

# The Role of Creativity and Innovation in Menus in Attracting Millennial Consumers to the Culinary Business

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of menu creativity and innovation on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers in the culinary business. The background of this study is based on changes in the consumption behaviour of millennials, who not only pursue taste but also pay attention to visual aspects, unique value, and emotional experiences when choosing food. This study employs a quantitative-descriptive approach using a survey method targeting 120 millennial respondents who actively consume creative and innovative culinary offerings. The analysis technique used is multiple linear regression with the assistance of SPSS. The results of the study indicate that menu creativity ( $\beta = 0.341$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and menu innovation ( $\beta = 0.468$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) have a positive and significant effect on millennial consumers' purchasing interest, both partially and simultaneously ( $R^2 = 0.576$ ;  $F = 47.53$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, which explains that creativity and innovation as stimuli can shape consumers' perceptions and emotions, ultimately leading to purchasing decisions. This study provides strategic implications for culinary business actors to integrate creative design and innovative approaches in product development to be more relevant to the preferences of the digital-native generation.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Menu Innovation, Millennial Generation, Culinary Business, Purchasing Interest.

## 1. Introduction

The culinary industry has become one of the sectors showing rapid growth in the creative economy, in line with the increasing public demand for food products that are not only delicious, but also have aesthetic and innovative value. Changes in consumer preferences regarding dining experiences are no longer focused solely on taste but have expanded to include the visual, narrative, and emotional aspects of a dish (Fajrul & Saptiyana, 2025). This phenomenon requires culinary businesses to be able to present creative and innovative menus in order to remain competitive in an increasingly complex market.

The dominance of millennials as the main consumer group has also contributed to a paradigm shift in the culinary industry. This generation, born between 1981 and 1996, is known to have different consumption characteristics compared to previous generations. They tend to seek authentic, unique culinary experiences that reflect their personal identity and digital lifestyle (Wachyuni et al., 2022). For this generation, food is not merely a functional necessity but also a medium for social expression and even a visual asset to be showcased on social media. Therefore, creativity and innovation in menus have become strategic factors in shaping the purchasing interest and loyalty of millennial consumers.



Various forms of innovation in menus have emerged, ranging from the use of locally sourced ingredients creatively prepared in modern ways, the fusion of cross-cultural cooking techniques (fusion food), to the incorporation of cultural narratives in the presentation of dishes (Chauhan & Philosophers, 2023). Menu creativity encompasses visual elements, presentation, and the story behind the food, while innovation focuses on technical and substantive aspects such as ingredient composition, processing techniques, and sustainability (Chauhan & Philosophers, 2023). However, the main challenge faced by local culinary businesses is how to design menus that are not only aesthetically appealing but also highly competitive in attracting the attention of the critical and selective millennial generation.

Although the importance of creativity and innovation in menus has been widely discussed in public discourse, scientific studies that simultaneously measure both variables in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among millennials, remain limited. Most previous studies have highlighted certain aspects partially. Janjić et al. (2023), for example, examined the influence of visual aesthetics on the value of culinary products, but did not discuss the dimension of innovation. Harrington and Ottenbacher (2013) examined food innovation in the context of culinary tourism, but did not directly link it to purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Chung et al. (2021) focused more on the relationship between innovation and customer loyalty and satisfaction, rather than initial purchasing interest. Even the study by Kaiser et al. (2021) which highlighted post-pandemic healthy food, still overlooked the role of narrative and aesthetics as determining factors.

Based on this identification, there is a research gap in terms of a comprehensive approach to examining the influence of menu creativity and innovation on millennial purchasing interest, particularly in the context of local culinary businesses facing significant challenges in building differentiation and maintaining relevance amid the globalisation of major brands. Therefore, this study is designed to address this gap using a quantitative-descriptive approach, aiming to measure millennial consumers' perceptions of menu creativity and innovation, as well as the extent to which these two variables contribute to the formation of purchasing interest.

Thus, this study has two main contributions: first, it enriches the academic literature on millennial consumer behaviour in the culinary industry with a more integrative approach; and second, it provides practical implications for business actors in formulating product and marketing strategies based on innovation that are adaptive to contemporary market dynamics. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference in developing relevant, competitive, and sustainable menus in the competitive digital era.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Creativity in the Culinary Context

Creativity is a divergent thinking process that generates new and original ideas that are useful in a specific context. In the culinary industry, creativity is a fundamental aspect that goes beyond the taste of food, encompassing presentation aesthetics, product storytelling, and new approaches to menu design (Ramirez, 2025). Creativity enables culinary businesses to create a unique identity that distinguishes them from their competitors. High creativity in culinary arts can also trigger emotional responses from consumers, especially those who are sensitive to visuals and unusual dining experiences.

## 2.2. Menu Innovation

Menu innovation refers to the development or application of new ideas manifested in the form of food presentation, cooking techniques, or combinations of ingredients that were previously uncommon. According to Carayannis et al. (2015), innovation is the primary function of entrepreneurship, which creates new value for customers and the market. In the culinary world, innovation can take the form of adapting cooking technology, modern processing of local ingredients, or combining cross-cultural culinary traditions (fusion). Menu innovation plays a crucial role in maintaining the relevance of culinary businesses amid rapidly changing trends, as well as in attracting consumer segments seeking novelty in their consumption (Horng & Hu, 2008).

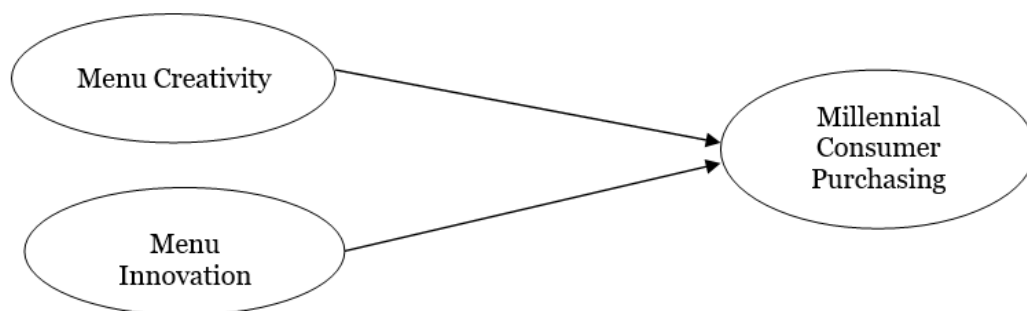
## 2.3. Millennials as Target Consumers

Millennials are known as a group of consumers who have consumption preferences based on experience, personal values, and social connectivity. They do not only buy products for their function, but also for their meaning, lifestyle, and potential to be shared digitally (Hall et al., 2017). In the culinary context, millennials show a high interest in food that is not only delicious, but also visually appealing and has a narrative that can go viral. Therefore, understanding the consumption behaviour of this generation is important in designing appropriate product strategies, including creating menus that combine aesthetic value, innovation, and identity.

## 2.4. The Dynamics of the Culinary Business in the Digital Age

The culinary industry is one of the sectors that has undergone significant transformation alongside advancements in information technology and changes in consumer lifestyles (Lubis et al., 2025). In the digital era, culinary businesses no longer rely solely on product quality but also on the ability to innovate in consumer experiences through visual branding, product storytelling, and online interactions (Inlando & Hartati, 2025). The emergence of social media platforms has strengthened the position of the aesthetic experience of food as one of the main attractions influencing purchasing decisions. In a highly competitive environment, culinary businesses need to adopt creativity- and innovation-based strategies to compete sustainably and reach digital-native consumers.

This study is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model developed by Jacoby (2002), which states that an external stimulus can influence an individual's internal condition (organism), which in turn will produce a behavioural response. In this context, menu creativity and innovation are positioned as stimuli that influence the perceptions and emotions of millennial consumers (organism), which then generate a response in the form of purchasing interest.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

## 2.5. Research Hypothesis

### 2.5.1. The Influence of Menu Creativity on Millennial Consumer Purchasing Interest

Creativity in culinary products includes the ability to generate new and unique ideas in terms of taste, visual presentation, and the overall concept of the dish (Amabile, 1996). In the digital and visual culture era, the aesthetics of food products have become an important part of the consumer experience. Millennials, as consumers who grew up with social media and visual trends, show a strong preference for food that has aesthetic appeal and emotional meaning (Syahputra et al., 2022). Therefore, menu creativity is believed to have a significant influence on their purchasing interest.

Previous research by Janjić et al. (2023). shows that the visual aesthetic aspects of culinary menus contribute greatly to the perception of value and purchasing desire among the younger generation. In line with this Chauhan and Philosophers (2023) emphasise that creativity can serve as a strategic differentiation tool in facing market competition.

**H1:** Menu creativity has a positive effect on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers.

### 2.5.2. The Effect of Menu Innovation on the Purchasing Interest of Millennial Consumers

According to Rasyid and Awwal (2024)., product innovation consists of five main characteristics that determine consumer adoption, namely relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In the culinary context, menu innovation can include the adoption of new cooking techniques, the use of modified local ingredients, and the integration of nutritional and sustainability values (Chung et al., 2021).

Millennials, known as an adaptive and open-minded generation, tend to value products that offer new experiences and align with their personal values. This makes menu innovation one of the key determinants in shaping purchase interest among this segment.

**H2:** Menu innovation has a positive effect on the purchase interest of millennial consumers.

### 2.5.3. The Simultaneous Influence of Creativity and Menu Innovation on Purchase Interest

Creativity and innovation are two complementary elements in creating products that are appealing both functionally and emotionally. Culinary products that combine high aesthetic value with novelty in taste, ingredients, or presentation tend to attract more consumer attention and foster long-term loyalty (Chung et al., 2021). In the SOR model, the combination of two strong stimuli can produce a more significant behavioural response. Therefore, when creativity and innovation are integrated into menu development strategies, it is expected to have a stronger influence on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers than if each is applied separately.

**H3:** Menu creativity and innovation simultaneously have a positive effect on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research Approach

This study uses a quantitative-descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to objectively and measurably explain the influence of menu creativity and innovation on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers. The data collected is numerical data, which is analysed using statistical techniques to obtain conclusions that can be generalised to a limited extent according to the context.

### 3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of individuals from the millennial generation, namely consumers born between 1981 and 1996, residing in City X, and who have experience purchasing food from culinary businesses offering creative and innovative menus. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the following inclusion criteria:

1. Aged between 27 and 44 years old (born between 1981 and 1996).
2. Active use of social media as a culinary reference medium.
3. Previous consumption of products from creative culinary businesses, such as fusion food concepts, unique visual presentations, or viral menus based on digital trends.

The minimum sample size was established at 100 respondents, in accordance with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2014) for multiple linear regression analysis, which requires a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of independent variables.

### 3.3. Data Collection Techniques

Primary data was collected through an online questionnaire using the Google Form platform. The research instrument was designed using a 5-point Likert scale, with a range of values from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The constructs and indicators in the questionnaire include:

1. Menu Creativity: covering visual aesthetics, innovation in taste, and product narrative or story.
2. Menu Innovation: includes unique processing techniques, new ingredient combinations, and the functional value of food.
3. Consumer Purchase Interest: consists of the tendency to try, initial loyalty to the product, and the urge to recommend it to others.

**Table 1. Operational Definition**

Variables	Definition	Indicator	Statement
Menu Creativity (X <sub>1</sub> )	To what extent do consumers consider the culinary menu to be creative, unique, interesting, and not monotonous?	A1	The menu has an attractive visual appearance that is different from others.
		A2	There is a unique element in the way the food is presented.
		A3	The menu names sound creative and easy to remember.
		A4	The menu is accompanied by narratives or stories that add to its appeal.
		A5	I am interested in trying it because of the visual uniqueness of the menu.
Menu Innovation (X <sub>2</sub> )	To what extent does the menu offer innovation in terms of taste, ingredients, processing techniques, or other added value?	B1	The menu offers unique and distinctive flavour combinations.
		B2	The menu uses unusual or innovative ingredients.
		B3	The menu combines local and global elements (fusion food).
		B4	There are new cooking or serving techniques.
		B5	The menu offers innovations that I have never found anywhere else.
	A person's tendency to purchase and try menus based on their perception of creativity and innovation	C1	I am interested in purchasing food from creative culinary businesses.
		C2	I am willing to try new menus that appear innovative.
		C3	I feel satisfied when purchasing food that is visually appealing.
		C4	I would like to share my culinary experiences on social media.



### 3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in the following stages:

1. Validity and Reliability Tests. Validity tests were conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation to ensure that each statement item measured the correct construct. Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum reliability value of 0.7 (Sugiyono, 2017).
2. Classical Assumption Tests include normality tests (using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test), multicollinearity tests (using the Variance Inflation Factor/VIF), and heteroscedasticity tests (using the Glejser test).
3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used to analyse the partial and simultaneous effects of independent variables (creativity and menu innovation) on the dependent variable (purchase interest of millennial consumers). The significance of the results was determined at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Research Results

#### 4.1.1. Respondent Description

The distribution of respondents based on gender, education level, and frequency of creative culinary consumption is shown in the following table:

**Table 2. Respondent Characteristics**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Male	52	43,3%
Female	68	56,7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	78	65,0%
Consumption of innovative cuisine $\geq$ 1x/week	87	72,5%

The respondents in this study numbered 120 individuals, all of whom fell within the millennial generation category, i.e., individuals aged between 27 and 44 years. Based on gender distribution, the majority of respondents were female, with 68 individuals (56.7%), while male respondents numbered 52 individuals (43.3%). In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents had completed higher education, specifically a bachelor's degree (S1) or higher, accounting for 78 respondents or 65.0% of the total sample. Meanwhile, in terms of consumption behaviour, 87 respondents (72.5%) were recorded as consuming innovative culinary products at least once a week.

These demographic and behavioural characteristics indicate that the respondents are relatively educated individuals who are active in exploring new culinary experiences. This is in line with the findings of Shipman (2020), who stated that millennials tend to have a high interest in food products that are unique, aesthetically pleasing, and in line with contemporary lifestyles. Thus, the profile of the respondents in this study can be said to be representative of the urban millennial population, which is the main target of the creative and innovative culinary industry.

#### 4.1.2. Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test for all items in the questionnaire was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The test results showed that all items in the menu creativity, menu innovation, and purchase interest variables had Pearson correlation values above 0.300 and were significant at the 5% significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, all items were declared valid and suitable for further analysis.

**Table 3. Results of the Instrument Validity and Reliability Test**

Variables	Number of Items	Pearson correlation	Significance	Cronbach's Alpha
Menu Creativity	5	$> 0.300$	$p < 0.05$	0.843
Menu Innovation	5	$> 0.300$	$p < 0.05$	0.875
Consumer Purchase Interest	4	$> 0.300$	$p < 0.05$	0.811

Next, reliability tests were conducted to measure the internal consistency of each variable construct. The Cronbach's Alpha values obtained for the menu creativity variable were 0.843, for menu innovation 0.875, and for purchase interest 0.811. All of these values are above the minimum threshold of 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019), indicating that the instrument has high reliability. Thus, the three research variables meet the validity and reliability requirements, so that the instrument used is considered to be able to measure the intended construct consistently and accurately.

#### 4.1.3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression model was used to test the effect of menu creativity and innovation on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers.

**Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,102	0,95	–	1,16	0,249
Menu Creativity (X <sub>1</sub> )	0,341	0,085	0,359	4,012	0,000
Menu Innovation (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,468	0,081	0,472	5,778	0,000

The results of multiple linear regression analysis indicate that the regression model constructed is capable of explaining the influence of menu creativity and innovation on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers. Based on the regression output, the menu creativity variable has a regression coefficient of 0.341 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that menu creativity has a positive and significant effect on purchasing interest. This means that the higher the level of creativity in the presentation, visuals, and narrative of the menu, the greater the tendency for millennial consumers to purchase the culinary product.

Meanwhile, menu innovation was also found to have a significant effect on purchasing interest, with a regression coefficient of 0.468 and a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This value is larger than the influence of menu creativity, indicating that innovation in the form of new ingredients, modern processing techniques, or fusion food concepts has a more dominant influence in driving millennial consumers' purchasing decisions.

#### 4.1.4. Coefficient Determination Test ( $R^2$ )

Based on the regression analysis results, the R Square ( $R^2$ ) value is 0.576, meaning that 57.6% of the variation in millennial consumers' purchasing interest can be explained by the creativity and innovation of the menu variables. Meanwhile, the remaining 42.4% is influenced by other factors outside the model that were not studied in this research. This R Square value indicates that the regression model used has sufficient explanatory power to predict purchasing interest based on menu creativity and innovation.

**Table 5. Coefficient Determination ( $R^2$ ) Test Results**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,759	0,576	0,568	3,624

a. Predictors: (Constant), Menu Innovation ( $X_2$ ), Menu Creativity ( $X_1$ )

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.568 indicates a correction to the number of predictors used in the model, which still reflects the stability of the model. The Standard Error of the Estimate value of 3.624 indicates the level of prediction error of the model against the actual value, and the value is still within reasonable limits. Thus, this model can be considered suitable for use in analysing the relationship between menu creativity and innovation and the purchasing interest of millennial consumers.

#### 4.1.5. Simultaneous Test (F-test)

Based on the ANOVA test results, a calculated F value of 47.530 was obtained with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This value is much greater than the F table value at a 5% significance level, indicating that the regression model used in this study is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that simultaneously, the variables of menu creativity and menu innovation have a significant effect on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers.

**Table 6. ANOVA Test Results**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.745,21	2	872,607	47,53	0,000
Residual	1.282,46	117	10,962		
Total	3.027,68	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Consumer Purchasing Interest

b. Predictors: (Constant), Menu Creativity ( $X_1$ ), Menu Innovation ( $X_2$ )

The very small significance value ( $<0.001$ ) indicates that the possibility of error in concluding the influence of the two independent variables on the dependent variable is very small. This means that creativity and innovation in menu development not only have an individual (partial) impact but also together contribute strongly to shaping the purchasing interest of millennial consumers. These results strengthen the validity of the regression model used in the study and support the hypothesis that integrating aesthetic and innovative elements into the culinary business is an important strategy for attracting the attention of dynamic and selective young consumers.



## 4.2. Discussion

### 4.2.1. Menu creativity influences the purchasing interest of millennial consumers

The results of the linear regression test show that menu creativity has a positive and significant effect on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers, with a coefficient value of 0.341 and significance of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. This finding is consistent with the Product Creativity Theory proposed by Amabile (1996), in which creativity is defined as the ability to generate new ideas that are useful in a particular context. In the culinary industry, creativity is not only displayed in the form of new flavour ideas, but also in the techniques of presentation and visualisation of dishes. Creativity is the primary means of building product appeal that can create memorable sensory and emotional experiences, especially for millennial consumers.

Millennials are known to be highly visual, expressive, and value originality and aesthetic value in product consumption (Shipman, 2020). They not only buy food for consumption, but also to share visually on social media as part of their digital lifestyle. Therefore, creativity in the menu is an effective differentiation strategy to attract the attention of this market segment (Chauhan & Philosophers, 2023). These results are also in line with the findings of Janjić et al. (2023), who stated that the visual aesthetic aspect of cuisine contributes to value perception and purchasing decisions, especially among young people. In this context, menu creativity acts as a strong stimulus in influencing the perceptions and reactions of millennial consumers.

### 4.2.2. Menu Innovation Influences Millennial Consumer Purchase Interest

The research results also indicate that menu innovation significantly influences purchase interest, with a coefficient value of 0.468 and significance of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), thereby accepting the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ). This finding supports Greenacre et al. (2012) Product Innovation Theory, which states that consumers' adoption decisions regarding an innovation are influenced by five main attributes: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Culinary innovations that offer relative advantages such as healthy menus, fusion food, or unique cooking techniques are proven to be more quickly adopted by consumers who prioritise experience and added value.

Innovation in culinary products is also highly relevant to the needs and expectations of the millennial generation, known for their flexibility to change and quick response to market trends. In many cases, menu innovation plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of product quality and uniqueness, thereby driving purchasing decisions. This finding is supported by Chung et al. (2021) research, which shows that menu innovation can create customer satisfaction and loyalty through a contemporary approach that adapts to both local and global market preferences. From the perspective of Millennial Consumer Behaviour Theory, the purchasing decisions of this generation are greatly influenced by the emotional value, uniqueness of the product, and the exploratory experience offered by the food (Asmara et al., 2019). Innovations that combine elements of sustainability, nutrition, and contemporary creativity are effective strategies for building emotional attachment while strengthening trust in the product.

### 4.2.3. Creativity and Menu Innovation Simultaneously Influence Purchase Interest

Simultaneously, creativity and menu innovation have a significant influence on the purchase interest of millennial consumers, as evidenced by a calculated F value of 47.530 and significance  $< 0.001$ , as well as a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.576. This means that 57.6% of the variation in purchase interest can be explained by the combination of these

two variables, and the third hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>) can be accepted. The integration of creativity and innovation creates strategic synergy in developing culinary products that are not only aesthetically appealing but also have a novelty value that is relevant to the tastes and lifestyles of today's consumers.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is highly relevant for explaining this relationship. In the S-O-R model, menu creativity and innovation act as stimuli that evoke perceptions, emotions, and evaluations from consumers (organism), which ultimately result in a response in the form of purchase interest. This response occurs because consumers assess products not only from a functional perspective (satiety) but also from the symbolic and aesthetic value attached to the product. The combination of these two elements is more effective in creating a memorable experience than the application of one aspect alone.

This finding is reinforced by the results of studies by Chung et al. (2021), which state that the synergy between innovation and creativity in menus contributes to strengthening competitive advantage and increasing customer loyalty. In the context of digital marketing, the visual power of creativity and the novelty of innovation are two key elements in shaping consumer engagement, especially among millennials who are highly active on social media and responsive to visual and narrative product content.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that both creativity and menu innovation have a significant effect on the purchasing interest of millennial consumers. Creativity, which includes visual, narrative, and food presentation aspects, as well as innovation through the use of new ingredients and modern processing techniques, can increase appeal and encourage purchasing decisions. The regression model used explains that 57.6% of the variation in purchase interest can be explained by both variables simultaneously, with menu innovation showing a more dominant influence. This finding reinforces that culinary product development strategies prioritising differentiation and innovation align with millennials' preferences for experience, uniqueness, and aesthetic value. Based on these findings, it is recommended that culinary businesses focus on developing products that are not only visually and narratively appealing, but also innovative in satisfying the tastes of today's consumers. Further research is expected to adopt a broader approach, such as mixed methods or the addition of other variables such as brand loyalty and the influence of social media, in order to strengthen a more comprehensive understanding of the behaviour of digital-native consumers.

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