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The Effect Of Ai Utilization, Creative Content, And Product Innovation On Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Of Food And Beverage Umkm In The Digital Era In Sukolilo, Surabaya

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Abstrak

This study aims to examine the effect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) utilization, creative content, and product innovation on strengthening the entrepreneurial competitiveness of food and beverage MSMEs in Sukolilo, Surabaya. The main objective is to understand the contribution of each variable, both partially and simultaneously, in enhancing MSMEs' competitiveness amid increasingly tight and digital-based business competition. The study employs a quantitative approach involving 30 MSME owners selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires specifically designed to measure the research variables. The data were then analyzed using multiple linear regression to test the relationships and impacts of the variables individually and collectively on MSME competitiveness. The findings indicate that AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation have a positive and significant influence on strengthening MSME competitiveness. AI assists business actors in operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making, creative content expands market reach and strengthens business image, while product innovation becomes the dominant factor in attracting consumer attention and creating competitive advantage. These results highlight the importance of integrating technology and creativity to support the sustainability and development of MSMEs in the digital era. Selain itu, studi ini memberikan bukti empiris bahwa transformasi digital memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan kinerja UMKM, khususnya di sektor makanan dan minuman. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi bagi pelaku UMKM dalam merumuskan strategi bisnis dan bagi para pembuat kebijakan dalam merancang program yang mendorong adopsi teknologi dan inovasi di kalangan UMKM.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Creative Content, Product Innovation, Competitiveness, Digital Entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has profoundly altered the competitive dynamics of global business ecosystems, influencing organizations across various sectors, including micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. In this rapidly evolving environment, the adoption of advanced digital technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), creative digital content, and product innovation, has become increasingly essential for sustaining entrepreneurial competitiveness. AI provides substantial opportunities for process automation, enhanced decision-making, operational efficiency, and improved customer interaction. Creative digital content strengthens brand identity, enhances audience engagement, and supports market positioning across social media platforms. Meanwhile, product innovation enables firms to differentiate themselves, respond effectively to shifting consumer preferences, and maintain long-term competitiveness, especially within dynamic industries such as food and beverage (Mamin). Despite these digital advancements, many MSMEs continue to face challenges in adopting and optimizing digital technologies due to limited digital literacy, insufficient technological readiness, and inconsistencies in innovation practices.

Within the local context of Sukolilo, Surabaya, Mamin MSMEs have demonstrated a growing engagement with digital platforms, driven by the increasing relevance of social media, online delivery services, and digital marketing. However, the extent to which these enterprises utilize AI tools, produce consistent creative content, and implement structured product innovation varies considerably. This research underscores that low digital capability and technological constraints remain major barriers, preventing MSMEs from fully leveraging AI, creativity, and innovation to enhance their competitiveness. This situation highlights the importance of examining how AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation collectively shape entrepreneurial competitiveness in the Mamin MSME sector in Sukolilo.

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A review of prior empirical studies indicates a clear research gap. Existing literature tends to examine these variables separately or in pairs, such as the influence of AI on innovation or the relationship between creative content and business performance. Only a limited number of studies have integrated AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation within a unified analytical framework to assess their combined effects on MSME competitiveness, particularly in the Mamin sector. This indicates a scarcity of comprehensive empirical evidence and a lack of studies focusing specifically on the unique business environment of Sukolilo, Surabaya.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide deeper insights into the determinants of digital-based competitiveness among Mamin MSMEs. Its findings offer valuable guidance for policymakers, MSME practitioners, and entrepreneurship development institutions in formulating strategies that enhance digital capability, creative content practices, and innovation capacity. Moreover, the study contributes practical recommendations for designing targeted training programs, digital empowerment initiatives, and innovation-oriented interventions aimed at strengthening MSME competitiveness in the digital era.

Based on the problem formulation outlined in the original document, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Does AI utilization significantly influence the entrepreneurial competitiveness of Mamin MSMEs in Sukolilo?
2. Does creative content significantly influence entrepreneurial competitiveness?
3. Does product innovation significantly influence entrepreneurial competitiveness?
4. Do AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation simultaneously influence entrepreneurial competitiveness?

Accordingly, the objectives of this research are to:

1. Examine and verify the effect of AI utilization on entrepreneurial competitiveness.
2. Examine and verify the effect of creative content on entrepreneurial competitiveness.
3. Examine and verify the effect of product innovation on entrepreneurial competitiveness; and
4. Examine and verify the simultaneous influence of AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation on entrepreneurial competitiveness.

This study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it expands the literature on digital entrepreneurship by offering empirical evidence regarding the combined roles of AI, creative content, and product innovation in enhancing MSME competitiveness. It also strengthens theoretical frameworks related to digital capability, creativity, and innovation synergy. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for MSME actors to optimize AI tools, improve the quality of creative content, and develop systematic product innovation strategies. Furthermore, the study informs policymakers and entrepreneurship-support institutions in the development of digital empowerment and innovation-based capacity-building programs.

MSME competitiveness. It also strengthens theoretical models related to digital capability, creativity, and innovation synergy. Practically, the study provides MSME actors with actionable insights for maximizing AI tools, improving creative content strategies, and enhancing product innovation. Additionally, the findings support policymakers and entrepreneurship institutions in developing targeted digital empowerment and innovation-based capacity-building programs.

Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Utilization

Studies show that AI can significantly increase innovation capability and MSME competitiveness. Suharto (2025) highlights that AI integration combined with design thinking can enhance innovation quality and MSME competitiveness through improved decision-making and product development processes. This supports the Dynamic Capability Theory, which argues that firms that sense, seize, and transform technological opportunities gain superior competitive advantage.

Creative Content

The highlights that creative content is essential for strengthening engagement and differentiation of MSMEs in digital markets. Creative digital strategies such as branding, campaign storytelling, and visual consistency significantly enhance competitiveness, particularly for MSMEs relying on social media platforms. Supporting evidence from prior studies includes Rifaldy Mochtar (n.d.), which demonstrates how creative digital marketing by influencers helps MSMEs expand visibility and strengthen competitive position on Instagram. Similarly, studies

on online marketing (Chakim & Nada, 2024) confirm that digital content and online promotion significantly expand market reach and improve MSME positioning.

Product Innovation

Product innovation is defined as the creation, modification, or enhancement of goods that offer new value to customers. This includes new product variations, improved quality, updated packaging, new flavors, sustainable materials, or the use of technology in production processes. The emphasizes that product innovation is one of the most consistent predictors of MSME competitiveness.

Entrepreneurial Competitiveness

Entrepreneurial competitiveness refers to an MSME's ability to maintain superior market performance through differentiation, efficiency, product quality, customer satisfaction, and innovation capability. According to the research, competitiveness includes productivity, market access, innovation adoption, and the ability to sustain competitive advantage under digital transformation pressures.

2. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach, aiming to examine the causal relationships between AI utilization, creative content, product innovation, and entrepreneurial competitiveness. The explanatory design was selected to empirically test the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable through statistical hypothesis testing. The study used a structured survey method to collect numerical data, which were subsequently analyzed using inferential statistical techniques.

Data Sources

The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary data.

A. Primary Data

Obtained directly from questionnaires to owners/managers of MSMEs (Food and Beverage) in Surabaya.

B. Secondary Data

Obtained from government reports, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), scientific publications, national and international journals related to AI, creative content, product innovation, and MSME competitiveness.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all food and beverage (Mamin) MSMEs operating in the Sukorilo District, Surabaya. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria:

- (1) MSMEs that had been operating for at least two years;
- (2) MSMEs that actively used digital platforms for marketing or business operations; and
- (3) MSMEs that engaged in product development and/or content creation activities.

A total of 30 MSME owners met these criteria and were included as respondents. This sample size is considered sufficient for regression analysis in small-scale explanatory studies and aligns with minimum sample requirements for preliminary quantitative research.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was distributed directly to MSME owners both online and offline.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to evaluate both the individual and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on entrepreneurial competitiveness. Before regression testing, classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, were conducted to ensure the suitability of the model.

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS, which provided the basis for computing t-tests, F-tests, regression coefficients, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). These analyses were essential for testing the hypotheses and determining the significance of relationships among variables.

3. Results and Discussion

The respondent group consisted of 30 Mamin MSME owners operating in the Sukolilo District of Surabaya. Most respondents were young entrepreneurs aged 18–25 years (63%), followed by those aged 26–30 years. The majority of MSMEs had been operating for 2–3 years, indicating that most businesses were in the growth phase. In terms of digital activity, the respondents predominantly used WhatsApp Business, Instagram, and TikTok for promotional and operational purposes.

The descriptive statistics show that all variables are rated at moderate to high levels:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Category
AI Utilization	3.40	Neutral
Creative Content	3.52	Agree
Product Innovation	3.74	Agree
Entrepreneurial Competitiveness	4.27	Strongly agree

These findings indicate that product innovation and creative content are relatively stronger competencies among MSMEs, while AI utilization remains underdeveloped.

Validity and Reliability

All measurement items passed the item validity test, with correlation values exceeding the minimum threshold (0,361). Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced values above 0,6 for all variables, demonstrating strong internal consistency of the instrument.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	> <	Cronbach Alpha	Keterangan
Pemanfaatan AI(X1)	0,884	>	0,6	Reliabel
Konten Kreatif (X2)	0,932	>	0,6	Reliabel
Inovasi Produk (X3)	0,915	>	0,6	Reliabel
Daya Saing (Y)	0.879	>	0,6	Reliabel

Data Analysis

Classical Assumption Test

1. Normality Test

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual	
N		30	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000	
	Std. Deviation	2.79862069	
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.095	
	Positive	.076	
	Negative	-.095	
Test Statistic		.095	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200 ^d	
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.	.700	
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.688
		Upper Bound	.712

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 926214481.

Based on the table above, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test results show an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200 and a Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.700. Since both significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

Thus, the regression model used in this study meets the assumption of normality, making the data suitable for use in further statistical analysis such as regression testing.

2. Multicollinearity Test

Table 4. Multicollinearity Tes

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	8.723	6.698		1.302	.204		
	X1	.302	.138	.297	2.183	.038	.992	1.008
	X2	.409	.099	.565	4.142	.000	.985	1.016
	X3	.303	.116	.356	2.610	.015	.983	1.017

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Based on the table above, it shows that the VIF value for the AI Utilization (X1) variable is 1.008, Creative Content (X2) is 1.016, and Product Innovation (X3) is 1.017. From the results of the multicollinearity test, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in this study.

3. Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.762	3.230		.545	.590
	X1	-.081	.067	-.225	-1.208	.238
	X2	-.001	.048	-.006	-.031	.975
	X3	.076	.056	.255	1.363	.185

a. Dependent Variable: Abs_RES

Based on the results of the heteroscedasticity test (Glejser), the significance values for variables X1 (0.238), X2 (0.975), and X3 (0.185) are all greater than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no symptoms of heteroscedasticity in the regression model, so the data is declared homoscedastic and suitable for further analysis.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.723	6.698		1.302	.204
	X1	.302	.138	.297	2.183	.038
	X2	.409	.099	.565	4.142	.000
	X3	.303	.116	.356	2.610	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Y

From the results of the regression analysis calculations with SPSS For Windows version 27, a constant of 8.723 and a regression coefficient of 0.302 for X1 were obtained, a regression coefficient of 0.409 for X2 and a regression coefficient of 0.303 for X3, so that the multiple linear regression equation can be known as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \varepsilon$$

$$Y = (8,723) + (0,302) X_1 + (0,409) X_2 + (0,303) X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Description:

Y	: MSME Entrepreneurial Competitiveness
α	: Constant
b_1, b_2, b_3	: Regression coefficients of each independent variable
X ₁	: AI Utilization
X ₂	: Creative Content
X ₃	: Product Innovation
ε	: Error

Based on this equation, it can be interpreted as follows:

1. Constant (8.723)

The constant value indicates that if AI utilization (X1), creative content (X2), and product innovation (X3) are assumed to be zero, then the level of entrepreneurial competitiveness of MSMEs is 8.723. This means that without the contribution of these three variables, MSMEs still have a basic level of competitiveness, although not high. This constant indicates that there are other factors outside the model that can also influence MSME competitiveness.

2. AI Utilization Coefficient (X1) = 0.302

This positive coefficient indicates that every 1 unit increase in AI utilization will increase MSME competitiveness by 0.302, assuming other variables remain constant. This means that AI utilization has a positive effect on increasing MSME competitiveness. The better the use of AI in business processes, decision-making, or customer interactions, the greater the competitiveness of MSMEs.

3. Creative Content Coefficient (X2) = 0.409

This coefficient is the largest of the three independent variables. A positive value of 0.409 indicates that every 1-unit increase in creative content will increase MSME competitiveness by 0.409, assuming other variables remain constant. This means that content quality, relevance, and creativity have the strongest influence on increasing MSME competitiveness. The more creative and engaging the content produced, the greater the opportunity for MSMEs to expand their market and win the competition.

4. Product Innovation Coefficient (X3) = 0.303

This positive coefficient indicates that every 1-unit increase in product innovation will increase MSME competitiveness by 0.303, assuming other variables remain constant. This means that product innovation positively contributes to competitiveness. The more frequently MSMEs update their product design, quality, features, or technology, the greater their ability to compete in the market.

Hypothesis Testing

t-test (partial)

Table 7. t-test (partial)

Relationship	t-value	Sig.	Result
AI Utilization → Competitiveness	2.183	0.038	Significant
Creative Content → Competitiveness	4.142	0.000	Significant
Product Innovation → Competitiveness	2.610	0.015	Significant

Based on the results of the t-test in the table above, variables X1, X2, and X3 show a calculated t-value greater than the t-table and have a significance value <0.05 . This means that the three variables have a significant effect on variable Y. In other words, the use of AI (X1), creative content (X2), and product innovation (X3) each have a real influence on increasing the competitiveness of MSME F&M entrepreneurship.

Simultaneous Effect (F-test)

Table 8. Simultaneous Effect (F-test)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	249.164	3	83.055	9.507	.000 ^b
	Residual	227.136	26	8.736		
	Total	476.300	29			
a. Dependent Variable: Y						
b. Predictors: (Constant), X3, X1, X2						

All three independent variables exhibit significant positive effects on entrepreneurial competitiveness, with creative content and product innovation emerging as the strongest predictors.

The F-test result indicates that the model is statistically significant:

F = 9.507, sig = 0.000

This confirms that AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation jointly influence entrepreneurial competitiveness.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R²)Table 9. Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.723 ^a	.523	.468	2.95567

a. Predictors: (Constant), X3, X1, X2

The model demonstrates a moderate explanatory power:

R² = 0.523

This means that 52.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial competitiveness can be explained by the three predictors in the model, while the remaining 47.7% is influenced by factors not examined in this study.

Discussion**Interpretation of Findings**

The findings demonstrate that AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation each contribute significantly to enhancing entrepreneurial competitiveness among Mamin MSMEs. The strongest contributors are creative

content and product innovation, while AI utilization although significant shows a relatively lower effect due to limited digital literacy and minimal integration of AI into operational workflows.

Comparison with Prior Research

The positive effect of AI utilization aligns with studies showing that AI supports decision-making and operational efficiency for MSMEs. The strong influence of creative content is consistent with digital marketing literature emphasizing the role of visual branding, storytelling, and content quality in driving customer engagement. Meanwhile, the strong impact of product innovation reinforces findings that continuous innovation enhances differentiation and competitiveness.

Implications for Theory

The results strengthen the applicability of the Dynamic Capability Theory, demonstrating that MSMEs that integrate digital technologies, creativity, and innovation can better adjust to evolving market conditions. The results further support the Resource-Based View (RBV), showing that creative content and product innovation serve as strategic resources that enhance competitive advantage.

Implications for Digital Business and AI Adoption

1. **AI Adoption:** MSMEs need to transition from basic, exploratory AI usage to more structured applications, such as demand forecasting, customer segmentation, and automated marketing.
2. **Creative Content:** Improvements in content quality, storytelling, and brand consistency can significantly enhance digital presence and customer loyalty.
3. **Product Innovation:** Continuous development of new product variations, improved quality, and creative packaging remains a key driver of competitiveness, especially in saturated markets like Mamin.
4. **Policy:** Stakeholders and government institutions should enhance digital literacy programs, AI training, and innovation coaching tailored for MSMEs.

Regression Analysis

- AI utilization → competitiveness (**sig < 0.05**)
- Creative content → competitiveness (**sig < 0.05**)
- Product innovation → competitiveness (**sig < 0.05**, strongest effect)
- Simultaneous effect (**F-test sig < 0.05**)

These results show that all three variables contribute to strengthening MSME competitiveness.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation on the entrepreneurial competitiveness of food and beverage (Mamin) MSMEs in Sukolilo, Surabaya. The empirical results show that all three independent variables AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation have significant positive effects on entrepreneurial competitiveness. Creative content and product innovation emerged as the strongest predictors, indicating that visual communication quality and continuous product development play crucial roles in enhancing MSME competitiveness in digital environments. The regression model explains 52.3% ($R^2 = 0.523$) of the variation in entrepreneurial competitiveness, while the F-test results confirm a significant simultaneous influence of the three predictors. **Theoretical Implications,** This study contributes to the theoretical development of digital entrepreneurship and MSME competitiveness by empirically validating the roles of AI utilization, creative content, and product innovation in enhancing competitive performance. The findings support the Dynamic Capability Theory, demonstrating that MSMEs' ability to sense, seize, and integrate digital technologies strengthens their adaptability and competitiveness. Similarly, the results reinforce the Resource-Based View (RBV) by highlighting creative content and product innovation as strategic, valuable, and difficult-to-imitate resources that provide sustained competitive advantage. **Practical Implications,** From a practical perspective, the results of this study provide important implications for MSMEs, policymakers, and entrepreneurship support institutions. MSMEs are advised to increase their use of AI not only as an administrative support tool, but also as a means of customer analysis, inventory planning, and marketing automation. Furthermore, strengthening creative content production capabilities needs to be a primary focus to increase brand visibility, build consumer trust, and expand market engagement. Continuous product innovation is also essential to enable businesses to adapt to changing market tastes and trends.

For policymakers and MSME support institutions, this study emphasizes the importance of providing targeted digital literacy and AI training programs, developing innovation-based incubation activities, and increasing access to digital infrastructure and technology. These efforts are expected to encourage more equitable distribution of MSME competitiveness. Meanwhile, business associations can play a role in providing guidance on the

development of creative content and digital marketing strategies, as well as encouraging collaboration among MSMEs in innovation and joint marketing activities. **Limitations**, This study still has several limitations. First, the relatively limited number of respondents, namely 30 MSMEs, means the results cannot be broadly generalized. Second, the study's focus on Sukolilo District limits the study's ability to represent the conditions of MSMEs in other regions. Third, the measurement of AI utilization was conducted in a general manner without classifying the level of maturity of technology adoption. Fourth, the use of multiple linear regression analysis limits the exploration of more complex relationships between variables compared to a structural analysis approach. **Recommendations for Future Research**, Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to involve a larger sample size and Broaden the research area to achieve findings that are more representative and generalizable. Future research could also add other variables, such as digital literacy, technology readiness, customer engagement, or innovation capability, to enrich the research model. Additionally, employing more advanced analytical techniques, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), may be explored to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the interrelationships among variables. Qualitative approaches and comparative studies between technology-based MSMEs and traditional MSMEs could also be conducted to explore the dynamics of AI adoption and innovation in more depth.

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