-gado MSMEs to increase productivity, competitiveness, and profitability. Furthermore, these findings are expected to enrich the literature on the integration of product innovation and pricing strategies in culinary MSMEs and serve as a basis for policy considerations for local economic empowerment based on technology and modern marketing strategies.

METHODOLOGY

1. Type of Research

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The aim is to provide an in-depth description of the product innovation and pricing strategies implemented by the Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME and how these strategies contribute to increasing the business's competitiveness and sales.

2. Research Location

This research was conducted at the Gado-Gado Suramadu UMKM located on Jalan Pendidikan, Makassar City, South Sulawesi.

3. Research Subjects

The subjects in this study were the owners or managers of the Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME. Key informants were selected purposively, namely based on their knowledge and experience of the object being studied.

4. Data Collection Techniques

- **In-depth interviews:** Interviews were conducted directly with the owners of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs to gather information regarding the product

185

innovation strategies implemented (e.g., adding variations in content, attractive presentation methods) and how the pricing strategy is carried out (whether adjusting to market prices or adjusting to consumer purchasing power). This interview also aimed to determine the owners' perceptions of the impact of innovation and pricing on the competitiveness and increasing sales of their businesses.

- **Direct Observation:** Researchers recorded the physical appearance of the stall, the appearance and variety of gado-gado products offered, and how prices were listed. In addition, observations included customer service, customer enthusiasm, and repeat customer behavior. Observations also focused on product uniqueness compared to competitors and the number of portions sold as a reflection of competitiveness and sales.
- **Literature Study:** This research also uses secondary sources, secondary data is data obtained through intermediaries (indirectly), originating from data that is already available from books, scientific journals, and government reports related to MSMEs, product innovation, pricing in increasing competitiveness and sales of MSMEs.

5. Research Variables

This research uses a non-experimental (qualitative) approach, so it does not use quantitative variables. However, the focus of the research study is divided into two main aspects:

- **Product Innovation:** includes changes or additions to menu variations, product presentation, and taste quality.
- **Pricing:** includes competitive pricing strategies, adjusting prices to raw materials, and customer price perceptions. These two focuses are examined for their impact on Business Competitiveness: product uniqueness, position in the local market.
- **Increasing Competitiveness and Sales:** trends in increasing customer numbers and turnover.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

This study uses thematic analysis techniques based on patterns and meanings emerging from interview data, observations, and literature studies. The data analysis process in this study was carried out through several systematic stages. First, data analysis began with Data Transcription (recording and transcribing verbatim interviews), followed by Data Coding (grouping data based on themes such as product innovation, pricing to increase competitiveness and sales). Then, Thematic Analysis was

conducted to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Finally, Conclusions were drawn based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to understand the phenomenon in depth.

7. Data Credibility Test

To ensure data validity, this study employed several techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants to verify the consistency of the information. Method triangulation was used by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to strengthen the findings. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with informants to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation. These steps helped improve the validity and reliability of the study.

8. Interpretation and Presentation of Results

The research results are presented in three main formats. First, a Narrative Description illustrates findings based on interviews and observations. Second, Thematic Categories group the data to identify patterns related to pricing strategy and operational efficiency. Third, an Interpretative Analysis is conducted to understand the relationship between pricing strategy, operational efficiency, and sales growth. Through this approach, the research provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics that influence sales performance.

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

Research result

Table 1. Summary of Interview Results

No.	Question	Answer
1.	What innovations have you made to the gado-gado products at this stall?	I added variations like egg toppings, fried tempeh, and chili sauce with a choice of spiciness. This is to attract customers and prevent them from getting bored. Coding A1
2.	Why did you make this innovation?	Since so many people are selling gado-gado these days, I need to have a unique style. So people will remember that the gado-gado here is different. Coding A2
3.	Is the presentation method also part of innovation?	Yes, I use plastic rattan plates, banana leaves, and paper cutlery. This gives it a more natural and traditional look. Coding A3

4.	How did customers respond to the innovation?	Thank God, it's good, many people like it, they say it's different from the others and the taste is great. Coding A4
5.	How do you set the selling price for gado-gado?	I look at the quality of the materials and the operating costs. It can't just be cheap; quality must also be maintained. Coding A5
6.	Are prices adjusted to competitors' prices?	I understand my competitors' prices, but I also adjust them based on the content and taste. If I offer more complete products with better ingredients, it's natural for it to be a little more expensive. Coding A6
7.	How are the sales progressing so far?	Thank God, there's been an increase, not a big one, but it's steady. Many people come because they like the chili sauce and the presentation. Coding A7
8.	In your opinion, does this business have competitiveness among the many gado-gado sellers?	I think so, because people come not just because it's cheap, but because it's different. And I maintain the taste and service. Coding A8

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

Based on an interview with Mas Zaki, the owner of the Gado-Gado Suramadu UMKM, it can be concluded that the business's competitiveness and sales are increased through simple yet attractive product innovations, such as topping variations and unique presentations. Meanwhile, pricing is proportionally based on ingredient quality and operational costs, rather than simply following market prices. This strategy has contributed to a steady and sustainable increase in sales.

DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted through interviews and direct observation, it was found that product innovation and pricing are the two main factors that significantly influence the competitiveness and sales growth of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs. The following is a further analysis of each research finding:

Product Innovation as a Strategy to Increase the Competitiveness of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs on Jalan Pendidikan, Makassar City

Based on field interviews with the owner of the Gado Gado Suramadu SME, I found that product innovation is implemented in the form of adding various toppings (such as eggs, tempeh, crackers, and chili sauce with optional spiciness levels) and serving on rattan plates and banana leaves. This is not a technological innovation, but rather a strategy to strengthen product identity and differentiation to make customers feel more special. According to the owner, "This innovation is important so that our gado gado is not monotonous and can differentiate itself from many similar sellers." This demonstrates an awareness of the importance of product differentiation in building competitiveness in the local market.

Research by Yuliani et al. (2024) shows that gado-gado and risol MSMEs that innovate their products and branding can become more competitive by building a strong identity that is relevant to market needs. Meanwhile, a study by Mahendra et al. (2025) revealed that product innovation positively and significantly increases the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs. In the context of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs, simple yet consistent innovations such as topping variations and traditional presentations have successfully created added value that is directly felt by consumers.

Furthermore, research in Gorontalo by Ibrahim et al. (2024) concluded that product innovation has a positive and significant relationship with the competitiveness of MSMEs, with a significant contribution in combination with the use of digital marketplaces. This strengthens the argument that product innovation can be the foundation for MSMEs to survive and thrive in market competition. From the approach I observed, the innovation implemented does not sacrifice quality—the ingredients remain fresh and the presentation maintains quality and aesthetics. Consumers also reported enjoying the unique dining experience, consistent taste, and confidence in the quality.

Thus, product innovation has proven to be a key pillar in building the competitiveness of Gado Gado Suramadu MSMEs. Despite its simplicity, this innovation is highly relevant, capable of increasing customer loyalty, and making the business's gado gado more memorable and memorable. This emphasizes that innovation is not about technical complexity, but about creating uniqueness that is meaningful to consumers.

Pricing as a Tool to Balance the Quality and Sales Value of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSME Products on Jalan Pendidikan, Makassar City

Based on interviews with the owners of Gado-Gado Suramadu, a small and medium enterprise (SME), I noted that their pricing strategy focuses heavily on production costs and the quality of their ingredients, rather than simply matching competitors' prices. Despite the

slightly higher selling price, customers feel they're getting good value for money thanks to the savory flavor, extensive toppings, and distinctive presentation.

The owner stated that prices are determined by calculating the costs of raw materials, operations, and labor, similar to the concepts of full-costing and cost-plus pricing, to ensure the business remains profitable and fair to consumers. This aligns with the recommended practices in Fahriani et al. (2024) regarding strategies for determining the cost of goods sold to strengthen competitiveness.

Furthermore, the approach used also reflects the concept of value-based pricing, where prices are determined not only by costs but also by the perceived value of the product to customers, such as the distinctive taste of chili sauce or exclusive toppings. This aligns with Dinanti (2023), who recommends value-based pricing as an appropriate strategy for maintaining the competitiveness of MSMEs.

During fluctuations in raw material prices, this MSME chooses to maintain quality and price consistency as long as it remains reasonable for local consumers. This strategy has a positive effect on perceptions of price fairness and builds long-term trust, similar to findings in a study of onion cracker MSMEs by Rohmah (2022), which showed that maintaining quality and pricing is key to customer loyalty. Furthermore, research by Shantilawati et al. (2024) on coffee MSMEs also highlights that pricing errors can lead to losses, thus highlighting the importance of a mature and transparent pricing strategy for culinary micro-enterprises like this.

In general, this strategy increases customer confidence in product quality while maintaining business profitability. Nurhanifah et al. (2025) also support that implementing cost-plus pricing through full-costing can maintain the competitiveness and profit margins of culinary MSMEs.

The Impact of Product Innovation and Pricing on Increasing Sales of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs on Jalan Pendidikan, Makassar City

The relationship between product innovation and appropriate pricing strategies significantly contributed to the increase in sales of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs. The following is an analysis of the impact of each factor on sales growth.

The impact of product innovation on sales revenue is as follows:

a. Adding Product Variations and Added Value

Gado-Gado Suramadu SMEs introduce a variety of toppings such as boiled eggs, fried tempeh, and a choice of chili sauces (original, sweet and spicy, and extra spicy), which enrich the flavor and provide more choices for customers. This strategy increases the product's appeal and makes consumers feel in control of their taste preferences. This

190

is reinforced by research by Yusman et al. (2025), which states that innovative product differentiation can increase the competitiveness and sales of food SMEs in Surabaya.

b. Traditional and Aesthetic Packaging

Serving gado-gado on rattan plates covered with banana leaves creates an authentic and traditional feel that attracts customers. This packaging also enhances perceived quality. Research by Farhan & Tjokrosaputro (2023) shows that unique traditional packaging can increase purchasing interest and the perceived value of local food.

c. Increasing Loyalty and Repeat Purchases

innovation creates new experiences that keep customers coming back. This has a direct impact on increasing the number of repeat purchases each week. Consistent According to Yusman et al. (2025), consumer satisfaction due to innovative taste and presentation positively correlates with customer loyalty in culinary MSMEs.

The impact of pricing strategy on sales revenue is as follows:

a. Competitive and Rational Pricing

The selling price of gado-gado has been adjusted based on realistic cost calculations and profit margins, without burdening consumers. Prices remain affordable while still providing profits for business owners. Research by Hikmah et al. (2024) demonstrated that a full-cost pricing strategy is able to maintain the long-term sustainability of micro-enterprises.

b. Fostering Consumer Trust in Price Fairness

Consumers perceive that the price they pay is commensurate with the quality and quantity of the product they receive. Price transparency and consistency in offerings increase trust and satisfaction. Jannah & Hayuningtias (2024) explain that price transparency is an important indicator in building customer loyalty for MSMEs in the food sector.

c. Financial Stability and Business Flexibility

Prices are set taking into account all operational costs, enabling businesses to maintain healthy cash flow. This allows MSMEs to continue operating efficiently without financial stress. According to research by Syarifah Nadia & Kafidin Muzakki, (2025), a pricing strategy that prioritizes sustainability is more effective in building a long-term business than simply competing with low prices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that product innovation and pricing play a significant role in increasing the competitiveness and sales of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs. Product innovations, such as variations in toppings, chili sauce spiciness levels, and presentation using traditional media such as plastic rattan plates, provide added value and differentiate the product from competitors. Pricing is determined by considering production costs, ingredient quality, and local consumer purchasing power. This strategy not only maintains profit margins but also strengthens consumers' perceptions of product value. The combination of innovation and pricing strategies significantly increases customer satisfaction, loyalty, and encourages repeat purchases, which directly impacts sales growth. Therefore, it can be concluded that simple yet relevant product innovation and a realistic pricing strategy are strategic steps in increasing the competitiveness and profitability of Gado-Gado Suramadu MSMEs in the midst of local culinary market competition.

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