

Entrepreneurship Business Management and Culinary Tourism for the Competitiveness of Traditional Food SMEs in Majalengka

Nur Komariah^{1*}, Ayu Nurwitasari¹, Raden Sondjana Ali Suganda¹, Agung Ilham Triana¹

¹Politeknik Pariwisata NHI Bandung
Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 186, Bandung, West Java 40141, Indonesia

*Corresponding Email: nuk@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Publication information

Research article

HOW TO CITE

Komariah, N., Nurwitasari, A., Suganda, R. entrepreneurial capability, market access, S. A., & Triana, A. I. (2026). and tourism integration. This study aims to Entrepreneurship business management examine how entrepreneurship business and culinary tourism for the management and culinary tourism competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in development enhance the competitiveness Majalengka. *International Journal of of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Applied Business & International Regency, Indonesia, with a particular focus Management, 11(2), 757-772.* on *jalakotek* and *gula cakar*. A qualitative case study approach was employed using purposive sampling involving seven informants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings identified five entrepreneurship business management dimensions and six culinary tourism dimensions that shape SME competitiveness. The study demonstrates that integrating entrepreneurship business management with culinary tourism development provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening traditional food SME competitiveness than relying solely on internal business capabilities. These findings offer practical guidance for policymakers and SME owners in promoting sustainable traditional food enterprises and regional tourism development.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v11i2.4689>

Copyright© 2026 owned by Author(s).
Published by IJABIM



This is an open-access article.

License:

Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike
(CC BY-NC-SA)

Received: 10 June 2026

Accepted: 14 July 2026

Published: 20 August 2026

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Culinary Tourism; Entrepreneurship Business Management; Majalengka Regency; Small and Medium Enterprise Competitiveness; Traditional Food Enterprises

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in economic development by creating employment, stimulating entrepreneurship, and strengthening local economic resilience. In Indonesia, SMEs also contribute to preserving local knowledge, cultural heritage, and traditional production systems, particularly in the traditional food sector (Safitri et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2024). Traditional food SMEs are increasingly recognized as strategic economic actors because they combine commercial activities with the preservation of regional identity and cultural values while responding to the growing demand for authentic culinary experiences (Pugra et al., 2025).

The competitiveness of traditional food SMEs depends not only on product uniqueness but also on entrepreneurial business management, including innovation, financial management, branding, digital marketing, and product certification. These capabilities enable SMEs to improve operational performance, expand market access, and achieve sustainable competitiveness. However, many traditional food SMEs continue to face challenges related to limited managerial capability, inadequate digital literacy, and weak market integration, restricting their business growth (Díaz-Arancibia et al., 2025; Junaidi et al., 2025). At the same time, culinary tourism offers opportunities to strengthen SME competitiveness by connecting local food products with destination branding and tourism experiences, thereby creating additional economic value for local communities (Coelho, 2025; Nurwitasari et al., 2021).

Majalengka Regency possesses considerable potential for developing traditional food SMEs because of its rich agricultural resources, distinctive culinary heritage, and expanding tourism sector. Local products such as *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* represent important cultural assets and have the potential to become regional culinary icons. Nevertheless, field observations reveal that many producers continue to rely on conventional production and marketing practices. At the same time, limited packaging innovation, certification, digital capability, and integration with tourism activities constrain their competitiveness. Despite the growth of tourism and SMEs in Majalengka, empirical evidence explaining how entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism jointly strengthen the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs remains limited.

Against this background, this study aims to examine how entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development enhance the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. The study is significant because it provides insights for strengthening traditional food enterprises while supporting sustainable regional development. Its novelty lies in proposing an integrated framework that combines entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development to explain traditional food SME competitiveness, extending previous studies that have generally examined these dimensions separately. The findings contribute to both the literature and practice by offering strategic recommendations for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and SME practitioners to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of traditional food SMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Business Management in Traditional Food SMEs

Entrepreneurship business management is increasingly recognized as a strategic capability that enables SMEs to improve innovation, operational performance, and long-term competitiveness in dynamic business environments. Entrepreneurship extends beyond business creation to include the ability to identify opportunities, mobilize

resources, and adapt to changing market conditions through effective managerial practices (Otache & Usman, 2024; Terchila, 2025). For traditional food SMEs, entrepreneurship business management encompasses product innovation, financial management, digital marketing, business legality and certification, as well as branding and packaging, which collectively influence business sustainability and market expansion.

Traditional food SMEs differ from other SMEs because they operate at the intersection of commercial objectives and cultural preservation. Their products often rely on inherited knowledge, traditional production methods, and local cultural values, creating both opportunities and managerial challenges. While cultural authenticity represents a competitive advantage, limited managerial capability frequently restricts innovation, market access, and business growth. Previous studies consistently identify inadequate financial management, limited digital capability, weak branding, and insufficient certification as major barriers preventing traditional food SMEs from expanding into broader markets (Agyapong et al., 2022; Hidayati et al., 2025).

Recent literature further emphasizes that entrepreneurship management should be understood as an integrated capability rather than isolated business functions. Product innovation enhances customer value without diminishing authenticity; digital marketing expands market reach beyond local communities; certification increases consumer confidence and facilitates access to formal markets, while effective branding and packaging strengthen product differentiation and destination identity. Collectively, these capabilities improve business resilience and create a sustainable competitive advantage. Nevertheless, previous studies primarily examine these managerial dimensions separately, providing limited understanding of how they collectively strengthen the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs, particularly within tourism destinations. This gap justifies examining entrepreneurship business management as a multidimensional framework for improving SME competitiveness.

Culinary Tourism Development

Culinary tourism has emerged as an important strategy for destination development because food provides authentic cultural experiences while generating economic opportunities for local communities. Unlike conventional tourism products, culinary tourism enables visitors to experience local history, traditions, and community identity through food consumption and interaction with local producers (Coelho, 2025; Recuero-Virto & Arróspide, 2024). Consequently, local culinary products have become strategic resources for destination differentiation, regional branding, and sustainable tourism development.

The literature identifies several interrelated dimensions of culinary tourism development. Destination branding uses local foods to create distinctive regional identities that differentiate destinations from competitors. Traditional foods also function as tourist attractions by offering authentic sensory and cultural experiences that increase visitor satisfaction and destination attractiveness. Furthermore, culinary tourism contributes to preserving intangible cultural heritage by encouraging communities to maintain traditional recipes, local ingredients, and culinary knowledge across generations.

Beyond cultural preservation, culinary tourism creates economic value through tourism experiences, culinary souvenirs, and stronger integration between SMEs and tourism value chains. Traditional food products marketed as souvenirs extend tourists' experiences beyond the destination while creating additional income opportunities for local enterprises. Likewise, collaboration between SMEs, tourism businesses, and local

governments enables broader market access and encourages inclusive regional development.

Despite these opportunities, existing studies indicate that many traditional food SMEs remain weakly connected to tourism ecosystems because of limited promotion, inadequate stakeholder collaboration, and insufficient managerial capability. As a result, tourism growth does not automatically improve SME competitiveness. Therefore, culinary tourism development should be viewed as a collaborative strategy integrating destination branding, cultural preservation, tourism experiences, and SME participation to maximize economic and social benefits. Existing research has largely examined these dimensions independently, leaving limited empirical evidence regarding their collective contribution to strengthening traditional food SMEs in emerging tourism destinations such as Majalengka.

Competitiveness of Traditional Food SMEs

Competitiveness refers to the ability of SMEs to achieve superior performance through innovation, efficiency, market responsiveness, and value creation. For traditional food SMEs, competitiveness extends beyond financial performance to include the preservation of cultural authenticity while responding to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics (Otache & Usman, 2024).

The literature suggests that competitiveness is reflected through six interconnected dimensions: product quality, market access, business sustainability, customer recognition, value creation, and competitive advantage. High product quality strengthens consumer trust and repeat purchases, while broader market access enables SMEs to expand beyond local consumers through retail, digital platforms, and tourism networks. Sustainable businesses demonstrate resilience by balancing economic performance with cultural and social responsibilities. Customer recognition enhances brand awareness and loyalty, whereas value creation differentiates traditional foods through authenticity, heritage, and local identity. Together, these dimensions contribute to sustainable competitive advantage.

Previous studies acknowledge that both internal capabilities and external environmental factors influence competitiveness. Entrepreneurship management provides the internal capability to innovate, manage resources, and improve market responsiveness, whereas culinary tourism creates external opportunities by expanding markets and strengthening destination identity. However, existing research generally investigates these factors separately. Limited attention has been given to how entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development interact to enhance the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs. This gap forms the theoretical foundation of the present study.

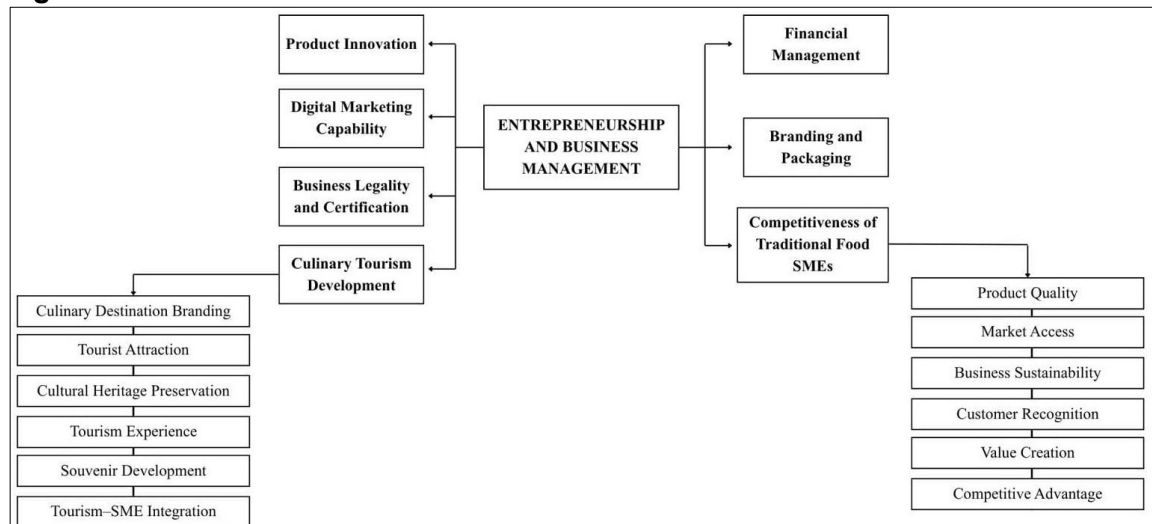
Conceptual Framework

Drawing upon the Resource-Based View and contemporary literature on entrepreneurship and tourism, this study proposes that the interaction between entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development influences the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs. Entrepreneurship business management represents the internal capability of SMEs, reflected through product innovation, digital marketing, business legality and certification, financial management, and branding and packaging. Culinary tourism development represents the external environment that creates opportunities through destination branding, tourist attractions, cultural heritage preservation, tourism experiences, souvenir development, and tourism–SME integration.

Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined entrepreneurship management or culinary tourism independently, this study integrates both constructs into a single analytical framework. The framework assumes that entrepreneurship capability alone is insufficient to strengthen SME competitiveness unless supported by tourism development that expands market opportunities and increases the visibility of traditional food products. Conversely, tourism development cannot generate sustainable economic benefits without competitive local SMEs capable of delivering high-quality products and authentic experiences.

Accordingly, this study positions Traditional Food SME Competitiveness as the outcome of the interaction between Entrepreneurship Business Management and Culinary Tourism Development. This integrated framework provides the theoretical basis for examining how managerial capability and tourism development collectively strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency. The research framework is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore how entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development enhance the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth understanding of business practices, cultural values, and stakeholder perspectives within their natural context.

Research Design

A case study design was adopted to examine traditional food SMEs producing *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* in Maja District, Majalengka Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The study area was selected because of its rich culinary heritage, strong agricultural resources, and growing tourism potential, supported by the development of Kertajati International Airport. This context provides an appropriate setting for examining the relationship between entrepreneurship business management, culinary tourism development, and SME competitiveness.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling was used to select informants with relevant knowledge and experience related to traditional food SMEs and culinary tourism. The units of analysis were traditional food SMEs, particularly enterprises producing *jalakotek* and *gula cakar*, together with stakeholders involved in tourism and SME development. Informants were selected based on four criteria: ownership or management of traditional food SMEs, involvement in tourism or local economic development, familiarity with local culinary products, and willingness to participate in the research. Data collection continued until information saturation was achieved. The informant profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Informant Profile

Informant Category	Role	Number
SME owners	Producers of <i>jalakotek</i> and <i>gula cakar</i>	2
Government representatives	SME and tourism agencies	1
Tourism stakeholders	Tourism practitioners/associations	1
Community representatives	Community leaders and consumers	3
Total		7

Data Collection Method

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews explored entrepreneurship practices, business challenges, tourism opportunities, and competitiveness strategies from the perspectives of SME owners and relevant stakeholders. Direct observations were conducted at production sites, marketplaces, and tourism-related locations to examine production processes, business operations, packaging practices, and interactions between producers and consumers. Document analysis included government reports, tourism statistics, SME development documents, and other secondary sources related to entrepreneurship and culinary tourism in Majalengka Regency. The combination of these methods enabled data triangulation and provided a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Data Analysis Method

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014). The analysis involved data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were systematically coded and categorized into themes corresponding to the study's conceptual framework, namely entrepreneurship business management, culinary tourism development, and traditional food SME competitiveness.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence, as well as member checking with selected participants. Transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants. Dependability and confirmability were enhanced through systematic documentation of data collection, coding procedures, and analytical decisions, thereby ensuring transparency and consistency throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Entrepreneurship Business Management of Traditional Food SMEs

Business Orientation and Entrepreneurial Practices

The findings indicate that entrepreneurship among traditional food SMEs in Maja District has developed through different business orientations despite operating within the same geographical and cultural context. Triangulation of interview data, field observations, and document analysis demonstrates that *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* represent distinct entrepreneurial models that influence their competitiveness and business development.

Interview Findings

Interviews with SME owners revealed that both enterprises originated from household activities inherited across generations. However, *jalakotek* producers described entrepreneurship primarily as an economic activity responding to increasing consumer demand, whereas *gula cakar* producers emphasized preserving family traditions and cultural practices.

One *jalakotek* producer explained:

"Since 2003. It started only for family consumption, but many people liked it, so it gradually became a business." (*Jalakotek* SME Owner)

Observation Findings

Field observations confirmed clear differences between the two enterprises. *Jalakotek* production was carried out almost daily using relatively simple but continuous production processes. Products were distributed through schools, neighborhood retailers, traditional markets, and informal resellers, indicating a stronger commercial orientation.

Conversely, observations at *gula cakar* production sites showed that production was largely seasonal and depended on orders related to religious celebrations and traditional ceremonies. Production techniques remained highly manual and were preserved primarily to maintain product authenticity rather than to increase production capacity.

Document Analysis

Document analysis of local government reports identified both *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* as priority traditional culinary products in Majalengka Regency. However, development documents distinguish their strategic roles. *Jalakotek* is promoted as a product with commercial potential capable of supporting SME development. In contrast, *gula cakar* is primarily recognized as an element of local culinary heritage requiring preservation alongside economic utilization.

Integrated Findings

The triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence demonstrates that different business orientations shape entrepreneurship among traditional food SMEs. *Jalakotek* reflects a market-oriented entrepreneurial model characterized by continuous production and gradual business expansion. In contrast, *gula cakar* represents a heritage-oriented model in which cultural preservation remains central to business decisions. These contrasting orientations subsequently influence innovation, market access, and long-term competitiveness.

Innovation, Digital Marketing, and Business Legality

Interview Findings

Interviews revealed considerable differences in innovation practices between *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* producers. Several *jalakotek* entrepreneurs reported introducing frozen products and vacuum packaging to increase shelf life and facilitate wider distribution.

"We have tried producing frozen jalakotek so customers can take it outside Majalengka." (Jalakotek SME Owner)

In contrast, *gula cakar* producers expressed greater reluctance to modify production methods because maintaining traditional characteristics was considered essential for preserving product identity.

Interviews also showed that digital marketing adoption remained limited among both enterprises.

"There was training from university students about online selling, but I still find it difficult to use. My phone is limited, and I do not really understand social media." (Jalakotek SME Owner)

Regarding business legality, most producers acknowledged that they had not obtained PIRT or halal certification.

"No, we do not have certification yet. We still sell products in a simple way." (Jalakotek SME Owner)

Observation Findings

Observations supported these interview findings. Several *jalakotek* products had adopted improved packaging and frozen-product formats, although implementation remained limited to a few producers. In contrast, *gula cakar* products continued to be packaged in transparent plastic without branding, nutritional labels, or product information.

Researchers also observed that most marketing activities relied on direct sales through traditional markets, neighborhood stores, and personal networks. Digital promotion through websites, marketplaces, or social media was rarely found at either enterprise.

Document Analysis

Government documents relating to SME development indicate that entrepreneurship training has emphasized product innovation, digital marketing, and certification. However, program implementation remains uneven because many traditional food SMEs experience limited financial resources, technological capability, and access to mentoring.

Integrated Findings

Triangulation indicates that innovation alone is insufficient to strengthen competitiveness. Although *jalakotek* demonstrates greater product innovation than *gula cakar*, both enterprises continue to experience similar structural barriers related to digital capability, certification, and managerial capacity. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship development requires integrated support combining innovation, branding, certification, and digital transformation rather than isolated business training programs.

Culinary Tourism Development

Interview Findings

Interviews with SME owners and tourism stakeholders revealed that both traditional foods possess considerable tourism potential but fulfil different tourism functions. *Jalakotek* was widely perceived as an authentic local snack that could enrich visitors' culinary experiences. In contrast, *gula cakar* was regarded as a culturally symbolic product suitable for souvenirs and traditional ceremonies.

Observation Findings

Field observations showed that *jalakotek* was predominantly sold in food stalls, traditional markets, and roadside vendors, enabling direct interaction between producers and consumers. Conversely, *gula cakar* was more commonly displayed as a packaged traditional product with a longer shelf life, making it more suitable for visitors seeking regional souvenirs. Nevertheless, researchers observed limited integration of both products into tourism activities. Neither enterprise was systematically incorporated into culinary tours, tourism packages, or destination branding initiatives.

Document Analysis

Regional tourism planning documents identify culinary products as part of Majalengka's tourism potential. However, document analysis also indicates that traditional foods are generally discussed as complementary tourism products rather than as core attractions integrated into destination development strategies.

Integrated Findings

The triangulated findings indicate that tourism development has created opportunities for expanding traditional food markets, but stronger collaboration between SMEs, tourism stakeholders, and local government remains necessary. *Jalakotek* demonstrates greater potential as a culinary attraction because of its experiential value. In comparison, *gula cakar* possesses stronger potential as a destination souvenir because of its cultural symbolism and longer product durability.

Competitiveness of Traditional Food SMEs

The triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence indicates that the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs is determined by the interaction between entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development. The comparison between the two products demonstrates distinct competitive characteristics. *Jalakotek* benefits from continuous local demand, stronger innovation, and greater opportunities for experiential tourism. Conversely, *gula cakar* derives its competitive advantage primarily from cultural authenticity and symbolic value but remains constrained by limited branding, packaging innovation, and commercialization.

Despite these differences, both enterprises share common structural constraints, including inadequate digital capability, limited access to certification, insufficient managerial capacity, and weak integration into tourism value chains. These constraints restrict market expansion beyond local communities and reduce the potential contribution of traditional food SMEs to regional tourism development.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that improving the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs requires simultaneous strengthening of entrepreneurship, business management, and tourism integration. The convergence of cultural heritage, entrepreneurial capability, and tourism development provides important opportunities for transforming *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* from locally consumed traditional foods into competitive regional culinary products capable of supporting sustainable economic development.

DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurship Business Management as an Internal Driver of Traditional Food SME Competitiveness

The findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship business management constitutes the primary internal capability influencing the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency. Competitiveness is not determined solely by the uniqueness of traditional food products but also by entrepreneurs' ability to innovate, manage financial resources, strengthen branding, improve packaging, obtain business certification, and adopt digital marketing practices. These managerial capabilities determine whether traditional food SMEs can adapt to changing consumer preferences while maintaining product authenticity, consistent with the view that entrepreneurial capabilities are strategic resources for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2001; Tambunan, 2021).

The comparison between *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* demonstrates that entrepreneurial orientation differs according to product characteristics and cultural functions. *Jalakotek* producers exhibit a stronger market-oriented approach by gradually introducing product innovation and expanding distribution channels, whereas *gula cakar* producers prioritize preserving traditional production methods and cultural authenticity. This finding suggests that entrepreneurial decision-making in traditional food enterprises is influenced not only by commercial objectives but also by cultural values embedded in local food traditions. Such findings extend previous research that has primarily associated entrepreneurship with innovation and business growth by demonstrating that cultural preservation also shapes entrepreneurial behavior in heritage-based SMEs (Busyra et al., 2023; Priya, 2024).

Another important finding concerns the limited adoption of digital marketing and business certification among both SMEs. Although universities and government institutions have introduced entrepreneurship training, many producers continue to rely on conventional marketing practices because of limited digital capability and financial resources. Similar challenges have been identified among rural SMEs, where digital transformation is constrained by technological readiness, infrastructure, and managerial capability (Almahameed et al., 2026; Anwar et al., 2022). Consequently, entrepreneurship development should move beyond technical production skills by strengthening digital capability, branding, certification, and strategic business management simultaneously (Sumarlinah et al., 2022).

Culinary Tourism Development as an External Enabler of SME Competitiveness

The findings indicate that culinary tourism provides an important external ecosystem for strengthening the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs. Tourism creates opportunities not only for increasing product sales but also for reinforcing destination identity, preserving local culture, and generating memorable visitor experiences (Mohanty et al., 2020). This finding supports the growing recognition that local food has become an essential component of destination competitiveness because it differentiates destinations through authentic cultural experiences (Syahrial et al., 2020).

The comparison between *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* reveals different tourism functions. *Jalakotek* possesses stronger experiential value because tourists can observe production processes and consume the product directly as part of their travel experience. Conversely, *gula cakar* demonstrates greater potential as a cultural souvenir because of its symbolic meaning and longer shelf life. These differences suggest that destination

development strategies should recognize the diversity of traditional food products rather than apply standardized promotional approaches. Such differentiation aligns with studies emphasizing that culinary destination branding should be based on the distinctive identity and authenticity of local food products (Dirgahayu & Budhirianto, 2023; Pamukçu et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that tourism potential has not yet been fully translated into business competitiveness. Traditional food SMEs remain weakly integrated into tourism value chains, and collaboration among SMEs, tourism stakeholders, and local government remains limited. This observation is consistent with previous studies suggesting that tourism contributes to local economic development only when SMEs are effectively incorporated into destination planning and tourism supply chains.

Integrating Entrepreneurship Business Management and Culinary Tourism Development to Strengthen SME Competitiveness

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that traditional food SME competitiveness emerges from the interaction between entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development rather than from either factor independently. Entrepreneurship provides the internal capability required to improve product quality, branding, innovation, and operational performance, while culinary tourism expands market exposure, destination recognition, and consumer appreciation of local culinary heritage (Noor et al., 2021; Otache & Usman, 2024).

The findings further indicate that the relationship between entrepreneurship and tourism differs across the two case products. *Jalakotek* demonstrates relatively stronger entrepreneurial capability but has not fully utilized tourism opportunities to expand its market beyond routine consumption. In contrast, *gula cakar* possesses considerable tourism value because of its cultural symbolism but lacks sufficient managerial capability to transform this cultural value into broader commercial competitiveness. These contrasting patterns illustrate that entrepreneurship and tourism are mutually reinforcing rather than independent drivers of SME development.

This integrated perspective extends previous studies, which generally examine entrepreneurship and culinary tourism as separate research domains (Hasan et al., 2021; Priya, 2024). By integrating both perspectives within a single analytical framework, this study demonstrates that competitiveness is strengthened when entrepreneurial capability and tourism development operate synergistically. Traditional food products therefore function simultaneously as economic commodities, cultural assets, and tourism resources, enabling SMEs to contribute to sustainable regional development while preserving local culinary heritage.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on SME competitiveness by proposing that entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development should be understood as complementary rather than independent determinants of competitiveness. While previous studies have emphasized managerial capability or tourism development separately, the present findings demonstrate that competitiveness is created through the interaction between internal entrepreneurial capability and external tourism ecosystems. Furthermore, the study highlights cultural authenticity as a strategic intangible resource that enhances competitiveness when supported by innovation, branding, and destination integration, thereby extending the Resource-Based View in the context of traditional food SMEs (Barney, 2001).

Practically, the findings suggest that policies aimed at strengthening traditional food SMEs should integrate entrepreneurship development with tourism planning. Business development programs should emphasize digital marketing, certification, branding, packaging improvement, and financial management. At the same time, tourism policies should incorporate traditional food SMEs into destination branding, culinary festivals, tourism packages, and regional souvenir development. Strengthening collaboration among local governments, tourism organizations, universities, and SME associations is essential to creating an integrated culinary tourism ecosystem capable of enhancing SME competitiveness while preserving Majalengka's culinary heritage.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development jointly enhance the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that SME competitiveness is shaped not only by internal managerial capabilities but also by the extent to which traditional food products are integrated into the regional tourism ecosystem. The comparison between *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* shows that the two products possess different competitive characteristics. *Jalakotek* demonstrates stronger commercial orientation through continuous production and product innovation, whereas *gula cakar* derives its competitive advantage primarily from cultural authenticity and heritage value. Despite these differences, both SMEs face common challenges related to limited digital capability, business certification, branding, and tourism integration.

The study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrated perspective in which entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development function as complementary drivers of traditional food SME competitiveness. The findings suggest that sustainable competitiveness can be achieved when managerial capability is strengthened while simultaneously positioning traditional culinary products as tourism assets that support regional identity and local economic development.

A practical implication of this study is that local governments should develop integrated SME and tourism development programs that combine entrepreneurship capacity building, digital transformation, certification support, and destination branding to strengthen the competitiveness of traditional food enterprises.

Future research should examine this integrated framework across different regions and traditional food products to validate its applicability in broader cultural and tourism contexts.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research adopted a qualitative case study approach focusing specifically on traditional food SMEs in Majalengka Regency, particularly *jalakotek* and *gula cakar* producers in Maja District. While this approach enabled an in-depth understanding of local contexts, business practices, and cultural dimensions, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions or types of traditional food SMEs with different socio-economic and cultural characteristics.

Second, the study relied primarily on purposive sampling and a limited number of key informants, including SME owners, local government representatives, tourism stakeholders, and community members. Although data saturation was achieved and

triangulation techniques were employed to enhance credibility, the findings remain dependent on participants' experiences and perceptions, which may introduce subjective interpretations and potential response bias.

Third, the study examined competitiveness from a qualitative perspective by exploring themes such as product quality, market access, business sustainability, customer recognition, value creation, and competitive advantage. As a result, the research did not quantitatively measure the relative influence of entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development on SME competitiveness. Future studies employing mixed-method or quantitative approaches may provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the relationships among these dimensions.

Fourth, data collection was conducted within a specific time frame and therefore may not fully capture the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship practices, tourism development, and market changes over time. External factors such as policy shifts, technological advancements, and changes in consumer behavior could influence SME competitiveness in ways not fully reflected in this study.

Finally, although the study integrated entrepreneurship business management and culinary tourism development into a single analytical framework, other factors that may influence SME competitiveness, such as institutional support, supply chain integration, access to finance, and consumer preferences, were not examined in detail. Therefore, future research is encouraged to incorporate these additional dimensions to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the competitiveness of traditional food SMEs in emerging tourism destinations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to this research. Special appreciation is extended to the traditional food SME owners in Maja District, Majalengka Regency, particularly the producers of *jalakotek* and *gula cakar*, for their willingness to share their experiences and valuable insights during the fieldwork. The authors also acknowledge the support provided by local government agencies, tourism stakeholders, and community representatives whose participation greatly enriched this study.

The authors further thank Politeknik Pariwisata NHI Bandung for providing academic support and research facilities that facilitated the completion of this study. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues and reviewers for their constructive feedback and suggestions, which significantly improved the quality of this manuscript.

Finally, the authors are grateful to all parties who directly or indirectly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- Agyapong, A., Aidoo, S. O., & Akomea, S. Y. (2022). Does managerial capability always drive performance? Empirical examinations of small and medium firms (SMEs) in a developing economy. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 71(6), 2337–2360. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-10-2020-0551>

- Almahameed, M., Almohtaseb, A., & Shakkour, A. (2026). Dynamic capabilities, digital readiness, and SME performance: Insights for project and operations management in emerging markets. *Journal of Project Management*, 11(2), 561–576. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.jpm.2025.12.005>
- Anwar, M., Scheffler, M. A., & Clauss, T. (2022). Digital capabilities, their role in business model innovativeness, and the internationalization of SMEs. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 71, 4131–4143. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TEM.2022.3229049>
- Barney, J. B. (2001). Resource-based theories of competitive advantage: A ten-year retrospective on the resource-based view. *Journal of Management*, 27(6), 643–650. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630102700602>
- Busyra, N., Darmawati, D. M., Handayani, T., & Alimudin, M. (2023). Pengembangan kemasan produk kuliner lokal Kepulauan Pari. *Reswara: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 4(1), 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.46576/rjpkkm.v4i1.2275>
- Coelho, R. A. (2025). Culinary tourism: The role of local cuisine in enhancing destination appeal. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management*, 9(2), 41482. <https://doi.org/10.55041/IJSREM41482>
- Díaz-Arancibia, J., Bustamante-Mora, A., Hochstetter-Diez, J., & Villegas, G. M. R. (2025). Systematic mappings on technology adoption in small and medium-sized enterprises from developing countries: An umbrella review. *PeerJ Computer Science*, 11, e3395. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.3395>
- Dirgahayu, D., Karman, K., & Budhirianto, S. (2023). Potential of Indonesian indigenous community local wisdom for food security. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 1230, No. 1, pp. 012023). IOP Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1230/1/012023>
- Hasan, M. R., Abdunurova, A., Wang, W., Zheng, J., & Shams, S. M. R. (2021). Using deep learning to investigate digital behavior in culinary tourism. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 14(1), 43–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-03-2020-0022>
- Hidayati, H. A., Astuti, E. S., Kusumawati, A., & Iqbal, M. (2025). The nexus between entrepreneurial and market orientation on digital marketing capabilities and marketing performance of SMEs in emerging markets. *Cogent Business & Management*, 12(1), 2526150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2526150>
- Junaidi, J., Parela, E., & Ariswandy, D. (2025). The improvement of managerial capacity of MSMEs in facing global competition. *Devotion: Journal Corner of Community Service*, 3(3), 15–25. <https://doi.org/10.54012/devotion.v3i3.428>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Mohanty, P. P., Rout, H. B., & Sadual, S. K. (2020). Food, culture and tourism: A gastronomy trilogy enhancing destination marketing, case study of Odisha, India. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality in Asia Pasific*, 3(1), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijthap.v3i1.721>
- Noor, H. M., Imang, U., Ramli, A. M., Rahman, R. A., & Afrizal, T. (2021). New norm for traditional food business by SMEs entrepreneurs: Case study in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 6(16), 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v6i16.2667>
- Nurwitasari, A., Handayaningrum, N., Sinaga, E. K., Kurniati, C., & Komariah, N. (2021). Tourist Perceptions of the Quality of Traditional Culinary Products in Priority Tourism Destinations in Borobudur Central Java. In *Proceedings of the 1st NHI Tourism Forum NTF* (Vol. 1, pp. 100–105). <https://doi.org/10.5220/0009802801000105>

- Otache, I., & Usman, T. O. (2024). Entrepreneurial management, competitive advantage and SME performance: Evidence from an emerging economy. *European Business Review*, 36(6), 997–1014. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2023-0359>
- Pamukçu, H., Saraç, Ö., Aytuğar, S., & Sandıkçı, M. (2021). The effects of local food and local products with geographical indication on the development of tourism gastronomy. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6692. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126692>
- Priya, S. S. (2024). Influence on Entrepreneurship Ability. *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, 11(S1), 119–124. <https://doi.org/10.34293/>
- Pugra, I. W., Kencanawati, A. A. A. M., & Kurniawan, I. G. W. A. (2025). The cultural significance of traditional foods in shaping Indonesian social identity: Challenges and preservation strategies. *Journal of Language, Literature, Social and Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 21–31. <https://doi.org/10.58881/jllscs.v3i1.318>
- Recuero-Virto, N., & Arróspide, C. V. (2024). Culinary destination enchantment: The strategic interplay of local gastronomy in regional tourism development. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 36, 100931. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2024.100931>
- Safitri, N., Dinana, A., & Mashudi, M. (2025). MSMEs as the backbone of the economy: Optimizing potential and facing various challenges. *Public Service: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan*, 2(1), 28–38. <https://doi.org/10.61166/service.v2i1.10>
- Sumarlinah, Y., Sukesu, S., & Sugiyanto, S. (2022). The role of digital marketing, service quality, product quality on purchasing power through the satisfaction of Probolinggo MSME followers during the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 7(1), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v7i1.1444>
- Syahrial, S., Rijal, S., & Badollahi, M. Z. (2020). Analysis of development of culinary tourism management model in case study East Luwu district based on SIG. *International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality in Asia Pasific*, 3(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijthap.v3i1.712>
- Tambunan, P. (2021). Kekuatan bisnis “Dekke Naniura”, keunikan kuliner tradisional suku Batak (Toba) di provinsi Sumatera Utara, Pulau Sumatera, Indonesia. *Jurnal Hutan Tropis*, 9(2), 387–396. <https://doi.org/10.20527/jht.v9i2.11290>
- Terchila, S. (2025). The future of entrepreneurship: Strategic approaches for business adaptation in a changing global environment. From risks to opportunities. *Studies in Business and Economics*, 20(1), 263–280. <https://doi.org/10.2478/sbe-2025-0015>
- Wahyudi, A. S., Yulivan, I., & Rahman, A. (2024). The role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in supporting Indonesia’s economic resilience. *Jurnal Pertahanan: Media Informasi Tentang Kajian dan Strategi Pertahanan yang Mengedepankan Identity, Nasionalism dan Integrity*, 10(2), 297–307. <https://doi.org/10.33172/jp.v10i2.19519>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

1st Author

Nur Komariah is a lecturer in the Culinary Arts Study Program at the Polytechnic of Tourism NHI Bandung, Indonesia. Educational qualifications include a Master's degree in Management from the University of Pasundan, Bandung (2011), a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from STIA Bagasasi Bandung (1996), and diplomas in Hotel Management and Food Production from BPLP Bandung. Professional experience includes serving as Head of the Food Production Department at AKPAR NHI Bandung (2007–2011) and participating in various national and international culinary activities. Research interests include culinary arts, gastronomy, hospitality management, and food safety.

Email: nuk@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id

2nd Author

Ayu Nurwitasari is a lecturer in the Culinary Arts Study Program at the Polytechnic of Tourism NHI Bandung, Indonesia, and currently serves as Coordinator of Indonesian Gastronomy Studies. Educational qualifications include a Doctoral degree in Management from the Indonesia University of Education (2025), a Master's degree in Tourism Management from the Bandung Institute of Tourism (2014), a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management from STIA LAN RI Bandung (2007), and a Diploma in Culinary Management from the Bandung Institute of Tourism (1999). Professional expertise includes gastronomy, culinary arts, food safety, and tourism development.

Email: ayn@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8458-1376>

3rd Author

Raden Sondjana Ali Suganda is a lecturer in Culinary Arts Study Program at the Polytechnic of Tourism NHI Bandung, Indonesia, holding the academic rank of Lecturer (Lektor). Educational qualifications include a Master's degree in Hospitality Management from the Postgraduate Program of STP NHI Bandung (2011), a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from STIA Bagasasi Bandung (1999), a Diploma in Apiary Technology from Fairview College, Canada (1995), and a Diploma in Food Production from BPLP Bandung (1992). Research interests include hospitality management, culinary tourism, and tourism development.

Email: soa@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id

4th Author

Agung Ilham Triana is a lecturer in the Culinary Arts Study Program at the Polytechnic of Tourism NHI Bandung, Indonesia, holding the academic rank of Assistant Expert (Asisten Ahli). Educational qualifications include a Master's degree in Hospitality Management from the Postgraduate Program of STP NHI Bandung (2019), a Bachelor's degree from Universitas Bandung Raya (2015), and a Diploma in Food Production from Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Bandung (2006). Research interests include culinary arts, hospitality management, and tourism development.

Email: agl@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id