
Analyzing the Economic Impact of Marketing Mix Strategies on Entrepreneurial Resilience

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Abstract:

In this study, This study aims to examine the marketing mix strategies and entrepreneurial challenges faced by UMKM Warung Nasii. The research employs a qualitative approach using phenomenological methods to explore the subjective experiences of business actors in depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the business owner and supporting informants, as well as direct observation of business activities at the outlet and during Car Free Day events. The findings reveal that the 7P marketing mix strategies (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) are applied adaptively by Warung_Nasii in responding to the dynamics of the culinary market. Product variations are achieved through menu innovation, pricing strategies are adjusted to consumer purchasing power, location strategies combine permanent outlets with participation in CFD events, and promotion is carried out through social media and direct customer interaction. However, the study also identifies several significant challenges, such as limited capital, fluctuations in raw material prices, increasingly intense business competition, limited human resources, and operational time management. From a phenomenological perspective, these challenges are not merely obstacles but also shape adaptive strategies that strengthen business resilience. This research contributes to the development of MSME marketing strategy literature by providing empirical insights into the application of the marketing mix alongside the dynamics of entrepreneurial challenges. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for other culinary MSMEs in formulating innovative, contextual, and sustainable marketing strategies.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Entrepreneurial Challenges, Culinary MSMEs, Phenomenology

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1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) represent one of the foundational pillars of Indonesia's national economy. Their contribution is not only reflected in employment creation but also in maintaining the nation's economic resilience during various crises. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia (2023), MSMEs account for 99.9% of all business units, numbering over 65 million, and contribute approximately 61.9% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Among these, the culinary sector plays

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a particularly strategic role. Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2022) recorded that more than 30% of MSMEs are engaged in the food and beverage trade, making this sector a major contributor to local economic growth and entrepreneurial innovation. This highlights the essential role of culinary MSMEs in fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development.

However, navigating the highly dynamic and competitive culinary industry has become increasingly challenging. Rapid shifts in consumer preferences, lifestyle trends, and digital behavior require MSMEs to continuously innovate in how they position and promote their products. Modern consumers no longer focus solely on food quality; they also expect affordability, convenience, and unique dining experiences. As a result, effective marketing strategies have become a crucial determinant of survival and growth for culinary MSMEs (Ahmed et al., 2024; Alqudah, 2023). Within this context, the marketing mix—comprising product, price, place, and promotion, and later extended to include people, process, and physical evidence—serves as a fundamental managerial framework for formulating business strategies (Wang, 2020).

The marketing mix remains one of the most frequently applied strategic models in the MSME context. It enables small enterprises to deliver value, strengthen customer relationships, and differentiate themselves from competitors (Ardianwiliandri et al., 2021; Amin, 2021). Previous studies have demonstrated that effective utilization of the marketing mix can improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, and financial performance (Asapa, 2025; Asi, 2025). Nonetheless, while such studies affirm the relevance of the marketing mix, most have been quantitative and have not explored the experiential aspects of how MSMEs implement these strategies amid real-world constraints. Thus, there remains a significant research gap in understanding how small food enterprises interpret and apply marketing mix strategies within their operational and entrepreneurial realities.

This research gap becomes even more pronounced when examining MSMEs with limited resources, such as those in semi-urban or emerging regions, where owners must balance strategic decisions with financial limitations and market pressures. Prior research has tended to focus on larger SMEs or digital-based firms (Tolstoy et al., 2022; Obadia & Vida, 2024), leaving smaller, locally focused enterprises underrepresented. Furthermore, existing literature seldom considers how cultural nuances, local market dynamics, and personal entrepreneurial experiences influence marketing decisions (Keelson et al., 2024; Sulaiman et al., 2024). Addressing this gap is essential to formulating more contextually relevant models for MSME competitiveness and resilience.

One illustrative case is *Warung_Nasii*, a local culinary MSME that began as a rice bowl stall before diversifying its menu in 2024 to include dim sum mentai. The brand name “Warung_Nasii” has remained central to its identity, symbolizing both tradition and innovation. The business operates from two locations: a permanent outlet in the Toyoresmi/Tanjung area and a temporary stall at Car Free Day (CFD) Simpang Lima

Gumul, open only on Sundays. These dual locations represent distinct distribution and marketing strategies—targeting both the weekly mass audience at CFD and the stable local community in Toyoresmi/Tanjung. This context provides a rich empirical ground for exploring how MSMEs deploy the marketing mix to manage competition and sustain growth.

Despite its growing recognition, *Warung_Nasii* faces a range of challenges typical of emerging MSMEs. These include maintaining consistent product quality amid menu diversification, setting competitive yet profitable prices, managing spatial limitations, and executing promotions with minimal capital. Moreover, competition in the culinary sector is intensifying, with rival MSMEs increasingly adopting digital marketing and social media engagement as core promotional tools (Zahara et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021). These dynamics underscore the urgency of understanding how MSME entrepreneurs creatively adapt their marketing mix strategies to sustain business viability.

To address these issues, this study adopts a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of *Warung_Nasii*'s business actors in applying marketing mix strategies to navigate entrepreneurial challenges. Unlike quantitative studies that merely identify correlations among marketing variables, a phenomenological inquiry captures the subjective meanings and interpretations underlying entrepreneurs' strategic decisions (Franco et al., 2021; Isensee et al., 2023). Through this lens, the study aims to uncover how MSME owners internalize, modify, and execute marketing principles within their specific sociocultural and economic contexts.

Accordingly, the study is guided by two key research questions: (1) How are marketing mix strategies implemented by *Warung_Nasii* to navigate competition in the culinary business? and (2) What challenges does *Warung_Nasii* face in operating its business amid intensifying competition? By answering these questions, this study seeks to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the body of knowledge on marketing mix applications within micro and small culinary enterprises through a qualitative, phenomenological perspective. Practically, it offers actionable insights for MSME owners and policymakers to design more adaptive and context-specific marketing strategies that enhance competitiveness in Indonesia's evolving culinary economy.

Finally, the novelty of this research lies in integrating the economic dimension of marketing mix strategies with a phenomenological understanding of entrepreneurial experience. While prior works (e.g., Purnomo et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022) have examined resilience and adaptation among entrepreneurs, few have connected these aspects with marketing decision-making in culinary MSMEs. This study bridges that gap, providing a comprehensive perspective that combines economic relevance, strategic management, and human experience—thereby contributing new insights to the broader discourse on sustainable entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

2. Theoretical Background

The Role of MSMEs in Economic Development

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are recognized as engines of economic growth and employment generation in both developed and developing economies. They contribute substantially to national income, innovation, and social stability (Keelson et al., 2024). In Indonesia, MSMEs account for nearly all business units and employ a large portion of the workforce, making them indispensable for inclusive economic development. Their contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reflects their role not only as business entities but also as agents of community empowerment and poverty reduction (Amin, 2021). Furthermore, MSMEs demonstrate strong resilience during economic crises, maintaining business continuity despite limited resources (Purnomo et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022). In the culinary sector, MSMEs play a particularly vital role in preserving cultural identity, promoting local products, and supporting the creative economy.

The Concept and Evolution of the Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a foundational concept in marketing theory that serves as a strategic tool for aligning business offerings with consumer needs. Initially conceptualized by McCarthy as the “4Ps”—product, price, place, and promotion—the framework has evolved into the “7Ps” by including people, process, and physical evidence to capture service-based and experience-oriented dimensions (Wang, 2020). The marketing mix provides a comprehensive structure for decision-making in product development, pricing strategies, distribution channels, and promotional communication (Ahmed et al., 2024). Recent studies emphasize that adapting the mix to contemporary digital contexts enhances brand engagement and customer loyalty, especially in competitive service industries such as food and beverage (Alqudah, 2023; Ardianwiliandri et al., 2021).

Application of Marketing Mix Strategies in MSMEs

The marketing mix has been widely applied as a practical model for MSMEs seeking to compete in resource-constrained environments. For small businesses, these strategies help create market differentiation, improve service quality, and build customer satisfaction (Amin, 2021). Empirical research supports that the systematic application of the marketing mix can significantly enhance performance outcomes such as sales growth, customer retention, and brand recognition (Asapa, 2025; Asi, 2025). In culinary MSMEs, the marketing mix manifests in designing unique product offerings, establishing competitive pricing, selecting strategic locations, and utilizing digital promotions through social media (Praesri et al., 2022). However, several studies highlight that MSMEs often lack the managerial capability and analytical tools necessary to optimize their marketing mix decisions (Tolstoy et al., 2022; Obadia & Vida, 2024).

Entrepreneurial Challenges in the Culinary Sector

Culinary entrepreneurs face distinct challenges due to the industry’s fast-changing trends and high competition. These challenges include maintaining consistent product

quality, balancing price and cost, and adapting to consumer demands for innovation and sustainability (Li et al., 2021). Limited capital, human resources, and technological adoption further constrain the ability of MSMEs to compete effectively (Zahara et al., 2023). Franco et al. (2021) and Isensee et al. (2023) highlight that resilience and adaptability are critical attributes for entrepreneurs to navigate such constraints. In Indonesia, culinary MSMEs also contend with local market saturation and the need for creative promotional efforts within tight budgets (Asi, 2025). Consequently, understanding how entrepreneurs experience and respond to these multifaceted challenges provides valuable insight into their strategic decision-making processes.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method. The phenomenological approach was chosen because the research aimed to deeply explore the subjective experiences of *Warung_Nasii* MSME actors in implementing marketing mix strategies and overcoming entrepreneurial challenges. Phenomenology seeks to understand the meaning of lived experiences from the perspective of individuals who directly undergo them. Therefore, this approach was considered appropriate for answering the research questions regarding how marketing strategies are executed and how challenges are encountered in the context of small-scale culinary entrepreneurship.

The research was conducted at *Warung_Nasii*, a culinary MSME operating in two locations: a permanent outlet in the Toyoresmi/Tanjung area and a temporary outlet at the Car Free Day (CFD) Simpang Lima Gumul, which opens every Sunday. The primary research subjects were the owner and key managers of *Warung_Nasii*, who are directly involved in designing and implementing marketing mix strategies, as well as in the day-to-day business operations. To strengthen the data, several consumers were also selected as supporting informants to provide insights into consumer perceptions of the marketing strategies applied by *Warung_Nasii*.

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves choosing participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2019). The main informant was the owner of *Warung_Nasii*, while supporting informants consisted of consumers who had made repeat purchases and were therefore able to offer valuable perspectives on how the marketing mix strategies influenced their purchasing behavior and loyalty.

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were carried out with the owner to explore experiences, strategies, and challenges faced in managing the business. Participant observation involved direct observation of sales activities at both the Toyoresmi/Tanjung outlet and the CFD Simpang Lima Gumul location, focusing on customer interactions, promotional activities, and service delivery processes. Meanwhile, documentation included gathering supporting materials such as photos,

sales records, promotional media, and social media posts that reflected *Warung_Nasii*'s marketing strategies and operational dynamics.

Data analysis followed an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA), which involved several systematic steps. The process began with bracketing, where the researcher set aside personal biases to maintain objectivity. This was followed by horizontalization, identifying significant statements from the informants' narratives. These statements were then clustered into key themes such as product, price, place, promotion, and business challenges. Subsequently, textural descriptions were developed to explain what the participants experienced, while structural descriptions illustrated how these experiences occurred. Finally, both descriptions were synthesized to reveal the essence of the participants' lived experiences concerning the implementation of marketing mix strategies and the challenges faced in entrepreneurship.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, both source and method triangulation were employed. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from multiple sources, including the business owner, consumers, and supporting documents. Method triangulation combined data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency across different techniques. Additionally, member checking was conducted by returning the interpreted findings to the informants for validation, ensuring that the analysis accurately reflected their actual experiences and perceptions.

Overall, this methodological design allowed the researcher to capture the depth and complexity of *Warung_Nasii*'s entrepreneurial experience. The integration of qualitative inquiry with a phenomenological approach provided rich insights into how marketing mix strategies are formulated and applied in real-world contexts and how these strategies help MSMEs navigate the challenges of competition, limited capital, and changing consumer behavior.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

This study employed a phenomenological approach to deeply explore the experiences of *Warung_Nasii*'s MSME owner in implementing the 7P marketing mix strategy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the business owner, who had experienced a transformation from selling rice bowls to mentai dim sum, as well as interviews with consumers. This approach was chosen because phenomenology does not only focus on the technical aspects of marketing but also on the lived experience of entrepreneurs in facing market dynamics, interpreting challenges, and finding adaptive strategies in practice.

1. Marketing Mix

a. Product: Product is the core aspect of the marketing mix strategy and becomes the starting point that determines the sustainability of a culinary business. In the context of *Warung_Nasii*, the product is not only seen as a commodity for sale but also as the

result of entrepreneurial journeys, creativity, and adaptation to ever-changing consumer preferences. The shift from rice bowls to mentai dim sum was not merely a business decision but also a reflection of the owner's existential experience in responding to market dynamics, maintaining brand identity, and building emotional connections with customers.

The owner stated: *"The beginning of Warung_Nasii started when I used to sell rice bowls before the COVID-19 pandemic until 2024. I tried adding a trending product at that time, which was dim sum. It turned out that many people liked it, so I've been selling it ever since. I kept the same brand name, Warung_Nasii, because people were already familiar with it. I maintain the quality of the product—from the taste and menu variety to the packaging—to keep it appealing."*

This statement illustrates that the products at Warung_Nasii have evolved in response to market demand while maintaining the brand's identity. This phenomenon reflects the owner's awareness that brand consistency is just as important as product innovation.

This is further supported by a loyal customer who shared their experience: *"I first knew Warung_Nasii from its rice bowls, but when they started selling a new product—mentai dim sum—I ended up liking it even more. It tastes great, the portion is just right, and the price is affordable. I think they're smart to change the menu without changing the name, so it remains easy to remember."*

From the customer's perspective, the product transformation is seen as a strategic move because it preserves brand continuity even though the menu has changed. Customers perceive that the taste, portion size, and menu innovation are added values that keep them loyal.

Phenomenologically, the product aspect at Warung_Nasii is not merely about menu choices, but an experience that unites consumer memory, producer creativity, and brand identity. The product becomes a medium of social and emotional interaction that connects sellers and buyers within the context of culinary business competition. This finding aligns with Kotler & Keller's (2016) view that an effective product is one that not only meets functional needs but also provides emotional and symbolic value to consumers."

b. Price: Price is a crucial element as it directly relates to consumer purchasing power and business profitability. For Warung_Nasii, price-setting was not only based on production costs but also on an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic conditions of its target market—local residents, CFD visitors, and university students.

The he business owner shared their experience as follows:

"When setting prices, I adjust them based on the target market. Since I sell at CFD and near a university, I determine the product price using quality ingredients and calculate the cost of goods sold (COGS) to avoid losses. If it's too expensive, I'm afraid customers might turn to competitors."

This statement shows that pricing is positioned flexibly and adaptively. The owner understands that the CFD location and the campus environment demand affordable prices, as most buyers are students and families looking for practical yet inexpensive food.

This perspective is supported by a customer who stated: “In my opinion, the prices at Warung_Nasii are just right—not too expensive but not cheap either. For that price, the taste and quality are worth it. Compared to other vendors at CFD, Warung_Nasii is actually more worth it.”

The customer’s statement illustrates that Warung_Nasii’s pricing strategy is well-received and even perceived as more valuable than competitors. For consumers, affordable prices that still maintain product quality create a sense of fairness and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the owner’s family, who also support the business operations, added: “*The price is already suitable, especially for young people and those who come to CFD. What’s important is not to raise it suddenly, so people will keep coming back.*”

The family’s statement, as a supporting informant, highlights the social dimension of pricing decisions. Pricing is not merely a business calculation but also a strategy to maintain business sustainability and long-term customer relationships.

From a phenomenological perspective, pricing at Warung_Nasii is not merely a nominal figure but a reflective outcome of the owner’s experience in understanding market realities and sustaining brand existence. The “right” pricing carries symbolic meaning: providing fairness to consumers, maintaining social trust, and ensuring business continuity. This aligns with Tjiptono (2019), who emphasizes that pricing strategies in MSMEs are not only about cost calculations but also about building perceived value in the minds of consumers.

c. Place: Location plays a significant role in culinary business success. Warung_Nasii strategically operates in two locations: (1) CFD Simpang Lima Gumul every Sunday, where large crowds gather, and (2) a permanent outlet in Tanjung/Toyoresmi, close to residential areas.

In the context of the marketing mix, the *place* aspect plays a crucial role in determining the success of a culinary business. Location is not merely viewed as the physical point where transactions occur but also as a representation of accessibility, visibility, and consumer convenience in reaching the product. For Warung_Nasii, location selection is the result of a strategic consideration based on market characteristics. The business owner recognizes that each location has a different market segment with unique consumption patterns. Therefore, Warung_Nasii utilizes two distinct locations to open broader market opportunities: first, at the Car Free Day (CFD) area of Simpang Lima Gumul on Sundays, and second, an outlet in the Tanjung/Toyoresmi area that operates daily.

CFD Simpang Lima Gumul was chosen because it serves as a public gathering hub, especially on weekends, where thousands of people gather to exercise, relax, and seek culinary experiences. The owner understands that consumers at this location tend to look for light, fast, and affordable meals, making Warung_Nasii's presence there highly strategic. Meanwhile, the outlet in Tanjung/Toyoresmi functions as a more permanent business base. Although the owner describes it as still in the early stage of development—or as they say, “mbabat” (clearing ground)—it offers long-term potential due to its proximity to residential areas and local community traffic. Thus, Warung_Nasii's location strategy reflects market diversification efforts, aiming to capture both short-term crowds and build a stable customer base within the local neighborhood.

The owner of Warung_Nasii explained:

“For location, I chose two places. Every Sunday I open at CFD Simpang Lima Gumul because it's really crowded there—people are exercising and hanging out—so it's perfect for selling practical food like dim sum or rice bowls. Then, on weekdays I open in the Toyoresmi or Tanjung area, near GTT. It's still new, kind of still in the 'clearing stage,' but I see good potential because it's near housing areas, so people can buy every day. I think with these two locations, I can reach more customers—both weekly and daily ones.”

A frequent CFD customer shared their view:

“At CFD, it's really easy to find Warung_Nasii; the spot is strategic, right near the jogging and walking routes. So after exercising, you can just buy something—very practical. The Tanjung outlet is also a good idea because locals don't have to wait until Sunday to buy; they can get it any day. The strategy is smart—it reaches more people.”

Based on interview and observation data, Warung_Nasii's location strategy consists of two dimensions: a temporary location in a public crowd center (CFD) and a permanent location within a residential area (Tanjung). From a phenomenological perspective, the choice of place is not merely geographical but also about the consumer's experience in discovering, accessing, and enjoying the product. The CFD location provides a *social experience*, where consumers enjoy the lively atmosphere while eating, whereas the Tanjung outlet offers *comfort and proximity*, allowing access to the product anytime without waiting for special occasions.

The combination of these two locations demonstrates an adaptive strategy—reaching mass consumers while building loyalty in the local market. This shows that for the business owner, place is not just a site for transactions but also a medium to build brand identity and emotional connection with customers. Therefore, Warung_Nasii's *place* strategy effectively expands market reach, increases purchase frequency, and strengthens business existence amid the increasingly competitive culinary landscape.

d. Promotion

In the competitive culinary industry, promotion is one of the most vital elements of the marketing mix. Promotion is not merely about providing product information but

also about building brand awareness, fostering emotional connections with consumers, and ultimately driving purchases. For a micro-business like Warung_Nasii, promotional efforts are carried out in a simple yet strategic manner—by utilizing social media and direct communication with customers. Social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp are chosen due to their low cost, wide reach, and ability to showcase visually appealing product content.

Warung_Nasii's promotional strategy also focuses on creating brand awareness through consistency in its name and brand image. Although the main product has shifted from *rice bowls* to *mentai dim sum*, the brand Warung_Nasii remains unchanged because it is already recognized by consumers. This brand consistency is reinforced through social media promotions, including posts about new menus, customer testimonials, and selling location updates. Additionally, the owner relies heavily on word-of-mouth marketing, where satisfied customers recommend the products to others.

The owner of Warung_Nasii shared:

“When it comes to promotion, I mostly use Instagram and WhatsApp. On Instagram, I usually upload photos or videos of the menu to make people want to try them. I also post when there’s a new menu or information about my selling location at CFD. Besides that, I really believe in word-of-mouth promotion. When someone likes my food, they usually tell their friends, and that often makes others want to try it too. I intentionally keep using the name Warung_Nasii so people don’t get confused because that name has been known since I used to sell rice bowls.”

The research findings indicate that Warung_Nasii's promotional strategy is organic and emphasizes closeness with consumers. Promotion through social media has proven effective, especially since millennial consumers tend to seek product information online. Attractive food visuals stimulate consumers' desire to try the products, while location updates ensure ease of access. Meanwhile, word-of-mouth promotion strengthens the business's credibility, as recommendations from friends or family are generally more trusted than formal advertisements.

From a phenomenological perspective, the promotional approach taken by the owner is not just about spreading information—it also shapes consumers' experiential journey in getting to know and enjoying the product. For example, a customer who first sees a post on social media and later visits the CFD stall experiences an interactive process that reinforces the brand image.

Thus, Warung_Nasii's promotional strategy successfully integrates digital and interpersonal promotion, aligning well with the characteristics of small culinary enterprises. This strategy underscores that successful promotion is not merely about having a large budget but about authenticity, consistency, and connection with consumers.

e. People:

The “people” aspect in the marketing mix emphasizes the role of humans involved in the service and product delivery process to consumers. In the context of the culinary business, *people* are not limited to owners and employees but also include interactions with customers as part of the overall shopping experience. At Warung_Nasii, the owner also acts as the main manager, handling everything from ingredient preparation and product processing to serving customers directly. This characteristic is typical of small culinary enterprises (UMKM), where the owner’s personal involvement in service creates a stronger emotional connection with customers.

The owner’s direct involvement makes interactions with customers warmer and more personal. Customers often feel more appreciated because they are served directly by the owner, who is not merely selling products but also building two-way communication. In addition, the owner strives to maintain consistency in taste, cleanliness, and friendliness in service—creating a lasting positive experience for customers. This factor aligns with the importance of service quality as part of marketing strategy, since in the culinary business, friendly and consistent service often becomes the main differentiator amid many competitors.

The owner of Warung_Nasii stated:

“When it comes to the people involved, I handle everything myself—from cooking, preparing ingredients, to selling. I want customers to feel satisfied, so I make sure everything is well maintained, from taste and cleanliness to how I serve them. I also try to be friendly to all customers because I believe that if the service is good, people will come back.”

A customer shared their experience:

“I like buying from Warung_Nasii because the seller is friendly. When I ask about the menu or request extra sauce, they always respond nicely. It feels more personal because I’m served directly by the owner, not someone else. That makes me comfortable buying there and recommending it to my friends.”

Based on interviews and observations, the people aspect at Warung_Nasii plays a key role in building long-term relationships with customers. The owner’s presence as the frontliner adds value through personalized service rarely found in large-scale culinary businesses. From a phenomenological perspective, the customer’s experience of the owner’s warmth and attentiveness becomes part of the meaning they attach to their interaction with the product. The taste of dim sum or rice bowls is not only about flavor but also about how they are treated during the purchase.

This demonstrates that in UMKM marketing strategies, *people* are not merely the workforce but an essential asset in building customer loyalty. Warm service, consistent taste, and emotional closeness between the owner and the buyer strengthen Warung_Nasii’s brand identity. Thus, *people* become a differentiating factor that helps the business sustain itself amid the intense competition in the culinary industry.

f. Process:

The process aspect in the marketing mix relates to the workflow or mechanisms that ensure products consistently reach consumers in a satisfying manner. In a culinary business such as Warung_Nasii, *process* includes how the owner prepares ingredients, cooks the food, maintains hygiene standards, and serves the final product to customers. A good process is crucial because it affects product quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction.

Warung_Nasii has developed a simple yet systematic work process. The owner ensures that ingredients are always fresh by shopping daily, organizing preparation before selling, and paying attention to small details such as sauce presentation and packaging. At the Car Free Day (CFD) location, the process focuses more on speed of service, as many customers arrive at once. Therefore, the owner prepares stock in advance to avoid long waiting times. Meanwhile, at the Tanjung outlet, the process is more flexible since customers come in waves, but cleanliness and consistency of taste remain priorities.

The owner of Warung_Nasii explained:

“In terms of the workflow, I start in the morning by shopping for ingredients and preparing the dough or production materials, then steaming, which also takes quite a while. So, the dim sum production process actually takes time. After that, I prepare for CFD. My products are always fresh, so I don’t stock up for several days. For example, I make about 5 kg per day and bring that to CFD — it usually sells out, and then I make more again, so I don’t overstock. This way, the product stays fresh. On weekdays, my outlet opens at 9:00 AM and closes at 5:00 PM. For CFD, I leave early at 5:00 AM because I have to be ready by 6:00, and thankfully, everything is usually sold out before noon.”

The research findings show that Warung_Nasii implements operational processes that prioritize quality, speed, and cleanliness. For customers, the dining experience depends not only on flavor but also on the smoothness of the process—from ordering to receiving the food. From a phenomenological perspective, the consumer experience of waiting, observing the preparation, and receiving their meal forms part of the meaning of their interaction with the product.

By maintaining consistent processes across two different locations, Warung_Nasii succeeds in meeting consumer expectations for stable service quality. This demonstrates that even with limited resources, a well-organized process can enhance efficiency and improve customer satisfaction. The process strategy also strengthens Warung_Nasii’s image as a culinary business that takes product quality and customer experience seriously.

g. Physical Evidence:

The physical evidence aspect in the marketing mix refers to everything visible and tangible to consumers that represents the quality of products and services. In a culinary business, physical evidence includes the appearance of the stall, cleanliness, food

packaging, and presentation style. *Physical evidence* plays a key role in creating a strong first impression, enhancing business credibility, and building customer trust. At Warung_Nasii, physical evidence is reflected in several elements. First, the use of clean, neat, and practical packaging makes it easy for customers to take their food home—especially at CFD events. Second, the stall appearance is simple yet organized, both at CFD and the Tanjung outlet. At CFD, the stand is designed to be visually appealing and easy to spot amid crowds, while at the outlet, the owner ensures the area remains clean even as it continues to develop. Additionally, products such as *dimsum mentai* and *rice bowls* are arranged attractively, allowing customers to enjoy not just the taste but also the visual presentation.

The owner of Warung_Nasii stated:

“Actually, there isn’t much difference because the dimsum mentai uses aluminum packaging to keep it durable and heat-resistant — it’s about function. For physical appeal, I focus on taste since many of my customers are repeat buyers because of that. Still, I believe packaging and presentation are important because people eat with their eyes first.”

The research findings indicate that Warung_Nasii recognizes the importance of physical evidence as part of its marketing strategy. Neat and attractive packaging is not just a container but also a branding medium that reinforces the business’s identity. A visible stand at CFD events helps attract customers visually, while outlet cleanliness symbolizes the brand’s commitment to quality. From a phenomenological perspective, customers’ sensory experiences—seeing, touching, and bringing home the product—are integral to their satisfaction.

Thus, physical evidence at Warung_Nasii serves as tangible proof that supports the business’s promise of quality and taste. It strengthens consumer trust, fosters loyalty, and differentiates the business from other culinary competitors.

2. Entrepreneurial Challenges

In the journey of managing a culinary business, every entrepreneur faces various and complex challenges. A phenomenological study helps reveal the meaning behind these experiences—uncovering not only technical obstacles but also the psychological and social dimensions that accompany them. The following outlines the main challenges faced by the main informant of Warung_Nasii.

a. Financial Capital: From the beginning, limited capital was a real constraint. The lack of funds forced the business owner to be cautious in managing expenses and to adjust the scale of the business according to available financial capacity.

The owner of Warung_Nasii stated:

“The challenge is that, since my product is dim sum and there are already so many dim sum sellers or competitors in Kediri, I never do price wars. I set prices according to the cost of goods sold, so the price matches the quality.”

This financial limitation highlights the importance of financial management strategies in small businesses. From a phenomenological perspective, this experience shows how entrepreneurs develop awareness of their economic realities while refining self-discipline in managing cash flow.

b. Raw Materials:

Aside from capital, fluctuating raw material prices are a recurring challenge. This condition demands adaptability and ingenuity in finding reliable suppliers.

The owner of Warung_Nasii said:

“After I switched to selling dim sum mentai, the main challenge has been the raw materials because prices often go up and down, so I have to be smart in finding the right supplier.”

The fluctuation in raw material prices reflects the market uncertainty entrepreneurs must face. From a phenomenological viewpoint, this experience cultivates an understanding that business is constantly influenced by uncontrollable external factors, thus requiring creativity and adaptive strategy to sustain operations.

c. Time and Energy: Balancing time between daily operations at the outlet and selling during Car Free Day (CFD) events poses its own difficulties. It requires both physical stamina and effective time management.

The owner of Warung_Nasii shared:

“Managing time is another challenge because I have to split between opening the outlet on weekdays and selling at CFD on Sundays. It’s definitely tiring, but it has to be done.”

This phenomenon illustrates that entrepreneurship demands not only business skills but also the ability to maintain life balance. The meaning that emerges is that perseverance and personal commitment form the foundation for business sustainability.

d. Market Competition: In strategic locations such as CFD areas and outlets, many other food vendors sell similar products. This intense competition drives the need for innovation to maintain attractiveness and uniqueness.

The owner of Warung_Nasii mentioned:

“There’s also competition—at CFD or around the outlet, lots of people sell similar foods, so I have to think about how to make my product stand out.”

Competition is understood as both a source of **creativity and pressure**. From a phenomenological standpoint, this experience forms the understanding that a business identity must be built through **strong differentiation** to avoid blending into market homogeneity.

e. Psychological and Motivational Challenges:

Beyond technical barriers, challenges also arise in the psychological realm, particularly when sales are slow or when experiencing mental fatigue.

The owner of Warung_Nasii expressed:

“Sometimes I feel mentally tired, especially when sales are slow, but I always try to motivate myself to stay positive.”

This psychological dimension reflects the inner struggles of entrepreneurship. From a phenomenological perspective, such challenges are not merely about profit but represent an existential effort to maintain motivation and purpose. The business becomes a space for self-reflection where mental endurance is both tested and strengthened.

5. Discussion

The marketing mix strategy serves as a crucial foundation for sustaining business continuity, especially for MSMEs in the culinary sector. In the case of *Warung_Nasii*, the implementation of the marketing mix reflects a continuous adaptation process to changing market demands and resource limitations. From the product perspective, *Warung_Nasii* successfully transformed its menu from rice bowls to mentai dim sum, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to culinary trends. This finding supports the assertion of Praesri et al. (2022) that product innovation is a critical strategy for maintaining competitiveness in the food industry. Such adaptation shows that entrepreneurs are not only selling food products but also shaping their products as symbols of identity and as responses to evolving consumer preferences.

The pricing strategy adopted by *Warung_Nasii* emphasizes affordability in alignment with the purchasing power of the local community while maintaining reasonable profit margins. According to Amin (2021), competitive pricing in MSMEs functions not only as a financial decision but also as a form of value communication with consumers. For *Warung_Nasii*, pricing reflects a careful negotiation between market expectations and business sustainability. In terms of distribution, the dual-location model—operating both a permanent outlet in Toyoresmi/Tanjung and a temporary stall at the Car Free Day (CFD) Simpang Lima Gumul—illustrates a flexible approach to reaching diverse consumer segments. This finding resonates with the study by Keelson et al. (2024), which revealed that strategic mobility and location diversification enhance MSMEs' ability to expand their market reach while strengthening social and community networks. In this regard, *Warung_Nasii*'s outlets are not merely sales points but also spaces for interaction and brand engagement.

Promotion plays an equally significant role in the success of *Warung_Nasii*. The business utilizes digital platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, complemented by direct promotion at the sales sites. Ahmed et al. (2024) emphasized that digital marketing creates cost-efficient opportunities for MSMEs to establish broader and more personalized relationships with consumers. For *Warung_Nasii*, social media

serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a medium to build emotional connections and strengthen consumer loyalty—a finding consistent with Asapa (2025), who found that effective social media branding significantly increases customer loyalty in café-based MSMEs. Furthermore, the owner's direct involvement and the active participation of family members represent a personalized human resource model, typical of small enterprises. This finding aligns with Isensee et al. (2023), who stressed that the quality and commitment of human resources significantly shape consumer experience and organizational resilience.

The service process at *Warung_Nasii* is simple yet consistent, maintaining a smooth flow from ordering to serving. This operational simplicity is an inherent feature of MSMEs, allowing them to maintain close relationships with customers. Ardianwiliandri et al. (2021) found that process efficiency directly affects customer satisfaction and loyalty, as it demonstrates reliability and attentiveness to consumer needs. From a phenomenological perspective, the consistency in service delivery reflects the entrepreneur's personal commitment to maintaining trust and familiarity—key aspects of long-term customer relationships. Physical evidence, meanwhile, is represented by packaging design, booth presentation, and consistent branding elements that have remained unchanged despite product diversification. According to Asapa (2025), brand identity is essential in fostering consumer trust and loyalty, as it serves as a visual and symbolic representation of the business's values and stability.

Overall, the marketing mix strategy implemented by *Warung_Nasii* demonstrates that the success of culinary MSMEs depends not only on managerial and operational aspects but also on the deeper meanings derived from the entrepreneur's lived experiences. The phenomenological findings show that each component of the marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—embodies emotional, social, and existential dimensions that shape entrepreneurial identity. This aligns with the argument of Sulaiman et al. (2024), who stated that entrepreneurial marketing in dynamic environments requires balancing creativity and adaptability. Thus, this study reaffirms that the marketing mix within MSMEs is not merely a theoretical construct but a lived practice, negotiated between constraints and opportunities, between competition and innovation, and between business reality and entrepreneurial aspiration.

The challenges faced by *Warung_Nasii* further highlight the complex realities of managing a small culinary business in a competitive market. The findings reveal several obstacles, including limited capital, fluctuating raw material prices, increasing competition, insufficient human resources, and the difficulty of managing operations across multiple outlets. These issues are consistent with the findings of Franco et al. (2021), who noted that financial and managerial constraints are among the most significant barriers to MSME sustainability. Similarly, Purnomo et al. (2021) emphasized that during periods of market turbulence, MSMEs must rely on resilience and innovation to maintain business continuity.

From a phenomenological standpoint, these challenges are not merely external obstacles but are integral to the entrepreneur's process of meaning-making, adaptation, and growth. The entrepreneurial experiences at *Warung_Nasii* reveal that confronting challenges fosters learning, creativity, and flexibility—key ingredients for long-term survival in the culinary industry. As Sharma and Rautela (2022) suggested, resilience is a defining trait of successful small business owners, allowing them to navigate uncertainty through adaptive decision-making. Thus, the lived experience of *Warung_Nasii* exemplifies how marketing mix strategies are continuously reinterpreted and redefined through the lens of entrepreneurial resilience and innovation, reinforcing the idea that MSMEs' sustainability is rooted as much in mindset and adaptability as in managerial competence.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that the implementation of the 7P marketing mix strategy—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—at *Warung_Nasii* plays a vital role in sustaining competitiveness within the highly dynamic culinary MSME sector. Each element of the marketing mix is executed adaptively based on consumer needs and market conditions, highlighting that flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness to trends are essential factors for maintaining customer loyalty and ensuring business continuity. The phenomenological analysis reveals that the marketing mix is not merely a managerial concept but a lived practice reflecting the entrepreneur's personal values, social interactions, and adaptive capabilities.

However, this study also uncovers several key challenges faced by *Warung_Nasii*, including limited financial capital, fluctuating prices of raw materials, heightened competition, limited human resources, and complex time management between fixed and mobile business operations. These constraints illustrate the vulnerability of MSMEs in maintaining operational efficiency and innovation under resource limitations. Nevertheless, from a phenomenological perspective, these challenges serve as a valuable learning process that shapes entrepreneurial resilience and creativity in managing uncertainty and pursuing business sustainability.

Despite its meaningful findings, this research has several limitations. The study focuses on a single MSME case, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other sectors or geographic contexts. Additionally, qualitative phenomenological analysis relies heavily on the depth of informant perspectives, which may not capture all external market variables. Future research could incorporate a comparative or mixed-methods approach involving multiple MSMEs across various culinary segments to strengthen the robustness and representativeness of the findings.

Future studies are also encouraged to examine the digital transformation aspect of MSME marketing strategies, particularly the integration of e-commerce and data-driven marketing analytics in enhancing customer engagement and business resilience. Longitudinal research could further explore how MSMEs adapt their

marketing mix over time in response to evolving consumer behavior and market challenges. By expanding these dimensions, future research can provide deeper insights into how marketing mix strategies contribute to the sustainable growth and competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital economy era.

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