

The Success of Traditional Marketing of Tofu Bulat Bang Jo MSMEs in North Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face increasing competition amid changes in consumer behavior and the development of digital communication. Nevertheless, some culinary MSMEs continue to rely on direct and traditional marketing practices. This study aims to analyze the factors supporting the success of traditional marketing implemented by Tahu Bulat Bang Jo in North Jakarta, identify the dominant factors, and examine the obstacles encountered in maintaining business sustainability. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving the business owner, mobile vendors, and customers. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and SWOT analysis. The findings indicate that product quality, affordable prices, strategic sales locations, service quality, owner experience, and word-of-mouth communication support business sustainability. Product quality emerged as the most dominant factor, particularly through the consistency of taste, freshness, and direct frying before serving. Strategic routes and direct interpersonal communication also strengthen customer engagement. The main obstacles are raw material price increases, competition, limited promotion, changing consumer preferences, and weather conditions. The study contributes to understanding how interpersonal communication and traditional marketing remain relevant for culinary MSMEs.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are an important part of the economic activities of the Indonesian people. The existence of MSMEs is not only related to production and sales activities, but also to job creation, meeting community needs, and developing local economic activities. The relatively simple characteristics of MSMEs allow business owners to make direct decisions and adjust operational activities to changes in the business environment.

In practice, the success of MSMEs is not only determined by the ability to produce products. Business actors also need to build relationships with consumers, determine appropriate prices, choose sales locations, maintain service quality, and develop communication that is able to make products known to the public. In businesses with limited resources, direct relationships between owners, traders, and consumers can even be an important part of a marketing strategy.

Changes in information and communication technology have driven a transformation in the way companies relate to their consumers. Social media, e-commerce, and messaging applications have opened up opportunities for MSMEs to reach a wider range of consumers. However, these developments do not automatically eliminate the relevance of traditional marketing. For certain businesses, especially culinary businesses that sell products directly, face-to-face interactions, proximity of locations, seller communication, and the consumer experience when receiving products still have strategic value.

Research on MSMEs shows that product quality and word-of-mouth communication have an important relationship with consumer experience and loyalty. Istanti et al. (2025), for example, found that product quality and word of mouth are related to consumer satisfaction and loyalty to MSME products. These findings show that product quality is not only an aspect of production, but can also be the basis for the formation of positive communication between consumers.

In the culinary sector, word-of-mouth communication also has an important position because consumer experience can be quickly conveyed to family, friends, and the social environment. Prameswari and Sitorus (2024) show that word of mouth in culinary MSMEs can be supported by product quality, price, and service. Thus, marketing communication in MSMEs does not always have to be in the form of formal advertising. Consumer experience can turn into a marketing message when customers convey recommendations to others.

This condition is interesting to study at Tahu Bulat Bang Jo in North Jakarta. This business is a culinary MSME established in 2025. Initially, the business was run using one cart, then expanded to eight carts with six employees. This development shows that the business is able to maintain operational activities and expand its sales reach in a relatively short time.

Bang Jo Round Tofu has different marketing characteristics from MSMEs which have made digital media the main channel since the beginning. Products are sold directly using carts, with locations and routes tailored to the community's concentration. The main product in the form of round tofu is fried

when it is to be served so that consumers get a warm product with a crispy texture on the outside and soft on the inside.

These characteristics create a form of marketing communication that takes place directly. Consumers not only buy products, but also see the frying process, interact with merchants, receive service, and experience firsthand the characteristics of the products offered. Thus, interpersonal communication between merchants and consumers becomes an inseparable part of the marketing process.

Location is also an important part of the strategy. Businesses use carts that allow traders to move from one location to another. Areas close to settlements and community activity centers are potential points to acquire consumers. In the context of marketing, this flexibility allows businesses to adjust product distribution to the characteristics of the local market.

Research on MSME marketing strategies shows that analysis of internal and external factors can help business actors determine the appropriate strategy. Rais et al. (2022) use SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the preparation of MSME marketing strategies. The results of the study show that SWOT can be a simple but useful tool for understanding business positions and formulating alternative strategies.

In the culinary sector, Luhung and Hartini (2024) used a qualitative and SWOT approach to analyze the marketing strategy of Cendol Sonia MSMEs. The results of the study show that mapping internal and external conditions can be the basis for formulating market and product development strategies.

These studies provide the basis that the marketing success of MSMEs needs to be understood through the context of their respective businesses. However, some studies highlight the use of digital marketing strategies, marketing mixes, or market development. Meanwhile, research on how traditional direct communication-based marketing can continue to function in urban culinary MSMEs is still relatively limited.

This research positions traditional marketing not solely as a pre-digital sales method, but as a communication practice that involves direct interaction between sellers and consumers. In the context of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo, traditional marketing includes direct sales, location and route selection, interpersonal communication, service, consumption experience, and word of mouth.

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to see the success of traditional marketing through the perspective of communication and business simultaneously. From a business perspective, the research analyzes product quality, price, location, services, management resources, and business barriers. From a communication perspective, the research analyzes how direct interaction and word of mouth are part of the process of forming relationships with consumers.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the factors that support the success of traditional marketing of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo in North Jakarta, identify the most dominant factors, and analyze the obstacles faced in maintaining business sustainability.

Academically, this research is expected to contribute to the study of business communication by showing that marketing communication does not always take place through digital media. In certain contexts, interpersonal communication, geographical proximity, consumer experience, and customer recommendations can be effective communication mechanisms. Practically, this research is expected to provide input for culinary MSME actors in maintaining the strength of traditional marketing while making adjustments to changes in the business environment.

Entrepreneurship and MSMEs

Referring to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Micro Enterprises are defined as productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities that meet certain criteria of net worth and annual sales results as stipulated in the regulation (Law No. 20 of 2008).

Entrepreneurial activities are essentially a synthesis of personality characteristics, financial capabilities, and strengthening resources in an integrated manner (Suryana, 2014). Entrepreneurship is seen as a flexible and imaginative career field, where an entrepreneur is required to have the ability to plan, calculate risks, make strategic decisions, and execute concrete actions to achieve business goals (Fadhilillah & Sakti, 2015). The relationship between entrepreneurship and business activities reflects the manifestation of nature, creativity, and innovation into operational actions that are able to give birth to new business opportunities. In Bygrave's view (in Suryana, 2014), an entrepreneur is an individual who is quick to seize opportunities and is able to build an organizational platform to realize these opportunities into economic value (Pamungkas & Rodiyana, 2024).

Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is a core element in business management practices that functions to map out the best approach to reach the target market effectively and efficiently. The basic concept of marketing mix pioneered by Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasizes four main elements: product⁴"P" , price, distribution channel, and promotion. These four pillars are the strategic foundation in responding to consumer needs while building a sustainable competitive advantage.

In practice, marketing strategies are formed through strategic planning that integrates the analysis of internal and external factors. For MSME actors, this planning is very crucial to optimize limited resources in order to still be able to produce significant marketing impacts. According to Ferdinand (2014), the effectiveness of marketing strategies is highly determined by the accuracy of segmentation, target market (targeting), and the formation of product positions (positioning) that are relevant to the needs of target customers.

Along with the development of information technology, marketing thinking has undergone a paradigm shift towards an integrated marketing strategy, which is the integration between conventional approaches and digital channels (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Marketing no longer focuses on short-term transactions (transactional marketing), but is oriented towards the formation of long-term relationships based on trust (relationship marketing).

Tjiptono (2020) emphasized that business entities that are able to present customer experience consistently through various channels (omnichannel) will master a competitive advantage in the market.

In the operational context of MSMEs, the implementation of the marketing mix () is adjusted to the business reality:4P

1. **Product:** Focuses on the uniqueness, quality, and added value of the product, such as the use of local ingredients and attractive packaging to build visual appeal (Handoko, 2021).
2. **Price:** Demands *value-based pricing* that considers the production cost structure, realistic profit margin, and affordability of the target market's purchasing power (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).
3. **Distribution (Place):** The use of digital channels such as *marketplaces* (TikTok Shop) and social media (*WhatsApp Business*) becomes efficient to reduce operational costs while expanding market reach without geographical boundaries (Setiawan, 2022).
4. **Promotion:** Digital marketing does not just rely on discounts, but utilizes *storytelling* techniques, creative content, and two-way interaction on social media platforms such as Instagram to optimize *customer engagement* (Nisa et al., 2023).

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises)

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in accelerating national and global economic growth. Theoretical studies on MSMEs have developed rapidly since David Birch's pioneering study in the 1970s which proved that the small business sector is the main motor in absorbing labor and creating new jobs compared to large-scale companies (Birch, 1987). In Indonesia, the existence of MSMEs is legally recognized through Law No. 20 of 2008 which classifies business scale based on net worth and annual turnover criteria (Sari et al., 2023).

The development of MSME theory academically is reviewed through three main approaches:

1. **Entrepreneurship-Based Approach:** Emphasizing the high personal motivation and flexibility of entrepreneurs in responding to market dynamics.
2. **Resource Constraint Theory:** Explain the obstacles of MSMEs related to limited capital, technological mastery, and human resource capacity that require external intervention to be able to develop rapidly (Barney, 1991).
3. **Incremental Growth Model:** Describes the evolution pattern of MSMEs that takes place gradually as experience and adoption of innovation increases.

The MSME sector in Indonesia often faces structural challenges, such as low digital literacy and limited access to the official financial ecosystem (BPS, 2023). Therefore, digital marketing strategies for MSMEs cannot adopt the pattern of large corporations outright, but must be designed pragmatically, adaptively, and *cost-effectively* (Pentanurbowo, 2025; Siregar et al., 2025).

SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis Theory (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) is a strategic planning instrument developed by Albert Humphrey in the 1960s at the *Stanford Research Institute*. This instrument is designed to conduct situational evaluation by mapping internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) that affect the sustainability of an organization (Ranka, 2020).

For MSME actors, SWOT analysis is very relevant because its agile business character allows strategic decision-making to be made quickly (Satria & Shahbana, 2020). Through SWOT mapping, companies can formulate four generic strategy combinations (Maulana et al., 2023):

1. **SO (Strength-Opportunity) Strategy:** Using internal strengths to seize external opportunities. For example, utilizing the advantages of culinary product quality to fill the healthy food market niche that is trending on social media (Pratiwi & Rohman, 2023).
2. **WO (Weakness-Opportunity) Strategy:** Minimize internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities, such as overcoming limited promotional capital through the use of free social media platforms.
3. **ST (Strength-Threat) Strategy:** Using internal force to anticipate or suppress the impact of external threats.
4. **WT (Weakness-Threat) Strategy:** Minimize internal weaknesses while avoiding threats from competitors or changes in the business environment.

In the context of digital marketing, SWOT analysis is a *continuous evaluation framework* and can help determine the digital platform that is most compatible with the business's internal resources (Hidayat & Dewi, 2021; Rais et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in Indonesia's economy through job creation, income generation, and fulfillment of community needs. The success of MSMEs depends not only on production activities but also on effective marketing strategies and strong relationships with consumers.

Traditional marketing remains relevant for culinary MSMEs because it emphasizes direct interaction between sellers and consumers. Through interpersonal communication, sellers can build trust, provide better service, and create positive consumer experiences. These experiences often influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions.

Product quality is one of the main factors affecting consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Istanti et al. (2025) found that product quality contributes to customer satisfaction and encourages positive word-of-mouth communication. Similarly, Prameswari and Sitorus (2024) reported that product quality, price, and service quality support word-of-mouth promotion in culinary MSMEs.

Word of mouth is an effective marketing communication tool because consumers tend to trust recommendations from family, friends, and acquaintances. Positive consumer experiences can increase product

recommendations and help businesses attract new customers without significant promotional costs.

In addition, location strategy and service quality are important factors in traditional marketing. Businesses that can reach consumers easily and provide satisfactory service are more likely to maintain customer loyalty. SWOT analysis is also widely used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in developing appropriate marketing strategies (Rais et al., 2022; Luhung & Hartini, 2024).

Overall, previous studies indicate that product quality, service, location, interpersonal communication, and word of mouth are important factors influencing the success of traditional marketing and the sustainability of culinary MSMEs.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research is directed to understand the experiences, perceptions, and marketing practices carried out by business actors in natural conditions. The case study is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the marketing practices of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo as a business unit that has special characteristics.

Qualitative research allows researchers to understand a phenomenon based on the perspective of the parties directly involved. In this study, attention is directed to how owners, traders, and customers understand product quality, price, location, service, marketing communication, and obstacles faced by the business. The selection of this approach is also in accordance with the characteristics of research that does not aim to generalize results statistically, but rather to produce a contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The object of the research is the traditional marketing practices of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo in North Jakarta. The focus of the research includes direct sales, the use of mobile carts, the selection of locations and routes, communication between traders and customers, service quality, *word of mouth*, and factors that support business success.

The research location is in the North Jakarta area, especially the Koja, Kelapa Gading, and Tanjung Priok areas. The research data also recorded business locations around Jalan Gotong Royong, Koja District, North Jakarta. The research manuscript noted that the area was chosen because it is close to settlements and community activities.

The research informants were selected purposively. The informants were selected because they were considered to have experience or knowledge relevant to the object of the research. The informants consisted of business owners as key informants, two mobile traders as the main informants, and two customers as supporting informants. The original informant data of the study showed five informants, namely Mr. Joshua or Bang Jo as the owner, Mas Roni and Mas Yefta as mobile traders, and Mrs. Ani and Mas Dimas as customers.

Table 1. Research Informant

Code	Role	Long Involvement	Region
INF-01	Business owners	From 2025	Koja
INF-02	Itinerant traders	8 months	Koja-Tanjung Priok
INF-03	Itinerant traders	1 year	Ivory Coconut
INF-04	Customers	6 months	Koja
INF-05	Customers	1 year	Ivory Coconut

Source: Research data, processed by researchers, 2026.

Data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted openly so that informants can explain their experiences regarding the marketing process and operational activities. Interview questions are directed to product quality, price, location, service, how to acquire customers, communication with customers, and business barriers. Observation is carried out by observing sales activities, business locations, frying processes, trader-customer interactions, and environmental conditions. The results of observations are an important source for comparing the information submitted by informants with actual conditions in the field. Documentation is used as data to support research. Documentation includes field records and documentation of research activities relevant to business activities.

Data analysis is carried out through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. In the reduction stage, interview and observation data are selected based on their relationship to the research focus. The data is then grouped into the themes of product quality, price, location and route, service, owner experience, *word of mouth*, and business barriers. At the data presentation stage, the grouping results are compiled in narrative descriptions and tables. Conclusions are drawn after the researcher finds a consistent pattern from the results of interviews and observations.

SWOT analysis is used as a supporting analysis to map the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the business. SWOT is not used to generate statistical scores, but rather as an interpretive tool to formulate alternative strategies based on field findings.

Data validity is done through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation is done by comparing information from owners, traders, and customers. Technique triangulation is done by comparing interview results with observations and documentation. The approach is used to ensure that findings do not come from just one source of information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo

Tahu Bulat Bang Jo is a culinary MSME that sells tofu to people in the North Jakarta area. The business was founded in 2025 by Joshua or known as Bang Jo. At the beginning of business activities, sales were carried out using one cart. In its development, the business had eight carts and six employees. The development of the number of carts shows an expansion of operational activities. This growth not only shows an increase in distribution capacity, but also shows

that the owner is able to manage production, sales, and human resources activities on a larger scale than when the business was first established.

The organizational structure of the business is still simple. The owner plays a role in the procurement of raw materials, fleet management, financial management, and decision-making. Employees assist in the production and sales processes. The simplicity of the organizational structure is an important characteristic in understanding the business marketing strategy. The owner can make decisions quickly without going through lengthy organizational procedures. On the other hand, a high dependence on the owner can also be a weakness when the business grows and requires a more structured administration and management system.

The main product of Bang Jo Round Tofu is round tofu that is fried directly before being given to consumers. The product has a crispy texture on the outside and soft on the inside. Prices are set at a level that is relatively affordable for the public. The production and sales process creates a consumption experience that becomes part of marketing communication. Consumers can see the product fried, receive the product warm, and interact directly with the merchant.

Product Quality as the Core of Marketing Communication

The results of the study show that the quality of products is the most consistent factor appearing in various data sources. The owner explained that the quality of raw materials is maintained to maintain the consistency of taste. The merchant said that customers like fried products when there are buyers so that the products are received warm. Customers also mentioned taste as one of the reasons for purchase.

The findings show that product quality functions as a form of nonverbal communication. The product itself conveys a message about freshness, taste, and attention to quality. When consumers receive products that meet expectations, the experience can strengthen a positive perception of the business. From a business communication perspective, the consumer experience has strategic value because consumers are not only the recipients of the product, but also the recipients of messages about the quality of the business. Consistent products can strengthen consumer trust without the need for lengthy promotional explanations. The findings are in line with Istanti et al. (2025) who found that product quality has a positive relationship with consumer loyalty through satisfaction. The study also shows that *word of mouth* is one of the important factors in the relationship between consumer experience and loyalty.

At Bang Jo Round Tofu, product quality is increasingly important because the product is a ready-to-eat food whose characteristics can be directly assessed by consumers. Taste, texture, temperature, and freshness can be felt at the time of transaction. These characteristics make product quality the main differentiator when businesses face many snack sellers who offer products at relatively similar prices. Consumers have the opportunity to compare the experiences received from various sellers. The observation results show that round tofu is fried before serving so that the product is still warm and crispy. Thus, the production process is not only an operational activity, but also part of the communication experience that consumers can see and feel.

Affordable Prices and Value Perception

Price is the next important factor in the success of the business. The results of interviews with customers show that affordable prices are one of the reasons consumers make purchases. Customers judge the price of the product according to their ability and is proportional to the taste obtained. In the context of marketing communication, price does not only function as a transaction number. Price also conveys a message regarding the position of the product. The relatively affordable price places Tahu Bulat Bang Jo as a snack that can be purchased spontaneously.

Spontaneous purchases are an important characteristic of snacks. Consumers do not need to do long planning to buy products because the economic sacrifice is relatively small. However, price affordability must still be accompanied by adequate quality. These findings show that price and quality are inseparable. Low prices do not automatically lead to success if quality is not suitable. On the contrary, good quality becomes more attractive when consumers value the price to be paid commensurate with the benefits obtained.

Mawardi et al.'s (2023) research on MSME products in Malang shows that product quality, price, promotion, and *electronic word of mouth* are together related to consumer buying interest. The findings reinforce the understanding that price needs to be placed in combination with other marketing elements. In the case of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo, price becomes a simple but effective message: products can be obtained easily without the need for large expenses. The message is then reinforced by the quality of taste and direct consumption experience.

Location, Route, and Consumer Access

The traditional marketing of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo cannot be separated from the location. Because it uses mobile carts, the business does not depend on one point of sale. Traders can adjust the route to the density of the community. The results of observations show that the sales location is close to settlements and community activity lines. This condition makes it easier for consumers to find products.

From a business perspective, location flexibility is an advantage because product distribution can follow consumers. Unlike businesses that use fixed stores, mobile carts can approach crowded points. From a communication perspective, cart movement also functions as a mobile communication medium. The existence of carts, frying activities, and the sound or identity of the business can inform the public that products are available. This shows that *places* in traditional marketing have a broader function than just distribution. Locations become a meeting space between business messages and consumers.

Geographical proximity can also strengthen *word of mouth*. Consumers who live in the surrounding area are more likely to recommend products to others because they have first-hand experience and know the location of the seller. The findings are in line with Luhung and Hartini's (2024) research on Cendol Sonia MSMEs which shows that marketing strategies need to consider internal and external environmental conditions as well as local market characteristics.

Interpersonal Service and Communication

Service is an important part of direct marketing because transactions involve interpersonal communication between merchants and consumers. The results of the interviews show that merchants try to provide fast and friendly service. Observations also show that transactions take place in an orderly manner and consumers acquire products in warm conditions. In this context, service is not only related to the speed of transactions. The seller's attitude, way of communicating, willingness to respond to consumer requests, and friendliness are all part of the customer experience.

Interpersonal communication is important because consumers can respond directly. Merchants can find out how consumers react to products, prices, or services without having to wait for formal surveys. This kind of interaction also provides opportunities for businesses to obtain market information informally. Customer complaints, questions, and comments can be a source of information about consumer needs.

Fahrizal et al. (2024) in a study on Bogor Pioneer Meatball MSMEs showed the relationship between service quality, product quality, customer satisfaction, and *word of mouth*. These findings support the results of the study that service can be a link between consumer experience and positive communication about business. Thus, interpersonal communication can be seen as a relatively cheap marketing asset but has strategic value. Owners do not always have to buy promotional media if every transaction is able to create a positive experience.

Word of Mouth as a Marketing Communication Media

The results of the study show that customers know Tahu Bulat Bang Jo through recommendations from friends, family, and the surrounding community. The findings show that *word of mouth* is one of the important marketing communication media for businesses. Information about products moves through consumer social relationships. The strength of *word of mouth* lies in the level of trust. Recommendations from known people can be perceived as more personal than advertisements made by companies. Consumers tend to consider recommendations as real experiences shared by others. However, *word of mouth* cannot be separated from the quality of the experience. Consumers will not have a strong reason to recommend a product if the experience obtained is not satisfactory. Thus, *word of mouth* in Tahu Bulat Bang Jo is a consequence of a combination of product quality, price, location, and service. Marketing occurs through consumers after consumers have a positive experience.

Prameswari and Sitorus (2024) show that product quality, price, and service are important parts of the implementation of *the word of mouth strategy* in culinary MSMEs. These results strengthen the findings of this study that communication between consumers does not stand alone, but is built from consumption experiences. Istanti et al. (2025) also show the importance of *word of mouth* in building consumer loyalty of MSMEs. Thus, the strategy of retaining customers at Tahu Bulat Bang Jo can be carried out not only through formal promotions, but through the creation of experiences that are worth talking about and recommended.

The Role of Owner Experience in Business Success

The owner has a central role because the business structure is still simple. The owner handles the procurement of raw materials, fleet management, finance, and decision-making. This condition shows that the owner's experience is an important resource. The owner understands demand patterns, potential locations, raw material needs, and customer characteristics. These capabilities allow decisions to be made quickly. When one location generates less sales, traders can change routes. When the price of raw materials increases, the owner can adjust the cost management. However, dependence on the owner can also be a weakness. The larger the number of carts, the greater the need for an administration and supervision system. Overly centralized management can make it difficult to do business when the number of units grows. Therefore, the success of the business in the next stage needs to be followed by strengthening the administrative system, financial records, and operational standardization.

Dominant Success Factors

Based on triangulation of sources and observations, product quality is the most dominant factor in business success. These factors appear consistently from owners, traders, customers, and observation results.

Table 2. Supporting Factors for the Success of Bang Jo Round Tofu

Factor	Owner	Merchant	Customers	Observations	Interpretation
Product quality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very dominant
Affordable price	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Height
Location/route	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Height
Live promotion/jingle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium-high
Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium
Owner experience	Yes	Yes	Not dominant	Yes	Supporters
Word of mouth	Not dominant	Yes	Yes	Visible	Important supporters

Source: Primary data, processed by researchers, 2026

The table shows that product quality is the factor with the strongest consistency of findings. These advantages mainly come from the process of frying directly before the product is delivered to customers. These findings also improve the interpretation of the original manuscript. The initial version of the abstract stated that price and route were the most dominant factors, while the results of the study in other sections explicitly stated the quality of the product as the dominant factor.

To maintain scientific consistency, the final article uses **product quality as the dominant factor**, while price and location are positioned as strong supporting factors. Product quality becomes dominant because the product is the main meeting point between business activities and consumer experience. Price can entice consumers to try, location can make it easier for consumers to find products, and service can provide a positive experience. However, repurchases are highly dependent on whether the product meets expectations. The findings reinforce the business communication perspective that marketing communication is not just a verbal message or advertisement. Consistent products are also a form of communication regarding business value.

Obstacles to Rising Raw Material Prices

The increase in the price of raw materials is one of the main obstacles found in the study. The raw materials used include tofu, cooking oil, and gas. When the price of raw materials increases, production costs also increase and can reduce profits. The problem becomes more complex because of efforts to position products as food at affordable prices. An increase in selling prices can affect consumer perception and potentially reduce the attractiveness of products. Strategies that can be done are to improve cost recording and monitor changes in raw material prices periodically. With better recording, owners can find out the cost components that have the most effect on margins.

Barriers to Competition

Competition with similar food sellers is an external threat. The research manuscript shows that more and more business actors are selling similar products around the operational area. In a competitive situation, price wars are not the only option. Businesses can build differentiation through product quality, service, location, and consumer experience. The quality of products fried directly can be differentiated because consumers can see the process. Direct interaction with merchants also creates a different experience compared to purchasing pre-packaged food products.

Promotional Limitations

Bang Jo Tahu Bulat Promotion still relies heavily on direct sales and *word of mouth*. The use of digital media has not become the main part of promotional activities. In this study, this condition is not directly considered a failure of strategy. In fact, traditional marketing is still able to run because there is a compatibility between product characteristics and sales methods. However, the limitations of promotion remain a weakness when businesses want to expand the market. Direct marketing has limited geographical reach. Carts can only reach consumers within their operational radius. Therefore, businesses can maintain traditional marketing as the core while using digital media in a limited way as a communication support. This integration does not have to change the main character of the business.

Changing Consumer Tastes

Consumers have an increasingly diverse selection of snacks. The results show that product variations and changes in tastes can be challenges for business sustainability. Changes in tastes need to be responded to with innovations that still maintain the main identity of the product. Innovation does not have to

change the product as a whole. Variations in flavors, sizes, or packages can be considered based on consumer input.

From a communication perspective, listening to customers is an important part of business relationships. Consumers are not only sales targets, but also sources of information about changing market needs.

Weather as an External Threat

Weather is a factor that has quite an influence on sales because activities are carried out using carts. During rainy or bad weather conditions, the number of customers tends to decrease. These conditions are external factors that are difficult to control. However, businesses can reduce their impact through adjustments to routes and operational hours. The flexibility of the cart can actually be an advantage in these conditions. Traders can choose a more protected location or adjust the point of sale to the pattern of community activities.

SWOT Analysis

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the internal and external factors of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo can be mapped to see the strategic position of the business.

Table 3. SWOT Analysis of Bang Jo Round Tofu

Internal Factors	External Factors
Strengths: direct-fried products; affordable price; eight carts; easily recognizable sales identity	Opportunities: dense settlements; potential event orders; snack needs; local customers
Weaknesses: financial records are still simple; limited promotional reach; dependence on the physical condition of the trader; texture quality decreases when the product is cold	Threats: rising prices of raw materials; bad weather; competition from food vendors; changes in tastes

Source: Primary data from interviews and observations, processed by researchers, 2026.

The main strength of the business lies in the characteristics of the product and the flexibility of distribution. The product that is fried directly provides an easily recognizable experience. Eight carts allow the business to reach several regions. Affordable prices expand the potential of consumers. The weaknesses are mainly related to administration and the limitations of promotion. Financial records that are still simple can make it difficult for the owner to know the development of profits accurately. The limitation of promotions also makes the business more dependent on local consumers. The opportunity comes from the characteristics of the North Jakarta area which has many residential areas and centers of community activities. Orders for community events can also be developed because products can be prepared in large quantities. The threat mainly comes from changes in the cost of raw materials, the weather, competitors, and changes in consumer preferences.

Strategies that can be developed are to maintain product quality as the main strength, optimize sales routes based on consumer density, and strengthen word-of-mouth communication. On the weak side, businesses need to improve financial records and create a simple operational system that can be used by all traders. The system is important because the number of carts has grown to eight units. In the face of threats, owners can monitor raw material costs, evaluate routes, and develop a limited variety of products according to customer demand.

Traditional Marketing as a Business Communication Practice

The findings of the study show that traditional marketing of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo cannot be understood only as an activity of selling products from traders to buyers. In it, there is a continuous communication process. The cart functions as a visual communication medium. Frying activities become a form of demonstration of product quality. Traders' interaction becomes interpersonal communication. Price becomes a message about affordability. Location is a way to bring together business messages with potential customers. Meanwhile, *word of mouth* is a mechanism for spreading messages from customers to their social environment.

Thus, the success of traditional marketing of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo can be explained as a combination of product value and direct communication. This perspective is important because digital developments often make traditional marketing considered less relevant. In fact, the results of the study show that the relevance of a marketing method depends on the characteristics of the product, consumers, and the context of the business.

In products like Tahu Bulat Bula, the direct experience has a high value. Consumers can see the frying process, smell the aroma of the product, receive the product in warm conditions, and interact with the merchant. Such multisensory experiences are difficult to completely replace by digital communication. Therefore, digital marketing should not be positioned as a substitute for traditional marketing. For Tahu Bulat Bang Jo, digital media can be seen as a supporting channel to expand information, while direct sales remain the main channel that shapes the consumer experience.

Research by Luhung and Hartini (2024) shows that the marketing strategy of culinary MSMEs can be analyzed through internal and external conditions. In the context of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo, this condition results in a strategy that maintains direct marketing while opening up opportunities for the development of supporting communication. Thus, the main contribution of this study is to show that traditional marketing can be understood as a business communication system consisting of direct interaction, product experience, geographical proximity, service, and customer recommendations.

Research Implications

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of marketing communication in MSMEs by showing that communication does not always take place through mass media or digital media. Interpersonal interaction between traders and consumers can be part of the process of forming business relationships. Practically, the research provides several implications for Tahu Bulat Bang Jo. First, product quality needs to be maintained because it is the main source of business value and message. Second, sales routes need to be evaluated

based on locations with high consumer potential. Third, services need to be standardized so that the consumer experience remains consistent across the cart. Fourth, word-of-mouth communication needs to be maintained by maintaining customer satisfaction. Fifth, financial administration needs to be improved to support decision-making.

For other culinary MSMEs, this study shows that the limited use of digital media does not necessarily mean that marketing strategies are ineffective. Effectiveness must be seen based on the suitability of the strategy with the characteristics of the product and consumers.

For the development of business communication research, these findings can be the basis for further research on the relationship between interpersonal communication, consumer experience, *word of mouth*, and the success of MSMEs

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the success of traditional marketing of Tahu Bulat Bang Jo in North Jakarta is supported by product quality, affordable prices, location and route flexibility, service, owner experience, and word-of-mouth communication. These factors do not work separately, but reinforce each other in shaping consumer experience and business sustainability.

Product quality is the most dominant factor based on the consistency of findings from owners, traders, customers, and observations. Products that are fried directly before serving provide warm, crispy, and fresh characteristics that are the main value for consumers. The findings show that the product itself can be a medium of business communication because the quality received by consumers is a message about business value and consistency.

Affordable prices and strategic locations serve as supporting factors. Prices make it easier for consumers to make purchases, while the mobile cart system allows businesses to approach consumers in locations that have high community activity. Friendly and fast service strengthens the consumer experience, while *word of mouth* expands information about products through customer social relationships.

Obstacles faced include rising raw material prices, competition from similar businesses, limited promotions, changes in consumer tastes, and weather. These obstacles show that business continuity requires the ability to maintain key strengths while adapting operations to the environment.

The implications of the study show that traditional marketing still has relevance for culinary MSMEs when there is a match between product characteristics, consumer behavior, and the means of communication used. Traditional marketing should not be seen as the opposite of digital marketing. Instead, both can be placed proportionally according to business needs.

For Tahu Bulat Bang Jo, the development priorities are to maintain product quality, improve financial records, evaluate sales routes, and improve the standardization of services between carts. The use of digital media can be developed gradually as a supporting media without eliminating the main character of direct sales.

The next study can expand the number of informants and compare some culinary MSMEs that use traditional marketing with MSMEs that have used

digital marketing. The next study can also use a quantitative approach to test the relationship between product quality, interpersonal communication, *word of mouth*, customer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty.

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