

# The Competitiveness of Traditional Markets in The Face of The Expansion of Online-Based Commerce

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:**

traditional market  
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adaptation; social  
interaction and  
trust

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The development of online-based commerce has changed people's consumption patterns and created new challenges to the sustainability of traditional markets. This phenomenon also occurred in Wongsorejo Market, Banyuwangi, which is located on the strategic route of the Banyuwangi-Situbondo Highway and is the center of economic activities of the local community. This research aims to understand the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based commerce through the perspective of traders and buyers. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, documentation, and findings in the field involving two traders and two buyers as research informants. Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with the support of source triangulation and triangulation techniques. The results of the study show that the competitiveness of the Wongsorejo Market is built through two main aspects, namely the adaptability of traders to changes in digital trading patterns and the advantages of social interaction that generate customer trust. Merchants leverage simple digital communication to retain customers, while shoppers remain opting for traditional markets due to social proximity, bargaining processes, and confidence in product quality. The results of this study have implications for the importance of strengthening digital adaptation and preserving social values as a traditional market sustainability strategy in the era of digital transformation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has significantly changed people's trade patterns in recent years. The presence of various online-based trading platforms offers ease of access, time efficiency, and transaction flexibility that are increasingly in demand by consumers (Gulfraz et al., 2022). These conditions not only change the shopping behavior of urban people, but also begin

to affect economic activities in areas that still have traditional markets as the main trading centers. This phenomenon is also seen at the Wongsorejo Market located on the Banyuwangi-Situbondo Highway, Banyuwangi. The market, which was previously one of the centers of economic activity of the local community, is now facing a new challenge in the form of declining the intensity of buyer visits due to the increasing use of online shopping services (Sari & Nursyahidah, 2022). Some traders feel a change in people's consumption patterns who more often compare prices through the internet before making a purchase. On the other hand, traditional markets remain a social space that brings together sellers and buyers directly. This reality shows that there is a dynamic of competition between conventional trading systems and digital trade that forms new experiences for economic actors at the local level and affects the sustainability of traditional market activities.

Competitiveness in the context of trade can be understood as the ability of a business actor or economic institution to maintain its existence, attract consumers, and create value that is able to compete with other alternatives available in the market (Tautiva et al., 2023). In the traditional market, competitiveness is not only determined by the price and availability aspects of the product, but also influenced by the quality of service, social proximity, trust, and adaptability to changes in the business environment (Mishchuk et al., 2023). Meanwhile, online-based trading is developing through the use of digital technology that allows transactions to be made quickly without space and time limitations (Kwon, 2024). These characteristics create a change in people's consumption patterns that increasingly prioritize convenience and efficiency. In such conditions, traditional markets are required to adapt to the developments that occur in order to remain able to retain customers (Pishgar et al., 2022). The ability to adapt to technology, maintain social relationships with buyers, and maintain customer trust are important parts of building a competitive advantage (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Therefore, the study of the competitiveness of traditional markets needs to be understood as a phenomenon that involves economic, social, and consumer behavior changes that take place simultaneously.

Various studies on traditional markets and online-based trading (Corsini & Frey, 2024) It shows that the development of digital technology has created a major change in the modern trading system. Some studies explain that online trading provides advantages in the form of ease of transactions, operational cost efficiency, and a wider market reach than conventional trading systems (Chen, 2024) and (Kitkanasiri & Palahan, 2025). Other research reveals that the existence

of digital platforms has an effect on decreasing the number of consumer visits to traditional markets because people have more options in meeting their daily needs (Oluka, 2024). On the other hand, some studies (Kustono et al., 2022) It also found that traditional markets still have advantages that are difficult to replace by online commerce, especially in terms of social interaction, the bargaining process, as well as the ability of consumers to check the quality of products directly. However, most previous studies have focused more on the economics and use of digital technologies, while studies that specifically examine the competitiveness of traditional markets through the perspective of traders and buyers simultaneously are still relatively limited. This condition shows the need for research that is able to describe the experiences of the two groups in dealing with changes in increasingly digital trading patterns. Citation limits

Based on various studies that have been conducted previously, there is still research space that needs to be developed related to the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based trade. Most previous research has focused on the impact of technological developments on the decline in traditional market activity or the level of technology adoption by business actors. However, relatively few studies examining how traders and buyers interpret these changes in daily economic life are still relatively rare. In addition, previous research generally placed traders as the primary source of information, while the buyer's perspective often did not receive balanced attention. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to understand the competitiveness of the traditional market through a combination of the perspective of traders and buyers who are directly involved in trading activities at the Wongsorejo Banyuwangi Market. This research also highlights the relationship between adaptability to digital developments and the power of social interaction as two complementary aspects in maintaining the existence of traditional markets in the midst of changing trading patterns that increasingly lead to online-based systems.

This research aims to understand in depth how the competitiveness of the Banyuwangi Wongsorejo Market is formed and maintained in the face of the growing expansion of online-based trade. The focus of the research is directed at the experiences, views, and strategies carried out by traders in adapting to changing consumer behavior, as well as the reasons that encourage buyers to continue to choose traditional markets amid the many alternatives to digital transactions. This research also seeks to identify various forms of adaptation carried out by traders in maintaining their businesses and uncover social factors

that are still the attraction of traditional markets. By understanding these two aspects, this research is expected to be able to provide a more complete picture of the actual condition of the traditional market in the face of changes in the increasingly competitive business environment. This focus was chosen because the competitiveness of traditional markets is not only related to economic capabilities alone, but is also influenced by social relationships, trusts, and transaction experiences that develop among traders in daily life.

Research on the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based trade is important because the changes in trade patterns that are happening today not only have an impact on economic aspects, but also on the sustainability of the social space that has been formed in traditional markets. Traditional markets have a broader function than just a place for buying and selling transactions because they are part of the social activities of the local community that bring together various groups in daily life. If the development of online trade continues to increase without the adaptability of the traditional market, then the existence of traditional markets has the potential to experience a decline in economic and social function. Therefore, an understanding of the factors that are still able to maintain the competitiveness of the traditional market is indispensable as a basis for formulating development strategies that are in accordance with community conditions. In addition to providing academic contributions in economic and business studies, this research also has practical value because it can be a source of information for market managers, business actors, and local governments in designing policies that support the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of digital transformation.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based trade based on the experiences, views, and actions of actors directly involved in trading activities (Fahlefi, 2025). Descriptive research is used to describe phenomena that occur in actual action in the field without manipulating the conditions being studied. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to understand the various strategies that traders carry out in maintaining their businesses as well as the factors that influence buyers' decisions to continue shopping in traditional markets. The research data was obtained naturally according to the conditions that took place at the Wongsorejo Market,

Banyuwangi. This approach allows researchers to obtain more comprehensive information about the dynamics of competition between traditional markets and online-based commerce so as to be able to produce a more in-depth picture of the social and economic realities that develop at the research site (Kovács & Keresztes, 2024).

The material object in this study is the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based trade which is reviewed from the adaptability of traders as well as the advantages of social interaction that develops in trading activities. The research was carried out at the Wongsorejo Market located on the Banyuwangi-Situbondo Highway, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. The location was chosen because it is one of the traditional markets that is still actively operating in the midst of the development of digital commerce and online shopping platforms. The research subjects consisted of four informants who were considered able to provide information in accordance with the focus of the research, namely two traders and two buyers who were regularly active in the Wongsorejo Market. The selection of informants is carried out purposively by considering their direct involvement in buying and selling activities as well as their understanding of the changes in trading patterns that have occurred in recent years. The diversity of perspectives between traders and buyers is expected to provide a more complete picture of the competitive conditions of the traditional market in the face of the increasingly widespread development of online-based commerce.

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through interviews, documentation, and findings in the field. Interviews are used as the main technique to obtain in-depth information about the experiences, perceptions, and strategies carried out by traders and buyers in dealing with changes in trading patterns due to the development of online-based transactions. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner so that the researcher has the flexibility to explore information relevant to the focus of the research without neglecting the goals that have been set. In addition to interviews, documentation was used to complete the research data through the collection of photos, field notes, and various information related to the condition of the Wongsorejo Market. Findings in the field were carried out to see firsthand trading activities, interaction patterns between traders and buyers, as well as various forms of adaptation that emerged in daily trading practices. The combination of these three techniques is used to obtain rich, in-depth data, and in accordance with the

research context so that it is able to describe the actual conditions that occur at the research site.

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive analysis model which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data obtained from interviews, documentation, and findings in the field are first collected and transcribed systematically. Furthermore, the researcher reduced the data by selecting information that was relevant to the research focus on the competitiveness of traditional markets in the face of the expansion of online-based trade. The reduced data is then presented in the form of a thematic narrative to facilitate the process of identifying patterns and relationships between research results. The final stage is carried out by drawing conclusions based on the overall data that has been analyzed. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is done by comparing information obtained from traders and buyers, while technical triangulation is done by comparing the results of interviews, documentation, and findings in the field. Through this process, the data obtained is expected to have a high level of credibility and be able to represent the conditions that actually occur in the Banyuwangi Wongsorejo Market.

## **RESULT**

### **Adaptation of Traditional Traders to Changing Digital Trading Patterns**

The adaptation of traditional traders to changes in digital trading patterns is the ability of business actors in traditional markets to adapt their economic activities to technological developments and changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly connected to online platforms. This adaptation is not always shown through the full use of technology, but can be in the form of efforts to retain customers, improve service quality, improve communication with buyers, and utilize simple digital media to support transactions. In the context of traditional market competitiveness, adaptability is an important factor because the expansion of online-based commerce has changed people's consumption patterns that prioritize convenience, speed, and flexibility of shopping. Therefore, this theme illustrates how traders in Wongsorejo Market respond to these changes through various strategies implemented to maintain business continuity while maintaining relationships with customers amid increasing competition from online-based trading.

Changes in trading patterns that have occurred in recent years have a direct impact on buying and selling activities at Wongsorejo Market. Traders feel a change in consumer behavior who are starting to get used to making

transactions through online platforms. This condition has prompted some traders to make adjustments to still be able to retain customers who have been their main source of income. One of the traders revealed: "Now many buyers look at prices from the internet first before coming to the market. So I try to maintain the quality of goods and serve buyers well so that they keep coming back to shop here." The same thing was also conveyed by another informant: "If in the past buyers came every day, now it is not like that. I sometimes receive orders via WhatsApp from regular customers so they don't have to come directly to the market." The statement shows that merchants are starting to make various forms of adjustments to changing consumer behavior. This shows that the competitiveness of traditional markets depends not only on prices, but also on the ability of traders to adapt to the development of increasingly digital trading patterns.

Through the results of the interview conducted with the informant above, it can be seen that changes in online-based trading patterns have affected the way traders carry out their business activities in the Wongsorejo Market. Both informants showed that there is an awareness that today's consumer behavior is no longer the same as before. It is easier for shoppers to get information about prices, product quality, and alternative places to shop through various digital platforms. This condition encourages traders to make adjustments in order to retain their customers. The form of adaptation that emerges is not always in the form of the use of complex technology, but is realized through improving services, maintaining product quality, and utilizing simple digital communication through messaging applications. These findings show that the competitiveness of traditional markets develops through the ability of business actors to respond to changing consumer needs. The adaptation made by traders is an important step to maintain business continuity amid the increasing expansion of online-based commerce that offers various ease of transactions to the public.

**Table 1. Traders' Adaptation Strategies for Facing Online-Based Trading**

| Forms of Adaptation              | Practices That Traders Do                                              | Impact on Competitiveness                                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maintain product quality         | Selecting and providing goods in good condition and suitable for sale  | Increase customer trust and satisfaction                   |
| Improve service                  | Serving buyers in a friendly and responsive manner during transactions | Encourage customers to return to shopping                  |
| Utilization of WhatsApp          | Accept orders and provide product information through messaging apps   | Simplify transactions without having to come to the market |
| Establish customer relationships | Maintain continuous communication with customers                       | Increase customer loyalty                                  |
| Provision of goods information   | Provide information about product stock and availability               | Accelerating the purchasing process and consumer decision- |

Traders' adaptation to changing digital trading patterns is one of the main factors determining the competitiveness of the Wongsorejo Market in the face of the expansion of online-based trading. Traders are aware that consumer behavior has undergone changes marked by increased access to information and ease of transactions through digital media. In response to these conditions, merchants make various forms of adjustments, ranging from maintaining product quality, improving service, to utilizing communication applications to receive customer orders. Findings in the field show that the adaptation is still simple, but it can help merchants maintain relationships with customers that have been formed before. This pattern shows that the competitiveness of the traditional market is not only determined by the ability to fully adopt technology, but also by the ability of business actors to maintain customer trust through services that are responsive and in accordance with the needs of an ever-evolving society.

#### The Advantages of Social Interaction and Trust as Competitive Capital

The advantages of social interaction and trust are one of the key characteristics that distinguish traditional markets from online-based trading systems. Social interaction refers to the direct relationship established between sellers and buyers through face-to-face communication, the bargaining process, and the emotional relationships that develop from repeated transactions. Meanwhile, trust is related to buyers' confidence in the quality of goods, the honesty of traders, and the consistency of services provided within a certain period of time. In the context of traditional market competitiveness, social interaction and trust are important assets that are difficult to replace by online commerce. Relationships built directly create social closeness that can increase customer loyalty. Therefore, this theme focuses on how the interpersonal relationship between traders and buyers in Wongsorejo Market is a force that supports the sustainability of trading activities amid the increasing expansion of online-based commerce that offers the convenience of digital transactions.

Although online commerce offers various conveniences in transactions, some people still choose to shop in traditional markets because of the social connections that are not found on digital platforms. Direct interaction between merchants and buyers provides a sense of comfort and confidence in the goods purchased. This condition shows that the social aspect still has an important role in maintaining the existence of traditional markets. One of the buyers said: "I prefer shopping at the market because I can see the goods right away. If there is something that is not good, you can immediately ask the seller and usually they also give an honest explanation." This is in line with what other buyers expressed: "I've been shopping here for a long time. The seller is already

familiar with it, so it is more trustworthy. Sometimes if you don't have enough money, you can also pay later because you already know each other." The statement shows that the social relationship established between traders and buyers is an important factor in trading activities in traditional markets. This shows that the trust built through direct interaction is still the main force that supports the competitiveness of the Wongsorejo Market.

Through the results of the interview conducted with the informant above, it can be seen that trust and social closeness are the main reasons buyers still choose to transact in the traditional market even though various online-based trading alternatives are available. The first informant emphasizes the importance of the ability to see and check the condition of the goods directly before making a purchase. Meanwhile, the second informant pointed out that the relationship that has been established for a long time creates a mutual trust between the seller and the buyer. These relationships are not only limited to economic activities, but also develop into social relationships that provide convenience in transactions. These findings show that the competitiveness of the traditional market is not solely determined by the price and availability of products, but also by the quality of the relationship formed between the transaction actors. The social closeness that continues to be maintained allows for the creation of relatively stable customer loyalty so that traditional markets remain in a strong position in the face of the increasingly widespread development of online-based commerce.

|  <b>The Strength of Social Interaction and Trust as Competitive Advantages of Traditional Markets</b> <br><i>Insights from Wongsorejo Traditional Market, Banyuwangi</i> |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Forms of Social Interaction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Practices Observed                                                                                   | Impact on Competitiveness                                                                                                                                                               |
|  <b>Direct Communication</b><br>Buyers and sellers interact face-to-face.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Sellers communicate directly with customers, listen to their needs, and provide product information. |  Enhances comfort and confidence during transactions.                                               |
|  <b>Bargaining Process</b><br>Price negotiation is done directly.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Buyers and sellers negotiate prices flexibly and reach a mutually agreeable deal.                    |  Provides price flexibility and benefits for buyers.                                                |
|  <b>Relationship with Regular Customers</b><br>Sellers build personal relationships with their loyal customers.                                                                                                                                               | Sellers remember customer preferences and needs, and greet them warmly.                              |  Increases customer loyalty and encourages repeat purchases.                                        |
|  <b>Trust in Product Quality</b><br>Buyers can see, touch, and inspect the products before purchasing.                                                                                                                                                        | Products can be checked directly for freshness, quality, and suitability before buying.              |  Reduces uncertainty and strengthens trust in the seller.                                           |
|  <b>Long-term Social Relationships</b><br>A close bond develops between sellers and buyers over time.                                                                                                                                                         | Sellers and buyers build long-lasting relationships, even beyond business, like extended family.     |  Strengthens the sustainability of trade activities and the competitiveness of traditional markets. |
|  <b>Key Insight</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Social interaction and trust are unique strengths of traditional markets that online platforms cannot fully replicate. These human connections create value beyond transactions—building loyalty, comfort, and long-term competitiveness.                                                                                                        |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Social interaction and trust are important competitive capital for the Wongsorejo Market in the face of the expansion of online-based trade. The direct relationship between merchants and buyers creates a transaction experience that is not only oriented to the economic aspect, but also to the social closeness that develops through repeated interactions. The results of the interviews show that

buyers feel more confident in the quality of goods because they can see the product directly and get information openly from the trader. Findings in the field also show that there is a relationship that has been established over a long period of time, thus forming a high level of trust between the two parties. This pattern results in relatively stable customer loyalty and is one of the main reasons buyers stick to traditional markets. Thus, social interaction and trust can be understood as a competitive advantage that strengthens traditional market positions in the face of changing trading patterns that increasingly lead to online-based transaction systems.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the adaptation of traditional traders to changes in digital trading patterns is an important factor in maintaining the competitiveness of the Wongsorejo Market amid the expansion of online-based commerce. Various forms of adjustment made by merchants, such as maintaining product quality, improving services, utilizing WhatsApp as a means of communication, and strengthening relationships with customers, show an active response to changes in consumer behavior. These results are in line with various studies that state that adaptability is the main element in maintaining business sustainability in the digital era (Zhang et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the adaptation characteristics found in the Wongsorejo Market show a different pattern as traders do not completely switch to digital trading systems, but rather combine conventional and digital approaches simply according to customer needs. This condition indicates that digital transformation in the traditional market is not always realized through the full use of e-commerce platforms, but can be done through a more flexible strategy and in accordance with the capacity of business actors. Thus, the competitiveness of the traditional market is not only determined by the level of technology adoption, but also by the ability of business actors to adapt services to changing consumer preferences (Pathak & Bansal, 2025).

The results also show that social interaction and trust are still competitive advantages that are difficult to replace with online-based commerce. The close relationship between merchants and buyers creates a more personalized transaction experience compared to digital transactions that tend to be impersonal (Pramanik, 2025). Buyers feel more confident in the quality of goods because they can inspect products directly, bargain, and get information openly from traders who have been known beforehand. These results reinforce previous research that places trust as one of the key factors in shaping customer loyalty (Yesitadewi & Widodo, 2024). However, the results of research at Wongsorejo

Market show that trust is not only formed through product quality, but also through social relationships that take place repeatedly over a long period of time. This relationship creates a sense of comfort and emotional closeness that encourages customers to stick to traditional markets despite the availability of various online shopping alternatives. Therefore, social interaction can be understood as a non-material asset that provides added value to traditional markets in the face of growing digital trade competition.

Overall, the results of the study show that the competitiveness of Wongsorejo Market in the face of the expansion of online-based commerce is built through a combination of adaptability to digital developments and the strength of social interaction that has taken root in traditional trading activities. These two aspects complement each other in maintaining the sustainability of economic activities in traditional markets. The emerging pattern shows that merchants who are able to adapt services to technological developments while maintaining good social relationships with customers have a greater chance of surviving in an increasingly dynamic competitive environment. However, this study has limitations because it was only conducted at one research location with a limited number of informants so that the results could not describe the condition of all traditional markets in other areas. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more research locations, variations in market characteristics, and more diverse informants in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of traditional market competitiveness strategies in the face of the development of online-based trade in various different regional contexts and socio-economic conditions.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the competitiveness of the Banyuwangi Wongsorejo Market in the face of the expansion of online-based commerce is not only determined by the ability of traders to utilize technology, but also by their ability to maintain the social values that are the main characteristics of traditional markets. In general, this study found that merchants carry out various forms of adaptation through improving product quality, more responsive services, utilizing simple digital communication media, and strengthening relationships with customers. On the other hand, shoppers still maintain their preferences for shopping in traditional markets due to direct interaction, bargaining opportunities, and a high level of trust in the quality of goods and the honesty of traders. This pattern shows that traditional market competitiveness is built through a combination of adaptation to changing business environments and the

ability to maintain social relationships that have been formed in the long term. Thus, the sustainability of the traditional market in the midst of the development of digital commerce is greatly influenced by the ability of business actors to balance service innovation and strengthen customer trust.

Although this study has succeeded in describing the competitive condition of the Wongsorejo Market in depth, the research still has some limitations. The scope of the study only focused on one traditional market with a limited number of informants, so the results obtained could not be representative of all the characteristics of traditional markets in different regions and socioeconomic conditions. In addition, this research focuses more on the perspective of traders and buyers without involving market managers or policy makers who have an important role in the development of traditional markets. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the scope of the research site, increase the number and variety of informants, and examine traditional market competitiveness strategies through a more comprehensive approach. Future research can also explore the integration of digital technologies, market management policies, and consumer behavior in more depth, resulting in a broader understanding of the sustainability of traditional markets in the face of trade transformation in the digital age.

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