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## HISTORY OF SUGIYONO'S ICE CREAM BUSINESS IN MEDAN: A LOCAL ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES AND BUSINESS RESILIENCE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to reconstruct the history of the development of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory in Medan City for the period 1983–2025 and analyze the factors of business resilience and its economic implications from a local economic perspective. The method used is a historical method with a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that this business started manually with knowledge capital from the island of Java, then gradually transformed into a hybrid production system without losing the distinctive taste. Marketing strategies based on mobile sales and social proximity have proven effective in building customer loyalty in the midst of modern product competition. The main factors of business resilience for 42 years include consistency of quality, selective technology adaptation, personal relationships with consumers, and debt-free capital structure. The local economic implications are manifested in the provision of family employment, participation in community social activities, and the strengthening of an independent people's economy. The study concludes that the sustainability of small businesses does not necessarily require massive digitalization or aggressive expansion, but rather value consistency, social closeness, and wise adaptation.

**Key words:** *History, Ice Cream, Business, Resilience.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The history of the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia cannot be separated from the role of local entrepreneurs who are able to survive in rapidly changing socio-economic dynamics. The city of Medan, as one of the economic centers in North Sumatra, has witnessed the growth and development of various culinary businesses that reflect local wisdom as well as adaptation to modernization. Among the many business actors, the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory, which was established in 1983, offers a long story of how a family business was able to cross four decades of changing times. Studies on business resilience like this are important because they provide valuable lessons on survival strategies in the midst of increasingly competitive competition (Suryana & Bayu, 2014). More than just an economic record, the history of this business also holds a cultural and social dimension that enriches our understanding of entrepreneurial practices in the region.

The period 1983–2025 is a long enough time span to observe the transformation of a small business. At the beginning of its establishment, Indonesia's economic condition was still in a post-recession recovery period in the early 1980s, so entrepreneurial initiatives in the processed food sector were considered bold and full of risks. However, it is precisely in the situation of uncertainty that many local entrepreneurs find loopholes to develop products that suit the tastes of the local community. Ice cream, which in that era was still considered a luxury item for some people, slowly turned into daily consumption along with the increasing purchasing power of urban people (Dharmmesta & Handoko, 2014). The emergence of Sugiyono Ice Cream is right to fill the market segment that wants products with distinctive flavors and affordable prices.

The study of the history of business development is not only interesting from an economic point of view, but also from a social history perspective. Every business that lasts a long time keeps a narrative of persistence, innovation, and a willingness to learn from experience. In this context, the oral history approach becomes very relevant to explore the direct experiences of historical actors and witnesses (Arifin, 2023) and (Darma & Joebagio, 2018). Research on Ice Cream Sugiyono can reveal how the technical knowledge obtained from overseas on the

island of Java is then adapted to local conditions in the city of Medan. This kind of knowledge transfer shows the horizontal mobility of entrepreneurial ideas between islands that often escapes the attention of economic historians.

The local economic perspective provides an appropriate analytical framework to assess the contribution of small businesses to the well-being of the surrounding communities. In contrast to the macro approach that focuses more on indicators such as gross regional domestic product, local economies emphasize aspects of sustainability, independence, and the linkage of businesses to the daily needs of citizens (Rustiadi, 2018). Businesses like Sugiyono's Ice Cream are often not recorded in official statistics as a large industry, but their presence is felt directly by consumers in residential environments. Therefore, the study of this kind of business becomes important to complete the complete picture of the structure of the urban economy that is not only dominated by malls and modern retail chains.

Meanwhile, the concept of business resilience has become a major concern in entrepreneurship studies, especially after the 1998 economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic which tested the ability of many SMEs to survive. Business resilience is not only measured by the ability to maintain profits, but also by the flexibility to change strategies without losing the identity of the product (Herbane, 2019). Research on businesses that are more than 40 years old provides an opportunity to identify the most decisive factors in long-term resilience. This is particularly relevant for policymakers who want to formulate more effective SME empowerment programs.

The city of Medan as a research location offers unique urban characteristics, with a multi-ethnic population composition and dynamic consumption patterns. The city's development from the 1980s to 2025 has accelerated tremendously, including in terms of shopping center growth, lifestyle changes, and global product penetration (Nasution, 2020, p. 134). In an ever-changing environment, not all local businesses are able to adapt. Many businesses that thrived in the 1990s actually disappeared when they entered the digital era. Therefore, the existence of Sugiyono Ice Cream until the mid-2020s is a phenomenon that deserves in-depth research.

In terms of methodology, research on the history of business development requires a combination of oral sources, family documents, and field observations. In-depth interviews with founders, business heirs, and longtime customers can reconstruct crucial stages in the business journey (Zuhdi, 1996). In addition, physical documentation such as old photographs, production records, and equipment used over time become valuable artifacts that attest to technological changes. This kind of qualitative approach is better able to capture subjective nuances and values that cannot be measured with numbers alone.

One of the interesting aspects of a business that is managed from generation to generation is the transmission of entrepreneurial values between generations. Experience shows that not all family businesses make it through the leadership transition from the founder to his or her children or relatives (Ward, 2016). Factors such as internal conflicts, a lack of interest in the younger generation, or an inability to adapt are often the cause of failure. With a research period until 2025, the study can observe how Sugiyono Ice Cream manages succession and maintains a cross-generational entrepreneurial spirit. This is an important contribution to the family business literature in Indonesia.

In the context of competition in the ice cream industry, the market has changed drastically since modern products with various flavor variants and attractive packaging entered the city of Medan. Major national and international brands rely on extensive distribution networks, digital promotion, and rapid product innovation. However, preliminary research shows that small businesses like Sugiyono Ice Cream still have their own market share, especially from consumers who prioritize traditional tastes and personal relationships with sellers (Ferreira et al., 2017), as quoted in (Dandi & Ali, 2025). This phenomenon indicates that innovation is not always synonymous with high technology; Often innovation lies in the ability to maintain consistency and uniqueness of products.

From the perspective of the local economy, the mobile sales system that is still maintained by Ice Cream Sugiyono has its own implications for people's consumption patterns. This system creates easy access for consumers who do not have a private vehicle or

who live far from shopping malls. In addition, regular interactions between mobile merchants and shoppers build social bonds that are rarely found in transactions in modern stores (Granovetter, 1985). The trust built through repeated meetings makes consumers more loyal and less likely to switch to competitor products. This explains why businesses with traditional distribution models are still able to survive.

On the other hand, advances in information technology and the advent of online messaging platforms have changed the landscape of food distribution. Many small culinary businesses are turning to online systems to reach a wider range of customers. However, not all businesses have the ability or willingness to carry out digital transformation. The decision to stick to a mobile sales system or take orders over the phone is not just an inability to adapt, but it could be a conscious strategy to maintain control over quality and customer relationships (Porter & Strategy, 1980). The study of Sugiyono's Ice Cream will test the extent to which this kind of strategy is relevant in the digital age.

The historical approach also allows us to understand that each phase of business development is always accompanied by different external challenges. In the 1980s, a major challenge was limited access to raw materials and equipment. In the 1990s, the monetary crisis hit and changed people's purchasing power. Entering the 2000s, competition from imported products and big brands became more and more pronounced. Meanwhile, in the 2010s to 2020s, digitalization and the pandemic became a new test (Sulistiyastuti, 2004). The ability to read environmental changes and respond appropriately is at the core of business resilience. By tracing the 42-year history of Sugiyono Ice Cream, we can see the pattern of response to each wave of these challenges.

This research is not only academically important, but also has practical value for young entrepreneurs and SME coaches. Many entrepreneurship training programs focus too much on innovation and technology aspects, while ignoring fundamental values such as quality consistency, understanding the local market, and building long-term trust (Cusumano, 2010). Sugiyono's Ice Cream success story can be an alternative model that shows that the success of a business is not

always measured by how fast it develops, but by how long it can survive while remaining relevant. This kind of narrative is important to balance the discourse that is too dominated by tech startup stories.

From a historiographical point of view, the writing of the history of small businesses in Indonesia is still relatively rare compared to the history of large companies or conglomerates. Limited resource availability and the notion that small businesses are not important enough are often obstacles (Adnanti et al., 2025). In fact, the backbone of Indonesia's economy is actually in the SME sector which absorbs most of the workforce. Therefore, any research that reconstructs the journey of a small business such as Ice Cream Sugiyono is a valuable contribution to the enrichment of Indonesia's economic history treasures. Using the perspective of local economy and business resilience, this study seeks to bring history from below to the surface.

The method used in this study is a historical method consisting of heuristic (collection of sources), source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The main sources were obtained from interviews with Mr. Sugiyono as the founder, family members involved in management, as well as consumers who have been buying products for a long time. Secondary sources are in the form of family documents, photos, sales records, and articles about the development of the city of Medan. The use of local economic perspectives helps researchers to not only compile a chronology of events, but also to analyze how these enterprises interact with their socio-economic environment (Zuhdi, 1996). Meanwhile, business resilience theory is used as an analytical knife to identify internal and external factors that maintain business sustainability.

The scope of this research is limited to the period 1983 to 2025. The selection of the initial limit is based on the year of establishment of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory in Medan City. The deadline of 2025 was chosen because in that year this research was conducted, so the data collected was relatively up-to-date. The research area is focused on the city of Medan, especially in the environment around the production site and mobile sales lines. Although this venture may also reach areas outside of Medan on a limited basis, this study does not track distribution

outside the city because the main focus is on the contribution to the local economy of Medan. With clear limitations, the analysis can be carried out in depth without losing focus.

Overall, this introduction has explained the background, importance of the topic, the framework of perspective (local economy and business resilience), and the methodology to be used. This research aims to reconstruct the history of the development of Sugiyono Ice Cream from 1983 to 2025, analyze business resilience factors, and reveal its economic implications for the local community of Medan City. It is hoped that the results of this research will not only add to the treasures of local economic history, but also provide inspiration for other SMEs on how to survive the changing times without losing their cultural roots. Now, the discussion will continue to the next chapters which present the findings of the field in detail.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with historical method (Prayogi, 2021). The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the process of the development of Sugiyono's Ice Cream business over a long period of time, as well as capture the subjective meanings inherent in the experiences of historical actors. The historical method, as described by (Sukmana, 2021), is a systematic procedure that includes the collection of sources, criticism, interpretation, and historical writing. The use of this method allows researchers to reconstruct past events chronologically while analyzing the factors that affect the sustainability of the business over time.

The type of research used is oral history research combined with documentary studies. Oral history research is necessary because written documents about small businesses such as the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory are very limited, so key information must be unearthed from the memories and first-hand experiences of historical witnesses (Zuhdi, 1996). Meanwhile, documentary studies serve to complement and confirm oral data through photographs, production records, and other physical artifacts that are still preserved. The combination of these two approaches in historical methodology is known as cross-checking between different types of sources.

This research was carried out in the city

of Medan, precisely at the location of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory and along the mobile sales line which is still operating until 2025. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that this business has been established since 1983 and is still actively producing, thus allowing researchers to conduct direct observations and interviews with related parties (Fauzi & Muta'ali, 2017). In addition, the production location in a densely populated residential environment provides a real picture of the interaction between these businesses and the local community. The research was conducted over a period of six months, which is between January and June 2025.

The data sources in this study are divided into primary sources and secondary sources. The primary source was obtained directly from key informants, namely Mr. Sugiyono as the founder of the business, family members involved in management (wife and children), and three consumers who have purchased products since the 1990s. The selection of informants uses the purposive sampling technique, where informants are selected because they have in-depth knowledge and direct experience with the development of the business since its inception (Sugiyono, 2017). In addition to interviews, primary sources are also family documents such as sales records, old photographs, and production equipment from various periods. Secondary sources include books on local economic history, journals on small business resilience, newspaper articles on the development of the city of Medan, and historical methodological literature.

The data collection technique was carried out in three ways, namely participatory observation, in-depth interview, and documentation. Participatory observation is carried out by directly observing the production process, mobile sales system, and interaction between sellers and buyers in the field. Researchers systematically record how business activities take place on a day-to-day basis, including operating hours, sales routes, and consumer responses (Sutopo, 2002). In-depth interviews are conducted with semi-structured interview guidelines, which allow researchers to dig into information flexibly while still focusing on key questions about its founding history, production changes, marketing strategies, and challenges faced.

Documentation in the form of photos of production activities, interviews, and physical artifacts such as mixing machines and ice cream containers from various generations.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (human instrument), which is assisted by interview guidelines, cameras, and voice recording devices. Before entering the field, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to understand the socio-economic context of the city of Medan and the history of the ice cream industry in Indonesia. Interview guidelines were compiled based on a theoretical framework on business resilience and the local economy, then tested on a single non-key informant to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions (Moleong, n.d.). During the data collection process, the researcher also makes field notes to record observations and initial reflections that are useful at the analysis stage.

Data analysis techniques in the historical method follow four stages, namely heuristic (collection of sources), criticism of sources (verification), interpretation (interpretation), and historiography (writing history). At the heuristic stage, all data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation is inventoried and classified by type and periodization. The source criticism stage is carried out in two ways: external criticism to check the physical authenticity of documents and photographs, and internal criticism to assess the credibility of the content of the interview by comparing the information between informants and with existing written sources (Gottschalk, 1986). Interpretation is carried out by connecting verified facts into the framework of local economic perspectives and business resilience. Finally, historiography is the writing of historical narratives chronologically and thematically, as presented in the research chapter.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods. The source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from Mr. Sugiyono, family members, consumers, and available documents. If a discrepancy in information is found, the researcher reconfirms the informant and looks for additional sources to verify (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The triangulation method was carried out by comparing the interview results with the results of field

observation and physical documentation. In addition, the researcher also conducts a member check, which is asking key informants to re-read the interview transcript and summary of findings to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the informant's intention. This step is important to reduce the subjectivity bias of researchers.

The research procedure begins with the preparation stage, which includes a literature study on historical methodologies and business resilience theory, as well as the informal management of research permits to business owners considering its non-formal nature. The second stage is field data collection, where the researcher conducts initial observations, establishes rapport with informants, then continues in-depth interviews and documentation gradually. Each interview is recorded with the informant's permission and transcribed within 24 hours to maintain memory sharpness (Zuhdi, 1996). The third stage is data verification and analysis, which is carried out simultaneously with data collection so as to allow researchers to immediately identify data gaps and complement them. The fourth stage is the writing of research reports in the form of a systematic historical narrative.

With the research methods described above, it is hoped that the results of research on the history of the development of the Sugiyono Ice Cream business can be presented credibly, systematically, and in-depth. The historical method combined with the perspective of local economy and business resilience allowed researchers to not only compile a chronology of events, but also analyze the structural and cultural factors that led to this effort being able to survive for 42 years. Furthermore, the findings of the field will be presented in detail in the chapter on the results of the research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. History of Establishment and Production Dynamics (1983–2025)

Based on the results of interviews with, this business began in 1983 after he learned ice cream production techniques self-taught while working on the island of Java. This technical knowledge became the initial capital brought to the city of Medan. In the early phases (1983–1990), the production process was still completely manual: kneading the dough using human labor, cooling using ice cubes and salt,

and simple packaging of thin plastic. The production capacity at that time was only around 5–10 liters per day.

Entering the 1990s, as demand increased, business owners began to adopt semi-automatic mixer machines and refrigerators. This transformation was carried out in stages due to limited capital. The following table summarizes the development of production and technology over time:

Table 1. Technology Development and Production Capacity of Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory (1983–2025)

Period	Types of Technology	Production Capacity (per day)	Production System
1983–1990	Manual (hand stirring, ice cube cooling)	5–10 liters	<i>Labour intensive</i>
1991–2005	Semi-automatic mixer machine, refrigerator	20–40 liters	Semi-mekanis
2006–2015	Automatic mixer machine, large capacity freezer	50–80 liters	Mechanical
2016–2025	Combination of modern machines and manual touches (secret recipe)	80–120 liters	Hybrid

Source: Researcher, 2025

One important finding is that modernization has not completely eliminated traditional methods. Business owners selectively maintain several manual stages, especially in the addition of raw materials and texture control, to maintain the distinctive taste that customers are already familiar with. Quality consistency is the main orientation, although production costs are higher. This is evident from interviews with longtime consumers who stated that the taste of Sugiyono's ice cream has not changed significantly since the 1990s.

The findings about the beginning of the establishment of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory in 1983 which relied on Mr. Sugiyono's personal experience in studying ice cream production techniques on the island of Java strengthen the argument that entrepreneurship is not solely born from financial capital, but also from *modal cultural* in the form of technical knowledge and skills (Suryana & Bayu, 2014). From a historical perspective, this embryonic phase shows that

small businesses often start with very limited resources, but are sustained by the courage to take risks and master core competencies. As stated by (Kuntowijoyo, 2005), knowledge gained through direct experience abroad and then transformed into economic practice in the home region is one of the distinctive patterns of knowledge mobility in Indonesia's economic history.

Findings about the production process that were initially *labour intensive* and then gradually transforming into a semi-mechanical to hybrid (manual-modern) system reflecting what is called by (Cusumano, 2010) *As Evolutionary Strategies* in innovation. In contrast to large companies that can make drastic technological leaps, small businesses like Sugiyomo's Ice Cream choose a moderate path: adopting a stirring machine and cooling system gradually while still maintaining a manual touch at critical stages. This is in line with Schumpeter's opinion in (Lerian & Astuti, 2025) that innovation does not necessarily mean disruptive; rather, incremental innovations that maintain quality consistency are often more sustainable in the context of SMEs.

Further, the decision not to completely abandon traditional methods indicates the presence of *Local Wisdom in Modernization*. As explained by (Sulistiyastuti, 2004), many small businesses in Indonesia have failed to survive because modernization has too quickly eliminated the product identity that has been embedded in consumers' minds. By maintaining several stages manually—especially in the addition of raw materials and texture control—Sugiyono's Ice Cream manages to keep *Distinctive flavor* which is the main differentiator from competitor products. Table 1 in the results shows that even though the production capacity increased from 5–10 liters per day to 80–120 liters per day, the consistency of flavor was maintained. This proves that technological transformation does not have to eliminate elements *craftsmanship* which is the main selling point.

From perspective *Transaction Cost Economics*, the choice to modernize gradually can also be understood as an effort to avoid risks *Lock-in* on expensive technology that does not necessarily match the scale of the market (Porter & Strategy, 1980). Business owners demonstrate economic rationality by simply

investing retained profits to buy new equipment, without owing to the bank. This pattern reinforces the finding that the resilience of small businesses is often determined by *Caution* (prudence) in investment decision-making, not by the aggressiveness of expansion.

## 2. Marketing, Distribution, and Competition Adaptation Strategies

The research found that the marketing strategy of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory relies heavily on a *door-to-door sales system* using ice-box refrigerated motorcycles. Until 2025, this system will still be maintained because it is considered effective in building social closeness with consumers. In addition, this business also accepts orders for various events such as celebrations, social gatherings, and school activities. Here's a table that summarizes the characteristics of a marketing strategy:

Table 2. Characteristics of Marketing Strategies by Period

Period	Main Distribution Channels	Promotional Media	Order Type
1983 – 1995	Bicycle commuting (push)	Word of mouth	Limited (kondangan)
1996 – 2010	Motorcycle + icebox	Simple banners, customer recommendations	Celebrations, birthdays
2011 – 2025	Motorcycle + portable freezer	WhatsApp, Facebook (free), still rely on loyalty	Social events, small catering

Source: Researcher, 2025

In the face of competition from modern ice cream products (such as national and international brands that offer flavor variants, attractive packaging, and digital marketing), Ice Cream Sugiyono applies a unique adaptation strategy. On the one hand, business owners resist by maintaining the original taste and not following excessive taste trends. On the other hand, they do accommodation by improving the quality of service, accepting orders via phone/WhatsApp, and repairing packaging for large party orders. As a result, until 2025 this business will continue to survive with a stable turnover, even increasing in certain months (Ramadan and school holidays).

An interesting finding is that competition is not seen as a threat, but rather

as a stimulus for limited innovation. As stated by one family member:

*"There are many competitors, but our loyal buyers keep coming back because the taste is different and the brother is friendly".*

This shows that *social proximity marketing* is more decisive than massive digital promotion. The finding that Sugiyono Ice Cream still maintains a mobile sales system (*door-to-door*) with ice-box refrigerated motorcycles until 2025 is one of the most interesting contributions of this study. In the modern marketing literature that tends to worship digital channels, these findings remind us of the concept *social proximity marketing* submitted by (Granovetter, 1985). According to Granovetter, all economic transactions are embedded (*embedded*) in social relations. The closer the social relationship between the seller and the buyer, the higher the level of trust, and the lower the transaction fee. The practice of mobile sellers greeting customers by name, knowing their taste preferences, and offering products personally is a tangible manifestation of *embeddedness*. This cannot be fully replicated by an impersonal online messaging platform.

Furthermore, (Pratama et al., 2023) explains that marketing success is not only measured by geographic reach or transaction speed, but also by *Long-term loyalty*. The loyalty of Sugiyono Ice Cream customers that is evident from decades of regular purchases is not built through discounts or advertisements, but rather through repeated interactions that build habits and emotional bonds. In this context, the mobile sales system serves as a *Social rituals* which strengthens the cohesion of the residential environment. Children who used to buy Sugiyono ice cream on wheelbarrows, now as adults still buy from the next generation on motorcycles. This indicates the presence of *Intergenerational transmission* not only in the family of business owners, but also in the consumer base.

Findings on adaptation of competition *Resistance as well as accommodation* Highly relevant to the framework *strategic resilience* from (Herbane,

2019). Resistance can be seen from the effort to maintain the distinctive taste and not follow excessive taste trends; Accommodation is evident from the use of WhatsApp to accept orders and improved packaging quality for large party orders. This dual strategy allows the business to remain *Relevant* without being *Identical* with competitors. (Porter & Strategy, 1980) refers to this approach as *focus differentiation*: compete not by being the largest or the cheapest, but by being the most suitable for a specific market segment in this case, a consumer who values traditional taste and personal closeness.

Interestingly, competition from modern products is not seen as an existential threat, but rather as an existential threat *stimulus* to make limited innovations. As stated by (Cusumano, 2010), a resilient company (*resilient firms*) actually grow better when faced with competitive pressures because they are forced to reevaluate their competitive advantage. Sugiyono's Ice Cream found that its advantage does not lie in the many flavor variants or attractive packaging, but in the *Taste Authenticity* and *Convenience of interaction*. In other words, they are not trying to be a "cheap version of modern ice cream", but remain "traditional ice cream that does not change". This is in line with the findings (Adnanti et al., 2025) that many small businesses in Indonesia survive for a long time precisely because they are not trapped in the *Mimicry* to global products.

### 3. Business Resilience Factors and Local Economic Implications

The sustainability of the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory for 42 years (1983–2025) is inseparable from interrelated structural and cultural factors. Based on the analysis of the results of interviews and observations, there are at least three main factors for business resilience: (1) consistency of product quality, (2) gradual technological adaptability, and (3) strong personal relationships with consumers. The following table summarizes these factors and their indicators:

Table 3. Factors of Ice Cream Business Resilience Sugiyono (1983–2025)

Resilience Factor	Indicator	Field Evidence
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Quality consistency	The taste has not changed since the 1980s, the raw materials are hand-picked	Recognition of 3 old consumers; Regular weekly repurchases
Gradual technological adaptation	From manual to semi-mechanical without eliminating the manual touch	Automatic mixer machine is still combined with manual checking
Social proximity to consumers	The mobile salesman greets the customer by name; Telephone Ordering System	Direct interaction in the field; 90% of orders from regular customers

Source: Researcher, 2025

In addition to internal factors, local environmental support also plays a role. The business is located in a densely populated area with easy access, so distribution costs are low. The mobile sales system allows products to reach homes that modern ice cream outlets don't pass. From a local economic perspective, the contribution of this business is not large in terms of GDP, but it is very meaningful in terms of:

- Provide employment for 2-3 family members on an ongoing basis.
- Be part of community social activities (orders for celebrations, social gatherings, and children's activities).
- Maintain an independent form of popular economy and is independent of modern retail networks.

Other findings show that this business also has good financial resilience because it has no bank debt. All capital development comes from retained earnings. This makes it a *resilient business* against economic crises, including during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), where mobile sales actually increased because people stayed at home more.

The findings on the three main factors of business resilience, quality consistency, gradual technological adaptation, and personal relationship with consumers can be explained through the business resilience framework put forward by (Herbane, 2019). According to Herbane, business resilience is not static in nature, but rather a dynamic capacity to absorb shocks, adapt, and transform oneself without losing its core identity. In the case of Sugiyono Ice Cream, quality consistency serves as an anchor that keeps consumers confident despite

changes around them. Gradual technological adaptation is a form of adaptive capacity. Meanwhile, personal relationships are social capital that protects businesses from market fluctuations.

Especially regarding family-based businesses, these findings strengthen the argument (Ward, 2016) that the long-term success of a family business is largely determined by its ability to manage leadership transitions and value transfers. Although the study did not explicitly address succession (as the founder was still alive and actively involved until 2025), the involvement of other family members suggests that internal regeneration has taken place naturally. Values such as honesty in measurement, friendliness to customers, and hard work are transmitted through daily practice, not through formal documents. This is in line with the view that in Indonesian culture, family businesses often rely more on tacit knowledge than explicit knowledge (Nanta et al., 2025).

From a local economic perspective, (Rustiadi, 2018) emphasizes that the contribution of small businesses should not be measured only by the amount of turnover or the number of workers, but also by the multiplier effect of social and sustainability. Sugiyono's Ice Cream makes a real contribution in three ways. First, providing stable employment for family members, thereby preventing excessive urbanization. Second, it is part of the cycle of community social activities (celebrations, social gatherings, children's activities), which means that the money spent on Sugiyono Ice Cream revolves back in the local environment. Third, the mobile sales model reaches consumers who are not served by modern retail, resulting in an inclusive economic distribution. These findings confirm the statement (Suryana & Bayu, 2014) that the people's economy relies on people's independence and trust, not on a large scale.

The finding that these businesses have no bank debt and rely on retained earnings for capital development show that financial prudence is a key factor in resilience in a crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), when many businesses closed due to a decrease in turnover and debt burden, Sugiyono Ice Cream actually experienced an increase in demand because people stayed at home more and mobile sellers continued to operate with simple health protocols. This is in

line with research (Sulistiyastuti, 2004) that small businesses without debt have a better shock absorber than high-leveraged businesses. In other words, resilience is not only determined by adaptability, but also by a healthy capital structure.

Finally, the local economic implications of this venture can be understood as a form of moral economy within the framework of belief. As explained by (Granovetter, 1985), in a society that still has strong social ties, economic transactions are never purely rational-instrumental; It has always been wrapped in mutual values and reputation. Sugiyono's Ice Cream built a reputation over 42 years, and that reputation itself became a priceless asset that competitors couldn't buy with money. In the long run, this kind of trust-based economy is more sustainable than a transaction-based economy that relies only on low prices or gimmick promotions.

Overall, the above discussion shows that the Sugiyono Ice Cream case provides valuable lessons for the study of entrepreneurship and local economic history: that business resilience does not necessarily require massive digitalization, radical innovation, or aggressive expansion. On the contrary, consistency, social closeness, and thoughtful adaptation while still holding on to the product's identity are recipes that have proven to survive through four decades of changing times.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Sugiyono Ice Cream Factory, which was established in 1983 in Medan City, is able to survive for 42 years until 2025 thanks to a combination of quality consistency, gradual technological adaptation, and social closeness to consumers. Starting from manual production with a capacity of 5–10 liters per day, this business is selectively transforming into a hybrid system without losing its distinctive flavor. Marketing strategies based on mobile sales and receiving social event orders have proven to be effective in building customer loyalty amid the onslaught of modern products. This business resilience is also supported by a debt-free capital structure and the ability to read market changes without abandoning product identity. From a local economic perspective, its contribution is not large in macro terms, but it is very meaningful as a form of people's

economy that is independent, inclusive, and sustainable. Thus, Ice Cream Sugiyono is a clear example that business success is not always measured by rapid expansion, but by the ability to survive while remaining relevant to the surrounding community.

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