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# Adaptive Rationality among Madura Grocery Store Owners: The Role of Experience, Intuition and Social Capital in Sales Strategies

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**ABSTRACK**

Competition between traditional grocery stores and modern retail outlets requires Madura grocery store owners to make appropriate sales decisions despite constraints in capital, information, and business management. This study analyzed how Madura grocery store owners in Paiton District make decisions when determining their sales strategies. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, involving three owners selected purposively. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed using an interactive model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation. The findings show that sales strategies are not developed through formal business planning but evolve from trading experience, observations of community needs, intuition, and conditions in the business environment. Owners retain customers through friendly service, social proximity, product variety, pricing based on operating costs and purchasing power, and inventory adjustments aligned with local consumption patterns. Experience provides the primary basis for interpreting market demand, whereas intuition is used when decisions must be made rapidly. The study concludes that the sustainability of Madura grocery stores depends on owners' capacity to adaptively integrate economic considerations, practical experience, and social capital when responding to retail competition.



## INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) occupy an important position in Indonesia's economic structure because they stimulate production and trade at the local-community level. Their role is evident not only in their contribution to national income but also in their capacity to create employment, support household income, and expand economic activity in areas not yet fully reached by large-scale companies. Their relatively flexible business characteristics enable MSME owners to adjust their activities to changing community needs and local economic conditions. This resilience makes MSMEs an important economic buffer during periods of slowdown and uncertainty. Nevertheless, the sector's substantial role has not always been accompanied by stronger managerial capacity, systematic business record-keeping, and well-planned decision-making at the enterprise level (Janah & Tampubolon, 2024; Nurhidayanti, 2025; Wati et al., 2024).

One form of MSME that continues to develop within community life is the traditional retail business locally known as a Toko Madura, or Madura grocery store. These businesses are generally operated at the household scale, with limited capital, simple management practices, and the owner's direct involvement in nearly all operational activities. Madura grocery stores are characterized by long opening hours, the availability of everyday necessities, locations close to residential areas, and the ability to adapt their services to local habits. They function not only as places of transaction but also as part of the community's social life because interactions between retailers and customers are repeated and personal. These characteristics allow Madura grocery stores to retain a place in local retail structures despite the continued expansion of modern retail outlets across many regions (Pritanjaya & Legawa, 2025; Wafi et al., 2024; Zuhri et al., 2025).

The expansion of minimarket networks and changes in consumer behavior have placed traditional stores in an increasingly complex competitive environment. Modern retailers offer standardized service systems, more orderly product displays, promotional programs, diverse payment options, and more systematic inventory-management support. At the same time, consumers increasingly consider price, convenience, product variety, location, and service quality when deciding where to shop. These conditions require Madura grocery store owners to do more than rely on their business location; they must also interpret changing market needs more carefully. A failure to adjust the product mix, prices, service, and operating hours may reduce a store's attractiveness and encourage customers to switch to competitors. Adaptability is therefore a decisive factor in the sustainability of traditional retail businesses amid the expansion of modern retail (Nasution, 2024; Ramin, 2021; Wijaya et al., 2025).

In responding to such competition, the strength of Madura grocery stores does not necessarily lie in their ability to offer the lowest prices. Familiar service, rapid responses to customer needs, flexible operating hours, and social proximity often provide distinctive value that modern retailers cannot easily replicate. Long-term relationships enable store owners to understand the consumption habits, purchasing power, and preferences of customers in the surrounding community. In some circumstances, this trust is expressed through flexible payment arrangements, the provision of goods upon request, or services tailored to particular customers. Such strategies demonstrate that the continuity of traditional stores depends on a combination of economic considerations and the capacity to build social relationships. Customer loyalty is therefore shaped not only by price but also by trust, convenience, and closeness developed through everyday interaction (Faqih & Rohman, 2026; Heri & Septiana, 2024; Subagio, 2025).

Efforts to retain customers and respond to competition are directly related to the decision-making processes of store owners. In small enterprises, business decisions are not always based on formal planning, written market analysis, or structured sales data. Owners more commonly rely on trading experience, direct observation, information from customers, established habits, and assessments of current conditions. This approach enables rapid decision-making, but it may also create risks when judgments depend too heavily on personal assumptions. Experience can help business owners recognize demand patterns and avoid previously encountered mistakes; however, market change still requires the continuous evaluation of decisions. Decision-making in MSMEs should therefore be understood as a process that integrates rational judgment, practical experience, and entrepreneurial intuition (Hamid et al., 2023; Indarto & Santoso, 2020; Purnamasari et al., 2026).

Madura grocery store owners face a range of interrelated decisions, including product selection, inventory levels, pricing, customer service, and operating hours. Inaccurately estimating consumer demand can lead to excessive stock, product deterioration, or lost sales opportunities. Conversely, overly cautious inventory management may leave customers unable to obtain the products they need and prompt them to shop elsewhere. Pricing decisions also cannot merely imitate competitors because store owners must consider purchase prices, operating costs, product turnover, and local purchasing power. In practice, these decisions are often based on a combination of limited information and knowledge derived from experience. The quality of owners' decisions therefore directly affects their stores' ability to maintain sales flows and retain customers (Hamzah & Priyono, 2025; Jumriani, 2024; Ramadhani, 2025).

Paiton District has a relatively well-developed local trading sector, including Madura grocery stores located near residential areas and along frequently traveled routes. Each store operates under a different combination of customer characteristics, competition, capital capacity, and environmental conditions. These differences may generate diverse strategies even though the retailers sell broadly similar product categories. Stores located in residential areas, for example, may rely more heavily on regular customers and social relationships, whereas stores in busier locations may need to emphasize service speed, product variety, and inventory turnover. Such variation makes Paiton District a relevant setting for examining how sales-strategy decisions emerge from experience, community needs, and competitive pressures at the local level (Ilham et al., 2024; Pritanjaya & Legawa, 2025; Wafi et al., 2024).

Previous studies have examined the existence and business strategies of traditional stores. Heri and Septiana (2024) showed that Madura grocery store owners use pricing, product variety, and service strategies to sustain sales. Wafi et al. (2024) emphasized that the economic activities of Madura grocery store owners are closely connected to the social dynamics of the communities in which they operate. Other research has found that business motivation and adaptability enable Madurese merchant communities to maintain their enterprises across different social and economic environments (Zuhri et al., 2025). Studies of consumer behavior have likewise shown that purchase decisions in grocery stores are influenced by price, proximity, product availability, and relationships between retailers and customers. These findings indicate that traditional-store strategies are not determined by a single factor but emerge from the interaction between market conditions and customers' social characteristics (Hamzah & Priyono, 2025; Heri & Septiana, 2024; Wafi et al., 2024; Zuhri et al., 2025).

Although research on the sales strategies of Madura grocery stores is expanding, much of the literature still treats price, service, location, and product variety primarily as the final outcomes of strategy. The processes preceding the selection of those strategies have received comparatively limited attention, particularly how store owners interpret information, weigh alternatives, and use experience and intuition under uncertainty. Two owners facing similar market conditions may make different decisions because they possess different levels of experience, capital, risk tolerance, and customer knowledge. This limitation highlights the need for research that not only identifies the strategies being implemented but also explains how and why those decisions are made. Such an approach is important for understanding decision-making in small enterprises as a contextual process rather than as a wholly formal and measurable economic act (Indarto & Santoso, 2020; Purnamasari et al., 2026; Subagio, 2025).

Addressing this gap, the present study analyzes the decision-making processes through which Madura grocery store owners determine their sales strategies in Paiton District, identifies the factors influencing those decisions, and explains the roles of experience, intuition, and the social environment in shaping business strategy. The study's novelty lies in placing decision-making at the center of the analysis, thereby treating pricing, product provision, service, and customer management as outcomes of the owners' deliberative processes. Theoretically, the study is expected to extend research on MSME sales strategies by integrating practical experience, intuitive knowledge, and social capital as interrelated elements. Practically, the findings may help store owners evaluate and improve the quality of their decisions without sacrificing the flexibility and social proximity that constitute the distinctive strengths of Madura grocery stores (Faqih & Rohman, 2026; Indarto & Santoso, 2020; Subagio, 2025).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to obtain an in-depth understanding of how Madura grocery store owners in Paiton District make decisions concerning sales strategies. This approach was selected because the study did not seek to test relationships among variables statistically, but rather to explore the experiences, considerations, and actual conditions encountered by store owners in operating their businesses (Ramdhan, 2021). The participants comprised three Madura grocery store owners selected through purposive sampling. Selection criteria required participants to have operated their businesses for at least two years, to be actively involved in day-to-day sales management, and to be willing to provide information about their sales strategies and business decision-making. This technique was used because participant selection in qualitative research emphasizes the relevance of participants' experience and knowledge to the research focus rather than statistical representativeness (Campbell et al., 2020).

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The interviews explored how store owners selected products, managed inventory, set prices, served customers, responded to competition, and used experience and intuition in decision-making. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers to use a common interview guide for all participants while retaining flexibility to develop follow-up questions based on each participant's responses and experiences (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Observations focused on store conditions, product availability, service activities, and patterns of interaction between store owners and customers. Documentation, including field notes, photographs of activities, and supporting records, complemented the interview and observational data. Secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and relevant previous studies.

Data were analyzed interactively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview, observational, and documentary data were first selected and grouped according to the study's themes, including customer loyalty, product adaptation, pricing, trading experience, intuition, and the social environment. The grouped data were then presented as narrative descriptions to identify patterns of relationships among themes. Conclusions were developed progressively and reviewed throughout the research process (Miles et al., 2020). Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing information from the three participants with observational and documentary evidence. When discrepancies were identified, the researchers re-examined the information in light of each participant's business context to obtain a credible account of the sales strategies used by Madura grocery stores in Paiton District.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Decision-Making Patterns and Adaptive Strategies among Madura Grocery Store Owners

The findings show that Madura grocery store owners in Paiton District did not make decisions through formal business planning involving market analysis, sales projections, or complex managerial records. Instead, the three participants relied primarily on trading experience, observations of customer behavior, information from suppliers, inventory conditions, and changes in the surrounding environment. This pattern indicates that business decisions emerged through a continuous process of practical learning. Business knowledge was not acquired through formal analytical systems but through repeated interactions with customers, experience in responding to changing demand, and assessments of the consequences of previous decisions.

The resulting decisions were situational because store owners adjusted their actions to the condition of the business at a given time. When customers increasingly sought a product, owners gradually increased its inventory. Conversely, they reduced slow-moving items to avoid tying up capital for extended periods. Adjustments were also made when suppliers raised prices. Rather than immediately increasing the prices of all products, owners first considered the magnitude of the cost increase, the community's purchasing power, and likely customer reactions. Decisions were therefore not fixed but continually adapted to market dynamics and the business's capacity.

These decision-making patterns reflect a form of practical rationality. Although the owners did not perform detailed written calculations, they nevertheless considered benefits, risks, and resource constraints. Risk assessment was evident when they determined purchase quantities, selected new products, responded to competitors' price changes, and decided whether to retain particular items. Owners did not necessarily purchase large quantities even when a product was currently popular. They tended to test demand first so that capital would not become tied up in goods that might not sell quickly.

These findings are consistent with Purnamasari et al. (2026), who explain that decision-making in microenterprises is often shaped by experience, intuition, limited capital, and restricted information. Under such conditions, business owners rely more heavily on their understanding of operational realities than on complex analytical systems. Indarto and Santoso (2020) similarly showed that business experience, owner characteristics, and the business environment are important determinants of MSME survival. This convergence indicates that simple decisions are not necessarily irrational, because store owners apply knowledge accumulated through experience and direct observation.

Adaptability emerged as one of the principal strengths of Madura grocery store owners. Rather than relying on a single strategy across all situations, they combined pricing, service, product variety, operating hours, experience, and social relationships. When they could not compete on price, they strengthened service quality and product availability. When certain products turned over slowly, they reduced inventory and redirected capital toward items more widely needed by the community. This flexibility enabled rapid action because owners were not constrained by lengthy organizational procedures.

Strategic adaptability was also evident in responses to modern retail. Store owners did not always treat minimarkets as competitors to be confronted through price wars. Instead, they sought to preserve their existing advantages, including proximity, personalized service, the ability to sell in small quantities, and flexible operating hours. This approach demonstrates that competition occurs not only through price but also through the value customers receive. Customers may use minimarkets and Madura grocery stores for different purposes: minimarkets may be selected for promotions and organized displays, whereas Madura grocery stores may be preferred for urgent needs, rapid service, and social proximity.

Zuhri et al. (2025) argue that adaptability is an important factor supporting the sustainability of Madura grocery store communities. Adaptation may involve changes in products, service hours, location choices, and alignment with the social environment in which the business operates. Wafi et al. (2024) likewise explain that the economic dynamics of Madura grocery stores are linked to owners' ability to understand community needs and use social relationships within their business environment. The findings from Paiton District reinforce these arguments by showing that adaptation occurs through everyday decisions about products, prices, inventory, and service.

Adaptive strategies do not imply that every decision made by store owners is correct. Limited record-keeping can make it difficult to measure changes in sales accurately. Owners may know that a product is popular without having data on the volume sold or the profit generated. Business flexibility should therefore be supported by simple record-keeping so that decisions can be evaluated more objectively. Such records need not involve a complex system; they may begin with lists of best-selling items, purchase prices, inventory levels, and product turnover.

Overall, the decision-making processes of Madura grocery store owners reveal a relationship between practical knowledge and adaptive capacity. Decisions are shaped not only by profit considerations but also by experience, capital constraints, customer characteristics, and environmental conditions. Consequently, business strategies are contextual. A strategy that succeeds in one store may not produce the same outcome in another because each location has a different level of competition, consumption pattern, and configuration of social relationships.

**Customer Loyalty and Social Capital in Business Sustainability**

Customer loyalty was one of the most prominent themes in the interviews with the three participants. Store owners regarded regular customers as their primary asset because most transactions involved residents living near the store. Retaining existing customers was considered more important than merely attracting new buyers who might not make repeat purchases. Owners therefore sought to maintain relationships through friendly service, familiar communication, rapid assistance, and a willingness to provide the products customers needed.

Relationships between store owners and customers extended beyond economic transactions. Repeated interactions created social ties that enabled owners to recognize the habits, needs, and financial circumstances of some customers. This knowledge provided an advantage because services could be personalized. Owners could identify the products customers usually bought, when they tended to shop, and the type of service they preferred. Such proximity is difficult for modern retailers to establish through standardized service systems.

Observations showed that interactions in Madura grocery stores were informal. Owners often greeted customers by name, asked about their needs, or offered products they usually purchased. These interactions conveyed the impression that customers were treated not merely as buyers but as members of the store's social environment. Repeated positive experiences subsequently built trust and encouraged customers to return. In some cases, regular customers continued to choose a Madura grocery store even when another shop offered slightly lower prices. This suggests that loyalty is not determined solely by price and product variety; trust, comfort, and emotional closeness are equally important. Faqih and Rohman (2026) explain that service adapted to community characteristics and close customer relationships form an important part of Madura grocery store marketing. Subagio (2025) similarly identifies cultural values, community relationships, and social interaction as factors that help sustain Madura grocery stores.

The social capital possessed by store owners provides a competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate. Minimarkets may improve service or offer promotional programs, but they cannot always develop equally personal relationships with local communities. In Madura grocery stores, trust is built through long-term interaction. Owners' consistency in providing service, maintaining reasonable prices, and meeting customer needs strengthens these relationships. Social capital ultimately functions as an economic resource because it stabilizes the customer base and supports sales turnover. This finding is related to Wafi et al. (2024), who show that the economic activities of Madura grocery store owners cannot be separated from community social dynamics. Social networks support business continuity, build trust, and retain customers. Although social relationships cannot always be quantified directly as profit, their influence is visible in customers' willingness to make repeat purchases. The success of traditional stores is therefore determined not only by financial capital but also by the owner's ability to build social relationships.

One manifestation of trust identified in this study was the provision of deferred payment or informal store credit (bon) to selected customers. This facility was not offered to everyone, but only to people whom the owner knew and considered responsible for repayment. Economically, credit can help retain customers and increase the likelihood of transactions. Socially, it reflects mutual trust developed over time. Nevertheless, extending credit also creates cash-flow risk. If too many customers postpone payment, owners may have difficulty purchasing new inventory. This situation illustrates the dilemma between maintaining social relationships and preserving working capital. Store owners need clear limits on credit amounts, repayment periods, and record-keeping so that informal credit does not become a source of loss. Such controls are not intended to eliminate the business's family-like character but to maintain a balance between trust and business continuity.

The social environment also influenced the forms of service provided. Store owners understood that customers differed in character: some prioritized speed, while others valued communication and friendliness. Adapting to these characteristics formed part of the strategy for sustaining loyalty. Owners who recognized both customers' emotional and functional needs had a greater opportunity to build long-term relationships. Pritanjaya and Legawa (2025) explain that the ability of Madura grocery stores to adapt to local culture and the surrounding environment is a key basis of business sustainability. Adaptation is evident not only in the products offered but also in how owners build relationships with the community. The findings from Paiton District show that the social environment serves both as a source of information and as a business resource. Through community interaction, owners learn about changing needs, customer complaints, and opportunities to introduce new products.

Social proximity also has limits. Relationships that become overly personal may make it difficult for owners to refuse customer requests, collect outstanding payments, or make decisions that the community dislikes. Owners must maintain professionalism without losing the friendly character of their service. This balance is important to ensure that social capital remains an asset rather than becoming a business burden. Customer relationships should therefore be managed consciously rather than merely following established habits. Overall, customer loyalty in Madura grocery stores is generated through a combination of service, trust, proximity, and consistency. Price remains relevant, but it is not the sole reason customers make purchases. Social capital makes customers feel more comfortable and valued. These findings confirm that relationship-building is part of sales strategy rather than a social activity separate from economic objectives.

**Managing Products, Inventory, and Prices in Response to Market Conditions**

Decisions about which products to sell were based primarily on the needs of communities surrounding the businesses. All three participants prioritized goods with relatively stable demand, such as rice, cooking oil, sugar, coffee, instant noodles, bottled water, snacks, liquefied petroleum gas, and mobile-phone credit. This selection reflected an effort to maintain capital turnover through products used in everyday life. High-demand goods were prioritized so that customers would not switch to another store because the items they needed were unavailable.

Store owners obtained information about community needs through direct observation. Products that sold out quickly were regarded as being in high demand, whereas quantities of rarely purchased items were reduced. Customer requests for products not yet available also informed decisions to expand the product range. When several customers asked for the same product, owners tested it in limited quantities. This approach indicates that the retailers practiced a market orientation despite not using formal surveys or consumer analysis. Product variety has strategic value because customers tend to choose stores capable of meeting several needs in a single visit. When one product is unavailable, customers may move to another store and purchase other items there as well. Lost sales may therefore extend beyond the out-of-stock product and affect the entire transaction. Owners sought to maintain the availability of frequently purchased goods so that customers had no reason to switch.

Ilham et al. (2024) show that Madura grocery store operators seek to increase business appeal by providing products suited to community needs. Hamzah and Priyono (2025) likewise explain that product availability, price, location, and ease of access influence consumers' choice of shopping venue. These findings are consistent with the evidence from Paiton District, where product variety constituted an important part of customer-retention strategy. However, maintaining variety must be balanced against limited capital and storage space. Owners cannot purchase every type of product in large quantities. Fast-moving goods are stocked more deeply, whereas products susceptible to expiration or damage are purchased in limited quantities. This decision reflects an effort to balance availability against inventory risk. Excessive inventory can tie up capital and increase the risk of loss, while insufficient inventory can result in lost sales.

Jumriani (2024) emphasizes that inventory management should consider product turnover, consumer demand, and the risk of damage. Inaccurate inventory decisions can generate avoidable costs and losses. In the Madura grocery stores studied in Paiton District, inventory management still relied largely on memory and visual observation. Owners determined which products needed replenishment by inspecting remaining quantities or recalling sales intensity. A memory-based system may remain workable at a simple business scale but becomes less effective as the product range expands. Dependence on memory can lead to duplicate purchases, stockouts, or delayed replenishment. Simple record-keeping can therefore improve decision accuracy. Lists of fast-moving products, purchase records, and supplier-price information can provide a more orderly basis for inventory management without requiring complex equipment.

In setting prices, the three participants did not use competitors' prices as their sole reference. Although they monitored market prices, final decisions were based on supplier purchase prices, operating costs, product turnover, local purchasing power, and an acceptable margin. When competitors reduced prices, owners did not necessarily follow because doing so could erode profit and compromise their ability to replenish inventory. Pricing strategies were flexible. Essential goods with high turnover could be sold at lower margins to remain affordable, whereas slow-moving goods or products with specific storage costs could carry different margins. Owners sought to set prices that customers would accept without undermining business sustainability. Price was therefore understood as the outcome of balancing consumer interests with the owner's need to preserve capital.

Heri and Septiana (2024) explain that Madura grocery store sales strategies generally combine competitive prices, product variety, and service. Competitiveness does not always mean offering the lowest price, because owners still require margins to finance operations. Wijaya et al. (2025) likewise show that the effects of minimarkets on grocery stores extend beyond price to service, convenience, and product variety. Reducing prices is therefore not the only way to retain customers. Maintaining price stability also affects customer trust. Frequent price changes can create uncertainty and the impression that prices are set inconsistently. Participants tended to adjust prices when suppliers increased their charges or when unavoidable operating costs changed. This approach enabled price changes to be justified by cost conditions rather than by the mere imitation of competitors.

Product, inventory, and pricing strategies are interdependent. An appropriate product that is unavailable when needed can still result in lost sales. Conversely, large stocks of products that do not match demand will tie up capital. Prices that are too low may increase sales while reducing profit, whereas prices that are too high may encourage customers to switch stores. Owners must therefore maintain a continuing balance among these three dimensions. The findings show that product and price management were grounded in strong local knowledge. Owners understood which goods the community needed, how sensitive customers were to price, and when demand tended to increase. This knowledge is a strength, but it should be supported by record-keeping so that decisions do not depend exclusively on memory. Combining local knowledge with more systematic sales information can improve efficiency and reduce risk.

**Experience, Intuition, and Their Implications for Strengthening Competitiveness**

Trading experience was the most influential factor in the overall decision-making process. All three participants stated that the ability to understand demand, determine inventory quantities, set prices, and recognize customer characteristics developed through operating their businesses over time. Experience provided knowledge about fast-selling products, periods of increased demand, and mistakes to avoid. Past purchasing errors or excess inventory became lessons for subsequent decisions. Knowledge derived from experience was practical and contextual. Although store owners might not explain their choices through formal management concepts, they could recognize recurring patterns. For example, they knew that certain products were more frequently needed at particular times or that some customers were more price-sensitive than others. This ability to identify patterns influenced inventory quantities and the forms of service provided.

Indarto and Santoso (2020) explain that business experience helps MSME owners recognize opportunities, manage change, and understand market conditions. Experience also reduces mistakes because owners can use previous events as a basis for evaluation. The findings from Paiton District show the same pattern. Experience should be understood not merely as the length of time in business but as accumulated learning from multiple decisions. Nevertheless, experience alone may not be sufficient to address new changes. Consumption patterns, modern retail development, payment methods, and access to pricing information continue to evolve. Strategies that succeeded in the past may not remain effective under different conditions. Owners need to renew their experience through observation and openness to new information. Without this process, experience can harden into habit and ultimately constrain adaptability.

In addition to experience, intuition played a role when owners had to make rapid decisions with incomplete information. Intuition was used to determine whether a new product was worth testing, how much to purchase, when to change prices, and whether a particular customer should receive store credit. The three participants regarded intuition as an instinct developed through years of trading. It was therefore not an unsupported impulse but the result of internalized experience.

Purnamasari et al. (2026) show that MSME owners often use intuition when information and analytical resources are limited. Intuition accelerates decision-making, particularly when owners lack the time for extensive data collection. Its accuracy, however, depends heavily on the quality of experience and the ability to interpret conditions. Intuition not supported by observation can produce biased decisions. Among Madura grocery store owners, the boundary between rational and intuitive decisions was not always clear. When an owner expected a product to sell based on prior experience and customer requests, the decision contained elements of both intuition and rationality. The owner relied on convictions formed through experience while still considering capital capacity and the risk that the product might not sell. Decision-making in microenterprises thus often integrates multiple forms of knowledge.

To reduce risk, intuition can be combined with incremental testing. Owners can purchase a new product in small quantities, observe customer responses, and increase stock when demand becomes evident. This approach preserves decision-making speed without exposing the business to excessive risk. Incremental testing is better suited to the scale of these enterprises than market analysis requiring substantial time and expense. The findings imply that capacity-building should not eliminate experience and intuition, both of which have helped these businesses survive. Instead, these strengths should be reinforced with more systematic information. Records of sales, price changes, inventory quantities, and customer payments can be used to test whether owners' judgments correspond to actual business conditions.

The competitiveness of Madura grocery stores should not be evaluated by their ability to replicate every feature of minimarkets. The strengths of traditional stores lie in flexibility, proximity, and personalized service. Modernization can be selective. Digital record-keeping, cashless payments, or inventory applications can be adopted to increase efficiency while direct communication and flexible service are preserved. For local governments and MSME-support institutions, the findings indicate that business-strengthening programs should be adapted to the retailers' actual practices. Training that is overly theoretical may be difficult to apply. Assistance can focus on simple record-keeping, margin calculation, inventory management, store-credit control, and the use of payment technology. Such support should be designed with consideration for owners' limited time, capital, and technical capacity.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates that decision-making in microenterprises does not fully conform to formal models that assume complete information. Decisions emerge from the interaction of economic considerations, experience, intuition, and social capital. Experience shapes intuition, the social environment supplies information about customer needs, and capital constraints determine which alternatives are feasible. Sales strategy should therefore be understood as the outcome of a contextual and dynamic process.

Practically, the sustainability of Madura grocery stores in Paiton District depends on owners' ability to maintain balance. They must provide sufficient inventory without tying up excessive capital, set acceptable prices without eliminating profit, and build trust without disrupting cash flow. Experience and intuition constitute the basis of decision-making, but both become more effective when supported by records and evaluation. The overall findings show that Madura grocery stores survive not because they use a single strategy but because they combine multiple sources of strength. Personalized service, product variety, price stability, experience, intuition, and social relationships are applied together according to circumstances. The capacity to integrate these elements generates an adaptive strategy that enables owners to respond to market change without losing the distinctive character of their businesses. These four groups of findings confirm that the success of Madura grocery stores is determined not only by financial considerations but also by decision quality and owners' understanding of the social environments in which they operate.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that decision-making among Madura grocery store owners in Paiton District is adaptive and does not depend on formal business planning. Decisions concerning product selection, inventory levels, pricing, service, and customer relationships are shaped by trading experience, observations of community needs, and adjustments to the business environment. Owners tend to select actions they consider most appropriate to their capital capacity, demand patterns, supplier prices, and the characteristics of customers surrounding the store.

Business sustainability is supported primarily by owners' ability to maintain customer loyalty, provide needed products, preserve reasonable prices, and build strong social relationships. Experience is the principal source of practical knowledge, while intuition is used when rapid decisions must be made under conditions of limited information. The findings show that Madura grocery store sales strategies are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by trust, emotional closeness, and an understanding of community habits.

Efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of Madura grocery stores should preserve the flexibility and social proximity that constitute their advantages. Owners can improve decision quality through more systematic sales records, inventory management, margin calculations, and control of customer credit. By integrating experience, intuition, business information, and social capital, Madura grocery stores are more likely to sustain their operations and adapt to changing consumer behavior and competition from modern retailers.

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