

Empowering Hijab Fashion Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Makassar: The Role of Digital Marketing and Product Innovation

Hasriah¹, Muhammad Aziz², Hamsu Abdul Gani³

1-3 Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia
Email: hasriah11@unm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of digital marketing and product innovation in empowering Hijab fashion micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM) in Makassar. The research findings indicate that the utilization of digital marketing among Hijab fashion UMKM in Makassar is prominently seen through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee to promote and market their Hijab fashion products. Several strategies are employed to optimize the utilization of digital marketing, including content marketing, engaging influencer marketing such as collaborating with Instagram celebrities and artists, conducting regular live-streaming sessions to build consumer engagement, and consistently organizing giveaways for consumers. These digital marketing efforts have significantly contributed to the visibility and sustainability of Hijab fashion UMKM in Makassar, showcasing the importance of integrating innovative marketing approaches to thrive in the competitive fashion industry.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Influencer Marketing; Content Marketing; Consumer Engagement; E-commerce Platforms

INTRODUCTION

The hijab fashion industry, particularly among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), plays a significant role in the economic landscape of Makassar. However, these enterprises face challenges in reaching broader markets and sustaining growth due to limited access to traditional marketing channels and innovation (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Hutahayan & Yufra, 2019). With the rise of digital platforms, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for MSMEs to enhance their market presence and competitiveness (Mawli, 2021; McCusker, 2018; Munir et al., 2011; Zighan & Dwaikat, 2023).

Digital marketing utilizes various online channels such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and digital advertising to promote products and engage with consumers (Mawli, 2021; McCusker, 2018; Munir et al., 2011; Zighan & Dwaikat, 2023). For hijab fashion MSMEs in Makassar, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee have become essential in marketing strategies, enabling these businesses to reach a wider audience and interact directly with consumers (Hurwitz et al., 2016; Pathak, 2023; Patterson & Ward, 2000). Content marketing, influencer collaborations, and live-streaming sessions are among the strategies that have proven effective in building consumer engagement and driving sales (Piacentini et al., 2019; Roy et al., 2018).

Product innovation is equally crucial for the sustainability of hijab fashion MSMEs. Innovation in product design, materials, and functionality can help businesses differentiate themselves in a competitive market (Alabdali & Salam, 2022; Dereli, 2015; Slater & Narver, 1995). By continuously innovating, MSMEs can meet changing consumer preferences and stay relevant in the fast-evolving fashion industry .

This study aims to investigate the role of digital marketing and product innovation in empowering hijab fashion MSMEs in Makassar. By examining the strategies employed and their impact on business performance, the research seeks to provide insights into how these enterprises can leverage digital tools and innovative practices to enhance their sustainability and growth (Khan, 2020; Lindsey et al., 2014). The findings will contribute to the existing literature on MSME development, digital marketing, and innovation, offering practical recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in the fashion industry.

LITERATUR REVIEW

In the realm of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) specializing in Hijab Fashion in Makassar, the integration of digital marketing strategies is paramount for enhancing market presence and engaging consumers effectively (Heizer, Jay. Render, Barry. Munson, 2017; Mohammadian et al., 2022). Digital marketing offers MSMEs opportunities to expand their reach and improve accessibility through platforms such as social media and e-commerce. This enables them to target a diverse consumer base more precisely, fostering interaction and building brand loyalty (Jukkola, 2021; Saputra et al., 2020; Tronvoll et al., 2020).

Additionally, amidst evolving consumer preferences and competitive pressures, product innovation emerges as a critical factor for MSMEs in maintaining relevance and sustainability (Franco et al., 2021; Nurjaya et al., 2020). Innovating product offerings allows MSMEs to differentiate themselves in the competitive Hijab fashion market, attracting discerning consumers seeking unique and up-to-date styles. By continuously updating their product lines and incorporating feedback from customers, MSMEs can effectively meet market demands and stay ahead of trends.

This study employs qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews, to delve into how MSMEs in Makassar harness digital marketing and innovate their products to bolster their market positions and achieve sustainable growth (Anderson & Rezaie, 2019; Dash et al., 2018). Through these interviews, insights are gained into the strategies used by MSMEs to leverage digital platforms such as social media for brand promotion and customer engagement. Moreover, the study explores how MSMEs navigate the challenges of product innovation, including adapting to changing consumer tastes and optimizing production processes to deliver quality and variety.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics within the Hijab fashion sector in Makassar, uncovering both the opportunities and barriers faced by MSMEs in adopting digital marketing and innovation strategies (Yessoufou et al., 2018). By conducting thematic analysis of interview data, the study aims to identify common patterns and unique insights into effective practices and obstacles encountered by MSMEs. This holistic examination contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how digital tools and innovation can be effectively harnessed by MSMEs to enhance competitiveness and sustain growth in the dynamic Hijab fashion industry.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the role of digital marketing and product innovation in empowering MSMEs in the Hijab fashion sector in Makassar. Qualitative methods are chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, strategies, and challenges

faced by MSME owners and managers (Chaula et al., 2022). This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of how digital marketing and product innovation contribute to enhancing market competitiveness and sustainability in this industry.

Research Participants

The informants for this study will be selected purposively from MSMEs in the Hijab fashion sector in Makassar. The criteria for selecting informants will include their role as owners or managers directly involved in decision-making related to digital marketing strategies and product innovation. A diverse sample of MSMEs will be chosen to capture varying perspectives and practices within the industry.

Data Collection Techniques

Data will be collected primarily through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the selected informants. These interviews will be conducted face-to-face or via online platforms, allowing for a detailed exploration of topics such as the use of digital marketing channels (e.g., social media, e-commerce platforms), strategies for product innovation, challenges faced, and successes achieved in enhancing market presence and consumer engagement.

Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, following the approach outlined by (Braun et al., 2021). Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and codes within the qualitative data to uncover key insights and findings related to the research questions. This process will involve several iterative stages: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this research highlight the pivotal role played by digital marketing and product innovation in empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) within Makassar's Hijab fashion sector. Through extensive interviews with MSME owners and managers, it became evident that digital marketing strategies, particularly those leveraging social media and e-commerce platforms, significantly enhance market reach and effectively engage a diverse consumer base. MSMEs emphasized the critical importance of these platforms not only for promoting their brands but also for fostering direct interaction with customers and gathering valuable feedback. This direct engagement was instrumental in building customer loyalty and boosting sales, illustrating the transformative potential of digital marketing tools in enhancing business viability.

Moreover, the study revealed that continuous product innovation is indispensable for MSMEs aiming to maintain competitiveness in Makassar's dynamic Hijab fashion market. By adapting their product offerings to align with shifting consumer preferences and emerging trends, MSMEs were able to differentiate themselves and appeal to discerning customers seeking unique and fashionable Hijab attire. This strategic focus on innovation enabled MSMEs not only to sustain

their market positions but also to explore new market segments, thereby expanding their customer base and revenue streams.

However, the research also identified significant challenges hindering MSMEs from fully leveraging digital marketing and sustaining innovation efforts. Key challenges include limited financial resources for digital advertising investments, as well as gaps in digital skills among MSME owners and staff. These obstacles underscored the need for targeted support and capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and resource management capabilities among MSMEs in Makassar's Hijab fashion sector.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the transformative impact of digital marketing and product innovation on MSMEs operating in Makassar's Hijab fashion sector. Through in-depth interviews with MSME owners and managers, it became evident that digital marketing strategies, particularly those leveraging social media and e-commerce platforms, play a crucial role in enhancing market reach and engaging a diverse consumer base effectively (Kaplan, 2000). This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the potential of digital platforms to facilitate direct customer engagement and brand promotion, thereby contributing to business growth (Hanifzadeh et al., 2018).

MSMEs participating in the study reported using social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook not only to showcase their products but also to interact directly with customers, respond to inquiries, and collect feedback. Such interactions were instrumental in building customer loyalty and increasing sales volumes, reflecting the strategic importance of digital marketing in fostering consumer relationships and enhancing market competitiveness (Marshall et al., 2023).

Moreover, product innovation emerged as a critical factor for MSMEs seeking to differentiate themselves in Makassar's competitive Hijab fashion market. By continuously updating their product offerings to align with changing consumer preferences and fashion trends, MSMEs were able to attract discerning customers looking for unique and trendy Hijab fashion items (Khajeheian & Ebrahimi, 2021). This finding underscores the strategic role of innovation in sustaining market relevance and capturing new market opportunities, a theme echoed in the literature on innovation management in small businesses (McMaster et al., 2022).

However, despite the evident benefits of digital marketing and product innovation, several challenges were identified that could potentially hinder MSMEs' ability to fully capitalize on these strategies. Financial constraints were a recurring issue, with many MSMEs lacking adequate resources to invest in comprehensive digital marketing campaigns or to fund extensive product research and development efforts (Patton, 2021). Furthermore, there was a noticeable gap in digital skills among MSME owners and staff, limiting their capacity to effectively navigate and utilize digital platforms for business growth (Eriksson, 2022).

The implications of this study suggest several avenues for enhancing the empowerment of MSMEs in Makassar's Hijab fashion sector through digital marketing and product innovation. Firstly, policymakers and business support agencies could focus on providing targeted financial assistance and capacity-building programs to address the financial constraints and digital skills gaps identified among MSME owners and staff (Robertson et al., 2021). This support would enable MSMEs to invest more effectively in digital marketing campaigns and product development initiatives, thereby enhancing their market competitiveness and sustainability. Secondly, there is a need for continued research into the regulatory environment and market dynamics affecting MSMEs' adoption of digital technologies and innovation strategies (Khalil et al., 2022; Paiola &

Gebauer, 2020). Understanding these factors would inform policy interventions aimed at creating an enabling environment for MSME growth and innovation in the Hijab fashion industry. Future research could also explore the role of collaborative networks and partnerships in facilitating knowledge sharing and resource pooling among MSMEs, particularly in leveraging digital platforms for business expansion and market penetration (Olafenwa et al., 2021). By addressing these areas, stakeholders can foster a supportive ecosystem that empowers MSMEs to harness digital technologies effectively, innovate continuously, and contribute to sustainable economic development in Makassar and beyond.

Conclusion

This study illuminates the critical role played by digital marketing strategies and product innovation in empowering MSMEs within Makassar's Hijab fashion sector. The findings underscore how MSMEs leverage social media and e-commerce platforms to enhance market reach and engage a diverse consumer base effectively, thereby fostering customer loyalty and increasing sales. Moreover, continuous product innovation emerges as essential for MSMEs to differentiate themselves in the competitive market landscape, catering to evolving consumer preferences for unique and fashionable Hijab attire. Despite facing challenges such as financial constraints and digital skills gaps, MSMEs can capitalize on these strategies to strengthen their market positions and sustain growth. Moving forward, enhancing support mechanisms for digital literacy and providing targeted financial assistance will be crucial in enabling MSMEs to harness digital technologies more effectively and drive innovation, ultimately contributing to the long-term viability and competitiveness of Makassar's Hijab fashion MSMEs.

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