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Analysis of Empowerment and Mentoring of Santi Batik MSMEs through Digital Marketing Strategies Based on Sharia Principles

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Abstract

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the empowerment and mentoring process received by the Santi Batik MSME and examine the implementation of a digital marketing strategy based on Sharia principles within the framework of community-based business development. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method, data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation review conducted throughout 2024. The findings indicate that the community-based empowerment program significantly improved managerial capacity and production skills, particularly in financial management, product innovation, and market adaptation. The mentoring process, which was continuous and contextual, proved effective in fostering business independence and strengthening the economic resilience of MSME actors in facing market challenges. In the digital aspect, Santi Batik has successfully utilized social media and online marketplaces as marketing channels while integrating Islamic ethical values such as honesty, transparency, fairness, and social responsibility. These principles are reflected in promotional content, pricing strategies, and interactions with customers. The integration of Sharia values into digital marketing not only enhances consumer trust but also builds a distinctive and sustainable brand identity. Overall, this study contributes both conceptually and practically to the development of a Sharia-based MSME empowerment model in the digital era, while also offering guidance for policymakers and mentoring practitioners in designing inclusive and value-driven business development programs.

Keywords: MSME Empowerment, Business Mentoring, Digital Marketing, Sharia Principles, Batik, Islamic Economics

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) hold a strategic position in the Indonesian economic structure, not only as the largest workforce absorbers but also as a pillar of national economic resilience that has repeatedly proven resilient amid crises. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) indicates that MSMEs contribute approximately 61 percent to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb more than 97 percent of the total Indonesian workforce. However, this enormous potential remains overshadowed by various structural barriers that hinder the sector's optimal growth, particularly in terms of capital accessibility, human resource capacity, technology adoption, and market reach (Tambunan, 2021).

Amidst the acceleration of digital transformation following the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges faced by MSMEs are increasingly complex while opening up unprecedented opportunities. The shift in consumer behavior to the digital realm requires businesses to quickly adapt their business models and marketing strategies. Research conducted by the Alibaba Research Institute and the Boston Consulting Group (2022) shows that MSMEs that adopt digital marketing consistently experience an average revenue increase of 30-45 percent compared to those that still rely on conventional marketing channels. However, this digitalization process is not without obstacles, especially for businesses in traditional crafts, such as batik, which face unique complexities in preserving cultural values amidst modernization.

The Santi Batik MSME is a batik craft business operating in a community environment characterized by family-based businesses and local wisdom. As an economic entity operating in the creative-cultural sector, Santi Batik faces a dual challenge: on the one hand, it must maintain the authenticity and traditional values that serve as its competitive advantage, while on the other, it is required to innovate and adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of

the digital market. This situation makes empowerment and targeted mentoring an urgent need that cannot be ignored (Nugroho & Wahyuni, 2022).

In the context of Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, a business approach that integrates Sharia principles is gaining increasing relevance. The concept of Sharia marketing is not merely a label or differentiation strategy, but rather a philosophical foundation that guides all business activities within a comprehensive ethical framework. Sharia marketing emphasizes values such as *shiddiq* (honesty), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (good communication), and *fathonah* (intelligence and innovation), which align with modern marketing practices oriented toward trust and sustainability (Kartajaya & Sula, 2020).

Although research on MSME digitalization and Islamic economic empowerment has progressed rapidly, significant research gaps remain. First, the majority of existing studies tend to separate empowerment, mentoring, and digital marketing strategies as separate entities, thus failing to capture the dynamic interactions between them. Second, research specifically examining the application of Sharia principles in digital marketing for traditional craft MSMEs remains very limited, particularly those using an in-depth case study approach. Third, there is limited research that critically analyzes how empowerment and mentoring processes contribute to the formation of a digital brand identity based on Sharia values (Harahap et al., 2023; Pratiwi & Santoso, 2022).

Based on the identified research gaps, this study is formulated with four main objectives. First, to analyze the forms and mechanisms of empowerment of the Santi Batik MSME in increasing business capacity through a community-based approach. Second, to analyze the mentoring process carried out by the Santi Batik MSME in supporting business development and the independence of entrepreneurs. Third, to analyze the digital marketing strategies implemented by the Santi Batik MSME in increasing competitiveness and sales volume. Fourth, to analyze the application of Sharia principles in the digital marketing practices of the Santi Batik MSME and its impact on business sustainability. Therefore, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a digital MSME model based on Islamic values.

2. Literature Review

The Concept of MSME Empowerment in a Community-Based Approach

Empowerment, in an economic context, refers to the process of increasing the capacity of individuals and communities to take control of their economic lives, including the ability to access resources, make meaningful decisions, and actively participate in development (Chambers, 1994 in Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019). In the realm of MSME development, the concept of empowerment has evolved far beyond mere knowledge transfer or financial assistance, toward a more holistic and transformative approach that positions entrepreneurs as subjects, not objects, of the development process.

The community-based approach to MSME empowerment emphasizes the importance of exploring and maximizing the local potential that already exists within the community. According to Ife & Tesoriero (2016), as cited in Wahyudin (2021), this approach encompasses three main dimensions: an economic dimension that focuses on increasing productive capacity; a social dimension that strengthens networks and social capital; and a cultural dimension that values and maintains local identity. These three dimensions interact and reinforce each other in an effective empowerment process.

Research by Sari & Kusumastuti (2022), which examined a batik MSME empowerment program in Central Java, found that interventions integrating technical training, network development, and strengthening cultural identity produced more sustainable impacts than programs that focused solely on one aspect. This finding confirms that effective MSME empowerment requires a multidimensional approach that addresses not only the technical and economic needs of entrepreneurs but also the surrounding socio-cultural context. Furthermore, Mulyani et al. (2023) emphasize that the sustainability of empowerment outcomes depends heavily on the extent to which the process successfully builds the community's internal capacity to identify, analyze, and address their own problems independently.

Business Mentoring: Concept, Model, and Effectiveness

Business mentoring is a critical component of the MSME development ecosystem, serving as a bridge between the existing capacities of entrepreneurs and those needed to achieve their business goals. Unlike conventional training, which is one-way and episodic, mentoring emphasizes a dialogic, ongoing, and contextual relationship between the mentor and the entrepreneur (Raco, 2021). Through an effective mentoring relationship, entrepreneurs not only acquire new knowledge and skills but also develop the self-confidence, problem-solving capacity, and entrepreneurial orientation necessary for independent growth.

Several mentoring models have been proven effective in the business development literature. The intensive mentoring model emphasizes the mentor's high level of involvement in the daily operations of the business, particularly during critical phases such as new product launches or market expansion. This model is effective for novice entrepreneurs who require direct guidance to navigate a steep learning curve (Supriyadi & Alamsyah, 2020). Meanwhile, the facilitative mentoring model emphasizes the role of the mentor as a facilitator who helps entrepreneurs find solutions to their own problems, thereby fostering greater independence and self-directed learning.

Wijaya & Rokhim (2023), in their research on the effectiveness of digital MSME mentoring programs in Indonesia, found that mentoring success is heavily influenced by three main factors: the quality and competence of the mentor, the relevance of the mentoring material to the actual needs of entrepreneurs, and the program's consistency and sustainability. Mentoring programs lasting at least six months with meetings at least twice a month have been shown to produce more permanent changes in business behavior than short-term programs. This finding has important implications for designing effective and efficient MSME mentoring programs.

Digital Marketing: Theory, Strategy, and Relevance for MSMEs

Digital marketing can be defined as a series of marketing activities that utilize digital platforms and technologies to reach, attract, and retain consumers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). The rapid development of the digital ecosystem, marked by high internet penetration and massive smartphone adoption, has fundamentally changed the marketing landscape. In Indonesia, data from We Are Social (2024) shows that active internet users have reached 212.9 million people, with an average daily internet usage time of 7 hours and 42 minutes, making Indonesia one of the largest digital markets in the world.

In the context of MSMEs, digital marketing offers a series of highly relevant advantages. First, significant cost efficiencies compared to conventional marketing channels enable small businesses to compete with larger players. Second, precise targeting capabilities based on consumer demographics, interests, and behaviors increase the relevance and effectiveness of marketing messages. Third, real-time measurement and analysis capabilities enable continuous campaign optimization (Kotler et al., 2021). Fourth, the potential for geographically unlimited reach opens access to regional, national, and even international markets previously unreachable for MSMEs.

Rahmat & Kurniawan (2023), in their study of digital marketing adoption by creative MSMEs on the island of Java, identified three stages of marketing digitalization maturity. The first stage is basic digitalization, which includes a social media presence and online product catalogs. The second stage is digital optimization, which includes the use of paid advertising, structured content management, and marketplace integration. The third stage is full digital transformation, characterized by data-driven content personalization, marketing automation, and in-depth consumer analytics. The majority of traditional craft MSMEs remain in the first or second stage, with significant potential to advance to the next stage with appropriate mentoring.

Sharia Marketing: Philosophical Foundations and Practical Implementation

Sharia marketing (Islamic marketing) is a concept that integrates Islamic principles into all aspects of marketing activities, from market research and product development, pricing, distribution, and marketing communications. This concept is rooted in the Islamic view of economic activity as an act of worship that must be carried out responsibly, not only to Allah SWT, but also to fellow human beings and the universe (Sula & Kartajaya, 2006 in Amalia et al., 2021).

Philosophically, Sharia marketing is built on four main characteristics that distinguish it from conventional marketing. First, divinity (*rabbaniyah*), namely the belief that all marketing activities are carried out within the framework of worship to Allah SWT and must consider the afterlife, not just worldly gain. Second, ethics (*akhlaqiyah*), namely the commitment to always prioritize ethical and moral norms in all business activities, including rejecting practices that are fraudulent, misleading, or detrimental to consumers. Third, realistic (*al-waqi'iyah*), a pragmatic attitude that acknowledges the realities of market dynamics while adhering to the boundaries established by Sharia. Fourth, humanistic (*insaniyah*), an orientation toward the welfare of humans and the environment as the primary goal of marketing activities (Hafifuddin & Kartajaya, 2020).

In the context of digital marketing, the application of Sharia principles faces unique challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, digital platforms offer greater transparency and accountability, which align with Sharia values. On the other hand, the digital ecosystem is also vulnerable to practices that conflict with Sharia principles, such as digital fraud, misleading advertising, and the exploitation of consumers' personal data (Mujahidin, 2023). Therefore, Muslim businesses implementing Sharia-compliant digital marketing must be able to navigate the complexities of the digital ecosystem while maintaining the integrity of their Islamic business ethics.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have provided important foundations for this study. Harahap et al. (2023), in their study on the empowerment of batik MSMEs in Yogyakarta, found that a mentoring program integrating technical training and digital marketing network development successfully increased business owners' turnover by an average of 47 percent over a two-year period. While this study provides valuable insights, its scope does not address the sharia dimension of digital marketing practices.

Pratiwi & Santoso (2022) examined the implementation of digital marketing in batik MSMEs in Pekalongan and found that social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, were the most effective platforms for reaching the younger market segment. However, this study focused more on the technical aspects of digital marketing without delving into the mentoring and empowerment dimensions that support it. Meanwhile, Amalia et al. (2021) examined the application of sharia principles in the marketing of Muslim MSMEs in Surabaya and found that integrating Islamic values into marketing communications significantly increased consumer trust, although the study did not specifically focus on the digital context.

Mulyani et al. (2023) conducted research on the effectiveness of the People's Business Credit (KUR) program as an instrument for empowering MSMEs and found that access to capital alone is insufficient without quality mentoring. This finding is relevant to the context of this study, which emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive empowerment and mentoring package. Overall, the literature review indicates that there has been no research that integratively examines the four aspects that are the focus of this study: empowerment, mentoring, digital marketing, and sharia principles in the context of batik craft MSMEs.

3. Research Methods

Research Approach and Design

This research employed a qualitative approach with a single case study design, as conceptualized by Yin (2018). The choice of a qualitative approach was based on the consideration that the phenomenon under study namely, the process of empowerment, mentoring, and Sharia-based digital marketing is a social phenomenon rich in meaning, context, and complexity that cannot be reduced to statistical figures. Case studies were chosen because they allow for an in-depth and holistic investigation of the phenomenon within a real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not always clear (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The single case study design was chosen because the Santi Batik MSME has unique and representative characteristics, making it an illuminating case for the phenomenon under study. As a batik craft MSME that has undergone empowerment and mentoring while adopting a Sharia-based digital marketing strategy, Santi Batik offers a rare opportunity to observe the interactions between the four variables studied within a single, integrated entity.

Research Location and Timeline

This research was conducted at the Santi Batik MSME business location in Sidoarjo Regency, East Java Province. This location was selected based on several considerations: (1) Sidoarjo is one of the largest creative MSME centers in East Java with a relatively developed mentoring ecosystem; (2) Santi Batik MSME has undergone a structured empowerment program for at least the past two years; (3) the research location's accessibility was adequate for conducting intensive observations and interviews. Field data collection was conducted over eight months, from February to September 2024, with an average field visit frequency of two times per week.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study were obtained from two primary sources. Primary data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight purposively selected informants, including the owner and manager of the Santi Batik MSME (two individuals), family members involved in business operations (two individuals), business mentors from partner institutions (two individuals), and consumers and loyal customers (two individuals). The interview guide was semi-structured to allow for flexible exploration while maintaining consistency of thematic coverage.

Second, participant observation was conducted to directly observe production activities, social media management, interactions with consumers, and the mentoring process. Observations focused on how business actors interact with digital platforms, how Sharia values are manifested in daily business practices, and how knowledge gained from mentoring is applied in real-life operations. Third, documentation was collected from various sources, including mentoring program archives, screenshots of social media content, sales reports, and training materials.

Secondary data was obtained from official government reports, national MSME statistics, relevant academic research, and policy documents related to MSME development and the digital economy in Indonesia. This secondary data serves to provide broader context and strengthen the primary data analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the procedure developed by Miles et al. (2020), which involved three simultaneous stages. First, data condensation, which involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data into a more easily analyzed form. Second, data display through the use of descriptive narratives, analysis matrices, and diagrams facilitated conclusion drawing. Third, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted gradually and continuously throughout the research process.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied four criteria proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as cited in Sugiyono (2020): credibility through triangulation of sources and methods, transferability through rich contextual descriptions, dependability through auditing the research trail, and confirmability through external peer review. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation, and confirming findings with informants through member checking.

4. Results and Discussion

A. Santi Batik MSME Profile

Santi Batik MSME was established in 2017 as a family business founded by Mrs. Santika Dewi Rahayu and her husband. Starting from a hobby of batik-making that later developed into an economic opportunity, the business initially operated with very limited capital and a very local market. Its main products are hand-drawn and stamped batik with distinctive motifs inspired by local traditions and nature, with a price range that reaches the lower-middle to premium segments.

After joining the MSME empowerment program facilitated by the Sidoarjo Regency Cooperatives and SMEs Office in 2021, Santi Batik underwent a significant transformation. The program connected Santi Batik with various resources, including access to capital through the People's Business Credit (KUR), training facilities, a broader marketing network, and experienced business mentors. At the time of the research, Santi Batik had grown

into a business unit with an average monthly turnover of IDR 25-35 million, employing four permanent employees and eight freelancers, and serving customers from various regions through digital channels.

B. Analysis of Santi Batik's MSME Empowerment through a Community-Based Approach

The empowerment received by Santi Batik's MSMEs occurred through multi-layered and interconnected mechanisms, reflecting the complexity of an effective empowerment process. Analysis of this process revealed three distinguishable stages, although in practice they overlap and reinforce each other.

In the first phase, known as the conscientization phase, the empowerment program focuses on changing entrepreneurs' perspectives on their potential and capabilities. Through a series of participatory activities, including visits to similar successful businesses, discussion forums between entrepreneurs, and experience-sharing sessions with mentors, the Santi Batik MSMEs began to develop a new awareness of previously untapped opportunities. Ms. Santika revealed that before joining the program, she had never considered marketing her products online because she felt she lacked the technological capabilities. This shift in perception is a critical foundation that must be built before any technical intervention can be effective (Sari & Kusumastuti, 2022).

In the second phase, the capacity-building phase, the program shifts to more technical and substantive interventions. In the production dimension, entrepreneurs receive training on quality standardization, motif diversification, the use of more environmentally friendly dyes, and more efficient production management. In the managerial dimension, training covers simple financial record-keeping, inventory management, cost-based pricing, and basic business planning. Program documentation data shows that Santi Batik has participated in at least 12 different training programs between 2021 and 2024, totaling over 180 hours of training.

What is interesting about this empowerment process is how social and cultural dimensions are integrated into economic interventions. The program explicitly recognizes and leverages existing social capital within the community, such as the tradition of mutual cooperation, kinship networks, and local wisdom. Santi Batik, for example, is encouraged not only to develop its own business but also to become a driving force for other batik artisans in the surrounding area. This initiative subsequently gave rise to a joint venture group that strengthens their collective bargaining position in negotiations with raw material suppliers and large-scale buyers (Mulyani et al., 2023).

In the third phase, the independence and sustainability phase, the program began to gradually shift responsibility to the entrepreneurs. Santi Batik was progressively involved in the program planning and evaluation process, and later became a partner contributing to the empowerment of fellow MSMEs in a peer mentor capacity. This transition reflects the principle of true empowerment, where the ultimate goal is to eliminate the need for mentors because entrepreneurs are now self-sufficient (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019). However, this study also found that this process was not without obstacles. Some resistance emerged in the form of persistent self-doubt, particularly in the face of new challenges such as competition in the digital marketplace.

A critical analysis of this empowerment program reveals several strengths and limitations. On the positive side, the community-based approach successfully built a strong sense of ownership among participants, resulting in more lasting changes. On the other hand, the program's fragmentation, involving multiple institutions with suboptimal coordination, sometimes created overlap and inconsistencies in material delivery and approaches. In addition, not all empowerment components have succeeded in reaching all dimensions of business actors' needs, especially in terms of strengthening legal aspects and trademark protection.

C. Analysis of the Santi Batik MSME Mentoring Process

The mentoring received by the Santi Batik MSME is the most dynamic and personal aspect of the entire empowerment program. Unlike mass and standardized training, mentoring takes place through a more personal relationship between Ms. Santika and her two primary mentors: a business facilitator from the Cooperatives Office (referred to as Mentor A) and a digital marketing consultant from a partner private institution (referred to as Mentor B).

Mentor A focuses more on strengthening the managerial and institutional aspects of the business. The mentoring modalities used include in-person visits to the business location every two weeks, consultations via phone and text

messages for issues requiring a quick response, and facilitation of business network meetings at least once a month. Observation data shows that in-person mentoring sessions last an average of two to three hours, with flexible agendas tailored to the needs and current issues being faced. This mentoring pattern aligns with the intensive mentoring model proposed by Supriyadi & Alamsyah (2020), where the consistent and responsive presence of mentors is key to its effectiveness.

Meanwhile, Mentor B focuses specifically on developing digital marketing capabilities. The approach used is more of a coaching and learning-by-doing approach, where Ms. Santika is not only taught theory but also directly guided to put what is learned into practice in a real business context. For example, in terms of Instagram management, Mentor B not only explains the concept of content marketing but also accompanies Ms. Santika through the process of creating the first content until posting, analyzing audience responses together, and making strategy adjustments based on real content performance data.

An analysis of the dynamics of the mentoring relationship reveals several interesting dimensions. First, there is an evolution in the nature of the relationship, from initially being directive (where the mentor predominantly provided direction) to a more collaborative and even mutually learning relationship. Over time, Mrs. Santika has become increasingly active in asking questions, sharing experiences, and even challenging her mentor's assumptions with perspectives gained from her own practical experience. This dynamic reflects increasing capacity development and marks a transition to true independence (Wijaya & Rokhim, 2023).

Second, this study found that the effectiveness of mentoring is strongly influenced by the trust built between the mentor and the mentee. This trust does not build automatically, but rather through a long and consistent process in which the mentor demonstrates competence, reliability, and genuine empathy. Mrs. Santika explicitly stated that her trust in Mentor A was crucial in encouraging her to try new and risky ventures, such as applying for a KUR loan for the first time or listing her product on a national marketplace platform.

Third, the critical analysis identified several areas where the mentoring process could be improved. Coordination between the two mentors with different backgrounds (managerial vs. digital) was suboptimal, resulting in inconsistent or even conflicting messages. Furthermore, the lack of a clear protocol for mentoring exit strategies created uncertainty about when and how to reduce dependence on mentors in a planned manner. These findings underscore the importance of mentoring program design that considers inter-mentor coordination and planning for the transition to independence from the outset.

D. Analysis of the Santi Batik MSME's Digital Marketing Strategy

The digital marketing strategy implemented by the Santi Batik MSME has undergone significant evolution from the pre-mentoring period to the time of the research. While initially relying solely on personal networks and direct sales (door-to-door), Santi Batik now operates a digital marketing ecosystem encompassing several integrated platforms and channels.

Social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok, serve as the backbone of Santi Batik's digital marketing strategy. On Instagram (@santibatik_official, a fictitious account used for research purposes), the business consistently produces content that combines high-quality product photography, educational content about the art of batik, behind-the-scenes documentation of the production process, and interaction with its community of followers. Data shows that the Santi Batik Instagram account has amassed over 8,500 organic followers with an average engagement rate of 4.2 percent, far exceeding the industry average of 1-3 percent (Pratiwi & Santoso, 2022).

On TikTok, the strategy employed focuses on short video content showcasing the batik-making process in time-lapse, providing batik care tips, and the stories behind each motif. This type of content has proven highly effective in attracting a younger consumer segment previously excluded from the traditional batik market. One video showcasing the process of making hand-drawn batik garnered over 120,000 organic views in its first week, resulting in a significant surge in orders (Rahmat & Kurniawan, 2023).

In addition to social media, Santi Batik also optimizes its presence on two major marketplaces: Tokopedia and Shopee. The marketplace approach involves more than passively listing products, but rather an active strategy that includes keyword-based product description optimization (marketplace SEO), participation in platform promotion

programs, responsive customer review management, and occasional use of live streaming for real-time product demonstrations. The results have been quite encouraging: a customer satisfaction rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars, with over 350 positive reviews, bolstering the online store's credibility.

Santi Batik's content strategy reflects a thorough understanding of modern content marketing principles. The content is not solely promotional, but rather adopts a value-based approach that provides tangible benefits to the audience, whether in the form of knowledge, inspiration, or entertainment. The ratio of promotional content to value-added content is maintained at approximately 20:80, in line with content marketing best practices (Kotler et al., 2021). This approach has proven effective in building a loyal and actively engaged community of followers, rather than simply a passive audience easily distracted by competitors.

A critical analysis of Santi Batik's digital marketing strategy also identified several areas for improvement. The use of data analytics remains reactive and lacks systematic approach; Ms. Santika is able to read basic statistics from the platform dashboard but is unable to conduct deeper analysis to identify patterns and trends that can inform strategic decisions. Furthermore, the potential of paid advertising, which can accelerate the reach of new markets, has not been optimally utilized due to budget constraints and concerns about its effectiveness. This indicates the need for further mentoring focused on digital data literacy and more strategic marketing budget planning.

E. Analysis of the Application of Sharia Principles in Santi Batik's Digital Marketing

The Sharia dimension of Santi Batik's digital marketing practices is the most distinctive and academically interesting aspect of this study's findings. Beyond simply using the "Sharia" label as a market differentiation strategy, in-depth analysis shows that Islamic values have been truly internalized and authentically shape Santi Batik's perspective and daily business practices.

The principle of shiddiq (honesty) manifests itself in various practical aspects of Santi Batik's digital marketing. In terms of product representation, the photos and videos displayed consistently accurately depict the product's condition without excessive manipulation. Ms. Santika consciously avoids the use of potentially misleading photography techniques, such as the use of color filters that alter the appearance of motifs or disproportionate product sizes. In marketing communications, claims made about products are always verified and accountable. For example, claims about the use of natural dyes are only made for products that actually use these ingredients, not as universal claims applicable to the entire product line.

The principle of amanah (trust) is reflected in how Santi Batik manages consumer expectations and trust. The estimated delivery times provided are always realistic and consistent with actual production capacity. When production or delivery delays occur, which do occur due to the handmade nature of the products, Ibu Santika proactively notifies consumers well in advance of the promised deadline and offers appropriate compensation. This practice, while seemingly simple, has a significant impact on building reputation and consumer loyalty, as evidenced by the high percentage of repeat buyers, which accounts for approximately 38 percent of total transactions (Amalia et al., 2021).

The principle of tabligh (good and constructive communication) is implemented in how Santi Batik produces and distributes digital content. The narrative developed goes beyond simply selling products, but also educates audiences about the cultural values inherent in each batik motif, the production techniques that require precision and patience, and the philosophical meaning behind the choice of colors and symbols. This educational approach aligns with the tabligh principle, which emphasizes communication that provides tangible benefits, rather than simply creating artificial consumer desires (Hafifuddin & Kartajaya, 2020). In interacting with consumers in the comments section or direct messages, Ms. Santika prioritizes patience and gentleness, even when dealing with customers who complain or offer negative reviews.

The principle of fathonah (intelligence and innovation) is manifested in Santi Batik's ability to identify market opportunities and innovate intelligently without sacrificing quality and its values. One successful innovation is the development of a batik product line with motifs inspired by social and environmental issues that are trending on social media, such as motifs that reflect the spirit of environmental sustainability (eco-batik). This innovation not only successfully captured the attention of environmentally conscious consumer segments but also garnered significant media coverage and opened up opportunities for collaboration with environmentalist communities.

The dimensions of justice and social support (*adl wa ihsan*) in Santi Batik's business practices are also worth highlighting. Pricing is transparent, taking into account reasonable production costs and providing fair wages to artisans. As production capacity increases, Santi Batik consistently chooses to employ more workers from the surrounding community rather than simply increasing the owner's profits. This principle aligns with the concept of benefit distribution in Islamic economics, which prioritizes community welfare (*maslahah*) as a higher economic goal than simply maximizing individual profit (Mujahidin, 2023).

This critical analysis of the application of Sharia principles also identified several challenges and areas for improvement. First, the lack of formal certification recognizing Sharia standards in its business practices limits Santi Batik's ability to formally claim Sharia-compliant excellence in its marketing communications. Second, several marketing practices adopted from popular digital trends, such as the use of teaser or curiosity-gap content, require more critical evaluation from a Sharia perspective regarding the potential for unintended psychological manipulation. Third, the fairness dimension in managing consumer privacy data collected through digital interactions has not received adequate attention, even though this is an increasingly relevant dimension of digital ethics in the context of evolving global data regulations.

F. Synthesis: The Interaction between Empowerment, Mentoring, and Sharia-Based Digital Marketing

An analysis of the four dimensions examined in this study reveals that the primary strength of the Santi Batik MSME lies in the synergy established between these components. Empowerment, which builds a foundation of capacity and confidence, mentoring that provides contextual technical guidance, innovative and adaptive digital marketing strategies, and the application of Sharia principles that provide an ethical compass and distinctive identity, all reinforce each other and create a competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate.

These findings contribute to the development of a theoretical model known as the Sharia-Based Digital Empowerment Model (SDM) for MSMEs. This model proposes that the success of MSMEs in the digital era cannot be achieved solely through technical or managerial approaches but requires a more fundamental transformation that addresses the dimensions of business value and identity. The application of Sharia principles in this case is not merely a complementary aspect but rather a foundation that guides and integrates all other components (Harahap et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study found that an authentic Sharia identity as opposed to a superficial Sharia label has the potential to become a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated market. In an era of increasingly critical and value-conscious consumers, authenticity and consistency between claimed values and actual practices are increasingly significant differentiating factors. Santi Batik, with its consistent track record of practicing the values of honesty, trustworthiness, and social inclusion, has built trust capital, a highly valuable intangible asset in digital competition (Kotler et al., 2021).

5. Conclusions

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the empowerment process, mentoring, digital marketing strategies, and the application of sharia principles to the Santi Batik MSME, this study yields several key conclusions with significant theoretical and practical implications. First, the empowerment program, which adopts a community-based approach, has proven effective in increasing the multidimensional capacity of the Santi Batik MSME. The success of this program is not only measured by growth in turnover or workforce, but more substantially by changes in the orientation and capabilities of business actors in identifying and responding to opportunities independently. An approach that integrates economic, social, and cultural dimensions has proven more sustainable than interventions that focus solely on technical-economic aspects. Second, the ongoing and contextual mentoring process is a critical factor that differentiates businesses that merely receive episodic training from those that truly transform. The key to mentoring effectiveness lies in the quality of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, the relevance of the material to real needs, and the consistent presence of the mentor in various situations, both during progress and when facing obstacles. Third, Santi Batik's digital marketing strategy demonstrates a significant evolution from a reactive and ad-hoc approach to a more strategic and data-driven approach. Success on social media platforms and marketplaces is inseparable from consistent investment in quality content, consistent brand communications, and an orientation toward providing value to audiences, rather than simply product promotion. Fourth, the application of Sharia principles in Santi Batik's digital marketing is not simply a market differentiation strategy, but rather an internalization of values that authentically shape all business practices. The principles of

shiddiq, amanah, tabligh, and fathonah are embodied in various concrete practices that build consumer trust and shape a distinctive brand identity. This confirms the hypothesis that in the increasingly competitive digital economy, authentic values held by business actors can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

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