

## The Influence of Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurial Experience on the Success of Culinary Businesses in Malang City, Mediated by Business Creativity

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the effect of digital marketing and entrepreneurial experience on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City, with business creativity as a mediating variable. The research method used is a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type. The research population is culinary business owners in Malang City, with a purposive sampling technique used for sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using path analysis. The results showed that digital marketing did not have a significant effect on the success of culinary businesses. Entrepreneurial experience had a positive effect on business success, but the effect was relatively small. Business creativity has a positive and significant effect on business success and is able to significantly mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial experience and culinary business success. These findings indicate that business creativity is a key factor in optimizing entrepreneurial experience to achieve sustainable culinary business success in Malang City.

### Introduction

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has changed almost all aspects of people's lives, including culinary business marketing practices. Digital marketing as a technology-based marketing strategy has become an important element that can expand market reach and increase sales volume, especially in the culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector. Ilham & Santoso (2025) found that digital marketing strategies have a positive and significant effect on the growth of culinary MSME sales volume in Surabaya through the use of social media, online promotions, and collaboration with digital platforms, thereby improving overall business performance.

Another relevant study by Permatasari et al. (2025) in Malang City shows that digital transformation in the form of digital marketing has an effect on increasing the sales volume of culinary MSMEs through social media and e-commerce, which is empirical evidence of the role of digital marketing in the local context of Malang. Fandy Tjiptono (2018) identifies four

indicators of digital marketing, as follows: (1) trust, (2) convenience, (3) quality of information, (4) price.

In the context of culinary MSMEs in Indonesia, research by Asmawiyah, Mukhtar, & Rahmat (2025) confirms that digital marketing not only has a direct impact on business success but also indirectly through an entrepreneurial orientation that supports decision-making and strategy adaptation for MSME actors. These findings indicate that digital marketing can strengthen the strategic capabilities of business actors through a better entrepreneurial orientation.

Another empirical study by Viola Yolanda, Hardilawati, & Hastuti (2024) on culinary MSMEs in Pekanbaru found that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance, which is one of the indicators of business success. This study also shows that entrepreneurial orientation strengthens the relationship between digital marketing and marketing performance, although the competitive advantage variable mediates the results.

In addition to the influence of digital marketing, entrepreneurial experience is also an important variable that affects the success of business actors. Research by Iskandar & Safrianto (2020) shows that business experience simultaneously has a significant and positive effect on entrepreneurial success, where entrepreneurial experience helps business actors in dealing with market dynamics and making more appropriate strategic decisions. According to Wahyuni et al. (2018), indicators of entrepreneurial experience include (1) the length of time the entrepreneur has been selling, (2) a family background in trading, (3) reducing mistakes, (4) product arrangement, and (5) mastery of equipment to support the business.

Entrepreneurial experience provides continuous learning for business actors in managing their businesses more effectively and efficiently. Business actors who have more experience tend to be able to recognize market demand patterns, understand consumer behavior, and anticipate business risks better. Research by Sari and Nugroho (2021) shows that entrepreneurial experience has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs, because experience allows business actors to repeatedly evaluate strategies that have been implemented and correct mistakes made in the past. This proves that experience is an important asset in achieving business success.

In addition, entrepreneurial experience is also closely related to technical and managerial skills in running a business, such as product arrangement, equipment mastery, and operational efficiency. Research by Prasetyo and Handayani (2022) found that entrepreneurs with a family background in trading and adequate business experience have a higher level of business success compared to novice entrepreneurs. This experience helps entrepreneurs reduce operational errors, improve product presentation quality, and support more accurate decision-making in facing increasingly competitive culinary business competition.

Business creativity is the ability of business actors to generate added value for customers through unique ideas, products, and services that are relevant to market needs. Creativity is an important factor in maintaining business competitiveness, especially in the culinary sector, which has a high level of competition. According to Winardi (2022), business creativity can be measured through several indicators, (1) the ability to develop new ideas innovatively, (2) the willingness to work hard to realize these ideas, (3) the ability to predict the future of the business and market changes, (4) and spontaneity in reading and utilizing emerging business opportunities.

Another study supporting the importance of business creativity was conducted by Hadi and Nugroho (2022), who found that entrepreneurial creativity has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs through the ability to create product differentiation and adaptive marketing strategies. Creativity enables business actors to respond quickly to changes in consumer tastes and create more engaging customer experiences. These findings confirm that creativity not only serves as a source of ideas but also as strategic capital in facing increasingly fierce business competition.

Furthermore, a study by Wulandari and Putra (2023) shows that entrepreneurial creativity plays a key role in increasing the success of culinary businesses, particularly through menu, packaging, and service concept innovations. Creativity supported by business experience and market understanding can increase customer loyalty and strengthen brand image. Thus, business creativity becomes an important element that bridges entrepreneurial ability with performance achievement and sustainable business success.

The success of culinary businesses in Malang can be seen from the ability of business actors to innovate services and improve product quality. Research by Adinugroho et al. (2024) shows that service innovation and product quality play a significant role in the revitalization of the culinary business in Malang. According to Kasmir (2016), indicators of business success include (1) increased production, (2) increased sales, (3) increased profits, (4) business development, and (5) business growth.

Additionally, the success of culinary businesses in Malang is also influenced by the marketing strategies implemented by business operators. Qualitative studies on marketing digitalization show that culinary business actors in Malang are increasingly utilizing various digital channels such as social media, marketplaces, and delivery service platforms to expand their market reach and increase brand awareness. According to Afifa, Pratikto, & Dhewi (2025), the adoption of digital marketing has become an important part of marketing strategies that help culinary businesses grow and maintain their presence amid dynamic competition..

Another internal factor that supports the success of culinary businesses in Malang is the knowledge and entrepreneurial characteristics of the business owners themselves. Research by Wijaya & Andrew (2023) shows that entrepreneurial knowledge, personal characteristics of business owners, and motivation have a positive and significant effect on the success of culinary businesses in Malang. These findings confirm that the success of culinary businesses is not only determined by external factors such as marketing or service innovation, but also greatly depends on the entrepreneurial capacity of business owners in managing and developing their businesses.

## Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the influence of digital marketing and entrepreneurial experience on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City, with business creativity as a mediating variable. The population in this study was all culinary business actors operating in Malang City, totaling 1,474 people. Given the large population size, the researcher only took 10% of the total population, namely 147 culinary business operators, including micro, small, and medium businesses, using purposive sampling, namely culinary business operators who have been running their businesses for at least one year and have utilized digital marketing in their marketing activities. Data collection was conducted through the distribution of structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale that measured the variables of digital marketing, entrepreneurial experience, business

creativity, and business success. The data obtained was analyzed using inferential statistical analysis with the help of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) statistical software to test the direct and indirect effects between variables, so that the role of business creativity as a mediating variable in increasing the success of culinary businesses in Malang City could be determined.

**Result and Discussion**

Table 1. Direct Impact Output

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Digital Marketing (X1) -> Business Success (Y)	0,089	0,088	0,859	0,391
Entrepreneurial Experience (X2) -> Business Success (Y)	0,212	0,215	2,803	0,005
Business Creativity (Z) -> Business Success (Y)	0,558	0,557	7,464	0,000
Digital Marketing (X1) -> Business Creativity (Z)	0,206	0,212	2,966	0,003
Entrepreneurial Experience (X2) -> Business Creativity (Z)	0,604	0,604	8,460	0,000

Source: processed by researcher, 2026

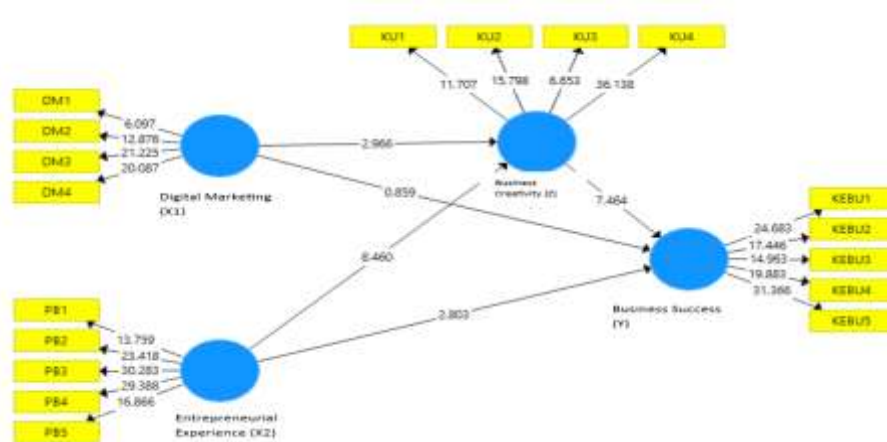


Figure 1. Direct impact output

Table 2. Output of Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Digital Marketing (X1) -> Business Creativity (Z) -> Business Success (Y)	0,115	0,119	2,549	0,011
Entrepreneurial Experience (X2) -> Business Creativity (Z) -> Business Success (Y)	0,337	0,337	6,074	0,000

Source: processed by researcher, 2026

### *Discussion*

#### *Digital marketing for the success of culinary businesses in Malang City*

The lack of digital marketing influence on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City may be due to the fact that the use of digital marketing by business actors is still limited and has not been managed strategically. Many culinary MSME actors only use social media as a passive promotional tool, without content planning, market analysis, or digital marketing performance evaluation. Research by Susanti and Haryanto (2021) shows that the use of digital marketing without a focused strategy does not have a significant impact on increasing sales or business profits. This indicates that business success requires more than just a digital presence; it requires professional and sustainable management.

In addition, the characteristics of culinary consumers in Malang City can also be a factor that weakens the influence of digital marketing on business success. Most culinary consumers still rely on direct recommendations, strategic locations, and taste experiences rather than digital promotions alone. Research by Ramadhan and Putri (2022) found that culinary consumers' purchasing decisions are more influenced by product quality and price than digital marketing activities. Similar findings were also reported by Lestari et al. (2023), who stated that digital marketing does not have a significant effect on the success of traditional culinary businesses because consumers trust direct experience and word of mouth more.

Another factor contributing to the insignificant impact of digital marketing is the limited digital literacy of business owners. Many culinary MSME owners do not yet have the ability to manage digital content, read social media insights, or optimally utilize paid advertising features. Research by Prabowo and Nugroho (2020) shows that the low digital literacy of MSME owners means that digital marketing is unable to significantly improve business performance. This is reinforced by a study by Sari and Widodo (2021), which found that digital marketing only has a positive impact if it is supported by digital analysis skills and an understanding of online consumer behavior.

In addition, the high level of competition in the culinary business in Malang City also causes digital marketing to lose its effectiveness as the main differentiator for business success. Almost all culinary business actors use the same digital platforms, such as Instagram and delivery apps, making digital promotions homogeneous and less competitive. Research by Kurniawan and Astuti (2023) shows that digital marketing does not significantly affect business success in sectors with high levels of competition, as consumers tend to experience digital information fatigue. This condition means that digital marketing is no longer the main determining factor for the success of culinary businesses.

Based on the discussion and empirical studies available, it can be concluded that the lack of influence of digital marketing on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City is due to the suboptimal use of digital marketing, the limited digital literacy of business owners, the characteristics of consumers who prioritize product quality and direct experience, and the high level of competition in the culinary business. Therefore, digital marketing cannot stand alone in driving business success but must be supported by business creativity, product quality, entrepreneurial experience, and integrated business strategies to have a significant impact on the success of culinary businesses.

#### *Entrepreneurial experience and its impact on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City*

Theoretically, entrepreneurial experience is considered an important asset in achieving business success because it provides practical lessons in business management, decision making, and the ability to deal with business risks. However, the results of this study indicate

that entrepreneurial experience has an influence on the success of culinary businesses in Malang, but with a relatively small level of influence. This finding is in line with the research by Iskandar and Safrianto (2020) and Sari and Nugroho (2021), which states that business experience does have a positive effect on business performance and success, but its influence tends to weaken when the business environment undergoes rapid and dynamic changes, such as in the highly competitive urban culinary sector.

One reason why the influence of entrepreneurial experience is relatively small is because of changes in the character of the culinary market in Malang City, which is increasingly influenced by trends, consumer tastes, and digital technology. Business actors with long experience are not necessarily able to keep up with rapid changes in consumer preferences if they are not accompanied by innovation and strategic adaptation. Research by Prasetyo and Handayani (2022) and Wijaya and Andrew (2023) shows that entrepreneurial experience without adaptive and innovative capabilities tends to be less than optimal in improving business success, especially in the culinary industry, which is highly dependent on creativity, product differentiation, and modern marketing strategies.

Additionally, the culinary business structure in Malang City, which is dominated by micro and small businesses, causes entrepreneurial experience to often be repetitive and limited to the same business patterns. The experience gained is more related to routine operations than to long-term strategy development. This is supported by research by Wahyuni et al. (2018), which states that business experience that is not accompanied by an increase in managerial capacity and business knowledge only contributes limitedly to business growth and success. Thus, entrepreneurial experience tends to function as a supporting factor, not a major determinant of culinary business success.

On the other hand, recent studies show that the success of culinary businesses today is more influenced by other factors such as digital marketing, business creativity, and service innovation. Studies by Hadi and Nugroho (2022) and Wulandari and Putra (2023) confirm that creativity and the ability to read market opportunities play a more dominant role than experience alone. Business actors with relatively short experience but who are creative and adaptable to digital technology are able to achieve higher levels of business success compared to business actors who only rely on long experience without updating their strategies.

In conclusion, entrepreneurial experience has been proven to have an influence on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City, but this influence is relatively small because it is no longer a dominant factor in the context of modern culinary business competition. Market dynamics, changes in consumer preferences, and technological advancements require entrepreneurs to not only rely on experience but also develop creativity, innovation, and digital marketing strategies. Therefore, entrepreneurial experience must be combined with adaptive and creative abilities to contribute more significantly to the success of culinary businesses.

#### *Business creativity for the success of culinary businesses in Malang City*

Business creativity plays a very large role in determining the success of culinary businesses in Malang, given the city's characteristics as a city of education and tourism with a very high level of culinary competition. Culinary business actors are required not only to be able to provide food products, but also to create added value that distinguishes their business from competitors. Research by Suryana and Bayu (2021) proves that the creativity of MSME players has a significant effect on competitive advantage, especially through menu innovation, business concepts, and unique services. Creativity allows business players to

provide a different consumption experience for customers, thereby increasing consumer interest and loyalty, which ultimately has an impact on business success.

In addition, business creativity contributes directly to improving the marketing and sales performance of culinary businesses. A study by Pratama and Lestari (2022) shows that business creativity can increase the added value of products as perceived by customers, thereby encouraging an increase in sales volume and business growth. This is reinforced by research by Wulandari and Putra (2023), which found that creativity in menu innovation, packaging, and service concepts has a positive and significant influence on the success of culinary businesses. In the context of Malang City, creativity is key for business owners to tailor their products to the tastes of local consumers and tourists, enabling businesses to survive and grow sustainably.

Business creativity also plays an important role in the ability of business actors to read opportunities and adapt to market changes. Research by Rahmawati (2023) shows that creativity in reading market opportunities has a significant effect on the sustainability of culinary businesses, especially in facing changes in consumption trends and competitive dynamics. Furthermore, Hadi and Nugroho (2022) found that entrepreneurial creativity has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs through product differentiation and adaptive marketing strategies. Creativity enables culinary entrepreneurs in Malang City to respond quickly to changes in consumer tastes and take advantage of new opportunities, such as current food trends and the use of digital platforms.

Moreover, business creativity is a strategic factor that bridges entrepreneurial ability with overall business success. Research by Adinugroho et al. (2024) shows that service innovation and product quality, which are manifestations of business creativity, have a significant effect on the revitalization and success of culinary businesses in Malang City. Creativity not only impacts product aspects but also service systems, customer experience, and business brand image. With high creativity, business actors can increase sales, profits, and expand their business scale sustainably.

Based on this description and empirical support, it can be concluded that business creativity has a major and significant influence on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City. Creativity enables business actors to create added value, product differentiation, and adaptive strategies that are relevant to market needs. Supported by the empirical findings of Suryana and Bayu (2021), Pratama and Lestari (2022), Rahmawati (2023), Hadi and Nugroho (2022), Wulandari and Putra (2023), and Adinugroho et al. (2024), creativity has been proven to be a key factor in increasing competitiveness, business performance, and the sustainability of culinary businesses in Malang City.

#### *The Influence of Digital Marketing on Business Creativity in Culinary Businesses in Malang City*

Digital marketing essentially has the potential to drive business creativity by providing a variety of references for ideas, market trends, and consumer interaction patterns that can be accessed quickly. In the context of culinary businesses, social media, marketplaces, and digital platforms enable business owners to gain inspiration related to product innovation, packaging, and promotional strategies. Research by Suryana and Bayu (2021) shows that the use of digital marketing can increase business creativity through easy access to market information and examples of innovation from other businesses. However, the study also emphasizes that the influence of digital marketing on creativity is not dominant, as creativity is more influenced by internal factors within the business.

In the culinary business in Malang City, the influence of digital marketing on business creativity was found to exist but was relatively small because most businesses tended to use digital marketing only as a promotional tool, not as a means of exploring creative ideas. This finding is in line with the research by Permatasari et al. (2025), which states that the majority of culinary MSMEs in Malang use social media only to upload product photos and price information, without being accompanied by continuous creative concept development. This condition means that digital marketing has not been optimally utilized to encourage creative ideas in product and service development.

In addition, limited digital literacy and understanding of digital marketing strategies are also factors that weaken its influence on business creativity. Research by Pratama and Lestari (2022) shows that low digital content analysis skills make MSME players tend to imitate existing marketing strategies, so that business creativity does not develop significantly. Another study by Hadi and Nugroho (2022) confirms that business creativity is more influenced by entrepreneurial experience, innovative thinking, and the courage to take risks than by the use of digital media alone.

Furthermore, empirical research by Viola Yolanda et al. (2024) found that digital marketing has a significant effect on marketing performance, but its effect on business creativity is relatively weak without the support of a strong entrepreneurial orientation. This is reinforced by the findings of Wulandari and Putra (2023), who state that culinary business creativity is triggered more by direct interaction with customers, experience in facing competition, and the intuition of business actors in reading market opportunities. Thus, digital marketing plays a supporting role, not a major factor, in shaping culinary business creativity.

In conclusion, the influence of digital marketing on business creativity in the culinary business in Malang City does exist, but it is relatively small because digital marketing is more often used as a promotional tool than as a means of developing creative ideas. Business creativity is more shaped by internal factors such as entrepreneurial experience, entrepreneurial orientation, and the ability to read market opportunities. Therefore, in order for digital marketing to make a greater contribution to business creativity, it is necessary to improve the digital literacy and strategic capabilities of business actors in utilizing digital technology creatively and innovatively.

#### *Entrepreneurial experience on business creativity in culinary businesses in Malang City*

Entrepreneurial experience has a significant influence on business creativity, especially in the culinary business in Malang City, which has a high level of competition and dynamic consumer characteristics. Business owners who have been in business for a long time tend to have a deep understanding of consumer tastes, demand patterns, and changes in culinary trends. This experience becomes a source of learning that encourages creative ideas in menu development, presentation, and business concepts. Research by Iskandar and Safrianto (2020) proves that business experience has a positive effect on entrepreneurs' ability to manage and develop their businesses through learning from previous mistakes and successes.

In addition, entrepreneurial experience allows culinary entrepreneurs to be more daring in innovating and experimenting with products. Business owners who have extensive experience generally do not only rely on intuition, but also reflect on previous experiences in creating menu variations and creative service strategies. This is reinforced by research by Sari and Nugroho (2021), which states that entrepreneurial experience increases creativity through a process of repeated evaluation of business strategies that have been implemented.

Thus, business creativity does not appear instantly, but develops along with the accumulation of experience possessed by business actors.

Entrepreneurial experience also plays an important role in improving the ability of culinary business actors to read market opportunities spontaneously and adaptively. Experienced business actors tend to be more sensitive to changes in consumer behavior and are able to anticipate new culinary trends. Research by Prasetyo and Handayani (2022) found that business experience supported by a family background in trading can increase the creativity of entrepreneurs in creating product differentiation and service innovation. Similar findings were reported by Hadi and Nugroho (2022), who stated that entrepreneurial creativity grows strongly through direct experience in facing competition and market changes.

In the context of culinary businesses in Malang City, entrepreneurial experience is also related to technical and managerial skills that support the creative process, such as product arrangement, equipment utilization, and operational efficiency. Experienced entrepreneurs tend to be able to combine creativity with technical aspects so that innovative ideas can be realized effectively. Research by Wulandari and Putra (2023) shows that business experience contributes significantly to creativity in menu innovation, packaging, and service concepts, which ultimately increases the attractiveness of culinary businesses. In addition, Rahmawati (2023) emphasizes that entrepreneurial experience encourages creativity in reading market opportunities that affect the sustainability of culinary businesses.

In conclusion, entrepreneurial experience has a huge influence on business creativity in culinary businesses in Malang because experience provides continuous learning, increases sensitivity to opportunities, and strengthens the ability of business actors to create innovative ideas that add value. Supported by various empirical studies, it can be concluded that the higher the entrepreneurial experience possessed by culinary business operators, the higher the level of business creativity that can be generated, thereby directly contributing to the success and sustainability of the business.

#### *Digital marketing affects the success of culinary businesses in Malang City through business creativity as a mediation variable*

Digital marketing has been proven to directly increase the success of culinary businesses by expanding market reach, brand visibility, and ease of transactions. However, when business creativity is positioned as a mediating variable, the influence of digital marketing on business success tends to weaken. This is because the use of digital marketing by culinary businesses in Malang City is still technical and operational in nature, such as the use of social media for routine promotion, without being accompanied by the development of sustainable creative ideas. Research by Ilham and Santoso (2025) and Permatasari et al. (2025) shows that most culinary MSME players utilize digital marketing only as a promotional tool, not as a means of exploring business creativity, so that its contribution to value creation is limited.

The small mediating role of business creativity is also influenced by the limited capacity of business players to process digital information into real innovation. A study by Hadi and Nugroho (2022) reveals that business creativity requires strategic thinking skills, the courage to take risks, and a continuous learning process, which do not automatically arise simply through the use of digital marketing. Similar findings were reported by Wulandari and Putra (2023), who stated that business creativity is more influenced by entrepreneurial experience and market understanding than by the intensity of digital media use. Thus, although digital marketing provides data and opportunities, not all business actors are able to convert them into creative ideas that directly impact business success.

Additionally, the highly competitive nature of the culinary business in Malang City also contributes to the small effect of entrepreneurial creativity. Many business actors implement uniform digital marketing strategies, such as discount promotions, standard product photos, and endorsements by local influencers, resulting in low levels of creative differentiation. Research by Viola Yolanda et al. (2024) shows that digital marketing does improve marketing performance, but it does not always have a significant impact on product innovation if it is not supported by a strong entrepreneurial orientation. This shows that business creativity does not automatically grow from digital marketing activities that are imitative and lack exploration.

Time and consistency are also reasons why business creativity has not been able to optimally mediate the relationship between digital marketing and business success. Creativity is a long-term process that requires repeated experimentation, evaluation, and adaptation to the market. Research by Sari and Nugroho (2021) and Prasetyo and Handayani (2022) shows that business actors with long experience are better able to develop creativity that impacts business performance compared to business actors who only rely on short-term digital marketing strategies. Therefore, the influence of digital marketing through business creativity is relatively small because creativity has not developed maturely and sustainably among culinary business actors.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that digital marketing influences the success of culinary businesses in Malang City through business creativity, but this mediating influence is relatively small. This is due to the use of digital marketing that is still oriented towards technical promotion, the limited ability of business actors to process digital information into creative innovations, the high pattern of imitation in culinary business competition, and business creativity that requires time and experience to develop optimally. Thus, digital marketing will be more effective in increasing business success if it is accompanied by strengthening the capacity for creativity and entrepreneurial orientation of business actors in a sustainable manner.

#### *Entrepreneurial experience affects the success of culinary businesses in Malang City through business creativity as a mediation variable*

Entrepreneurial experience plays a strategic role in determining the success of a culinary business because experience shapes the mindset, skills, and adaptability of business owners in facing market dynamics. Business owners with more experience tend to be better able to understand consumer preferences, manage business risks, and make more accurate decisions. Research by Iskandar and Safrianto (2020) proves that entrepreneurial experience has a positive and significant effect on business success because experience allows entrepreneurs to learn from previous mistakes. This finding is in line with Sari and Nugroho (2021), who state that business experience improves the performance of MSMEs through continuous evaluation of the business strategies that have been implemented.

However, entrepreneurial experience does not always have an optimal direct impact on business success if it is not accompanied by business creativity. The experience possessed by entrepreneurs will be more valuable when it can be transformed into new ideas, product innovations, and creative service strategies. Research by Hadi and Nugroho (2022) shows that entrepreneurial creativity can mediate the influence of business experience on MSME performance, because creativity bridges practical knowledge with the innovation needed by the market. In other words, experience becomes a source of learning, while creativity becomes a tool to process that learning into added value for the business.

In the context of culinary businesses in Malang City, which has a high level of competition, business creativity is a key factor in differentiating one business from another. Experienced culinary business actors tend to be more sensitive in reading opportunities, predicting food trends, and creating product differentiation through menu innovation, packaging, and service concepts. Wulandari and Putra (2023) found that business creativity has a significant effect on the success of culinary businesses through increased customer loyalty and brand image strengthening. In addition, Prasetyo and Handayani (2022) also showed that business actors with a strong trading background are able to produce more applicable creativity that has a direct impact on increasing sales.

The significant influence of entrepreneurial experience on business success through business creativity can be explained because creativity functions as an internal mechanism that activates experience into competitive advantage. Without creativity, experience is only repetitive and less adaptive to market changes. Rahmawati's (2023) research proves that creativity in reading market opportunities can increase the sustainability of culinary businesses, while Adinugroho et al. (2024) found that service innovation and product quality as forms of creativity significantly increase the success of culinary businesses in Malang City. These findings indicate that business creativity strengthens and amplifies the impact of entrepreneurial experience on business success.

Based on the discussion and empirical research support, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial experience has a significant impact on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City through business creativity as a mediating variable. Entrepreneurial experience provides practical knowledge and skills, while business creativity plays a role in transforming these experiences into innovations that are relevant to market needs. Therefore, business creativity becomes the main link that strengthens and amplifies the influence of entrepreneurial experience on the sustainable success of culinary businesses.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that digital marketing has not had a significant impact on the success of culinary businesses in Malang City because its use is still limited and lacks strategy. Entrepreneurial experience has a positive effect on business success, but its influence is relatively small if it is not supported by business creativity. Business creativity has been proven to have the greatest influence on the success of culinary businesses and plays an effective role as a mediating variable between entrepreneurial experience and business success. Thus, the success of culinary businesses in Malang City is largely determined by the ability of business actors to transform their experiences into innovative and adaptive creativity.

Culinary entrepreneurs in Malang City are advised to increase business creativity through product innovation, service, and market opportunity utilization so that entrepreneurial experience can have an optimal impact on business success. In addition, the use of digital marketing needs to be done more strategically and creatively, not only as a means of promotion. Further research is expected to add other relevant variables to enrich the study of culinary business success.

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