

Sales Strategy of a Newly Established Fried Chicken Micro Enterprise in Astana Japura Village

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Abstract

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) make up roughly 90 percent of businesses worldwide and contribute up to 61 percent of Indonesia's gross domestic product, yet evidence on how newly established rural culinary micro enterprises actually sell remains thin, because most marketing studies examine urban or already digitalised firms. This study addresses that gap by describing the sales strategy of one fried chicken micro enterprise in Astana Japura Village that had been trading for about three months. A qualitative single case design was used. The owner, the sole informant, was interviewed once on 3 January 2026 using an open ended guide built on the marketing mix, and the Indonesian transcript was coded and displayed following the Miles and Huberman interactive model. Four strategy themes emerged: a single core product emphasising consistent savoury and crisp taste; affordable pricing set at Rp7,000 per portion and Rp10,000 with rice and benchmarked against neighbouring sellers; unpaid word of mouth promotion with no social media use; and personal, flexible service across opening hours of 08.00 to 21.00 WIB. Four constraints were reported: limited capital, competition from nearby sellers, minimal promotional reach, and volatile chicken prices. As reported by the owner, and without sales or customer records, these practices appear sufficient for early stage viability but not for growth. The study contributes a rural, first year, single informant account that qualifies marketing mix claims drawn from larger or urban samples and indicates when product diversification and digital promotion become necessary.

Keywords: sales strategy; marketing mix; rural entrepreneurship; culinary msme; business sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium enterprises are a global phenomenon before they are a national one. They make up around 90 percent of all businesses worldwide, account for more than half of total employment, and in emerging economies their contribution to gross domestic product can reach 40 percent (Corporation, 2024). Their fragility is equally global. Across OECD economies micro firms record the lowest survival rates of any size class, and a substantial share of newly registered enterprises stop trading within their first three years, with the youngest and smallest firms proving the least able to absorb a shock in demand or in input prices (OECD, 2023). The opening months of operation are therefore the period in which a micro enterprise is least protected and most dependent on whatever selling practices its owner can improvise from personal resources.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic role in the Indonesian economy, especially as a driver of the local economy, job creators, and means of improving people's welfare. The scale is substantial. Indonesia hosts approximately 64 million MSMEs, which account for almost the entire enterprise population, contribute between 58 and 61 percent of gross domestic product, and absorb about 97 percent of the national workforce (Kurniawati et al., 2021; Tambunan, 2019). The existence of MSMEs not only contributes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but also serves as the main support for the economy in rural areas. In this context, the ability of MSMEs to manage sales strategies is a determining factor for business sustainability in the midst of increasingly competitive market competition (Sulistiyani & Pratama, 2021).

Sales strategy is an integral part of a marketing strategy that serves to direct business activities in achieving sales targets and maintaining market share. This strategy includes pricing, distribution channel selection, promotion methods, and approaches to consumers. The implementation of the right sales strategy allows MSME actors to increase sales volume, expand market reach, and build customer loyalty (Wahyudi et al., 2025). Without a planned sales strategy, MSMEs tend to stagnate and even decline in business performance.

The development of an increasingly dynamic business environment also affects the sales patterns of MSMEs. The digital era has changed consumer behavior in searching, selecting, and buying products. This condition requires MSMEs to adapt through sales strategy innovation, both conventionally and digitally. Research shows that the use of digital marketing based marketing strategies can significantly increase the competitiveness and sales of MSME

products (Saefudin & Maulana, 2023). However, the adoption rate of digital strategies among MSMEs, especially in rural areas, is still relatively limited. The gap is measurable: of the approximately 64 million Indonesian MSMEs, only about 20.8 million had entered the digital ecosystem by 2022, and roughly 90 percent of Indonesian MSMEs are still run conventionally, with rural firms the least represented among adopters (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

These limitations are generally caused by low digital literacy, limited capital, and lack of human resources who have marketing competence. Setiawan & Sudrartono, (2024) revealed that many MSMEs still have difficulties in optimizing marketing strategies due to limited knowledge and access to technology. This condition has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the sales strategy implemented and ultimately affects overall business performance.

The culinary sector is one type of MSMEs that has a high level of competition, including the business of selling fried chicken. Fried chicken products are classified as products with relatively stable market demand, but have a strict level of competition because they are easy to imitate and many business actors offer similar products. Therefore, fried chicken MSME players are required to have a sales strategy that is able to differentiate their products from competitors, both through product quality, price, service, and promotional strategies (Wahyudi et al., 2025). Astana Japura is a village in Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency, West Java, whose economy rests on agriculture, petty trade and home scale food production, and in which household culinary stalls form a large share of the registered micro enterprises.

Several previous studies have shown that the implementation of a marketing mix strategy has a positive effect on increasing the sales volume of culinary MSMEs. Isma et al., (2023) studied the Edi Mushroom MSME in Bagan Pete Village, Jambi City, using a qualitative SWOT analysis with the business owner as the main informant. They reported that integrated management of product, price, place and promotion raised sales volume, with complete products, affordable prices and a strategic location identified as the dominant strengths and weak promotion as the principal weakness.

The study nevertheless examines one established business and does not report how long the firm had been trading, so it cannot say whether the same mix is available to a seller at start up. Wahyudi et al., (2025) examined Tars_Bucket in Bengkulu, also qualitatively, and found that a planned marketing mix improved local competitiveness, particularly where product presentation and promotion were deliberately designed; their case is an urban

business with an active social media presence, which leaves open what happens when promotion is entirely offline.

Beyond Indonesia, Gao et al., (2023) surveyed 212 MSMEs in Bangladesh and showed, using partial least squares modelling, that e-commerce and digital marketing adoption improved both financial and sustainability performance, a result that again presupposes a level of digital participation that rural Indonesian micro sellers frequently do not have. Taken together, these studies establish that the marketing mix matters, but all three observe firms that are either already established or already digital, and none observes a business during its first months of trading.

However, most of the research related to MSME sales strategies still focuses on urban areas or MSMEs that have actively utilized digital platforms. Scientific studies that highlight the sales strategies of culinary MSMEs in rural areas, especially fried chicken businesses, are still relatively limited. In fact, the characteristics of rural markets have significant differences from urban markets, both in terms of consumer behavior, purchasing power, and product distribution patterns.

This research gap shows the need for a more in-depth empirical study of the sales strategies of MSMEs in rural areas. The novelty of this study is therefore stated explicitly rather than implied. It documents, at the level of the individual transaction and in the owner's own words, how a rural culinary micro enterprise sells during its first three months of trading, a stage and a setting that the marketing mix literature reviewed above does not cover. The urgency of studying this now lies in what happens when such businesses fail. Micro enterprises record the lowest survival rates of any firm size class, and a large proportion of newly registered micro firms cease trading within their first three years (OECD, 2023).

In a village economy the closure of a food stall is not merely the loss of one firm: it removes a household's principal source of daily cash income, and because micro and small enterprises absorb the great majority of the Indonesian workforce, repeated failure at this scale converts directly into rural household poverty (Tambunan, 2019). Establishing what a first year seller is actually able to do, rather than what a marketing textbook prescribes, is therefore a precondition for designing assistance that such a seller can use.

Astana Japura Village is one of the rural areas that has culinary MSME activities, including a fried chicken sales business. This business acts as a source of income for the local community and has the potential to develop if supported by the right sales strategy. However, in practice, business actors still face various challenges, such as limited promotions, competition from similar businesses, and changes in consumer preferences. This condition makes

Astana Japura Village a relevant location to conduct research related to MSME sales strategies.

This study aims to analyze the sales strategy of MSME products through a case study of the fried chicken sales business in Astana Japura Village. The focus of the research is directed at the identification of the sales strategies applied, the factors that affect the effectiveness of the strategy, and its implications on business performance. With a case study approach, this study is expected to be able to provide an in-depth overview of the practice of sales strategies applied in the real context of rural MSMEs.

In addition to providing empirical contributions, this research is also expected to enrich theoretical studies in the field of MSME marketing, especially related to sales strategies in micro-scale culinary businesses. Practically, three groups stand to benefit. Culinary micro entrepreneurs gain a concrete account of which conventional practices are worth keeping and of the point at which those practices stop being sufficient.

The village government and the district office for cooperatives and MSMEs gain a basis for targeting assistance at first year businesses rather than at established ones, and for sequencing that assistance so that working capital and simple bookkeeping support precede digital promotion training. Academics gain a rural, early stage case against which marketing mix propositions derived from urban samples can be tested. Thus, this research has academic and practical relevance in supporting the strengthening of MSMEs as the backbone of the national economy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Following Yin, (2018), the case is bounded as one fried chicken micro enterprise in Astana Japura Village during its first three months of trading. It must be stated at the outset that the evidence base consists of a single informant interviewed on a single occasion. The study is therefore a single informant case study rather than a case study in the full sense intended by Yin, whose logic rests on several independent sources of evidence converging on the same fact.

The design was retained because the aim was an in depth understanding of selling practice in a real and specific context, and the limitation it imposes is acknowledged explicitly below rather than left implicit. The case study approach enabled the researcher to explore the phenomenon holistically by considering the social, economic, and business conditions surrounding the research subject (Yin, 2018).

This research was conducted on January 3, 2026, in Astana Japura Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency. The subject of the study was one MSME owner who operated a fried chicken business and was selected purposively because he was considered relevant to the research objectives. The owner is referred to throughout by the pseudonym JM. He was 39 years old at the time of the study and had been trading for approximately three months. JM served as the primary source of data and provided information related to sales strategies, operational processes, and the challenges faced in running the business.

Research Ethics

Participation was voluntary and rested on informed consent obtained before the interview began, after the purpose of the study, the intended use of the data, the right to decline any question and the right to withdraw at any point had been explained. The informant is identified by a pseudonym and the precise address of the stall is withheld. Separate consent was obtained for audio recording and for the publication of the documentation photographs in which the informant and his premises appear, and those photographs are reproduced here with his permission. No incentive was offered and no personally identifying information beyond the pseudonym is reported.

The type of data used in this study was primary data, which was obtained through a direct interview with JM. The interview was conducted as an open-ended interview, allowing the informant the flexibility to describe his experiences, views, and strategies related to sales activities. Open-ended interviews are considered effective in qualitative research because they allow researchers to obtain in-depth information flexibly according to the flow of the conversation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

One interview session was held at the business premises, lasted approximately 60 minutes and was audio recorded with the informant's consent. The interview was conducted in Indonesian, in the local register in which the informant is most fluent, and the recording was transcribed verbatim by the author team. The excerpts presented in this article were translated into English by the authors and the translation of each excerpt was checked against the Indonesian transcript by a second author to confirm that its meaning had been preserved.

The data collection instrument was an open-ended interview guide, which was prepared based on theories of sales and marketing strategies. The preparation of the interview guide referred to the concepts of marketing strategy and the marketing mix proposed by Kotler, (2016), covering product, price, promotion and service. Because the instrument was organised around

these dimensions, the possibility that the findings simply mirror the instrument is a real one; it is addressed in the analysis by coding the transcript openly first and mapping the resulting codes onto the dimensions only afterwards, and it is discussed again in the Discussion.

Because the study draws on a single informant, no form of data, investigator or methodological triangulation in the sense established by Denzin is possible, and the claim of theoretical triangulation made in the earlier version of this manuscript is withdrawn. The triangulation typology is Denzin's rather than Miles and Huberman's, and comparing findings with expert concepts is interpretation rather than an independent check on the data, since it introduces no second source against which the account can be tested (Fusch et al., 2018).

Credibility was therefore pursued through the procedures that were actually available: verbatim transcription of the recording, an audit trail linking every reported theme to numbered transcript excerpts, and the display of representative quotations in Table 1 so that readers can judge the fit between data and interpretation for themselves (Nowell et al., 2017). Member checking was not carried out, and the findings are consequently reported as the owner's account rather than as verified fact.

The data analysis in this study employed the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model. The stages of analysis included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was conducted by selecting, simplifying, and organizing the interview data according to the focus of the research. The data were then presented in the form of a systematic narrative to facilitate an understanding of the relationships among the concepts identified. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions to ensure the consistency and validity of the research findings.

This analysis model was chosen because it provided a systematic and continuous approach to analyzing qualitative data (Miles et al., 2014). In operational terms, the transcript was read three times in full, meaning units relevant to selling practice were marked and given open codes in the margin, and the open codes were then grouped into the four marketing mix dimensions of product, price, promotion and service, together with a separate category for business constraints. Where a statement could belong to more than one dimension it was assigned to the dimension the informant himself emphasised. The resulting theme structure, its representative excerpts and an indication of how often each theme recurred in the transcript are displayed in Table 1, which constitutes the data display stage of the model.

Limitations of the Design

Four limitations follow from the choices set out above and should be read alongside every finding reported in this article. First, the evidence rests on one informant, so the study captures the seller's perspective only, with no consumer, competitor or supplier view. Second, only one interview was conducted, which precludes observation of change over time and any check on the internal consistency of the account.

Third, no documentary or observational data were collected: there are no sales records, purchase notes or customer counts, so statements about the number of buyers and the stability of income are perceptions rather than measurements. Fourth, the case is a single business of three months' standing in one village, so the findings are transferable only to comparable early stage rural culinary micro enterprises and are not generalisable to rural MSMEs as a population.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An Overview of the Fried Chicken MSME Business



Figure 1. MSMEs Kedai Manja



Figure 2. MSME Interview



Figure 3. Documentation with MSME Owners of Kedai Manja

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that are the object of this research are culinary businesses engaged in the sale of flour fried chicken. The premises, the interview and the documentation of the visit are shown in Figures 1 to 3; the profile of the business and of its owner has already been set out in the Research Method and is not repeated here. The three figures are documentation of fieldwork rather than analytical evidence, and the analytical display for this section is Table 1 below. Although it is still in the early stages of development, the owner describes sales activity in the surrounding environment as quite stable, although no sales records were available against which that description could be checked.

The main product offered is flour fried chicken with a taste that is tailored to the tastes of the local community. This product was chosen because it has a relatively high level of demand and can be accepted by various levels of society. The target consumers of this business include all groups, ranging from children, teenagers, to adults, both from the surrounding environment and the community who pass by the business location. In daily operations, these MSMEs carry out sales activities directly to consumers. The business operates from 08.00 to 21.00 WIB, thus providing time flexibility for consumers to make purchases. The long operating hours are one of the efforts of business actors to reach more consumers and increase sales opportunities.

As a new MSME, this fried chicken business still relies on a simple and conventional sales strategy. Promotional and marketing activities are carried out on a limited basis, mainly through direct interaction with consumers. This condition reflects the general characteristics of start-up MSMEs in rural areas, which are still in the stage of adjustment and development of business strategies. This overview is the basis for further analyzing the sales strategies

implemented as well as obstacles and opportunities for future business development.

Sales Strategies Implemented by Fried Chicken MSMEs

Based on the results of open interviews with MSME actors selling fried chicken in Astana Japura Village obtained several findings related to sales strategies applied in running a business. These strategies include product strategies, prices, promotions, and services to consumers.

Table 1. Coding matrix from interview excerpts to sales strategy themes

Theme	Sub theme	Representative excerpt (JM, 2026)	Salience in the transcript
Product strategy	Single core product; consistency of taste; selective choice of raw chicken	"I am more concerned with taste, so the seasoning is made just right so that the person who buys it wants to come back"	Raised first and unprompted; 5 distinct references
Pricing strategy	Affordability for local buyers; benchmarking against neighbouring sellers; no discounting or bundling	"The price I set should not be too expensive, Rp7,000 for the chicken, Rp10,000 if it comes with rice"	4 distinct references
Promotion strategy	Word of mouth from satisfied buyers; visibility of the stall; no social media	"If it tastes good, usually the buyer tells the story to his friend, so I rely on that"	3 distinct references
Service strategy	Friendliness and polite communication; flexibility over order size and timing; long opening hours	"I try to serve in a friendly way, so that buyers feel at home and don't hesitate to buy again"	3 distinct references
Business constraints	Limited personal capital; competition from nearby sellers; limited promotional reach; volatile raw material prices	"The capital is still limited, so we can't add menus or make better places"	6 distinct references across the four sub themes

Note: open codes were generated from the transcript first and mapped onto the marketing mix dimensions afterwards; the residual risk of circularity is addressed in the Discussion.

Product Strategy

The product strategy implemented by MSME actors focuses on providing flour fried chicken with a savory and crispy taste. JM said that the quality of taste is the main concern so that consumers feel satisfied and make repeat purchases. The selection of chicken raw materials is carried out selectively by considering the freshness and size of the chicken so that the fried results remain consistent.

"I am more concerned with taste, so the seasoning is made just right so that the person who buys it wants to come back," (JM, 2026).

In addition, products are presented in a simple form without diverse menu variations. This is adjusted to the small scale of the business and limited capital. MSME actors consider that focusing on one type of main product is easier to manage in the early stages of the business.

Pricing Strategy

In setting prices, MSME actors adjust the selling price to the purchasing power of the surrounding community. The price of fried chicken is set at an affordable level so that it can be purchased by all groups, including students and middle-to-lower income people.

"The price I set should not be too expensive, Rp7,000 for the chicken, Rp10,000 if it comes with rice; the important thing is that I still make a profit but people still want to buy," (JM, 2026).

Quotations in this article were translated from Indonesian by the author team. The figures in the excerpt above are stated in the transcript as Rp7,000 for one portion of fried chicken and Rp10,000 for a portion served with rice; the earlier rendering as "7000 thousand rupiah" was a translation error and has been corrected.

Pricing also takes into account the prices of competitors around the business location. MSME actors try to keep prices competitive so as not to lose consumers. However, until the time of the research, no discount strategy or special sales package has been implemented.

Promotion Strategy

The promotional strategy implemented is still simple and conventional. MSME actors rely on word-of-mouth promotion and the existence of stalls that are easily visible to the surrounding community. JM stated that promotion is carried out naturally through consumer satisfaction who then recommends to others.

"If it tastes good, usually the buyer tells the story to his friend, so I rely on that," (JM, 2026).

The use of social media as a means of promotion has not been actively carried out due to limited knowledge and time. MSME actors prioritize production and direct sales activities.

Service Strategy

In terms of service, MSME actors try to provide friendly and fast service to consumers. A polite attitude and good communication are considered important to create buyer comfort.

"I try to serve in a friendly way, so that buyers feel at home and don't hesitate to buy again," (JM, 2026).

Service also includes the willingness to adjust consumer orders, such as the number of purchases and the time of presentation. This service strategy is considered as one of the ways to maintain good relationships with customers, especially since most of the consumers are the surrounding community.

Obstacles in the Implementation of Sales Strategy

Based on the results of interviews with MSME actors selling fried chicken in Astana Japura Village, there are several obstacles faced in implementing sales strategies. These obstacles are related to capital aspects, business competition, promotion, and the availability of raw materials.

One of the main obstacles faced is the limitation of business capital. As MSMEs that have only been operating for approximately three months, business actors still rely on personal capital in carrying out daily business activities. This limited capital has an impact on the ability of business actors to develop product variety, improve business facilities, and promote more widely.

"The capital is still limited, so we can't add menus or make better places," (JM, 2026).

In addition to limited capital, competition with similar businesses is also an obstacle in the implementation of sales strategies. Around the business location, there are several other food sellers who offer similar and alternative products. This condition requires MSME actors to maintain product quality and prices so that they can remain competitive.

"There are some around here who sell food as well, so you have to be smart to maintain the same price," (JM, 2026).

Another obstacle is the limited promotional activities. MSME actors have not made optimal use of promotional media, both print and digital media. Promotion still depends on word-of-mouth promotion and easy-to-reach business locations. This causes the marketing reach of the business is still limited to the surrounding environment.

"I haven't had time to promote it anywhere, at least only people around here know," (JM, 2026).

In addition, MSME actors also face obstacles related to fluctuations in the price of raw materials, especially the price of chicken and other supporting materials. Unstable changes in the price of raw materials affect production costs and business profits. MSME actors must adjust their pricing strategies to remain affordable for consumers without reducing product quality.

"Sometimes the price of chicken rises, but if the selling price is increased, buyers are afraid of less," (JM, 2026).

These various obstacles show that the implementation of sales strategies for fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village still faces challenges, especially as a business that is still in the early stages of development. These obstacles are important factors that affect the effectiveness of sales strategies and business sustainability.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of the Sales Strategy

The Introduction undertakes to identify the factors that affect the effectiveness of the strategy, and that question is answered here by reading the four strategy themes in Table 1 against the four constraints reported above. Two conditions appear in the account to have made the strategies work. The first is consistency of taste made possible by a single product line: because only one item is produced, the owner controls the seasoning and the frying result closely, and he attributes repeat visits to that consistency rather than to variety. The second is accessibility in both space and time: the stall is directly visible from the road and is open from 08.00 to 21.00 WIB, so the practical cost to a passer by of making a purchase is low, which matters more in a village with a small and repeatedly circulating customer base than any promotional message would.

Three conditions appear to have limited effectiveness. The first is the absence of record keeping: with no sales notes, the owner cannot establish which hours, days or portion sizes are profitable, so pricing and production decisions are made on impression. The second is the dependence of promotion on satisfied customers alone, which caps the reach of the business at the social network of people who have already bought from it.

The third is exposure to chicken price volatility with no buffer, which forces the margin rather than the selling price to absorb the shock, because the owner believes the local market will not accept a higher price. These factors are the owner's reasoning as he reported it, not measured effects. They are presented here as the mechanism he describes, and they are examined against the literature in the Discussion.

The Impact of Sales Strategy on Business

Based on the results of interviews with MSME actors selling fried chicken in Astana Japura Village, the sales strategy implemented has several impacts on business sustainability. This impact can be seen in the number of buyers, income stability, and business development during the first three months of operation.

The owner perceives the number of buyers to be relatively stable from day to day and attributes this to the focus on taste quality and affordable prices; no customer counts or sales records were available against which that perception could be verified. Even though the business is still relatively new, the owner reports that consumers who are satisfied with the product tend to return.

"Every day there are people who buy, it is not very crowded, but it is enough to make a business," (JM, 2026).

The owner also associates friendly service and good communication with better relationships with buyers. MSME actors stated that some consumers began to know and remember the business, so that regular customers from the surrounding environment appeared.

"There are some buyers who have come often, usually they buy again because they match the taste," (JM, 2026).

In terms of revenue, the owner states that the strategy has so far been sufficient to keep the business trading, although the profit obtained is still limited; no bookkeeping was available to confirm the figures. Daily income is used to cover operational costs and buy raw materials for the next production. This condition shows that a simple sales strategy is still able to sustain the business in the early stages.

"Fortunately, it is not big yet, but it is enough to keep going and buy more materials," (JM, 2026).

However, MSME actors are also aware that a simple sales strategy limits business growth more quickly. Without wider promotion and innovation of sales strategies, the increase in the number of buyers and revenue tends to run gradually.

"If you want to be more crowded, it seems that you do need more promotion, but now we are still focusing on running first," (JM, 2026).

Overall, and on the owner's account alone, the sales strategy implemented by the fried chicken micro enterprise in Astana Japura Village appears to support early stage viability, particularly in maintaining a steady flow of buyers and covering daily operating costs. Because the study has no sales, revenue or customer data, this is a reported perception rather than a measured outcome. However, the strategy still has limitations in driving business growth significantly, so it is necessary to develop a sales strategy in the future.

Discussion

This discussion aims to interpret the findings of research on the sales strategy of fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village by linking it to the theory of sales and marketing strategies and the results of previous research. The discussion is focused on product strategies, prices, promotions, and services, obstacles to implementing sales strategies, and their impact on the sustainability of MSME businesses. Because the interview guide was organised around the marketing mix, the possibility that the four themes merely reproduce the instrument has to be confronted rather than assumed away.

Two features of the data argue against pure circularity: the owner raised taste consistency first and unprompted, before any dimension had been named, and the constraint category in Table 1 emerged from the transcript without any corresponding prompt in the guide. The framework nevertheless shaped what was asked, and the findings should be read as a structured account of the owner's practice rather than as an independent discovery of the dimensions themselves.

Product Strategy in the Perspective of Marketing Theory

The results of the study show that fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village apply a product strategy that focuses on one main type of product, namely flour fried chicken with an emphasis on taste quality and crunch. This strategy is in line with the concept of core product, where the main value offered to consumers is taste satisfaction and food quality (Kotler, 2016). In the context of MSMEs that are still in the early stages of development, focusing on one main product can be an effective strategy to maintain consistency of quality and production efficiency.

Previous research shows that product quality is an important factor in building consumer loyalty in culinary MSMEs. Isma et al., (2023) found that MSMEs that maintain product taste quality and consistency tend to have a higher rate of repurchase. This finding is in line with the results of this study, where consumers who are satisfied with the taste of fried chicken tend to return to purchase even though the variety of products is still limited.

However, the limitation of product variety can also be a challenge in the long run. According to Kotler, (2016), product differentiation is one of the important strategies to maintain competitiveness, especially in markets with high levels of competition. Therefore, although a strategy of focusing on a single product is effective in the early stages of the business, the development of product variations can be considered as an advanced strategy to increase consumer appeal.

Price Strategy and Its Suitability with People's Purchasing Power

The pricing strategy implemented by fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village is to set prices that are affordable and adjusted to the purchasing power of the surrounding community. This practice is more accurately described as affordability driven and competition based pricing than as value

based pricing. The price was fixed from two reference points the owner named himself, namely the purchasing power of nearby residents and the prices charged by neighbouring sellers, and not from any assessment of the value his product delivers relative to the alternatives, which is what value based pricing denotes (Kotler, 2016). Naming the practice correctly matters, because affordability driven pricing caps the margin at whatever the local market will bear and offers no mechanism for capturing additional value, whereas value based pricing does.

Research by Saefudin & Maulana, (2023) shows that pricing in accordance with local market conditions can increase the competitiveness of MSMEs, especially in areas with diverse levels of income. The findings of this study corroborate these results, where affordable prices allow fried chicken products to be accepted by all groups, from students to the general public. However, the results of the study also show that there is a dilemma in pricing when there are fluctuations in raw material prices. This condition shows that MSMEs are still vulnerable to changes in production costs. According to Sulistiyani & Pratama, (2021), MSMEs often face difficulties in balancing selling prices, production costs, and profits due to limited financial management. Therefore, a more flexible pricing strategy and careful cost planning are needed to keep the business sustainable.

Promotion Strategies and Limitations of Marketing Media Utilization

The promotion strategy implemented by fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village is still conventional, relying on word-of-mouth promotion and the existence of business locations. This strategy is commonly applied by beginner MSMEs, especially in rural areas, due to limited resources and marketing knowledge (Setiawan & Sudrartono, 2024). Word-of-mouth promotion has advantages in building consumer trust because it comes from direct experience. According to Kotler, (2016), recommendations from other consumers are one of the most effective forms of promotion because they are considered more credible. The findings of this study show that consumer satisfaction with taste and service encourages informal promotion.

However, the limitations of promotional strategies also have an impact on limited market reach. Research by Aidah & Riswan, (2025) shows that the use of digital media can significantly increase the sales volume of fried chicken MSMEs. In this study, MSME actors have not used social media as a means of promotion, so the wider market potential has not been exploited. This shows that there are opportunities to develop promotional strategies through digital marketing in the future.

Not all of the evidence points in the same direction, and the argument is weaker for treating every prior study as confirmation. Hanaysha, (2021), surveying customers of fast food outlets in Malaysia, found that social media marketing and price promotion were both significant drivers of word of mouth, that is, that paid and digital activity generates the informal recommendation this study treats as spontaneous. Y. Gao et al., (2023) reached

a comparable conclusion for 212 Bangladeshi MSMEs, where digital marketing adoption improved financial as well as sustainability performance. Neither result matches the present case, in which word of mouth is produced with no promotional spending at all.

The divergence is most plausibly explained by scale and setting: those studies examine branded outlets and firms already trading online, competing for the attention of a large, mobile and largely anonymous customer pool, whereas a village stall of three months' standing serves a small population that already knows the seller, so social proximity substitutes for the reach that promotion would otherwise have to buy. The comparison suggests that the apparent advantage of offline word of mouth in this case is a function of market size, and that it will cease to be sufficient at precisely the moment the business tries to grow beyond that population.

Service Strategy and Customer Relations

The results of the study show that friendly service and good communication with consumers are one of the important strategies in maintaining customers. This is better described as informal relational selling than as relationship marketing in the sense Kotler, (2016) intend. Relationship marketing as a construct involves systematic customer data, segmentation and deliberate retention programmes, none of which exists in a stall that has been trading for three months and keeps no customer records (Rosario & Casaca, 2023). What is present is the interpersonal dimension of relational exchange, that is, trust and familiarity built face to face, which emerging market studies identify as the resource small firms rely on before formal customer relationship management becomes feasible (Rebiazina et al., 2024).

Research by Wahyudi et al., (2025) shows that good service can increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty in MSMEs. These findings are in line with the results of this study, where friendly service encourages the formation of permanent customers even though the business is still new. In the context of rural MSMEs, the personal relationship between sellers and buyers is an added value that is difficult for large-scale businesses to imitate.

Constraints of Sales Strategy in the Context of Rural MSMEs

The main obstacles faced by fried chicken MSMEs in Astana Japura Village are limited capital, business competition, limited promotion, and fluctuations in raw material prices. These obstacles are common characteristics that are often faced by MSMEs, especially newly established ones (Sulistiyani & Pratama, 2021). Limited capital has an impact on the ability of business actors to develop sales strategies, both in terms of product innovation and promotion. Setiawan & Sudrartono, (2024) stated that limited capital and human resources are the main obstacles for MSMEs in optimizing marketing

strategies. The findings of this study confirm this statement, where MSME actors are still focused on the sustainability of the basic business.

Fierce business competition also requires MSMEs to have a competitive advantage. In this study, competitive advantage still relies on taste quality and affordable prices. Because the business has traded for only three months and its performance is known solely from the owner's account, the defensible claim is early stage viability rather than sustainable competitive advantage. A sustainable advantage in the sense of Kotler, (2016) requires clear differentiation and an integrated marketing strategy that can be defended over time, and neither the evidence base nor the trading history of this case supports a claim of that order.

The Impact of Sales Strategy on Business Continuity

Rather than restating the findings, this section sets out the mechanism that connects them, which is what the Results alone cannot supply. Two causal chains are visible in the account. The first runs from capital to quality: limited personal capital prevents the purchase of additional equipment and ingredients, which forecloses product diversification, which concentrates the entire value proposition in a single item, which in turn makes consistency of that one item the only available source of differentiation, and this explains why the owner treats seasoning discipline as his central management task.

The second runs from promotional capacity to growth: no budget and no digital skill mean promotion must be free, which makes the business dependent on satisfied customers to carry its message, which limits reach to an existing social network, which caps the rate at which new buyers can be acquired and therefore slows growth even while daily takings remain steady. Read this way, the constraints reported in the Results are not a separate list of problems but the upstream causes of the strategies themselves, which is consistent with the finding of Lesmana et al., (2024) that a simple but consistent strategy can carry a culinary micro enterprise through its early stage.

However, the impact of sales strategies on business growth is still limited. On the owner's account, conventional sales strategies appear sufficient to sustain the business at its present scale but not to accelerate growth. Therefore, the development of more innovative sales strategies, including the use of digital technology, is an important need.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study strengthens the concept that sales strategies that include products, prices, promotions, and services are important factors in the sustainability of MSMEs. This research also makes an empirical contribution by displaying the context of rural MSMEs that is still rarely studied in depth. Returning to the gap that opened this article, the comparison can now be made rather than merely asserted. The urban and digitally active cases reviewed in the Introduction report that promotional design, product

presentation and digital channel management drive sales volume. In this rural case none of those levers was in use, and the business nevertheless maintained a steady flow of buyers, because the functions those levers perform in a large market, namely creating awareness and establishing credibility, were performed instead by physical visibility and by prior acquaintance between seller and buyer.

The theoretical implication is that the marketing mix does not operate uniformly across market sizes: in a small and socially dense market the promotion element is partly substituted by social proximity, and the price element is bounded by observable local purchasing power rather than by perceived value. That is the specific sense in which rural early stage selling differs from the urban cases, and it is a proposition that larger comparative studies can now test.

Practically, the results of this research can be a reference for fried chicken MSME actors and other culinary MSMEs in designing sales strategies that are in accordance with local conditions. In addition, this research can be the basis for local governments and related parties in formulating MSME assistance programs, especially in strengthening marketing and sales strategies. All of these implications must be read against the limitations set out in the Research Method: one business, one informant, one interview, three months of trading, and no documentary or observational data.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the sales strategy implemented by the fried chicken micro enterprise in Astana Japura Village was relatively simple and sufficient to keep the business trading during its first three months. The business relied on a single product with consistent taste, affordable pricing, friendly and flexible service, and word of mouth promotion.

The effectiveness of the strategy was supported by taste consistency, a visible stall, and long opening hours, but limited by the absence of record keeping, limited promotion, and chicken price volatility. These practices were sufficient to cover operating costs and restock but remained limited in expanding the customer base. Therefore, a more planned and innovative sales strategy, particularly through product diversification and digital promotion, is needed to support future business growth.

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