

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DYNAMICS THROUGH THE ARCHIPELAGO'S CULINARY SECTOR IN KOTA BARU DISTRICT, JAMBI CITY

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the role of the Indonesian culinary sector in driving local economic dynamics in Kota Baru District, Jambi City, as well as to identify its contributions, challenges, and implications for regional economic development. The study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through field observations, in-depth interviews with culinary MSME actors, consumers, and local government, as well as documentation studies. The data is analyzed descriptively and analytically to understand the patterns of development, forms of economic contribution, and constraints faced by the culinary sector. The results of the study show that the Indonesian culinary sector plays a significant role in creating jobs, increasing household income, and strengthening the local economy through its links with supporting sectors such as raw material distribution, transportation, and digital services. The use of digital platforms has proven to expand market reach and increase the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs. However, this study also found major challenges in the form of limited capital, high business competition, and low managerial capacity and digital literacy among some MSME players. These findings imply the importance of strengthening local government policies, business assistance, and capacity building for MSME players so that the culinary sector can develop sustainably as a driver of the local economy and a guardian of regional cultural identity.*

**Keywords:** Indonesian cuisine, local economy, MSMEs, Kota Baru, Jambi

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran sektor kuliner nusantara dalam mendorong dinamika perekonomian lokal di Kecamatan Kota Baru, Kota Jambi, serta mengidentifikasi kontribusi, tantangan, dan implikasinya bagi pengembangan ekonomi daerah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam terhadap pelaku UMKM kuliner, konsumen, dan pemerintah daerah, serta studi dokumentasi. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif-analitis untuk memahami pola perkembangan, bentuk kontribusi ekonomi, dan kendala yang dihadapi sektor kuliner. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sektor kuliner nusantara berperan signifikan dalam menciptakan lapangan kerja, meningkatkan pendapatan rumah tangga, serta memperkuat perputaran ekonomi lokal melalui keterkaitan dengan sektor pendukung seperti distribusi bahan baku, transportasi, dan layanan digital. Pemanfaatan platform digital terbukti memperluas jangkauan pasar dan meningkatkan daya saing UMKM kuliner. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan tantangan utama berupa keterbatasan modal, tingginya persaingan usaha, serta rendahnya kapasitas manajerial dan literasi digital sebagian pelaku UMKM. Temuan ini mengimplikasikan pentingnya penguatan kebijakan pemerintah daerah, pendampingan usaha, dan peningkatan kapasitas pelaku UMKM agar sektor kuliner dapat berkembang secara berkelanjutan sebagai penggerak perekonomian lokal sekaligus penjaga identitas budaya daerah.

**Kata Kunci:** kuliner nusantara, perekonomian lokal, UMKM, Kota Baru, Jambi.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Kota Baru subdistrict, as part of the city of Jambi, has shown significant economic growth in recent years. Changes in consumer patterns and increased population mobility have driven demand for culinary services, making local cuisine one of the drivers of the micro and medium-scale economy (Heriyani et al., 2025). The culinary sector in Indonesia is generally supported by street vendors, family restaurants, and small-scale catering businesses, which absorb a significant amount of labor and act as a buffer for the local economy during times of macroeconomic turmoil. The existence and flexibility of these culinary MSMEs are also

important for regional economic resilience (Lee et al., 2025). An example of this can be found in the Kota Baru subdistrict of Jambi City.

Production development in MSMEs includes capacity building, process standardization, quality control, and product diversification. The development approach must take into account the characteristics of micro businesses, such as limited capital, family labor, and technical knowledge that is often traditional in nature, so that the solutions adopted are more gradual and contextual (Rachman, 2020). Human resource management in MSME production focuses on improving technical skills and basic managerial abilities. Short training programs, on-the-job training, and demonstration-based learning are often more effective than lengthy theoretical training. Improving human resource capacity has a direct impact on productivity and quality consistency (Prawita et al., 2025).

In the city of Jambi in particular, local statistics and research show an increase in the number of culinary MSMEs in recent years, both traditional ones and those that utilize digital platforms for sales. This trend of digitalization is changing the mechanisms of marketing, distribution, and even the relative prices of local culinary products (Rosmeli & Novita, 2022).

Indonesian cuisine, positioned as a cultural attraction, has the potential to attract visitors from outside the region. The synergy between tourism and cuisine opens up new revenue streams not only for food businesses, but also for supporting sectors such as raw material suppliers, packaging, and logistics. A study on the development of culinary tourism in Indonesia confirms the strategic role of cuisine in local economic development (Setyawati, 2024).

The characteristics of Kota Baru as a center of commercial activity and transit provide a comparative advantage for culinary businesses: heavy foot traffic, the presence of traditional markets, and local events create stable repeat sales opportunities if managed properly. However, the culinary market in Kota Baru is also heterogeneous: there are small informal businesses, as well as new players that are digitally oriented and focused on branding. These capacity differences lead to disparities in income and access to capital, training, and marketing networks.

Capital (financing), financial literacy, and e-commerce adoption capabilities are the main determinants of the sustainability of culinary MSMEs in Jambi City. A case study in Jambi City found a positive relationship between financial literacy, e-commerce use, and culinary business sustainability (Heriyani et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the culinary sector, which relies on public space interactions, but has also accelerated digital transformation (Miawaty & Sunarsih, 2025). Businesses that quickly adapted to online ordering and delivery were relatively able to survive and recover more quickly. As a result, local policies need to support the digital capabilities of culinary businesses (Sinurat et al., 2021).

The local raw material supply chain (farmers, market traders, fish/meat suppliers) greatly affects the availability and price of culinary ingredients. If this chain is disrupted, the margins of culinary businesses decline, which has an impact on the microeconomic cycle at the family level. Therefore, the integration between the local agriculture/fisheries sector and culinary businesses needs to be addressed in regional policy.

Cultural aspects and food identity are intangible assets that can be capitalized on. Traditional recipes, culinary stories, and halal values can differentiate products, increase their selling value,

and attract the domestic tourist market segment. Packaging local culinary narratives can expand the competitiveness of Kota Baru products (Hajarrahmah, 2017).

Public infrastructure (availability of bazaar/stall space, sanitation, parking facilities, transportation access) determines the scale and operational convenience of culinary businesses. The lack of infrastructure support can hinder business formalization and reduce the potential for local tax revenue from this sector. Local institutions, including relevant agencies, MSME associations, and culinary community groups, play an important facilitating role: business management training, quality standardization, food safety guidance, and access to microfinance. This collaboration can increase the multiplier effect of the culinary sector on the economy of Kota Baru District. From a regional economic perspective, money circulation in the culinary sector triggers a multiplier effect of raw material purchases by culinary actors, stimulating local production; culinary workers' wages increase household consumption, and so on, all contributing to an increase in the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at the district/city level. However, there are structural issues that must be addressed: low access to formal capital, limited sustainable marketing, seasonal fluctuations in demand, and competition with modern industrial/retail processed products that can put pressure on traditional businesses.

The research problem formulation needs to capture the gap between the huge culinary economic potential and the practical obstacles experienced by business actors in Kota Baru, including internal obstacles (business competence, management, capital) and external obstacles (policy, infrastructure, market access). Specifically, the research problem can be focused on the following questions: how does the culinary sector contribute to employment and household income in the Kota Baru District? What factors influence the competitiveness of local culinary MSMEs? To what extent does digitization increase the culinary economy in Kota Baru? In addition, it is necessary to examine how local policies, such as business licensing, MSME development programs, and culinary tourism promotion, impact business formality and the ability of culinary businesses to expand or survive in the face of competition. Another relevant issue is data and monitoring: the lack of a standardized culinary MSME database at the subdistrict level makes it difficult to formulate targeted policies and evaluate the impact of local economic programs.

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of the local economy through the archipelago's culinary sector in Kota Baru District, Jambi City, with a focus on the role of cuisine in creating jobs, increasing household income, and strengthening the local economy. Additionally, this study aims to identify patterns of development in the culinary industry, both traditional and modern, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the sustainability and competitiveness of culinary MSMEs in the region.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its micro-level focus on Kota Baru District as a rapidly developing urban area and a hub for Indonesian cuisine from various regions, unlike culinary studies in other cities that generally emphasize macro aspects such as tourism or city branding. This research integrates local economic analysis, culinary cultural identity, and MSME digitalization practices simultaneously, thereby demonstrating how Indonesian cuisine functions not only as an economic commodity but also as a driver of social interaction and strengthening of the local community-based economy. This approach provides a new scientific contribution to the study of creative economy based on medium-sized urban areas in Indonesia.

Thus, this study is important in providing practical policy recommendations: integrated coaching programs (management, sanitation, branding), access to microfinance, integration of local

e-commerce, and the creation of a culinary event calendar that maximizes visitor traffic to Kota Baru. The concluding background is that mapping the economic dynamics through the culinary sector in Kota Baru Subdistrict is not only a matter of calculating turnover or the number of businesses, but also understanding how culinary becomes a socio-cultural hub that links production, distribution, consumption, and policy. All these elements must be analyzed so that policy recommendations can encourage inclusive and sustainable economic circulation.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with the aim of providing an in-depth explanation of the contribution of the culinary sector to employment and household income in Kota Baru District, Jambi City. This method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding of social and economic realities through the experiences, views, and practices of culinary MSME actors and related communities (Creswell, 2014). The research location was determined purposively, namely in Kota Baru District, Jambi City. This area was chosen because it is one of the centers of regional economic growth, particularly in the culinary sector, which involves various types of businesses ranging from traditional food stalls and restaurants to modern cafes.

This research was conducted over a period of 25 days in Kota Baru, Jambi. It covered areas from Taman Remaja to Warung Minang Jambi. The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. The informants comprised 15 individuals, including 10 culinary MSMEs in Kota Baru District, 3 consumers, and 2 local government representatives involved in MSME development and the creative economy sector. The culinary MSMEs were selected because they have direct experience in managing Indonesian culinary businesses, both traditional and modern, enabling them to provide in-depth information regarding their business contributions to employment, household income, competitiveness, and the utilization of digitalization. Consumers were selected to gain perspectives on market demand, preferences, and consumption behavior toward local culinary delights. Meanwhile, local government representatives were selected because of their role in formulating and implementing policies related to MSME development and the culinary sector in Jambi City. The selection of this informant composition aims to obtain comprehensive, balanced, and valid data through a comparison of various complementary perspectives. The unit of analysis in this study is the culinary businesses of MSMEs in Kota Baru District as part of the local economic system, not individual businesses in isolation. Information from business actors, consumers, and the government is analyzed to understand the dynamics of the culinary sector at the sub-district level, particularly its contribution to job creation, household income growth, and local economic activity. By emphasizing this unit of analysis, this study positions informants as data sources to explain regional economic phenomena, ensuring that the analysis remains focused and consistent with the research objectives.

The data sources used consist of primary data obtained through in-depth interviews with culinary MSME actors, workers, consumers, and local government officials (Jambi City Cooperative and MSME Office). In addition, direct observations were conducted at the research location. Secondary data was obtained from government agency reports, academic publications, research journals related to MSMEs, and other official documents (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques include observation, which is used to directly observe culinary business activities, service patterns, and interactions between business actors and consumers.

In-depth interviews are conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines so that informants can provide richer information (Moleong, 2017). Documentation studies are used to supplement primary data through statistical reports, academic publications, and local government archives.

Data analysis techniques are carried out descriptively through three stages according to Miles & Huberman (1994), namely Data Reduction as a process of selection, focusing attention, and simplifying raw data from interviews and observations. Data Presentation is displaying organized information in the form of narratives, tables, or matrices to make it easier to understand. Drawing Conclusions to interpret the meaning of the data obtained, then comparing it with previous theories and research.

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through the application of triangulation as the main strategy to ensure the validity of qualitative findings. The triangulation used includes source triangulation and technique (method) triangulation as proposed by Patton (2002) and Denzin (2017). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from various informants, namely Indonesian culinary MSME actors, consumers, and local government officials or related institutions. Data from each source was analyzed comparatively to see the consistency of views regarding the contribution of the culinary sector to job creation, increased household income, and the dynamics of the local economy in Kota Baru District, Jambi City. Differences in information that emerged were not immediately eliminated but were analyzed as part of the diversity of social perspectives that enriched the research findings. Next, technical triangulation was applied by comparing the results of in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were used to explore the subjective experiences and business strategies of MSME actors, observations were conducted to directly observe production activities, seller-buyer interactions, and marketing practices, while documentation in the form of statistical data, local government reports, and policy archives were used to strengthen empirical findings. The consistency of the results from these three techniques formed the basis for assessing data credibility. Through this combination of source and technique triangulation, the study aimed to produce a comprehensive, valid, and scientifically accountable picture of the culinary sector's contribution to the local economy and the factors influencing its development in Kota Baru District, Jambi City.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Contribution of the Culinary Sector to Employment and Household Income in Kota Baru District, Jambi City**

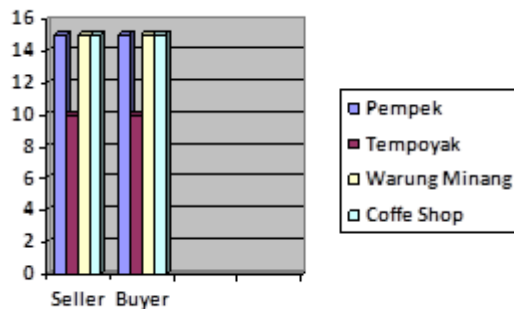
The culinary sector has become one of the main drivers of the regional economy in various cities in Indonesia, including Jambi City. The Kota Baru sub-district is known as a dynamic area with high levels of trade, services, and community consumption, resulting in the rapid growth of culinary businesses in this region. The development of culinary businesses in Kota Baru includes not only traditional restaurants, but also modern cafes, street vendors, and online businesses. This diversification of business forms has opened up significant employment opportunities, both for skilled workers and informal workers.

The contribution of culinary businesses to household economies can be seen in the increased income of families involved in this industry. Many families in Kota Baru rely on culinary businesses as their main source of income, whether through food stalls, catering, or snack businesses. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the culinary sector contributes a large percentage of the total national MSMEs and absorbs the most informal

workers. This is in line with the conditions in Kota Baru, where culinary businesses are dominated by micro and small businesses.

**Figure 1**

*Graph of Culinary Economic Turnover in Jambi's New City*



Interviews with rice stall owners in Simpang Kawat Village revealed that culinary businesses generate an average income of Rp7–10 million per month, employing 3–5 people, most of whom are family members. This shows the role of culinary businesses in reducing local unemployment. Another respondent, a cafe owner in the Jambi Town Square area, said that although the initial capital is relatively large, lifestyle-based culinary businesses targeting young people are able to employ up to 15 full-time and part-time workers. This impact is not only felt by the owners' families, but also by the workers' households.

One of the strengths of the culinary sector is its resilience in the face of crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many culinary businesses in Kota Baru switched to online services. This proved to be effective in maintaining employment despite declining turnover. Interviews with online culinary business owners revealed that food delivery apps such as GoFood and GrabFood helped maintain daily income and even expanded the market beyond the Kota Baru subdistrict.

The culinary sector also triggers a multiplier effect. For example, Padang restaurants in Kota Baru not only employ chefs and waiters, but also create sustainable demand for vegetable farmers, rice traders, and local chicken and meat suppliers. Thus, the contribution of the culinary sector is not limited to direct income, but also strengthens the local food supply chain involving many households. From a gender perspective, the culinary sector provides significant opportunities for women. Interviews with housewives in Thehok Village show that home-based wet cake businesses can increase family income by IDR 3 million per month, while also giving women the flexibility to continue taking care of their households.

The culinary sector in Kota Baru also provides informal employment opportunities for young people, such as casual waiters or food delivery drivers. Although the nature of the work is temporary, it helps them earn additional income and gain work experience. According to an interview with a young worker at a coffee shop, a monthly income of around Rp2 million–Rp2.5 million can help cover college tuition fees. This shows that the culinary sector also contributes to family investment in education. Despite its great potential, the culinary sector faces a number of challenges, such as limited capital, managerial skills, and high raw material costs. Several respondents complained about the fluctuating prices of meat and chili, which affect profit margins.

Another issue is regulatory uncertainty regarding business licenses and local taxes. Small business owners admit that they have difficulty meeting formal requirements, so they choose to operate informally. However, local governments have made efforts to support culinary MSMEs through training programs and facilitating access to capital. Several respondents said they had benefited from low-interest microloans from government-assisted cooperatives. From the community's perspective, the presence of culinary businesses in Kota Baru has expanded consumption options, increased social activity, and strengthened local identity. Jambi's culinary specialties, such as tempoyak, pindang patin, and various traditional snacks, remain in demand, despite competition from modern foods.

Relevant research in various regions shows that the culinary sector can increase household income by 20–30% and absorb a significant number of new workers (Heriyani et al., 2025; Putri & Husna, 2024). This is in line with the reality in Kota Baru District. Overall, the dynamics of the culinary business in Kota Baru Subdistrict show a positive pattern: absorbing labor, increasing household income, strengthening the local supply chain, and creating new entrepreneurial opportunities. Therefore, it can be concluded that the contribution of the culinary sector to employment and household income in Kota Baru Subdistrict, Jambi City is very significant, although it still requires appropriate policy support so that its impact is more equitable and sustainable.

### **Factors Affecting the Competitiveness of Local Culinary MSMEs in Kota Baru District, Jambi City**

Culinary MSMEs are a labor-intensive sector that quickly absorbs labor and often serves as a gateway to entrepreneurship for urban households; the relatively low capital requirements make it popular as an alternative source of livelihood. Kota Baru District, as one of the centers of trade and service activities in the city of Jambi, has high consumption dynamics, giving rise to many culinary businesses, from traditional food stalls to modern cafes. This situation makes the competitiveness of culinary businesses an important issue for local economic development.

Local administrative data shows that the proportion of MSMEs in the culinary sector in Jambi City is quite large and has increased in recent years. This increase in the number of culinary businesses indicates market potential as well as intense competition among businesses. The competitiveness of culinary MSMEs is determined by internal factors such as capital, product innovation, managerial capacity, service quality, and external factors such as location, market access, infrastructure, raw material prices, and institutional support. This combination of internal and external factors shapes a business's ability to survive and grow.

Regional specialty products such as tempoyak, a culinary heritage of Jambi, are cultural assets that, when packaged and marketed properly, can increase product value and the competitiveness of local businesses. Ethnographic and food studies on tempoyak show its commercial potential if accompanied by improvements in quality and packaging (Wulandari, et al., 2022; Jamil, 2025). Digital transformation (marketing through social media, marketplaces, and food delivery platforms) has now become an important component of competitiveness. Businesses that utilize digital channels tend to have a wider customer reach, but also face commission costs and digital literacy requirements (Putri et al., 2024). Empirical studies in various cities show a positive relationship between the use of e-commerce and increased sales of culinary SMEs (Royadi, et al., 2025).

Access to capital, whether it be personal capital, microcredit, or government assistance programs, determines the ability of MSMEs to make small investments such as production equipment, packaging, or outlet renovations. Limited capital is a major obstacle for businesses that want to increase the scale and quality of their products. The availability of a stable local supply chain (quality raw materials at affordable prices) helps maintain business margins. Conversely, fluctuations in the prices of basic commodities (e.g., chili peppers, meat, rice) can reduce competitiveness by forcing price adjustments or portion sizes that risk lowering demand. Human resource capacity (cooking skills, food hygiene/safety, business management, marketing, customer service) greatly determines product quality consistency and business image. Technical and managerial training is a real need for many culinary MSMEs. The role of local institutions (Cooperative/MSME Offices, business communities, NGOs) is important in providing guidance, training, access to capital, and promotion; several programs are already underway, but their coverage is not yet evenly distributed, so the benefits are not yet optimal for all actors in the Kota Baru District (Diwantara, 2023).

Field interviews were conducted with 10 informants, including owners of traditional food stalls, owners of modern cafes/shops, home industry operators (cakes/snacks), small catering providers, couriers/food delivery personnel, and representatives of local government agencies/cooperatives. Respondents were spread across several villages in the Kota Baru subdistrict.

The majority of micro business owners cite limited start-up capital (often between Rp2 million and Rp15 million) as the main obstacle. Small capital makes it difficult to purchase efficient equipment, marketable packaging, or procure stock for larger scales. This condition limits their ability to compete, especially when facing more established businesses. Business location repeatedly emerges as a determining factor. Businesses located in strategic locations (near campuses, offices, or busy centers) report receiving more stable customers compared to businesses in hidden locations. Those in less strategic locations cite digital marketing costs as a solution but complain about skill limitations.

Product and packaging innovation is a real differentiator. Several home industries producing tempoyak or other specialty products from Jambi that have successfully improved their packaging and added information labels (such as expiration dates and serving instructions) have been able to reach modern and online markets, thereby increasing their competitiveness (Wulandari, R. A., et al. 2022). Businesses actively utilizing delivery platforms and social media report a 20–40% increase in orders during certain periods, but many also complain about platform fee structures (commissions) and the need for consistent product photos and order management, with digital literacy posing a real challenge.

Human resources: Family businesses tend to rely on family labor without formal records, resulting in weak managerial skills (financial record keeping, inventory control). Many respondents expressed a strong desire for basic training in business accounting. Long-term relationships with local suppliers (market traders, farmers/fishers) help stabilize supply. Businesses with regular suppliers tend to be better able to negotiate prices and maintain quality. Therefore, collective cooperation among MSMEs for the purchase of raw materials is often cited as a solution to reduce costs.

The role of government support (training, expos, equipment assistance) is appreciated, but respondents feel that there is a need for more frequent training, ongoing mentoring, easier microcredit requirements, and the facilitation of bazaar/stand space for the promotion of local

products. Several successful actors have increased their competitiveness by combining three strategies: (a) improving product packaging/branding; (b) utilizing digital marketing/food intermediation; and (c) organizing collective raw material purchases. This combination reduces unit costs and increases market visibility.

The key findings of this interview indicate that the most important factors affecting the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs in Kota Baru Subdistrict are: (a) access to capital/financing; (b) business location; (c) product and packaging innovation; (d) utilization of digital technology and marketing; (e) human resource capacity and management; (f) stability of the raw material supply chain; and (g) quality of institutional support. Integrated interventions in these areas are recommended so that local culinary MSMEs can improve their competitiveness in a sustainable manner.

### **Digitalization Boosts Culinary Economy in Kota Baru District, Jambi City**

The Kota Baru subdistrict in Jambi City is known as one of the centers of economic activity with a fairly developed culinary sector. The growth in the number of culinary businesses, ranging from traditional food stalls, Padang restaurants, coffee shops, to modern cafes, is clear evidence that this sector plays an important role in the local economy. The presence of digital technology has brought significant changes to the culinary business pattern in Kota Baru. The use of social media, delivery service applications, and digital payment systems has provided new opportunities for culinary MSMEs to expand their market.

Digitalization is the answer to classic challenges often faced by MSMEs, such as limited market access, promotion, and distribution. With digital technology, businesses can reach a wider range of consumers without having to rely solely on physical locations. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digitalization in the culinary sector. Many businesses that previously relied solely on direct sales have now shifted to digital platforms in order to survive. This situation is also experienced by culinary businesses in Kota Baru District.

This phenomenon is in line, which shows that the adoption of digital technology increases the sustainability of MSMEs amid global challenges. This is relevant to the development of the culinary industry in Jambi, which increasingly relies on digital marketing. Beyond promotion, digitalization also impacts service systems. Online ordering apps make it easier for consumers to choose menus, compare prices, and leave reviews, ultimately enhancing the competitiveness of culinary businesses.

Culinary MSMEs in Kota Baru that are able to take advantage of digitalization tend to experience an increase in turnover compared to businesses that have not adapted. Digitalization has become a distinguishing factor that determines the competitiveness of businesses in the modern era. However, challenges remain. Not all culinary MSME players in Kota Baru have adequate digital skills. Some still have difficulty in utilizing social media or delivery service applications.

Local governments and business communities play an important role in promoting digital literacy among business owners. With training and support, culinary MSMEs can maximize the potential of digitalization to boost the local economy. Therefore, it is important to understand how digitalization actually contributes to the culinary economy in Kota Baru District, both from the perspective of business owners and consumers.

Interviews with the owner of a Padang restaurant on Jalan Slamet Riyadi, Kota Baru, revealed that the use of delivery apps has increased turnover by up to 40% in the past year. According to him, most new customers come from the app, not direct visitors. A coffee shop owner in Thehok mentioned that promotions through Instagram and TikTok are effective in attracting visitors, especially young people. Content such as photos of the menu and live music are uploaded regularly, and this has doubled the number of visitors.

The owner of a satay stall in the Talang Bakung area admitted that he initially had difficulty using digital platforms. However, after receiving guidance from the Jambi City MSME community, he was able to utilize WhatsApp Business and GoFood, which increased his orders, especially on weekends. One of the consumers interviewed said that he orders food more often through the app than coming directly to the location. This is because of the time efficiency and ease of digital payments, which are considered practical.

Owners of traditional culinary businesses, such as pempek and tekwan sellers at the Angso Duo market, stated that digitization helped maintain the sustainability of their businesses. Although initially hesitant, they now receive many online orders, especially from regular customers who have moved to digital platforms. Interviews with staff from the Jambi City Cooperative and MSME Office confirmed that digitization has become the focus of MSME development programs. The government regularly holds training sessions on the use of marketplace applications, social media, and digital marketing strategies. However, some culinary SME players still complain about the high cost of delivery application services. According to them, these commission fees can reduce profits even though turnover has increased.

From the consumer side, interviews with office workers in Kota Baru revealed that digitization has made it easier to access culinary delights. They do not need to leave work because food can be ordered online quickly. The owner of a wet cake business in Kota Baru said that sales increased significantly during Ramadan thanks to promotions on Facebook and WhatsApp Groups. This strategy allows traditional products to remain competitive with modern foods. Overall, the interview results show that digitization has had a positive impact on the culinary economy in Kota Baru District, although challenges in digital literacy and operational costs still need serious attention.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

Overall, the culinary sector in Kota Baru District, Jambi City, has proven to play a strategic role as a driver of the local economy through job creation, increased household income, and accelerated economic turnover. The growth of culinary businesses, both traditional and modern, can provide a main or additional source of income for the community, while the use of digital technology such as social media, delivery applications, and electronic payment systems has been proven to increase turnover and expand the market reach of MSMEs. The competitiveness of business actors is determined by a combination of internal factors, such as product quality, innovation, price, service, and digital literacy, as well as external factors such as policy support, market trends, and the level of competition. However, challenges such as limited capital, low digital literacy, high operational costs, and digital platform commissions still affect business sustainability. Therefore, synergy between MSME players, local governments, financial institutions, and business communities is key to strengthening competitiveness and ensuring that the culinary sector continues to contribute significantly to the welfare of the community and the economy of Jambi City.

At the end of this study, it is recommended that the role of the Jambi City Cooperative and MSME Office be strengthened as the leading sector in the development of culinary MSMEs in the Kota Baru District. Policy support needs to be focused on providing more inclusive access to capital, business management and digital literacy training programs, and ongoing assistance for culinary MSME players in the archipelago. In addition, the Jambi City Industry and Trade Agency (Disperindag) is expected to play a role in facilitating product certification, quality standardization, and expanding marketing networks through culinary events and partnerships with the modern retail sector. Meanwhile, the Jambi City Tourism and Culture Agency can integrate local culinary arts as part of the city's culture-based tourism development strategy. This inter-agency synergy, supported by collaboration with SME communities and digital platforms, is expected to promote the sustainability of culinary businesses and strengthen the culinary sector as the main driver of the local economy in Kota Baru District, Jambi City.

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