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Culinary MSME Purchase Decisions Under Food Price Pressure in the MBG Era

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines factors shaping culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions under food price pressure in the MBG era.
Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative exploratory-confirmatory survey design was used. Data were collected in two stages, involving 203 valid responses for EFA and 228 valid responses for CFA. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE, and model fit indices.
Findings/Results – EFA identified six factors: perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. CFA confirmed that the six-factor model met acceptable loading, model fit, reliability, and convergent validity criteria.
Originality/Value – This study positions culinary MSME purchase decisions under food price pressure as multidimensional evaluations, highlighting pricing strategy adaptation as a consumer-evaluated dimension.

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1. Introduction

The Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program provides an important policy context for understanding culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions because it is closely related to local food procurement, MSME participation, and regional supply chains. According to the technical guidelines issued by the National Nutrition Agency, the MBG program has been implemented gradually across 38 provinces since January 6, 2025, and continued in 2026 through SPPG units (National Nutrition Agency, 2025, 2026). The program targets approximately 82.9 million beneficiaries and prioritizes the use of local MSME and village-owned enterprise products that meet food safety and quality standards. In 2026, BGN also allocated 85% of daily funding for local food raw material procurement, with 95% sourced from the agricultural sector. Therefore, this study positions the MBG program not as the direct cause of rising food prices, but as a relevant policy context that highlights the interaction between public food policy, local supply chains, raw material price pressures, MSME adaptation, and consumer evaluations of price and value.

Food price dynamics are critical because food price inflation is closely related to supply-side pressures, including disruptions in food supply chains, rising energy and commodity prices, and climate-related production risks (Çakır, 2024). These pressures can affect production costs, pricing strategies, and consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in food-related businesses such as culinary MSMEs. In Indonesia, food price increases may follow seasonal demand patterns and contribute to inflationary pressures (Mutiara et al., 2025). Recent studies also show that rising food prices can increase price sensitivity and change consumers' food choices and consumption behavior (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024). For culinary MSMEs, rising raw material prices create a marketing dilemma: increasing prices may reduce consumer interest, while maintaining prices can narrow profit margins and encourage adjustments in portion size, ingredient composition, or product quality. Therefore, adaptive pricing strategies are important to balance cost pressure, perceived value, and consumer affordability (Ma et al., 2024).

From a marketing management perspective, consumer purchase decisions cannot be understood solely from the nominal price of a product. Consumers evaluate culinary products through a combination of price fairness, perceived value, product quality, trust, and consumption experience. In food-related contexts, perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value, and satisfaction have been shown to influence revisit intention and word-of-mouth, indicating that consumers assess not only what they pay but also the benefits and experience they receive (Konuk, 2019). Recent Indonesian studies also support this view. (Hadiantini et al., 2023) found that consumer taste perception affects satisfaction and repurchase decisions among culinary MSME consumers in Bandung, while (Rohman et al., 2023) showed that multidimensional consumer perceived value, including functional, economic, emotional, and social value, is related to satisfaction and purchase intention. Therefore, in the culinary MSME sector, consumers do not merely buy food or beverages; they evaluate taste, cleanliness, portion size, appearance, service, trust in the seller, price fairness, and the overall value received from the product.

The significance of this research problem lies in the fact that culinary MSME consumers are in a position to directly experience changes in product price, portion size, quality, and value. When the price of a culinary product increases, consumers are likely to continue purchasing if the price is perceived as reasonable, the quality remains consistent, the portion size remains appropriate, and the seller is perceived as transparent. Conversely, consumers may reduce

their purchases, seek cheaper alternatives, switch to other sellers, or delay their purchases if the price increase is not accompanied by comparable value. This complexity suggests that purchasing decisions during periods of rising food prices are not influenced by a single factor, but rather by a combination of factors such as price perception, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment.

Although research on consumer purchase decisions has been widely developed, recent studies still tend to examine purchase decisions through direct relationships among predetermined variables, such as price, product quality, promotion, trust, satisfaction, and digital marketing. (Hanaysha, 2022) showed that social media marketing features influence consumer purchase decisions in the fast-food industry through brand trust. (Kirana, 2022) also tested the direct effects of product quality, price, sales promotion, and customer trust on purchase decisions in a food and beverage business context. Previous studies indicate that marketing stimuli, consumer motivation, environmental awareness, and green product literacy can shape online purchase intention and purchase behavior in Indonesia (Amaliah et al., 2023; Revinzky et al., 2025). These studies provide important insights into the determinants of purchase decisions, but they have not specifically mapped the underlying factor structure of culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions under food raw material price pressure.

Based on this gap, this study aims to identify and confirm the factors shaping culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions amid rising food prices during the Free Nutritious Meal Program era. Specifically, it examines the empirical factor structure of purchase decisions, confirms the validity of the measurement model, and identifies the dominant factors in this context. A quantitative exploratory-confirmatory survey design was applied to consumers who had purchased culinary MSME products before and after the implementation of the program. The data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the initial factor structure and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model. This approach is suitable for construct development and validation because it enables researchers to identify latent dimensions, reduce items, and evaluate reliability and validity before further structural testing (Boateng et al., 2018; Watkins, 2018).

Therefore, this study contributes to consumer behavior, food-related purchase decision, and MSME marketing literature by showing that culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions under food price pressure are not merely price-sensitive responses, but multidimensional evaluations involving price fairness, perceived value, product quality, trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. The study extends existing purchase decision literature by explaining how consumers balance rising prices with perceived value and quality, while also positioning pricing strategy adaptation as a consumer-evaluated dimension that helps sustain trust and purchase commitment in culinary MSMEs.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Consumer Purchase Decisions in Culinary MSMEs under Food Price Pressure

Consumer purchase decisions are central to marketing management because they reflect how consumers evaluate, select, purchase, and reassess products based on expected value. In the culinary MSME context, these decisions are shaped not only by food and beverage needs, but also by consumption experiences such as taste, price, portion size, cleanliness, service quality, seller trust, and perceived product value. Food products are distinctive because consumers can directly assess their quality through taste, freshness, appearance, hygiene, and consistency. Prior studies show that perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value,

and satisfaction are related to revisit intention and word-of-mouth, indicating that consumers evaluate food products through economic, functional, and experiential considerations (Konuk, 2019). Indonesian evidence also shows that consumer taste perception influences satisfaction and repurchase decisions among culinary MSME consumers (Hadiantini et al., 2023).

This complexity becomes more important when culinary MSMEs face rising food raw material prices. Food price dynamics can increase production costs and encourage business operators to adjust selling prices, portion sizes, ingredient composition, or product quality. In Indonesia, Mutiara et al. (2025) found that food commodity prices tend to increase around Ramadan and may contribute to inflationary pressure. Recent studies also show that rising food prices and crisis conditions can change food-related consumer behavior and encourage saving-oriented consumption responses (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024). Therefore, food price pressure is not only a macroeconomic issue, but also a practical challenge for culinary MSMEs that rely on daily raw materials.

Conceptually, culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions should be understood as a multidimensional evaluation process. Although the price–quality–value framework was originally developed by Zeithaml (1988), recent food consumer studies show that consumers assess food products through perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value, satisfaction, and consumption value (Konuk, 2019; Rohman et al., 2023). Consumers may continue purchasing when price or portion adjustments are perceived as fair, product quality remains consistent, and the value received is still reasonable. Conversely, they may reduce purchases, seek cheaper alternatives, switch sellers, or postpone purchases when price, portion size, quality, or product value is no longer perceived as acceptable. Thus, this study positions purchase decisions not merely as final buying behavior, but as a construct formed by interconnected marketing factors.

Multidimensional Factors Shaping Consumer Purchase Decisions

Marketing literature indicates that consumer purchase decisions in food-related businesses are shaped by interconnected factors, including price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. These factors become more important when raw material prices rise because consumers evaluate whether price adjustments remain fair, whether quality and portion size are maintained, and whether the value received is still proportional to the price paid. In restaurant and food service contexts, perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value, service quality, and satisfaction have been shown to influence revisit intention, word-of-mouth, and customer satisfaction (Adnina et al., 2025; Konuk, 2019). Price fairness in online food service is also shaped by trust, perceived quality, and the relationship between actual price and perceived value (Tan et al., 2025). Thus, consumer purchase decisions in culinary MSMEs should be understood as a multidimensional evaluation process rather than a simple response to price changes.

In this study, perceived value reflects consumers' assessment of the balance between sacrifices and benefits, including taste, portion size, hygiene, ingredient quality, service, and overall purchase experience. Studies show that perceived value and product characteristics are important in shaping purchase intention and continuous purchase intention (Lin et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2024). Product quality is also central because consumers directly evaluate culinary products through taste, freshness, appearance, hygiene, and consistency. Consumer trust strengthens purchase decisions because consumers are more willing to accept price adjustments when sellers are perceived as honest, transparent, and committed to maintaining quality (Hanaysha, 2022; Tan et al., 2025). In the Indonesian local brand context, trust also

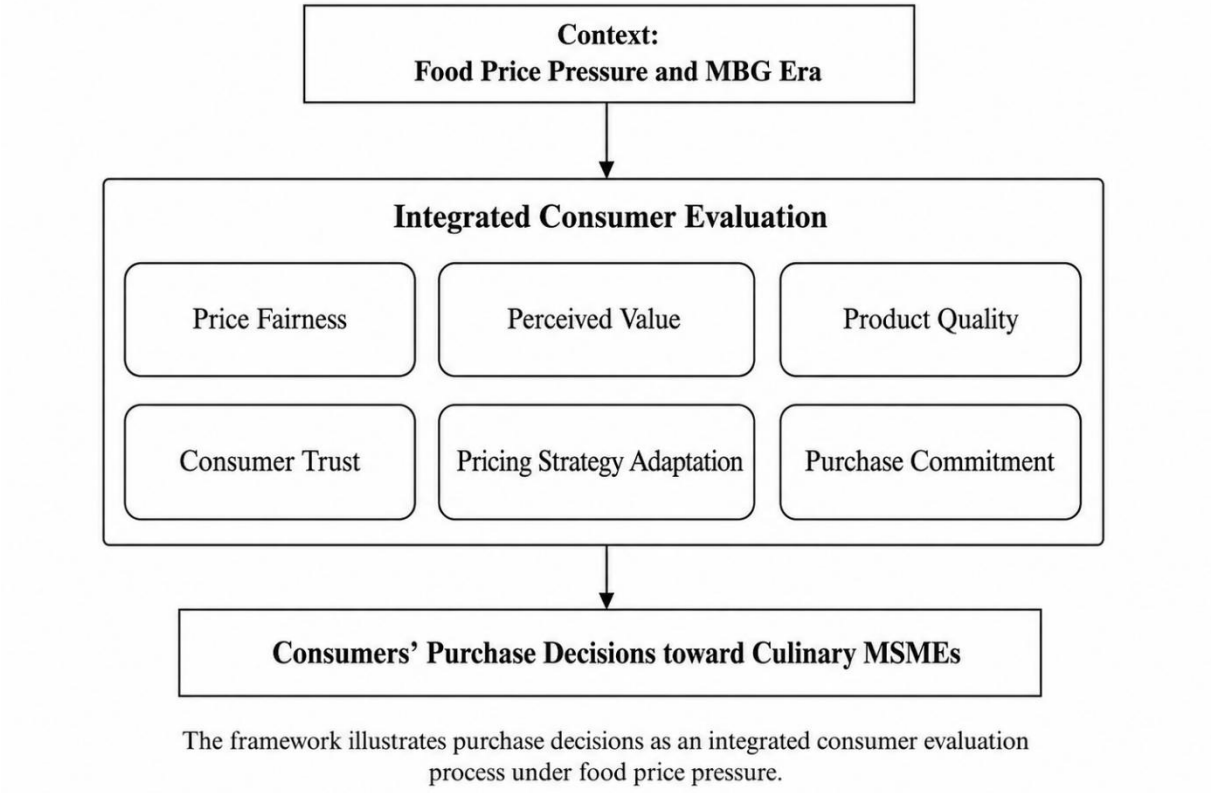
supports consumer engagement and long-term consumer relationships (Herdiyana et al., 2026; Wibowo et al., 2026).

Pricing strategy adaptation reflects how culinary MSMEs respond to cost pressure through value packages, bundling, size variation, portion adjustment, limited discounts, or alternative menus. Such strategies help balance affordability, perceived value, and business sustainability. Research on O2O catering merchants shows that pricing and promotional strategies can balance merchant sustainability and consumer response under different market conditions (Ma et al., 2024). Finally, purchase commitment reflects consumers' willingness to continue buying, repurchase, recommend the product, and remain with the same seller despite changes in price, portion size, or quality. In food-related markets, continuous purchase intention is shaped by product characteristics, perceived value, and seller or platform-related factors (Lin et al., 2021). Thus, purchase decisions under food raw material price pressure are best understood as a multidimensional construct involving value, quality, trust, pricing adaptation, and purchase commitment

Conceptually, the six dimensions identified in this study are not independent elements, but interconnected components of consumer evaluation under food price pressure. Price fairness provides the initial basis for consumers to judge whether price adjustments are reasonable. This judgment then affects perceived value, because consumers compare the price paid with the benefits received, including taste, portion size, hygiene, service, and overall product experience. Product quality strengthens this evaluation because consumers are more likely to accept price changes when quality remains consistent. Consumer trust further supports this process by reducing uncertainty and increasing consumers' confidence that the seller remains honest and committed to maintaining product standards. Pricing strategy adaptation acts as the business response that helps maintain affordability and perceived value through smaller portions, bundled menus, value packages, or flexible price options. When these evaluations remain positive, consumers are more likely to maintain purchase commitment through repeat purchases, recommendations, and continued preference for the same seller. Therefore, purchase decisions in culinary MSMEs should be understood as an integrated evaluation process that links economic judgment, product experience, relational trust, and adaptive business response.

To clarify the conceptual linkage among the six dimensions, Figure 1 illustrates purchase decisions as an integrated consumer evaluation process under food price pressure. The framework does not represent a causal structural model, but a conceptual explanation of how consumers evaluate price fairness, perceived value, product quality, trust, pricing adaptation, and purchase commitment when deciding whether to continue purchasing culinary MSME products.

Figure 1. Proposed Integrated Consumer Evaluation Framework Under Food Price Pressure



Note 1: This framework is developed from the literature review to illustrate the proposed conceptual linkage among the dimensions of consumers' purchase decisions. It does not represent a causal structural model.

Measurement Model and Hypothesis Development

This study applies EFA and CFA because its main purpose is to identify and confirm the factors shaping consumers' purchase decisions, rather than to test causal relationships among variables. In scale development and validation studies, EFA is used to explore the underlying factor structure, while CFA is used to evaluate whether the identified structure fits the empirical data and adequately represents the intended construct (Boateng et al., 2018; Carpenter, 2018; Watkins, 2018). Therefore, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as measurement hypotheses. These hypotheses assume that indicators developed from the literature form a multidimensional factor structure and that this structure can be validated through model fit, reliability, and construct validity testing.

Based on the literature review, consumers' purchase decisions toward culinary MSME products are expected to consist of six dimensions: perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. These dimensions reflect how consumers evaluate food products through price fairness, food quality, perceived value, satisfaction, trust, and purchase-related behavioral intentions. In food consumption contexts, perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value, and satisfaction have been shown to influence revisit intention and word-of-mouth, while trust also plays an important role in purchase decisions in the fast-food and online food-ordering contexts (Al Maalouf et al., 2025; Hanaysha, 2022; Konuk, 2019). Indonesian studies further show that consumer taste perception affects satisfaction and repurchase decisions in culinary MSMEs, while multidimensional perceived value is associated with customer satisfaction and

purchase intention in food consumption (Hadiantini et al., 2023; Rohman et al., 2023). Therefore, this study uses EFA to identify the factor structure emerging from respondents' data and CFA to confirm whether the structure has acceptable model fit, reliability, and construct validity.

Based on the literature review and the measurement development logic, this study formulates measurement hypotheses rather than causal hypotheses. Since the purpose of the study is to identify and validate the dimensional structure of consumers' purchase decisions, the hypotheses focus on the factor structure, the dimensions formed, and the adequacy of the measurement model. The proposed hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Indicators of consumers' purchase decisions toward culinary MSMEs form a multidimensional factor structure.

H2: The factor structure consists of perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment.

H3: The six-factor measurement model demonstrates acceptable model fit, reliability, and construct validity.

3. Methodology

Research Design and Sample

This study used a quantitative exploratory-confirmatory survey design to identify and validate the factors shaping consumers' purchase decisions toward culinary MSME products. This design was appropriate because the study focused on factor identification and measurement model validation rather than causal testing. In scale development studies, the factor structure should first be explored and then confirmed through appropriate validation procedures (Boateng et al., 2018; Carpenter, 2018).

The population consisted of consumers who had purchased food or beverage products from culinary MSMEs before and after the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program. The unit of analysis was the individual consumer. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling because the study required participants with specific consumption experiences relevant to the research context (Campbell et al., 2020). The criteria included being at least 17 years old, having purchased culinary MSME products before and after the MBG program, being aware of or experiencing food price increases, and noticing changes in price, portion size, quality, or product value during the period.

Data were collected in two stages. The first stage was used for EFA, with 220 responses collected and 203 valid responses retained after screening. Based on the EFA results, the instrument was revised by retaining statistically and conceptually acceptable items. The revised instrument was then distributed in the second stage for CFA, with 232 responses collected and 228 valid responses retained after screening.

Data and Measurement

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of screening questions, respondent profiles, and measurement items. The measurement items were developed from the literature on purchase decisions, price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Data screening was conducted to exclude incomplete responses, responses that did not meet the screening criteria, and responses with inconsistent answer patterns. Secondary data from journal articles, official documents, and government reports were used

to support the research context, particularly regarding food price dynamics, culinary MSMEs, and the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, EFA was applied to the first dataset to identify the underlying factor structure. Data suitability was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. EFA was performed using Principal Axis Factoring with oblique rotation because consumer behavior factors are theoretically expected to be correlated (Watkins, 2018). Items were retained when they had factor loadings of at least 0.50 and did not show high cross-loading. Initial reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered acceptable (Cronbach, 1951). Second, CFA was applied to the second dataset to confirm the factor structure identified through EFA. Model fit was evaluated using χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Construct reliability and convergent validity were assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A construct was considered reliable when CR ≥ 0.70 and was considered to have adequate convergent validity when AVE ≥ 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, David, 1981). The formulas used were:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + \sum \theta_i} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{AVE} = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2}{\sum \lambda_i^2 + \sum \theta_i} \quad (2)$$

4. Result and Discussion

Respondent Profile and Data Filtering

This study employed two stages of data collection. The first stage was used for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), while the second stage was used for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). This separation of the two stages allowed the factor structure discovered through EFA to be retested on a different data set through CFA. This procedure is relevant in construct development and validation research because EFA serves to explore the initial dimensional structure, while CFA is used to test the stability of the established measurement model (Boateng et al., 2018; Watkins, 2018).

In the first stage, 220 responses were collected from culinary MSME consumers. After data screening, 17 responses were excluded due to incompleteness or not meeting respondent criteria. Thus, the valid data used for the EFA totaled 203 respondents. After the factor structure was obtained, the instrument was restructured, retaining items that met statistical feasibility and conceptual relevance. The revised instrument was then distributed in the second stage for CFA. In this stage, 232 responses were collected, with 4 responses excluded due to not meeting criteria, resulting in a total of 228 respondents valid for the CFA. Thus, the total number of responses collected in this study was 452, while valid data for analysis amounted to 431 responses, consisting of 203 respondents for the EFA and 228 respondents for the CFA. The respondents analyzed were culinary MSME consumers who had purchased food or beverage products before and after the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program, were aware of or experienced food price increases, and experienced changes in price, portion size, quality, or value of culinary products during that period. This criterion was used

to ensure that respondents' answers were truly relevant to the context of purchasing decisions amidst the dynamics of raw food prices.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted on 36 initial items developed from six conceptual domains: perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. Prior to factor extraction, data suitability was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin/KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO test was used to assess sample adequacy, while the Bartlett's Test was used to ensure adequate inter-item correlations for further analysis using EFA (Watkins, 2018). The test results showed a KMO value of 0.816 and a Bartlett's Test significance of 0.000. These values indicate that the data are suitable for analysis using EFA. Inter-item correlations were also deemed adequate, as the Bartlett's Test was significant at the 0.05 level. The test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Measurement	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.816
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2,764.392
df	630
Sig.	0.000

EFA was then conducted using Principal Axis Factoring with oblique rotation. Oblique rotation was chosen because consumer behavior factors, such as price fairness, perceived value, product quality, and trust, are theoretically correlated. In factor analysis, oblique rotation is more appropriate when latent constructs are not assumed to be completely independent (Watkins, 2018). The extraction results showed the formation of six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. These six factors explained 58.59% of the total variance. Of the 36 initial items, 10 were eliminated because they had factor loadings below 0.50, experienced cross-loading, or lacked conceptual alignment with the formed factors. Thus, 26 items were retained for the CFA stage. The factor loadings of the retained items ranged from 0.519 to 0.752. This value indicates that the retained items met the minimum criteria, although some items still had moderate loading levels.

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage
Factor 1	7.642	21.23%	21.23%
Factor 2	3.918	10.88%	32.11%
Factor 3	3.084	8.57%	40.68%
Factor 4	2.516	6.99%	47.67%
Factor 5	2.008	5.58%	53.25%
Factor 6	1.923	5.34%	58.59%

The EFA results point to six factors influencing the purchasing decisions of culinary MSME consumers: Perceived Price Fairness, Perceived Value, Product Quality, Consumer Trust, Pricing Strategy Adaptation, and Purchase Commitment. This structure demonstrates that consumer purchasing decisions are not solely determined by nominal price. Consumers also consider whether the price remains reasonable, whether the product continues to provide value for money, whether quality is maintained, whether the seller is trustworthy, how MSMEs adjust their pricing strategies, and whether consumers remain inclined to continue purchasing.

These findings align with consumer behavior literature, which demonstrates that price, quality, and value are interrelated in the purchase evaluation process. Zeithaml (1988) explains that consumers evaluate products through the relationship between price, perceived quality, and perceived value. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) also demonstrate that consumer value is multidimensional, so purchasing decisions cannot be explained solely by price perception. In the context of food, (Konuk, 2019) found that price fairness, perceived food quality, perceived value, and trust play a role in shaping purchase intentions, repeat visits, and word-of-mouth. Thus, the six-factor structure that emerged in this study has both empirical support and a strong theoretical basis.

Table 3. Rotated Factor Loading Results

Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Decision
Perceived Price Fairness	PKH1	0.728	Retained
	PKH2	0.691	Retained
	PKH3	0.642	Retained
	PKH4	0.604	Retained
	PKH5	0.553	Retained
Perceived Value	PN1	0.746	Retained
	PN2	0.702	Retained
	PN3	0.635	Retained
	PN4	0.581	Retained
Product Quality	KP1	0.731	Retained
	KP2	0.676	Retained
	KP3	0.624	Retained
	KP4	0.548	Retained
Consumer Trust	KK1	0.713	Retained
	KK2	0.661	Retained
	KK3	0.592	Retained
	KK4	0.526	Retained
Pricing Strategy Adaptation	ASH1	0.684	Retained
	ASH2	0.637	Retained
	ASH3	0.572	Retained
	ASH4	0.519	Retained
Purchase Commitment	KB1	0.752	Retained
	KB2	0.703	Retained
	KB3	0.649	Retained
	KB4	0.591	Retained
	KB5	0.538	Retained

After the factor structure was established, the initial reliability of each factor was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. This test was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the items within each factor. Cronbach's Alpha is frequently used in measurement research, but its interpretation still requires consideration of the number of items, construct characteristics, and the stage of instrument development (Taber, 2018). The test results showed that all factors had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70. The highest value was for Purchase Commitment at 0.789, while the lowest value was for Pricing Strategy Adaptation at 0.702. Thus, all EFA factors were deemed to have adequate initial reliability for use in the CFA stage.

Table 4. EFA Factor Reliability Test Results

Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Perceived Price Fairness	5	0.781	Reliable
Perceived Value	4	0.763	Reliable
Product Quality	4	0.742	Reliable
Consumer Trust	4	0.714	Reliable
Pricing Strategy Adaptation	4	0.702	Reliable
Purchase Commitment	5	0.789	Reliable

Adequate reliability across the six factors indicates that the items within each dimension have fairly good measurement consistency. This is important because this study aims not only to identify factors but also to establish a baseline instrument that can be used to validate the measurement model in the next stage.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

CFA was conducted using 228 valid responses collected in the second stage. The tested instrument consisted of 26 items retained from the EFA stage. In the initial CFA model, two items, namely KK4 and ASH4, showed relatively low standardized factor loadings and were therefore removed from the model. After these eliminations, the final CFA model consisted of 24 items distributed across six factors: Perceived Price Fairness, Perceived Value, Product Quality, Consumer Trust, Pricing Strategy Adaptation, and Purchase Commitment.

All retained items had standardized factor loadings above 0.50, ranging from 0.584 to 0.778. The Perceived Price Fairness factor had loading values between 0.584 and 0.742, while the Perceived Value factor ranged from 0.607 to 0.763. The Product Quality factor showed loading values between 0.598 and 0.751, and the Consumer Trust factor ranged from 0.621 to 0.726. Meanwhile, the Pricing Strategy Adaptation factor had loading values between 0.613 and 0.711, and the Purchase Commitment factor ranged from 0.596 to 0.778. These results indicate that the retained indicators adequately represented their respective constructs.

Overall, the CFA results confirm that the six-factor structure obtained through EFA can be retained as a valid measurement model. The final model indicates that consumers' purchase decisions toward culinary MSME products are shaped by perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. Thus, the measurement model supports the view that purchase decisions under food raw material price pressure are multidimensional rather than determined by price alone.

Table 5. CFA Model Goodness of Fit Results

Fit Index	Value	Criterion	Decision
χ^2/df	2.184	< 3.00	Accepted
CFI	0.921	≥ 0.90	Accepted
TLI	0.907	≥ 0.90	Accepted
RMSEA	0.072	≤ 0.08	Accepted
SRMR	0.061	≤ 0.08	Accepted

The goodness-of-fit results indicate that the CFA model achieved an acceptable fit. The χ^2/df value was below 3.00, while CFI and TLI exceeded 0.90. In addition, RMSEA and SRMR were below 0.08. These results confirm that the six-factor structure obtained from EFA was supported by the second-stage dataset.

Table 6. Reliability and Construct Validity

Factor	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Decision
Perceived Price Fairness	5	0.759	0.834	0.506	Valid
Perceived Value	4	0.742	0.820	0.534	Valid
Product Quality	4	0.721	0.809	0.517	Valid
Consumer Trust	3	0.705	0.785	0.522	Valid
Pricing Strategy Adaptation	3	0.698	0.756	0.508	Acceptable
Purchase Commitment	5	0.781	0.849	0.552	Valid

Most constructs had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70. One construct, Pricing Strategy Adaptation, had an alpha value of 0.698, slightly below the general threshold of 0.70. This construct was retained because its value was very close to the minimum threshold and was supported by a CR of 0.756. In evaluating measurement models, CR can provide a more appropriate picture of construct reliability because it takes into account the contribution of each indicator through loadings, whereas Cronbach's Alpha tends to assume equal item contributions (Hair et al., 2021). Convergent validity results indicate that each construct adequately explains the variance of its indicator. Thus, the six factors identified through EFA and confirmed through CFA can be considered appropriate as factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions of culinary MSMEs during the situation of rising food prices during the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

The findings show that culinary MSME consumers' purchase decisions are shaped by six interconnected dimensions: perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. This indicates that consumers do not respond to rising food prices only through price sensitivity. Instead, they evaluate whether price adjustments are fair, whether product value and quality remain acceptable, whether the seller can be trusted, and whether MSMEs offer adaptive pricing responses that still fit consumers' purchasing capacity. This finding is consistent with food service and consumer behavior studies showing that purchase decisions are shaped by the interaction of price fairness, perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction, trust, and purchase intention (Al Maalouf et al., 2025; Hanaysha, 2022; Konuk, 2019; Tan et al., 2025). However, the finding should also be interpreted alongside studies showing that rising food prices can increase price sensitivity and encourage consumers to reduce spending or adjust food choices (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024).

Perceived price fairness is important because consumers do not automatically reject price increases. In the culinary MSME context, consumers may accept price adjustments when they perceive them as reasonable, transparent, and proportional to the product received. This suggests that price fairness functions as a psychological mechanism through which consumers evaluate whether MSMEs respond ethically to rising raw material costs. This result supports Konuk (2019), who found that price fairness, food quality, perceived value, and satisfaction influence revisit intention and word-of-mouth in restaurant consumption. It is also consistent with Tan et al. (2025), who showed that price fairness in online food services is shaped not only by actual price but also by perceived quality, trust, and the relationship between price paid and value received. Nevertheless, when household budgets are pressured, consumers may still respond defensively to price increases, especially when food affordability becomes a concern (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024).

Perceived value and product quality explain how consumers balance rising prices with the benefits they receive. Consumers are not only concerned with the nominal price, but also with taste, portion size, hygiene, ingredient quality, service, and the overall consumption experience. When price increases are accompanied by consistent quality and acceptable portions, consumers may continue purchasing because the value received is still considered reasonable. Conversely, perceived value may decline when price increases are accompanied by lower quality, smaller portions, or inconsistent product standards. This interpretation is supported by studies showing that multidimensional perceived value is related to satisfaction and purchase intention in food consumption contexts (Rohman et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2024). However, under strong food price pressure, consumers may prioritize affordability and spending control over product attributes, indicating that perceived value can shift depending on the severity of economic pressure (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024).

Consumer trust also helps explain why some consumers remain willing to purchase despite price or portion adjustments. In culinary MSMEs, trust is often built through repeated transactions, seller reputation, informal interaction, and product consistency. When consumers trust the seller, they are more likely to interpret price or portion adjustments as necessary responses to cost pressure rather than opportunistic behavior. Trust therefore reduces uncertainty and supports continued purchase decisions. This finding aligns with Hanaysha (2022), who showed that brand trust plays a role in consumer purchase decisions in the fast-food industry, and with Al Maalouf et al. (2025), who identified trust as an important factor in food-ordering purchase intention. However, trust may weaken when consumers perceive price increases as unfair or when product quality declines, because price fairness and perceived quality remain important foundations for consumer confidence (Konuk, 2019; Tan et al., 2025).

Pricing strategy adaptation provides the main originality of this study. The emergence of this factor shows that consumers evaluate not only whether prices increase, but also how MSMEs manage price adjustments. Strategies such as value packages, smaller portions, bundled menus, flexible pricing, and alternative menu options can help consumers maintain purchasing choices within their spending capacity. Thus, adaptive pricing is not merely an operational response by MSMEs, but also part of the consumer evaluation process. When pricing adaptation preserves fairness and perceived value, it can reduce consumer resistance and strengthen purchase commitment. This interpretation is supported by Ma et al. (2024), who showed that pricing and promotional strategies in catering services can balance merchant sustainability and consumer response. It is also consistent with Phan Tan and Le (2023), who found that perceived price and service quality are associated with repeat purchase intention. However, adaptive pricing may not be sufficient if consumers perceive that the adjustment reduces product value, for example through excessive portion reduction or quality decline.

The Free Nutritious Meal Program era provides a meaningful context for interpreting these findings because it connects public food policy, local food procurement, MSME participation, food supply dynamics, and consumer purchasing behavior (National Nutrition Agency, 2025, 2026). This study does not claim that the program causes food price increases. Rather, the MBG era is positioned as a policy-related context in which culinary MSMEs and consumers operate within a market environment shaped by local supply dynamics, price sensitivity, and MSME adaptation. Previous studies show that food price pressure can increase consumer price sensitivity and change food consumption behavior (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024), while food price dynamics are also influenced by supply-side pressures, commodity prices, climate-

related risks, and seasonal demand (Çakır, 2024; Mutiara et al., 2025). Therefore, the MBG context should be understood as a relevant academic setting for examining how consumers evaluate culinary MSME products and how MSMEs adapt their marketing strategies under food raw material price pressure.

Overall, this study contributes to consumer behavior, food-related purchase decision, and MSME marketing literature by showing that purchase decisions under food raw material price pressure are multidimensional evaluations, not merely price-sensitive responses. The validated six-factor model shows that consumers balance economic considerations, product experience, relational trust, adaptive pricing, and commitment to continue purchasing. This study also extends food-related purchase decision literature by positioning pricing strategy adaptation as a consumer-evaluated dimension within culinary MSME marketing. Thus, the findings complement studies on food price pressure and consumer adjustment behavior (Grunert et al., 2023; Hempel, 2024), while offering a more context-sensitive explanation of how culinary MSME consumers make purchase decisions during periods of cost pressure.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study identified and confirmed six factors shaping consumers' purchase decisions toward culinary MSME products amid rising food raw material prices during the Free Nutritious Meal Program era: perceived price fairness, perceived value, product quality, consumer trust, pricing strategy adaptation, and purchase commitment. Using a two-stage analysis, EFA was applied to explore the factor structure, followed by CFA to validate the measurement model using a different dataset. The findings show that consumers' purchase decisions are not driven by price changes alone, but by a broader evaluation of fairness, value, quality, trust, MSMEs' pricing responses, and consumers' willingness to continue purchasing. Academically, this study contributes to marketing and consumer behavior scholarship by showing that purchase decisions under food raw material price pressure are multidimensional evaluations rather than simple price-sensitive responses. The validated six-factor model extends food-related purchase decision literature by explaining how consumers balance rising prices with perceived value and product quality. The study also strengthens MSME marketing literature by positioning pricing strategy adaptation as a consumer-evaluated dimension, not merely as an internal managerial response. Practically, the findings suggest that culinary MSME actors should manage price adjustments carefully. Increasing prices without maintaining perceived value may weaken consumer trust and reduce purchase commitment. Therefore, culinary MSMEs need to maintain product quality, communicate price changes transparently, and offer adaptive pricing options such as value packages, smaller portions, bundled menus, or alternative menu choices. These strategies can help consumers perceive price adjustments as fair while preserving the value of the product. From a policy perspective, the findings indicate that MSME development programs should not only focus on production capacity, but also on pricing capability, cost control, product standardization, menu innovation, and consumer communication. In periods of rising food raw material prices, policymakers and MSME support agencies can use these insights to help culinary MSMEs maintain affordability, consumer trust, perceived value, and long-term purchase commitment.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research focuses on consumers who had experience purchasing culinary MSME products before and after the implementation of the

Free Nutritious Meal Program, so the findings may not fully represent consumers outside this context. Second, the study uses a cross-sectional survey design; therefore, it cannot explain changes in consumer decisions over time. Third, the analysis is limited to EFA and CFA, which means the study validates the factor structure but does not test causal relationships among the factors. These limitations are related to the selected research design rather than errors in the study. They do not invalidate the findings, but they limit the extent to which the results can be generalized and interpreted causally. Future research may extend this study by using Structural Equation Modeling to examine causal relationships among the confirmed factors. Further studies may also compare different regions, types of culinary MSMEs, consumer income groups, or urban and rural markets to test whether the factor structure remains stable across different contexts. Longitudinal research is also recommended to observe how consumer purchase decisions change over time as food price dynamics and public food programs continue to develop.

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Declaration of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process (if author[s] utilize AI)

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT by OpenAI to assist in improving language clarity, academic structure, grammar, and readability of the manuscript. The AI tool was not used to analyze data, generate research data, manipulate results, or produce statistical outputs. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the publication.

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