

Analysis Of The Application Of Franchising Systems In Street Food Businesses To Improve The Competitiveness Of Msmes

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the application of franchising systems in street food businesses and their impact on improving the competitiveness of MSMEs. Culinary MSMEs, especially in the street food sector, have high growth potential but face various challenges such as weak branding, inconsistent product quality, and limited managerial capacity. The franchising and micro-franchising models have emerged as potential strategies to overcome these challenges through operational standardization, management support, and brand strength. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method through in-depth interviews and observations of street food business actors who are franchisees. The results show that the implementation of SOPs, training, and supervision from the franchisor improve operational efficiency, product consistency, brand identity, and consumer trust. In addition, franchising has been proven to expand market access, increase sales, and help street food businesses move upmarket. However, the study also found challenges such as limited innovation, dependence on the franchisor for raw materials, and the burden of royalty fees. Overall, the franchising system has proven to be an effective strategy for increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in the street food sector through a combination of standardization, brand strengthening, and ongoing management support.

Keyword: Franchising, Micro-Franchising, Street Food, UMKM, Brand Identity

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in Indonesia's national economy, both in terms of employment and contribution to the local economy (Sukidjo & Kurniawati, 2020). The culinary sector, including street food businesses, is one form of MSME

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that is in high demand among the public due to its relatively low initial capital and operational flexibility (Rahmawati et al., 2021). However, despite this potential, MSME players often face challenges such as fierce competition, limited market access, weak branding, and obstacles in product standardization and management (Putri & Setiawan, 2022); (Hidayat & Anshori, 2020).

In a highly competitive environment, street food businesses need strategies that can increase their competitiveness in order to survive and grow (Santoso & Widjaja, 2021). One strategy that has emerged and is growing in popularity is franchising, whereby a proven business model can be replicated by small and medium-sized enterprises (Ismail & Rahman, 2020). Through franchising, MSME players not only gain a brand and reputation, but also an operational system, training, and marketing and management support from the franchisor (Hendrawan et al., 2022). This model has been proven to increase operational efficiency and expand market access for culinary SMEs (Pertiwi & Nugroho, 2021). In addition, the franchise system is also able to accelerate the product innovation process and strengthen consumer confidence in local brands (Wijaya, 2023).

The development of franchising in Indonesia shows a significant trend. Data from the franchise association shows that as of 2022, there are hundreds of franchise, license, and partnership businesses with a total of tens of thousands of outlets (Rachman & Yusuf, 2022). These figures illustrate that franchising is not only for large businesses or restaurants, but has also become an option for small and medium-sized enterprises—an indication that franchising can be a strategic path to empower MSMEs (Suharto & Kurniawan, 2021). This growth is also driven by the increasing interest of SME players in adopting standardized and proven successful business systems (Lestari & Prabowo, 2020). In addition, government regulatory support and increased business literacy have strengthened the franchise ecosystem in the local culinary sector (Hidayati, 2023). This shows that the franchise system has great potential as a means of accelerating MSME-based economic growth in Indonesia (Firmansyah & Nugraha, 2022).

Studies on the street food industry show that involvement in a franchising system can provide a competitive advantage. For example, research by Kyung A. Sun & Seoki Lee (2019) found that franchising enhances differentiation for companies, namely the ability to offer different and value-added products/services, although the effect on operational efficiency is not significant. These results indicate that franchising can help businesses, including small businesses, to build a stronger identity, brand, and appeal in the market.

In the context of MSMEs and micro businesses, the concept of micro franchising has emerged, which is the application of franchising on a small scale, tailored to local capital and resource capacities (Hartono & Wijayanti, 2020). According to one Indonesian academic, micro





franchising is a potential strategy to help MSMEs move up the ladder, improve management, and expand their business reach (Siregar & Ananda, 2021). With micro franchising, street food entrepreneurs can benefit from a proven system without having to start from scratch, as well as receive assistance in operational, marketing, and management aspects (Utami et al., 2022). In addition, this model enables the equal distribution of economic opportunities at the local level by encouraging collaboration between brand owners and small entrepreneurs (Ramadhani & Wibowo, 2021).

The adoption of the franchising model in street food businesses has also been proven in international expansion scenarios: a study of Indonesian street food businesses that developed franchising strategies in Malaysia shows that franchising can be a means of penetrating foreign markets, while also enhancing the reputation and scale of the business (Tan & Nugroho, 2023). Another study also shows that micro franchising supports the global expansion of small businesses through cultural adaptation and product standardization (Lukman & Prasetyo, 2022). This indicates that franchising is not only relevant for local growth, but also as a long-term strategy for MSME players who have expansion ambitions, provided that management, quality, and market adaptation can be maintained (Kusuma, 2023).

Considering the enormous potential of the street food sector as part of MSMEs, as well as the strategic benefits of the franchising model (including micro-franchising), it is important to conduct qualitative research that explores how the application of the franchising system in street food businesses can increase the competitiveness of MSMEs. This research is expected to reveal the processes, obstacles, and success factors from the perspective of business actors, which is highly relevant for policy development, assistance, and empowerment of MSMEs in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MSMEs and the Street Food Sector in the Indonesian Economy

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in supporting the national economy, particularly in creating jobs and driving the local economy. The contribution of MSMEs is not only evident in the number of business units that dominate Indonesia's economic structure, but also in their ability to absorb a large workforce and become the main driver of economic activity in various regions (Sukidjo & Kurniawati, 2020). One of the most prominent sectors in the MSME structure is the culinary sector, including street food businesses, which are growing rapidly due to their relatively easy operation, low initial capital requirements, flexibility to market changes, and rapid growth in line with increasing consumer demand



(Rahmawati et al., 2021).

However, despite this potential, culinary MSMEs still face various structural challenges that hinder their competitiveness, such as limited market access, weak branding strategies, suboptimal product quality standards, and unprofessional and unstructured business management (Putri & Setiawan, 2022; Hidayat & Anshori, 2020). This situation calls for a more focused strategy to strengthen competitiveness, especially for street food businesses, so that they can survive amid increasingly competitive and dynamic competition. Therefore, strengthening managerial capacity, improving product quality, and innovating business models are crucial elements in promoting the sustainability and growth of street food businesses as an integral part of national MSMEs (Sukidjo & Kurniawati, 2020; Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Franchising System Concepts and Models

The franchising system is a business model that emphasizes the standardized replication of a business, whereby the franchisor grants the partner (franchisee) the right to operate a business using a brand, system, and operational format that has been proven successful. Through this mechanism, businesses can be developed quickly and consistently because all business processes are carried out based on predetermined guidelines, from product management to customer service (Ismail & Rahman, 2020). In practice, the franchising system includes several key components, namely the use of trademarks, the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs), training programs for partners, and ongoing managerial assistance to maintain the quality and uniformity of services across the entire business network (Hendrawan et al., 2022).

For MSMEs, the application of the franchising model provides various strategic benefits, especially in improving operational efficiency and business competitiveness. Process standardization enables MSME players to run their businesses with a more structured system, minimize operational errors, and improve product quality consistently. In addition, the strength of a well-known brand helps to strengthen consumer confidence and expand market access, enabling MSMEs to grow faster than conventional independent businesses (Pertwi & Nugroho, 2021). This model also contributes to increasing product innovation and added value, while strengthening the positioning of local brands amid increasingly competitive competition (Wijaya, 2023).

The Development of the Franchise Industry in Indonesia

The development of the franchise industry in Indonesia shows a significant growth trend,



marked by an increase in the number of franchises, licenses, and partnerships spread across various sectors, including culinary and services. This condition reflects that the franchise model is increasingly in demand as a business expansion strategy that is considered more stable and structured than conventional business models (Rachman & Yusuf, 2022). This growth is also inseparable from the role of the government through regulations and supporting policies that encourage the creation of a conducive franchise ecosystem, such as business legality regulations, partnership standards, and protection for local businesses (Hidayati, 2023; Firmansyah & Nugraha, 2022).

Along with this, the interest of MSMEs in adopting the franchise business model has also increased significantly. MSME players see franchising as a solution to accelerate business growth through a proven system, operational standardization, and more professional management support (Suharto & Kurniawan, 2021). In addition, adopting the franchise model provides opportunities for MSMEs to increase their competitiveness and expand their market reach without having to build a business system from scratch, although in practice there are still challenges related to resource readiness and adaptation to the franchise system rules themselves (Lestari & Prabowo, 2020).

Franchising as a Strategy to Support the Competitiveness of MSMEs

Franchising has proven to play an important role in enhancing differentiation, brand identity, and market appeal for small businesses, including those in the culinary sector. Through a standardized system, franchise businesses are able to deliver consistent product quality and customer experience, thereby building trust and positive perceptions of the brand. Studies show that the implementation of franchising strategies provides a competitive advantage through the creation of a stronger brand identity and clear differentiation compared to non-franchise businesses, which tend to lack established branding standards (Sun & Lee, 2019). This consistency helps small businesses gain a more stable position in the market and increase opportunities for sustainable growth.

In addition, the application of attractive brand aesthetics, compliance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and service quality improvement are important elements that make the franchising system more effective for small culinary-based businesses. SOP standardization can minimize quality variations between outlets, so that the products produced remain consistent even though they are managed by different partners (Santoso & Widjaja, 2021). Management support from the franchisor also helps small business owners improve their operational, service, and marketing strategy skills. This makes franchising a business model that





not only strengthens business efficiency and stability but also provides opportunities for culinary MSMEs to develop in a more structured and competitive manner (Pertwi & Nugroho, 2021; Wijaya, 2023).

Micro-Franchising on the MSME Scale and Street Food

Micro-franchising is a derivative model of the franchise system that is designed on a smaller scale, with lower investment costs and a simpler operational structure, making it accessible to micro-businesses. This model generally adapts to local needs and conditions, using concise but standardized business modules, allowing small businesses, including street food vendors, to adopt the franchise system without the burden of large capital (Hartono & Wijayanti, 2020). With its local and flexible approach, micro-franchising provides a business format that is easy to replicate, easy to operate, and relevant to community-based economic characteristics (Siregar & Ananda, 2021).

The main advantages of micro-franchising for MSMEs include increased management capacity through structured training, the implementation of simple but effective operational systems, and direct mentoring support from franchisors that help strengthen the business capabilities of partners. This model also opens up opportunities for street food vendors to move up the ladder as they gain access to proven brands, SOPs, and marketing strategies (Utami et al., 2022). In addition, micro-franchising enables MSMEs to expand their market more quickly and purposefully thanks to the support of an established business network and system, thereby promoting more inclusive local economic growth (Ramadhani & Wibowo, 2021).

Franchising and Global Expansion of Street Food Businesses

The expansion of Indonesian street food businesses into Malaysia through franchising shows that this model is effective as a cross-border growth strategy. A case study of several Indonesian street food brands reveals that franchising allows businesses to expand their networks more quickly because the replicated model has been tested and accepted by the market (Tan & Nugroho, 2023). The success of this expansion is also supported by the ability of businesses to maintain their brand identity while adapting to consumer preferences in the destination country, so that the appeal of the product is maintained even in a different market.

In an international context, micro-franchising and small-scale franchising also require a combination of product standardization and cultural adaptation in order to be implemented effectively. Standardization ensures consistency in taste, service quality, and customer experience, while cultural adaptation—such as adjustments to taste, packaging, or marketing





strategies—helps increase local consumer acceptance (Lukman & Prasetyo, 2022). Therefore, franchising is considered relevant as an internationalization strategy for MSMEs because it provides a stable operational framework, strengthens brand identity, and minimizes expansion risks, especially for street food businesses that want to enter the global market (Kusuma, 2023).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of the franchising system in street food businesses and its impact on increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation of street food business owners or managers who are franchise partners. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the criterion of at least one year of experience as a franchisee. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns, practices, challenges, and success factors of franchising in the context of street food MSMEs. Data validity was maintained through source and technique triangulation, ensuring that the research findings were reliable, consistent, and in line with field conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Street Food Business as a Franchisee

The street food business that is the subject of this study is a business unit engaged in the fast-food industry with a ready-to-eat product concept that follows national franchise operational standards. Based on observation documents, this business began joining as a franchise partner after seeing the high potential of the street food business in urban areas and the increasing consumer interest in practical and affordable food. The main reason the business owner chose the franchise model was because of the guarantee of a stable system, management support, and a brand reputation that is already known to the public. In addition, franchising is considered to provide certainty of procedures that make it easier for novice entrepreneurs who do not yet have sufficient managerial experience.

Before joining the franchise, the entrepreneur admitted to running a smaller-scale independent food business. However, the business faced various limitations, such as the absence of standard operating procedures, difficulties in maintaining consistency in taste, and low marketing capacity. After joining as a franchisee, significant changes were seen in business management, ranging from the use of more modern equipment, standardized raw materials, to





promotional support from the franchisor. These changes increased the professionalism of the business and had a positive impact on sales and consumer perception.

Implementation of a Franchising System in Street Food Businesses

Implementation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Observations show that the implementation of the franchising system is strongly reflected in the use of SOPs at every stage of the production process. The SOPs provided by the franchisor cover the measurement of raw materials, processing techniques, cooking times, serving methods, and sales area cleanliness standards. These SOPs aim to ensure consistency in taste, product size, and service quality across the entire franchise network. Franchisees admit that SOPs are very helpful in minimizing operational errors and maintaining stable product quality even when there are changes in personnel.

In addition, the applicable SOP also covers stock recording processes, inventory management, and quality control systems. The franchisor conducts periodic evaluations to ensure that the SOP is implemented consistently. These findings are in line with the literature stating that franchising can improve the operational quality of small businesses through strict process standardization (Santoso & Widjaja, 2021). In practice, SOPs also help accelerate the adaptation process for new employees and make business management more efficient and structured.

Franchisor Training and Assistance

Franchisees receive initial training covering production methods, customer service techniques, use of equipment, and simple business management. The training is conducted directly by the franchisor's team and followed by intensive mentoring during the initial operational period. This mentoring includes field visits, quality monitoring, and consultation on operational challenges faced by franchisees.

This form of assistance has a significant impact on improving the managerial capacity of franchisees who were previously unfamiliar with running a business using a structured system. This finding is consistent with other studies that state that franchisor support in the form of training and supervision contributes significantly to the success of franchisees in managing their businesses (Hartono & Wijayanti, 2020). Franchisees also emphasized that franchisor assistance made them feel more confident because they had clear references when facing technical and non-technical problems.

Monitoring and Evaluation System





The franchisor implements a monitoring system through regular visits and product quality checks. Periodic evaluations serve as a means of maintaining franchise standards, as well as a medium of communication for providing feedback to franchisees. Franchisees state that this monitoring is useful for maintaining commitment to SOPs, but sometimes feel that it is quite strict, limiting their flexibility to innovate.

However, this periodic evaluation system remains important to maintain uniform standards across the franchise network. These findings are consistent with franchising management theory, which states that operational control is an integral part of the franchisor–franchisee mechanism (Siregar & Ananda, 2021). Through supervision, franchisors can ensure that quality remains consistent with standards, thereby maintaining brand image.

The Impact of Franchising on the Competitiveness of Street Food Businesses Enhancement of Brand Identity and Consumer Trust

One of the biggest impacts of franchising is the increased brand identity of the street food businesses studied. Before joining as franchisees, these businesses did not have a clear brand identity and relied on word-of-mouth marketing. After becoming part of the franchise network, the businesses gained a uniform and recognizable visual identity, from logos and packaging to employee uniforms and product display standards.

This enhancement of brand identity increases consumer confidence because they tend to choose brands that are considered more stable and professional. This is in line with literature stating that franchising can strengthen the image and reputation of a business through visual and operational consistency (Sun & Lee, 2019). Field findings also show that consumers trust branded businesses more because they are considered to be of better quality than non-franchised street food businesses.

Operational Efficiency and Business Structure

Franchising also has an impact on improving operational efficiency. Franchisees admit that after following SOPs, production time has become shorter, cooking errors have decreased, and customer service processes have become faster. This efficiency occurs because the operational system has been carefully designed by the franchisor based on tested standards.

On the management side, inventory management, raw material purchasing planning, and work time management also became more organized. Field findings show that the franchise system is able to reduce cost waste and optimize resources. This is consistent with the theory





that franchising can increase efficiency and reduce operational risks for MSMEs (Pertiwi & Nugroho, 2021).

Market Access Expansion and Sales Growth

Franchising also has a significant impact on expanding market access. With the strength of the brand and marketing support from the franchisor, this street food business has successfully reached more consumers than when it was still operating independently. In fact, franchisees say that the number of customers has increased since the first week of the outlet's opening. In addition, the existence of social media and centralized promotion from the franchisor helps strengthen the visibility of the business. New consumers are interested in trying the product because they see the brand appearing consistently on various digital platforms. These findings are in line with research stating that franchising can increase market reach through brand strength and integrated promotional strategies (Wijaya, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The main findings of the study are linked to relevant theories and literature. In general, the results of the study show that the application of a franchising system to street food businesses can improve various aspects of competitiveness, both internally and externally. This study confirms that SOPs are the main foundation for the operational success of franchisees. Standardizing production and service processes not only ensures consistency in taste and product quality, but also creates work efficiencies that were previously difficult for independent businesses to achieve. This finding is in line with the opinion of Santoso & Widjaja (2021), who emphasize that SOPs in franchising can minimize quality variations between outlets. For street food vendors, SOPs serve as a control tool that helps them run their businesses professionally, even if they have limited business experience.

The training and mentoring provided by franchisors have been proven to improve franchisees' managerial capacity. In the context of MSMEs, limited management knowledge often hinders business growth. Through intensive training, franchisees acquire technical and non-technical skills that support operational stability. These findings support the literature by Hartono & Wijayanti (2020), which explains that micro-franchising can improve the managerial capabilities of small business owners through continuous mentoring. Enhanced brand identity is one of the most significant impacts of franchising. A strong brand builds consumer trust, thereby increasing sales traffic. This is consistent with research by Sun & Lee (2019), which found that franchising increases brand differentiation and perceived value. In this study, franchisees





experienced an increase in customer numbers from the first week of operation as a direct result of brand strength and centralized promotion.

Franchising expands market access through collective marketing strategies and digital support provided by franchisors. For street food businesses that previously relied on simple marketing, the presence of professional marketing strategies helps to significantly expand market reach. These findings are in line with Wijaya's (2023) research on the role of franchising in expanding the culinary MSME market.

Several challenges were identified. Limited innovation is one of the complaints of franchisees, as all product creativity must be approved by the franchisor. Dependence on raw materials and operational regulations also limits franchisees' flexibility. In addition, royalty fees are considered quite burdensome when sales decline. These challenges are in line with the findings of Siregar & Ananda (2021), which emphasize the need for a balance between franchisor control and franchisee autonomy.

The results of this study indicate that micro-franchising can be an effective strategy for small-scale street food businesses. With low costs and a simple operational system, this model allows MSMEs to adopt a standardized system and obtain opportunities for advancement. These findings are in line with the literature by Ramadhani & Wibowo (2021), which explains that micro-franchising can strengthen local economic empowerment. Overall, the research results are consistent with national and international literature that positions franchising as a business model capable of combining brand excellence, operational systems, and management support to enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the application of a franchising system in street food businesses has a significant effect on increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs. Franchising has been proven to strengthen brand identity, improve operational efficiency, and provide managerial support that helps business owners run their businesses in a more structured and professional manner. The implementation of SOPs is a key factor in promoting product quality consistency, while training and mentoring from franchisors increase business management capacity. In addition, marketing support and the reputation of the franchise brand enable market access expansion and sales growth.

However, franchising also presents challenges, particularly related to limited innovation and operational dependence on franchisor policies. Royalty fees can also be a burden for franchisees, especially when sales are unstable. Therefore, a balance between franchisor control



and franchisee flexibility is necessary to ensure the sustainability of long-term partnerships. In general, the franchising model, including micro-franchising, can be an effective strategy for developing street food businesses and empowering MSMEs in Indonesia. This study provides important implications for franchisors, franchisees, and the government in strengthening an inclusive, efficient, and sustainable national franchise ecosystem.

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