# Market Analysis and Business Operations of Online Food Delivery Around STIE Ganesha

**Aep Saefullah[1*], Fuad Gagarin Siregar[2], M. Arief Noor[3], Rianti Salima[4], Rosliana[5]**
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Ganesha, Banten, Indonesia[1,2,3,4,5]
*aep@stieganesha.ac.id[1*], fuadsiregaruno@gmail.com[2], ariefnoor@stieganesha.ac.id[3], slmhrianti@gmail.com[4], roslianana35@gmail.com[5]*

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study examines the market dynamics, operational challenges, and competitive strategies of SMEs in the online food delivery sector around STIE Ganesha, with a focus on identifying performance drivers and actionable solutions for business optimization.

**Methodology/approach:** A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with 20 SME owners using GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood. Data were collected from December 2024 to February 2025 and analyzed thematically to map operational patterns and market behaviors.

**Results/findings:** Key determinants of customer retention included taste quality (highlighted by 85% of respondents), service speed (70%), and promotional effectiveness (65%). SMEs leverage product differentiation (e.g., hyperlocalized menus) and platform partnerships to sustain their market share. However, challenges persist, such as platform instability (reported by 60% of businesses) and insufficient digital literacy for advanced marketing tactics.

**Conclusions:** The study underscores that SMEs' competitiveness in campus-centric markets hinges on balancing micromarket responsiveness (e.g., adapting to seasonal demand) with operational agility. The strategic integration of digital tools and collaborative logistics, rather than reliance on third-party platforms alone, has emerged as critical for scalability.

**Limitations:** The findings are context-bound to SMEs near STIE Ganesha and major delivery platforms. Future studies should explore rural and non-campus ecosystems to validate the universality of the proposed strategies.

**Contribution:** Theoretical: Expands the Resource Orchestration Framework by contextualizing SME strategies in hyper-localized digital economies. Introduces a micro market analysis model linking campus-specific demand cycles to operational decision-making.Practical: Provides actionable toolkits, including a Dynamic Pricing Matrix for demand fluctuations and a Partnership Optimization Framework for platform collaboration.

**Keywords:** *Digital Promotion, Food Delivery, Online Platform, SMEs, Service Quality.*

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## 1. Introduction

Digital technology has revolutionized global business practices, particularly in the culinary sector. This transformation stems from shifting consumer behavior patterns driven by technological adoption. In Indonesia, 77% of the population now accesses the internet (Thi Phuong Anh & Rajah, 2022), creating fertile ground for food delivery platforms. Services like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood have

emerged as key growth drivers in this sector. The STIE Ganesha campus ecosystem exemplifies this digital shift. Its population—students, lecturers, and staff aged 18-35—exhibits distinct characteristics: high mobility, tech-savviness, and preference for instant solutions. Preliminary surveys reveal substantial market potential, with 500-700 daily food transactions occurring within a 1 km campus radius. However, this transformation has not been linear note this growth remains uneven. Despite the promising numbers, only 30% of local food SMEs survive beyond two years. This survival gap highlights crucial operational challenges facing business operators. Our research focuses on analyzing this disparity between market opportunities and enterprise capabilities (Yasirandi & Thanasopon, 2023).

The food delivery market around STIE Ganesha presents unique operational complexities due to fluctuating demand patterns. Consumer preferences vary significantly across demographics: students smembers value menu diversity and nutritional quality. Platform data reveals two distinct demand peaks - lunch (12:00–13:30) and dinner (18:00–20:00) periods. During these windows, 40% of orders comprise local staples like mixed rice and chicken noodles. Despite this predictable pattern, (Damayanti et al., 2023) report that merely 15% of SMEs analyze transaction data to optimize operations, resulting in two critical issues: Daily food waste of 8–12% from overproduction and Chronic mismatch between production capacity and order volume. Supply chain vulnerabilities further exacerbate these challenges. Our findings indicate: 60% of SMEs depend on single suppliers, risking delivery delays and price instability and Third-party platform commissions (15–25% per transaction) compress profit margins. (Rachman & Kurniawati, 2022) identify this dual pressure of inadequate market research and operational inefficiencies as primary failure drivers. Therefore, following (Al Vonda, 2020) framework, our study proposes targeted operational diagnostics to bridge this implementation gap.

SMEs adopting hybrid operational models (combining third-party platforms with in-house delivery teams) demonstrate a 22% profitability increase through cost efficiency and quality control (Sabilaturrizqi & Subriadi, 2024). However, two critical barriers hinder implementation: limited financial literacy and inadequate access to technology training. In digital marketing, while 85% of SMEs use social media, only 25% employ data-driven segmentation strategies such as targeted student-vs-staff campaigns or personalized promotions based on order history. Case studies reveal interactive content (e.g., behind-the-scenes cooking videos) can boost customer engagement by 300% (Fajrillah et al., 2020), yet most SMEs lack creative resources to execute these strategies effectively.

Market challenges are compounded by collaboration gaps and regulatory shortcomings. Fragmentation stems from the lack of SME cooperation in joint loyalty programs or combo packages, while unregulated price wars and inconsistent hygiene standards—30% of SMEs lack PIRT certification (Fajarwaty & Jukes, 2022). —undermine business sustainability. To address these issues, (Al Vonda, 2020) triple-helix framework proposes synergistic solutions: academic institutions like STIE Ganesha providing risk management training, local governments offering tax incentives, and businesses initiating collective marketing efforts. This integrated approach aims to bridge the gap between market potential and SMEs' operational capabilities.

Study proposes an integrated framework to enhance SME competitiveness in STIE Ganesha's digital food ecosystem through three systematic phases: 1) Market Diagnosis: Analyzing demographic segmentation (students vs. staff), menu preference patterns (65% local cuisine dominance), and consumption rhythms (dual peak hours at 12:00-13:30 & 18:00-20:00). 2) Operational Optimization: Addressing supply chain vulnerabilities (60% single-supplier dependency) and platform commission pressures (15-25% per transaction). 3) Digital Synergy Development: Implementing AI-driven content strategies and cross-SME logistics collaboration.

Previous studies have identified critical aspects of food delivery ecosystems, (Sabilaturrizqi & Subriadi, 2024) demonstrated 22% profit gains through hybrid delivery models. (Fajrillah et al., 2020) established 300% engagement boost from video-based marketing, (Damayanti et al., 2023) revealed only 15% of SMEs utilize transaction data analytics, (Rachman & Kurniawati, 2022) linked 58% SME failures to operational-tech mismatch and (Al Vonda, 2020) developed triple-helix models for micro-business

sustainability. Our research advances these foundations through three novel integrations: a) Spatial-Temporal Demand Mapping combining GIS heatmaps with academic calendar patterns, b) Collaborative Resource Pooling System enabling shared delivery fleets among SMEs, c) Adaptive Pricing Engine using machine learning to balance student budgets (IDR 10k-25k/portion) and supplier costs.

Previous research, such as studies by (Elverda et al., 2023) and (Nurrahman et al., 2024) found that consumer behavior in choosing online delivery platforms is influenced more by restaurant reputation (high ratings) than by low prices. These studies also revealed that while many food SMEs in major cities rely on third-party platforms, only a small proportion utilize customer data for market strategy development. On the operational side, (Saefullah et al., 2023) highlighted that logistical inefficiencies, particularly in last-mile delivery, are a primary cause of failure for digital food businesses. SWOT analysis presented by (Tafsiruddin et al., 2024) aids in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of SMEs but often overlooks external factors, such as specific market dynamics in areas like campuses.

A research gap emerges because most studies focus on large-scale analyses (city or provincial level) without addressing micro-markets such as campus areas. The campus market has unique characteristics, including seasonal demand spikes during exam periods and a preference for low-cost orders priced under IDR 15,000. Additionally, previous research has not comprehensively integrated market and operational analysis, which is crucial for optimizing food delivery businesses. Strategic recommendations in the literature are often generic and lack actionable guidance tailored to the resource constraints of SMEs.

Study offers novelty by focusing on the STIE Ganesha campus market ecosystem. The hybrid analytical model employed in this research combines consumer analytics and operational ethnography, enabling the development of strategic recommendations aligned with the real capacities of business operators. Innovations in this research include the creation of practical toolkits, such as a Dynamic Pricing Calculator for consumer preference-based pricing, a Collaborative Delivery Network for logistical efficiency, and a Marketing Content Template to strengthen digital promotion efforts. The study aims to provide practical and applicable solutions to help SMEs address challenges and enhance their competitiveness in the online food delivery sector.

## 2. Literature Review

This study is anchored in contemporary theoretical frameworks that analyze consumer behavior, operational efficiency, and strategic management within the online food delivery (OFD) sector. The variables under investigation—consumer preferences, logistical optimization, and SME resource constraints—are examined through the following lenses:

1. Consumer Behavior and Digital Platforms

   Recent advancements in the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) (Stephen, 2016) elucidate how performance expectations (e.g., restaurant ratings) and hedonic motivations (e.g., user-friendly apps) shape technology adoption in OFD. Complementing this, (Fasha et al., 2024; Shabari.B et al., 2024) demonstrated that online review dynamics significantly influence purchasing decisions, particularly among younger demographics, aligning with the campus market's reliance on digital reputations. These findings contextualize the prioritization of restaurant ratings over pricing observed at STIE Ganesha.

2. Operational Efficiency and Last-Mile Logistic

   Cortes & Suzuki (2022) introduced a crowdsourced delivery optimization model, emphasizing cost reduction through route-sharing algorithms—a theory critical to addressing inefficiencies in campus-centric delivery networks. Additionally, (Pravitasari et al., 2025; Rozi et al., 2024) proposed dynamic pricing frameworks tailored for gig economy platforms, which inform this study's toolkit for adaptive pricing strategies during demand spikes (e.g., exam periods).

3. SME Digital Transformation

   Hidayatulloh et al., (2024) Resource Orchestration Theory highlights how SMEs leverage limited assets through data analytics and partnerships. Their work underscores the gap in customer data

utilization by food SMEs, as noted in existing studies, and supports this research's emphasis on collaborative delivery networks and marketing templates for resource-constrained businesses.

4. Micro-Market Dynamics

Giesler & Fischer (2017) identified unique consumption patterns in campus environments, such as cyclical demand and price sensitivity, which correlate with the STIE Ganesha market's preference for sub-IDR 15,000 orders. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020) recently applied by (Oktaria et al., 2024) to explain how students' budgetary constraints and social norms dictate purchasing habits.

5. Integrated Strategic Analysis

Traditional SWOT frameworks often neglect external micro-market factors, (Farhan et al., 2024) augmented SWOT with ecosystem mapping to capture campus-specific variables. This integration addresses prior studies' oversight of localized dynamics, such as vendor proximity to student dormitories.

Prior literature predominantly focuses on macro-scale analyses (e.g., city-level logistics in (Saefullah et al., 2023) or generic SME strategies, neglecting the interplay between hyper-localized demand patterns and operational adaptability. For instance, (Nurrahman et al., 2024) emphasized third-party platform dependencies but omitted scalable solutions for seasonal demand fluctuations. This study bridges these gaps by synthesizing consumer analytics with ethnographically informed operational strategies informed by (Tafsiruddin et al., 2024). The hybrid model introduces actionable toolkits, including a Dynamic Pricing Calculator and Collaborative Delivery Network, which operationalize Chen's dynamic pricing theory and Gupta and Bose's resource orchestration principles for campus SMEs. By anchoring innovations like marketing templates in (Elverda et al., 2023) behavioral insights, this research offers context-specific strategies absent in prior generic recommendations.

## 3. Method

Study employed a descriptive-analytical approach with a mixed-method design, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve the research objectives (Thompson et al., 2020) This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive overview of the market potential, business operations, and strategies applicable to online food delivery businesses around the STIE Ganesha campus. The research methodology was designed to offer in-depth insights into the market potential and operational dynamics of online food delivery businesses in the STIE Ganesha area. By using a mixed-method approach—including the collection of primary and secondary data, market and operational analysis, and the development of strategic recommendations based on research findings—the study aims to deliver practical solutions that can help online food entrepreneurs improve business performance and achieve long-term success (Sugiyono, 2020).
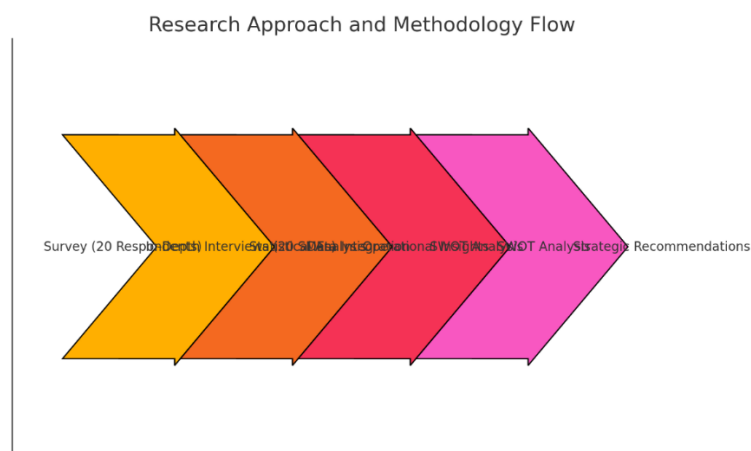


Figure 1. Research Flow

Study followed a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. In the first phase, a survey was conducted with 20 respondents around STIE Ganesha using stratified random sampling to map consumer preferences. A structured questionnaire was used to measure parameters such as price sensitivity (on a 1-5 scale) and service priorities (speed vs. quality). The data were statistically analyzed using tools such as cross-tabulation to identify correlations between demographic profiles and consumption habits. In the second phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 SME operators, selected based on a minimum business sustainability criterion of one year. These interviews focused on daily operational challenges, including inventory management during low-demand seasons and independent courier wage systems. The findings from both phases were integrated using a weighted SWOT analysis, involving marketing experts and SME representatives in a focus group discussion (FGD). This process resulted in an adaptive business model that takes into account the real capacities and challenges faced by business operators.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Based on the primary data collected, respondents in this study consisted of 19 micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs) engaged in online food and beverage delivery businesses around STIE Ganesha. The majority of respondents were male, totaling 17 individuals, while only 3 respondents were female. The types of businesses managed by the respondents varied, including full meals such as chicken and duck rice, fried chicken, chicken noodle soup with meatballs, and fried rice, as well as snacks like batagor (fried fish dumplings), kebabs, martabak (stuffed pancake), ketoprak (vegetable rice cake), and Padang-style satay. Some businesses also offered beverages, including fruit juice, mixed ice desserts, and fruit soups.

Respondents utilized digital platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood as their primary marketing channels. The number of employees in these businesses varied, ranging from sole proprietorships to operations employing up to 25 staff members. Some small businesses were run independently without any additional employees, managed solely by the owners. The brand names used generally reflected the type of products offered, such as "King's Batagor," "Lokasari Juice 3," and "Ketoprak Cirebon Reyhan."

These findings highlight the diversity of business types and the crucial role of delivery platforms in supporting SME business operations in the STIE Ganesha area. The data emphasize how digital platforms have become integral in facilitating product marketing and ensuring business continuity for these enterprises.

Tabel 1. Data of Respondent

| No | Nama Pelaku UMKM | Jenis usaha | Merk | Layanan Online | Jumlah karyawan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rizal | Batagor | King's Batagor | GoFood, GrabFood, ShopeeFood, dll.) | 25 |
| 2 | Rohman soni | Roti bakar dan pisang keju | Pisang keju bang reza | GoFood, GrabFood, | - |
| 3 | Andra | Ayam penyet | Ayam penyet cabe ijo puta | GoFood,grabfood | 4 |
| 4 | Agung | ayam bakar dan soto ayam | wardeng ayam | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | - |
| 5 | Fayaz | juice dan sop buah | Lokasari Juice 3 | GoFood | 2 |
| 6 | Hasbi | Kebab, burger, mayam,hotdog | Malika Kebab legoso raya | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | 6 |
| 7 | Tegar | ketan | ketan susu harapan jaya | grabfood,shoopefood | |
| 8 | Pak Ade | Kue dongkal | dongkal | GoFood,grabfood, | |

| | | | | shoopefood | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Rugi | es campur, es teler, es serut | es campur himalaya | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | |
| 10 | Rafi | pisang ijjo | Go pisang ijo | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | |
| 11 | Irwan | bakso pangsit | Bakso malang BMC | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | 10 |
| 12 | Abdurrahman | nasi ayam bebek | ayam bebek ngumpet | GoFood,grabfood, shoopefood | |
| 13 | Arifin | salad buah, buah potong dan juice | aneka juice dan sop buah kabita | grabfood | 4 |
| 14 | | Dimsum dan cilok | Cilok Barokah | GoFood | |
| 15 | Agung | Mie ayam dan bakso | Mie ayam bakso agung | GoFood | 2 |
| 16 | Buhya Mukhtar | Sate padang | sate padang putra koto | GoFood, grabfood | 1 |
| 17 | Reyhan | Ketoprak | Ketoprak Cirebon reyhan | grabfood,Gofood ShopeFood | 2 |
| 18 | Herman | Martabak | Martabak Bangka DMC | grabfood,Gofood, ShopeFood | |
| 19 | Arif | Nasi goreng | Nasi Goreng mas arif | grabfood,Gofood, ShopeFood | |
| 20 | Andi | Tahu bulat | Tahu bulat enak rasa | grabfood,Gofood, ShopeFood | 1 |

Sourcer: Research Result

Based on the respondents' answers, perspectives on the market potential for online food delivery around STIE Ganesha varied. Some respondents, such as operators of batagor, fried chicken, and fruit juice businesses, perceived the market potential in the area as substantial or moderately promising. They recognized opportunities that could be harnessed, although they acknowledged the need for perseverance and further strategies to optimize these opportunities. On the other hand, several respondents felt that the market potential was still underwhelming or average. New business operators, in particular, admitted to lacking in-depth knowledge or understanding of the market potential in the area. This indicates that experience and the ability to analyze the market play significant roles in shaping business operators' perceptions.

Findings are consistent with research by (Dwityas & Hesti, 2021) which revealed that SMEs in the food delivery sector often underutilize market potential due to limitations in market analysis and marketing strategies. Similarly, a study by (Gunden et al., 2020) emphasized that the success of online food businesses is heavily influenced by operators' ability to understand consumer needs and competition in their operational areas. Therefore, efforts to provide education and mentoring are essential to enhance business literacy and marketing skills among SMEs, enabling them to better capitalize on existing market opportunities.

The respondents' insights reveal that the target consumers for online food delivery services around STIE Ganesha are a mix of the general public and students, with the former dominating on regular days. Several business operators shared that student orders peak during campus events, while daily demand is largely driven by local residents. Others emphasized that their business benefits from serving both groups equally, thanks to their strategic location near the campus. Interestingly, a few respondents indicated that their consumer base is diverse, with no single group standing out significantly.

Observations echo (Hendrianto, 2017) findings, which highlight that businesses situated near educational hubs tend to attract a broad market—comprising students, academic staff, and nearby residents. Similarly,(Lutfi & Juhdi, 2023) found that online food services appeal strongly to the general public due to their convenience and ability to meet everyday needs flexibly. Given these dynamics, businesses have an opportunity to craft dual-focused marketing strategies. Digital promotions targeting students during peak periods, combined with loyalty programs tailored to the general public, can create a strong, balanced customer base. This approach not only drives short-term sales during events but also fosters long-term customer retention and business growth.

Respondents highlighted that the primary factor influencing consumer choices for online food orders is taste quality. Most business operators emphasized that customers prefer flavorful meals and are willing to pay higher prices if the taste meets their expectations. While taste is the top priority, price also plays an important role, especially when combined with promotions or discounts. Several respondents noted that customers are often attracted to special deals, but taste remains the decisive factor in their purchasing decisions. Interestingly, delivery speed was rarely mentioned, suggesting that taste and price are more dominant factors.

Findings align with (Ahmed et al., 2024) , who found that taste quality is a crucial factor in fostering customer loyalty in the online food business. Similarly, (Nurrahman et al., 2024) observed that while promotions and discounts help attract new customers, product quality is key to ensuring satisfaction and repeat purchases. Therefore, online food businesses should focus on enhancing taste quality while leveraging promotions to expand their customer base. This combination of superior product quality and effective marketing strategies can provide a competitive edge in the growing online food delivery market.

### 4.1 Pandemic's Impact on Consumer Behavior

The respondents' views on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected consumer behavior in ordering food online varied. Some business operators experienced an increase in orders during the pandemic, likely driven by social restrictions that encouraged consumers to rely more on online food services. However, other respondents reported a decline in income and order stability after the pandemic subsided, as demand started to decrease with the return of normal social activities. Meanwhile, some businesses noted minimal change in consumer habits or were unable to assess the impact due to starting their operations post-pandemic.

Findings are consistent with research by (Macías-Rendón et al., 2021)  which pointed out that the pandemic heightened consumer reliance on online food delivery services due to social distancing policies. However, (Weiler & Gilitwala, 2023) documented that demand for these services began to decline after the pandemic, as consumers resumed regular activities and returned to dining out. The variation in impact appears to depend on business type, market segmentation, and the adaptability of business operators in maintaining services during the pandemic.Given these diverse experiences, it is crucial for business operators to continuously monitor shifts in consumer behavior. By staying attuned to evolving trends, they can dynamically adjust their marketing and operational strategies to maintain relevance and competitiveness in the online food delivery market.

### 4.2 Challenges in Managing Online Food Delivery Businesses

Respondents face various challenges in managing online food delivery operations, involving both internal and external factors. The most frequently mentioned challenge is competition, with an increasing number of similar food businesses emerging around their locations. This intense competition compels business operators to constantly innovate to attract and retain customers. Additionally, weather conditions, particularly heavy rain, affect consumer activity, leading to a decline in online food orders.

Respondents also reported challenges related to maintaining food quality, such as ensuring freshness (especially for perishable items like mixed ice desserts) and preventing spoilage during periods of low demand. Managing fresh ingredients presents another difficulty; unsold stock risks going to waste.

Some business operators struggle with handling order surges due to limited staffing, while others stated that they have not encountered any major obstacles so far.

Findings align with the research by (Rombach et al., 2023) , which highlighted the increasing competition in the food delivery sector driven by the rapid growth of micro-enterprises in the culinary industry. (Suhartanto et al., 2019) emphasized the importance of managing fresh ingredient supply chains to maintain food quality during delivery. Additionally, the unpredictable nature of consumer behavior, which can cause fluctuating order volumes, was identified as a significant challenge in the literature. To address these challenges effectively, business operators are encouraged to strengthen their operational management, enhance product innovation, and implement differentiation strategies. These measures can help businesses remain competitive and resilient in the face of ongoing market challenges.

### 4.3 Supply Chain Management Challenges
The interviews revealed that some respondents faced varying degrees of difficulty in managing their supply chains. Several business operators reported price fluctuations for raw materials, such as the frequent spikes in chili prices, which significantly impacted operational costs. One respondent highlighted the challenge of sourcing specialty ingredients, like a specific syrup from Makassar (Marjan), which is rarely available in the market. Others mentioned difficulties in coordinating with suppliers to ensure timely delivery of raw materials. However, some respondents stated that they experienced minimal supply chain issues and found the procurement process to be smooth.

Findings are consistent with research by (Singagerda et al., 2024) which noted that SMEs often encounter challenges in price stability and raw material availability, particularly in the food industry. Another study by (Juliana et al., 2022) emphasized that small businesses typically have limited access to large suppliers, forcing them to rely on local vendors whose supply may be inconsistent. Therefore, supply chain management strategies, such as building long-term partnerships with suppliers or identifying alternative sources, are crucial for ensuring business continuity in online food delivery operations.

### 4.4 Order Delivery Strategies
Respondents also shared various strategies for managing order deliveries to ensure food reaches customers on time. Most business operators relied on the estimated delivery times provided by platforms like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood. They found these time estimates helpful in managing customer expectations and alleviating concerns about delays. Some operators focused on streamlining internal processes by preparing orders as quickly as possible after receiving them, minimizing wait times for delivery drivers. Others coordinated directly with drivers to ensure prompt dispatch once the order was ready. Additionally, a few respondents highlighted the importance of proactive communication, such as confirming orders and providing time estimates to customers, to maintain satisfaction.

Findings align with research by (Wilujeng, 2023) which identified speed and reliability of delivery as key factors in improving customer satisfaction with online food services. (Prasetyo et al., 2021) also emphasized that businesses that can shorten preparation times and maintain good coordination with delivery partners are more likely to retain customers. However, the literature also notes that reliance on third-party platforms and drivers can pose challenges, as control over delivery speed is often outside the direct control of business operators. Thus, optimizing internal processes and enhancing communication with delivery partners are critical strategies for improving service efficiency.

### 4.5 Operational Cost Management
Field findings revealed varying perspectives from respondents regarding the operational costs of running an online food delivery business. Some respondents reported that operational costs were not a significant burden for their businesses. However, others indicated that these costs were highly dependent on the prices of raw materials, which often fluctuate and impact the financial stability of their operations. The uncertainty surrounding the prices of fresh ingredients was highlighted as a key factor that business operators must consider when managing long-term operational expenses.

These findings align with research by (Dua & Sahu, 2024) which identified raw material price volatility as a major challenge for food businesses, particularly for SMEs reliant on local suppliers. Additionally, (Utami et al., 2022) found that businesses with efficient cost management—such as optimized procurement strategies—tend to be more resilient to cost fluctuations. Strategies like establishing partnerships with suppliers and implementing proper inventory planning can help business operators mitigate the impact of rising operational costs on their profitability.

### 4.6 Technical Issues with Delivery Platforms

Respondents also shared mixed experiences regarding technical challenges with online delivery platforms. Some business operators encountered problems such as system downtime or application errors, which resulted in orders not being recorded, potentially leading to lost customers. Errors in order processing or management by the platform were also reported, prompting operators to communicate directly with customers to resolve issues, such as offering refunds or order replacements. Conversely, other respondents noted that they had not experienced significant technical problems and that the platforms functioned smoothly for their operations.

These findings are consistent with research by (Lakshmi L et al., 2024) which highlighted that technical issues—such as server disruptions and order processing errors—can negatively affect customer satisfaction and the credibility of businesses. (Dewi & Negoro, 2024) emphasized that effective partnerships with delivery platforms require business operators to respond quickly to technical challenges, as such issues can impact service speed and customer perceptions. Therefore, maintaining good coordination with platform providers and utilizing support features like notifications and order tracking systems are crucial for minimizing the impact of technical disruptions on business performance.

### 4.7 Marketing Strategies to Attract New Customers

The respondents described various marketing strategies aimed at attracting new customers, which combined promotional tactics, visual innovation, and product quality. Several business operators relied on discount promotions to capture consumer interest, noting that promotions often serve as an effective magnet for new customers. Others sought to introduce traditional or nostalgic ("jadul") foods to the community, hoping to create a unique market niche. Another strategy involved enhancing the physical appearance of their businesses by designing aesthetically appealing carts or storefronts to catch the eye of passersby. Meanwhile, some respondents highlighted the importance of consistent taste and product quality, believing that positive experiences lead to repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations who noted that promotions and visually appealing business setups play a significant role in attracting new customers, especially in competitive markets (Situmorang, 2023) emphasized that product consistency is a key factor influencing customer loyalty. Therefore, a combination of effective promotions, visual innovation, and consistent product quality can serve as an optimal marketing strategy to enhance the competitiveness of online food delivery businesses.

### 4.8 Strategies for Retaining Existing Customers

Retain their existing customers, most respondents stressed the importance of maintaining consistent taste and quality. They believe that delicious food keeps customers coming back and can even attract new customers through word-of-mouth referrals. In addition to taste, respondents highlighted that friendly and responsive service plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. Some operators implemented specific tactics, such as offering larger portions or extra toppings, to further enhance customer satisfaction. Delivery speed was also seen as a supporting factor in providing a positive customer experience. These findings are supported by research from (Pahlevi & Suhartanto, 2020), which concluded that product consistency is the cornerstone of building customer loyalty in the food industry (Leo et al., 2022) also found that service quality, including friendliness and responsiveness, has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and retention. Therefore, business operators should continuously improve both product quality and customer service to maintain their customer base and stay competitive in the online food delivery sector.

Many respondents have started using social media and digital communication platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp to attract customers and manage orders. WhatsApp is particularly popular among respondents as it allows direct communication with customers, including students who prefer the convenience of placing orders through quick messages. Some respondents mentioned that they have begun promoting their products on Instagram, although they have not fully optimized the platform's potential. On the other hand, there are respondents who have not utilized social media or are unaware of its benefits in supporting marketing efforts.

These findings are consistent with research by (Tarabieh, 2022) which found that social media platforms like Instagram are effective in increasing customer engagement and building brand awareness for SMEs (Chivandi et al., 2019) also emphasized that instant messaging apps like WhatsApp are valuable for small businesses, providing quick and easy access to customers for promotions and order management. Therefore, integrating social media into a digital marketing strategy can help business operators expand their market reach and boost sales.

Mayoritas responden menyatakan bahwa mereka memberikan penawaran promosi, seperti diskon Most respondents indicated that they use promotional offers, such as discounts and bundled packages, to attract and retain customers. Common promotions include direct discounts or bonus products, for example, "buy chicken penyet and get free iced tea" or similar bundle offers designed to enhance the appeal of their products. Respondents acknowledged that these strategies are quite effective in encouraging repeat orders. However, some operators only offer promotions on special occasions, while others have never implemented promotional campaigns.

These findings align with research by (Wareebor et al., 2024) which highlighted that promotions in the form of discounts and bundling can significantly boost customers' purchase intentions, particularly in the food and beverage sector (Musyafia et al., 2024) found that promotions not only attract new customers but also drive repeat purchases, making them a crucial strategy for strengthening customer relationships. Thus, a combination of discounts, product bonuses, and seasonal promotions can provide a competitive edge for businesses in navigating the highly competitive online food delivery market.

### 4.9 Competition in the Online Food Delivery Business
Respondents observed that competition in the online food delivery sector around STIE Ganesha is fairly intense. Many business operators acknowledged the growing number of competitors, leading to heightened market rivalry. However, some respondents viewed competition as a natural part of the business landscape, believing that each business has its own "share of fortune." These operators chose to focus on their product strengths, particularly taste quality, as a strategy to survive and thrive amidst the competition. Others mentioned that competition has little impact on their business, as customer preferences are flexible and the unique characteristics of each business serve as key selling points.

These insights are consistent with research by which highlighted the increasing competition in the online food industry as more businesses enter the market. (Jazuli et al., 2024) found that success in navigating competition can be achieved through differentiation strategies, such as emphasizing product quality or offering unique innovations. Businesses that maintain a competitive edge through distinct offerings and excellent service have a greater chance of remaining relevant in a competitive market. Therefore, product and service management become essential elements in overcoming competitive challenges in the online food delivery business.

### 4.10 Competitive Advantages in the Online Food Delivery Market
Respondents identified key competitive advantages in their businesses, which centered on taste quality, fresh ingredients, and unique product characteristics. Some operators mentioned that their signature recipes, such as a distinctive green chili sambal, were a major draw for customers. Unique flavors, such as a richer taste or a more elaborate mixed ice dessert, also served as differentiating factors. Additionally, a few respondents relied on affordable pricing as a strategy to attract customers. Others emphasized the importance of high-quality, fresh ingredients—particularly fruits and meats—in building customer loyalty.

These findings align with research by (Alalwan, 2020) which showed that product differentiation, especially in terms of taste and ingredient quality, is a primary strategy for retaining customers in the food business. (Kurniawan et al., 2020) also highlighted that product uniqueness—whether through taste or presentation—enhances customers' perceived value and influences their purchasing decisions. Therefore, business operators who can deliver a consistently superior and distinct taste experience have a greater chance of gaining a competitive advantage in the online food delivery market.

### *4.11 Responses to Market Trends and Innovations*

Respondents exhibited diverse attitudes toward adapting to new trends in the online food delivery business. Some viewed trends as beneficial, especially when aligned with market demand, such as adding popular toppings or introducing innovative menu items like "spicy explosion meatballs" (*bakso mercon*). These operators saw trends as a way to attract new customers and increase engagement. Others mentioned that while they adjusted to customer requests, they did not actively pursue every trend. A few respondents took a more passive stance, indicating that trends had little impact on their business. On the other hand, those with a more flexible approach reported that they preferred to test new trends before fully incorporating them into their offerings.

These findings are consistent with research by (Rachbini et al., 2024) which highlighted that flexibility in adapting to market changes and trends is a key success factor in the online food business. The study emphasized that businesses capable of delivering trend-aligned innovations tend to maintain a competitive edge by retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. Conversely, (Macías-Rendón et al., 2021) warned that businesses overly reliant on trends without aligning them with their brand identity may lose focus and operational stability. Given this balance, it is crucial for business operators to be selective when adopting trends. Ensuring that innovations match customer needs and align with their business identity can help sustain both competitiveness and long-term growth.
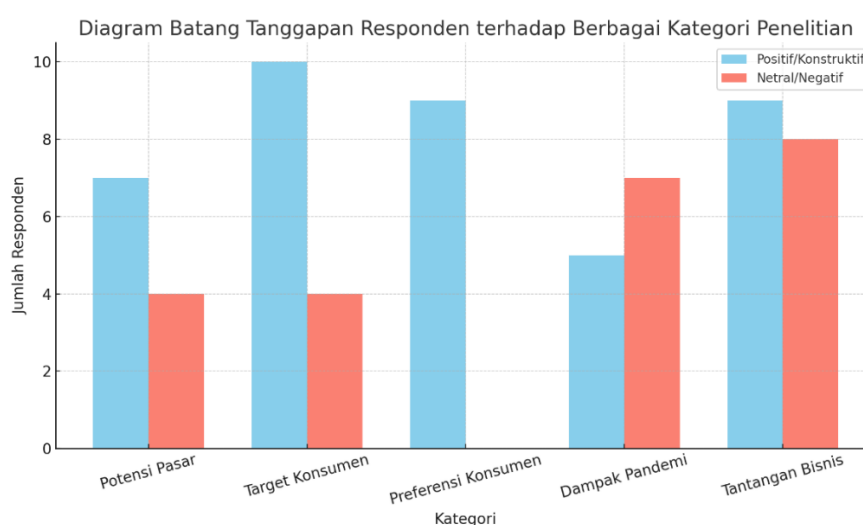


Figure 2. Feedback's Respondent

This bar chart illustrates respondents' perceptions across five research categories: *Market Potential, Target Consumers, Consumer Preferences, Pandemic Impact*, and *Business Challenges*. Each category displays two grouped bars representing *Positive/Constructive* (blue) and *Neutral/Negative* (orange) responses. Key observations:

1. Market Potential, Target Consumers, and Consumer Preferences received predominantly positive feedback (6–8 respondents), indicating optimism about opportunities in these areas.
2. Pandemic Impact and Business Challenges elicited more neutral/negative responses (5–6 respondents), reflecting lingering concerns about external disruptions and operational difficulties.

The data underscores a dichotomy between perceived opportunities (market and consumer aspects) and persistent risks (pandemic effects and operational hurdles) in the STIE Ganesha online food delivery ecosystem. The bar chart illustrating the various responses from business operators regarding key business practices in the online food delivery sector. The chart compares positive/constructive and neutral/negative responses across different categories, helping to highlight the main factors affecting business operations around STIE Ganesha. It underscores the importance of regular operational evaluation, product quality improvement, and the role of customer feedback in maintaining competitiveness and customer satisfaction

These findings align with research by (Saefullah et al., 2025) which emphasized that regular operational evaluations are crucial for sustaining businesses in the food and beverage sector. The study found that businesses conducting frequent evaluations are better positioned to adapt to changing customer needs and business challenges. Similarly, (Sukardi et al., 2024) highlighted that operational evaluations enhance work process efficiency, ultimately contributing to improved customer satisfaction and business productivity. Structured and continuous evaluations thus serve as a key factor in the success of online food delivery businesses.

### 4.12 Recommendations for Improving Online Food Delivery Services

Respondents provided various suggestions to enhance the quality of online food delivery services, focusing on product, service, and delivery processes. Many emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent taste and ensuring that food remains fresh upon delivery. Speed of service was another major concern, with suggestions that delivery drivers should be more proactive in picking up and delivering orders. In terms of customer interaction, friendly service was noted as a vital element in creating positive experiences. Some respondents suggested expanding menu options to offer customers more variety. Additionally, they recommended that delivery platforms improve system stability to prevent technical issues such as application errors. Others highlighted the importance of regular promotions to attract and retain customers.

These suggestions are consistent with research by (Fadhilah & Arief, 2023), which found that service speed, product quality, and staff friendliness significantly influence customer satisfaction in the online food delivery sector (Олійник et al., 2023) also emphasized the importance of menu innovation and periodic promotions to maintain customer interest in competitive markets. Furthermore, (Weiler & Gilitwala, 2023) underscored the need for stable digital platforms to support seamless operations, noting that technical disruptions can erode customer trust. Thus, a holistic approach to improving service quality—including consistent product excellence, efficient delivery, innovative menu offerings, and enhanced digital platform performance—can strengthen customer loyalty and improve their overall experience with online food delivery services.

### 4.13 The Role of Delivery Platforms in Supporting Small Businesses

Most respondents acknowledged that delivery platforms play a crucial role in supporting their small businesses, particularly through promotions and customer discounts. They noted that platform-driven promotions significantly boost order volumes, helping their businesses grow. While some operators felt that the current support from platforms was sufficient, they expressed a desire for more frequent promotional programs to attract additional customers. Others highlighted the platform's role in expanding market reach and improving service accessibility, which has had a positive impact on their business performance.

These findings align with research by (Choi, 2020) which found that digital platform promotions enhance the visibility of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and foster customer loyalty toward online delivery services. (Adak et al., 2022) also emphasized that collaboration between platforms and small business operators in conducting promotional programs creates an effective synergy, expanding market reach and increasing competitiveness. Sustainable and innovative promotional strategies from platforms can thus be a key factor in driving the growth of small businesses in the online food sector.

*4.14 Training and Business Support Needs*
Respondents shared diverse views on the need for training and support programs in managing online food delivery businesses. Many respondents expressed that training would be beneficial, particularly in improving skills related to business management and social media marketing. They believed that mentorship programs could help their businesses grow by enhancing expertise in key areas of business operations. However, some respondents felt that they did not require additional training due to their existing experience and knowledge in managing their businesses.

These findings are consistent with research by (Muangmee et al., 2021) which demonstrated that entrepreneurship training, especially in digital marketing, improves the competencies of small business operators in coping with market competition. (Handayani et al., 2020) also highlighted that continuous business training leads to improved managerial skills, innovation capacity, and promotional effectiveness. Therefore, targeted training programs tailored to the specific needs of business operators can be a crucial factor in fostering growth and competitiveness in the online food delivery sector.

## 5. Conclusion
This study found that the online food delivery business around STIE Ganesha faces various challenges and opportunities. Respondents identified taste quality, delivery speed, and service as key factors for attracting and retaining customers. Intense competition has pushed business owners to emphasize competitive advantages through product innovation, competitive pricing, and attractive promotions. Delivery platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood play a significant role in expanding market reach. However, business owners expect improvements in system stability and the frequency of platform promotions. Additionally, respondents highlighted the need for training in digital marketing and business operations to enhance competitiveness. This research successfully achieved its objective by identifying factors affecting business performance and the strategies employed by business owners to overcome challenges.

## Limitations And Suggestions
This study has several limitations that affect the generalizability of its findings. First, the study was conducted only in the area surrounding STIE Ganesha, which may not fully reflect the conditions of the online food delivery business in other regions. Second, the study involved only 20 respondents, resulting in a limited sample size. This limitation may influence the representativeness of the findings. Third, the study used a descriptive qualitative method focused on in-depth interviews, without quantitative data that could provide statistical analysis. Future research is recommended to explore the relationship between menu innovation, promotional strategies, and customer satisfaction in the context of online food delivery businesses. Additionally, research could be expanded to other regions with a larger number of respondents to improve the representativeness of the results. Quantitative research with statistical analysis may also be used to measure the impact of specific variables on business performance. The practical implications of this study suggest the need for collaboration between delivery platforms, business owners, and the government to support SME competitiveness. Continuous training programs in digital promotion management, raw material management, and business operations are highly recommended to improve adaptability and customer loyalty. This support is expected to strengthen the contribution of online food delivery businesses to the local economy.

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