

## Encouraging MSME Growth with Digital Platforms: Halal Competition and Innovation Strategy

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**ABSTRAK:** Perkembangan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi (TIK) yang pesat telah mempengaruhi sektor Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) dengan cara yang signifikan. Platform digital, termasuk e-commerce, media sosial, dan aplikasi mobile, memberikan UMKM akses yang lebih luas ke pasar global dan mempermudah proses bisnis mereka. Studi ini mengkaji peran platform digital dalam mendukung pertumbuhan UMKM, dengan fokus pada dua konsep utama: kompetisi halal dan inovasi. Kompetisi halal, yang berhubungan dengan praktik bisnis sesuai prinsip syariah, telah menjadi strategi penting dalam membangun kepercayaan dan loyalitas konsumen di pasar global. Di sisi lain, inovasi dalam pengembangan produk, proses, dan model bisnis memainkan peran vital dalam memanfaatkan teknologi digital dan membedakan UMKM dari pesaing. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka untuk menganalisis integrasi kompetisi halal dan inovasi dalam strategi digital UMKM. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa platform digital memainkan peran penting dalam pertumbuhan Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) dengan menyediakan akses ke pasar global dan mempermudah proses bisnis. Melalui e-commerce, Go-Jek, dan solusi manajemen berbasis cloud, UMKM dapat meningkatkan efisiensi operasional dan bersaing dengan retailer besar. Sertifikasi halal menjadi strategi vital dalam memperluas pangsa pasar dan membangun kepercayaan konsumen. Inovasi digital dalam pemasaran dan manajemen memberikan keuntungan kompetitif, mendorong UMKM untuk beradaptasi dan mengoptimalkan pertumbuhan ekonomi yang inklusif. Oleh karena itu, pemanfaatan teknologi digital adalah langkah krusial bagi keberlanjutan dan daya saing UMKM.

**Kata kunci:** UMKM, Platform Digital, Kompetisi Halal, Inovasi.

**ABSTRACT:** The rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT) has influenced the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in a significant way. Digital platforms, including e-commerce, social media and mobile applications, give MSMEs wider access to global markets and simplify their business processes. This study examines the role of digital platforms in supporting the growth of MSMEs, focusing on two main concepts: halal competition and innovation. Halal competition, which is related to business practices in accordance with sharia principles, has become an important strategy in building consumer trust and loyalty in the global market. On the other hand, innovation in product development, processes and business models plays a vital role in leveraging digital technology and differentiating MSMEs from competitors. This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach to analyze the integration of halal competition and innovation in the digital strategy of MSMEs. The research results show that digital platforms play an important role in the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by providing access to global markets and simplifying business processes. Through e-commerce, Go-Jek, and cloud-based management solutions, MSMEs can increase operational efficiency and compete with large retailers. Halal certification is a vital strategy in expanding market share and building consumer trust. Digital innovation in marketing and management provides competitive advantages, encouraging MSMEs to adapt and optimize inclusive economic growth. Therefore, the use of digital technology is a crucial step for the sustainability and competitiveness of MSMEs.

**Keywords:** MSMEs, Digital Platforms, Halal Competition, Innovation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The development of information and communication technology is increasingly rapid along with the increasing use of various digital platforms by various groups of society. The acceleration of digital adaptation has had an impact on increasing economic activity, one of which is in the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector. (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII), 2023) revealed that, in 2023, Indonesia's internet penetration rate will reach 78.19 percent. In other words, as many as 78 out of 100 Indonesians will have used the internet by 2023. When compared with data in 2018, this figure has increased by 13.39 percent in the last five years. This shows that Technology, Information and Communication (ICT) has experienced very rapid development in the last five years, and the digital economy industry has the potential for positive growth in the future.

MSMEs face an urgent need to adapt quickly and effectively. Two concepts that have emerged as key factors in digital business strategy are halal competition and innovation. Halal competition, which refers to business practices that comply with sharia principles, has become more than just compliance with ethical standards, it is also an important strategy for building consumer trust and loyalty in an increasingly global and digital marketplace (Khan, M. A., Khan, M. J., & Khan, 2020). On the other hand, innovation in product, process and business model development plays a vital role in enabling MSMEs to make maximum use of digital technology and differentiate themselves from competitors (Schumpeter, 2017). Digital platforms provide various tools and opportunities to implement innovations that can increase business efficiency and competitiveness (Abdullah, M. A., Rahman, S. A., & Sulaiman, 2021). By integrating halal competition and innovation in digital strategies, MSMEs can not only meet growing market demands but can also take advantage of new opportunities in an ethical and sustainable way.

Although many studies have explored the role of halal competition and technological innovation in driving MSME growth through digital platforms, there are several gaps that need attention. Previous research such as that carried out by (Khan, M. A., Khan, M. J., & Khan, 2020) dan (Al-Mutairi, A., & Kadhim, 2019) has provided in-depth insight into how halal certification can be a differentiation tool in the digital market and increase the visibility of MSMEs. However, these studies tend to focus on aspects of implementing halal principles without discussing in detail how the integration of innovative technology can strengthen halal strategies in a dynamic digital context. Besides that, (Abdullah, M. A., Rahman, S. A., & Sulaiman, 2021) (Zhang, X., & Li, 2019) have emphasized the importance of technological innovation for the growth of MSMEs, but they have not comprehensively explored how this innovation can be integrated with halal practices to create a holistic and effective digital strategy.

This gap shows that although there is a good understanding of these two elements separately, not many studies have investigated how the synergy between halal competition and technological innovation can be optimized to support the overall growth of MSMEs. This research aims to fill this gap by systematically exploring how the integration of halal competition with technological innovation strategies in digital platforms can have a greater impact on the growth and sustainability of MSMEs, as well as offering an integration model that can be practically applied by business actors in various industrial sectors.

## **2. METHOD**

In this research, the method used is qualitative with a literature study approach, which aims to explore and analyze information in the literature to understand MSME growth strategies through digital platforms, especially in the context of halal

competition and innovation. The literature study approach allows researchers to evaluate and synthesize various secondary data sources, such as journal articles, books, and research reports that are relevant to the research topic. Through this method, researchers can identify trends, patterns and relationships between the application of halal principles and technological innovation in MSME digital strategies without the need to collect primary data directly (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018; Webster, J., & Watson, 2022)

This approach also makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of how digital strategies can be optimized to support MSME growth by integrating these elements together. References from various literature studies provide a strong theoretical and empirical framework for data analysis and synthesis, as well as offering comprehensive insights into best practices and challenges faced by MSMEs in the digital context (Cooper, 2016; Hart, 1998).

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 The Role of Digital Platforms in the Growth of MSMEs**

Digital platforms have become the main driver in the growth of MSMEs by providing wider access to markets and simplifying business processes. By using digital platforms such as e-commerce, social media and mobile applications, MSMEs can expand their market reach significantly. E-commerce, for example, allows MSMEs to sell their products to customers around the world without requiring a presence in that location. These platforms offer practical solutions to overcome logistics and distribution challenges, while increasing the visibility of MSME products and services through efficient digital marketing techniques (Kumar, V., Gaur, V., & Sharma, 2021).

E-commerce, which is the activity of buying and selling goods and services carried out online using the internet, is currently a business activity and transaction that is often carried out by business actors. E-commerce has the largest contribution to the development of the digital economy in Indonesia. Apart from e-commerce, several other sectors also support the digital economy in Indonesia, including transportation, food, online travel and online media. The presence of e-commerce or electronic commerce has had a significant impact on the development of the real sector, especially in the trading business field in Indonesia (Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF), 2024).

The high potential for e-commerce growth in Indonesia presents wider opportunities for MSME players to enter the digital platform ecosystem. By becoming part of the digital economy, MSME players can utilize and maximize the use of technology to develop their businesses. The positive impact of MSME participation in the digital economy provides great potential for the development of MSMEs in Indonesia.

For example, Warung Pintar, a technology startup from Indonesia, shows how digital platforms can empower MSMEs in the traditional retail sector, starting from managing stock, carrying out transactions, and gaining access to suppliers in a more efficient way. Warungs, as a traditional distribution channel, are still very asymmetrical and fragmented, limiting all elements in the warung business ecosystem, from producers, distributors, wholesalers to retailers. By digitizing the distribution system, smart stalls are able to create information transparency for all stakeholders (Pintar, 2021).

This initiative not only simplifies daily operations but also increases the ability of MSMEs to compete with large retailers through innovative digital technology (Kurniawan, I., & Sihombing, 2021). Warung Pintar's success in providing comprehensive digital solutions is very significant with a focus on accelerating economic and technological inclusion. Warung Pintar not only helps

warungs to adapt to digital trends, but also empowers them to compete better. In Indonesia, where many MSMEs operate in a fragmented ecosystem, implementing integrated digital solutions is crucial to increasing accessibility, so that small businesses can take advantage of growth opportunities and compete effectively in the broader market. Thus, integrated digital solutions not only increase accessibility, but also give small businesses the opportunity to develop, innovate and compete more effectively. This has the potential to change the business landscape in Indonesia and encourage more inclusive economic growth.

Another example is Go-Jek, which is a technology company from Indonesia that provides transportation via motorbike taxi services. Gojek does not want to stop being just an online transportation company, but is transforming into a financial technology (fintech) company through GoPay as a platform provider that helps MSMEs in digital delivery and payments. The use of the Go-Jek platform has had a significant impact on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, especially in the food and beverage sector. By using Go-Food services, MSMEs can expand their market reach effectively. According to research by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), high internet penetration and widespread smartphone use have created new opportunities for MSMEs to connect with customers directly via digital platforms (Sutarsih & Maharani, 2022). Go-Jek also offers service integration that allows MSMEs to manage orders and payments more easily, as well as utilize data for more effective marketing strategies (Sari, D. P., & Wijaya, 2020).

One of the main advantages of using Go-Jek is increased operational efficiency. Through an integrated online ordering system, MSMEs can manage orders more quickly and accurately. This helps reduce waiting times and errors in delivery, leading to increased customer satisfaction. Research by McKinsey & Company shows that digitalization can increase MSME productivity by up to 30% (McKinsey, 2019).

In addition, Go-Jek provides access to various promotions and marketing programs that can attract more customers. Discount programs and rating features help MSMEs to increase their visibility among consumers. A study by the Demographic Institute, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, found that internet penetration supports business actors to integrate with various e-commerce and social-commerce platforms and has opened up new opportunities for business actors to reach wider markets, directly or indirectly increasing their income. This study found that the average business sales through e-commerce and social-commerce reached 36.1% and 44.7% of their total sales (mediacenter.feb, 2024).

Thus, utilizing Go-Jek not only helps MSMEs overcome operational challenges, but also gives them the opportunity to develop in the digital era. This shows that technology support can be the key to the sustainability and growth of MSMEs in Indonesia.

These findings confirm that digital platforms have an important role in expanding market access for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), not only providing opportunities to reach more customers, but these platforms also offer various tools that support efficient and strategic business management more targeted marketing. This research shows that the use of appropriate digital platforms can be a key factor in achieving success for MSMEs, as proven by the case studies mentioned above (Chong, A. Y. L., Chan, F. T. S., & Ooi, 2020).

The digital platform provides integrated solutions, enabling MSMEs to manage various operational aspects from inventory management to customer service in one easy-to-access system. This helps MSMEs adapt quickly to market

changes and increases their responsiveness to consumer needs. Leveraging technological innovation and analytical data, MSMEs can make more informed decisions. Data obtained from customer interactions can be used to formulate more effective marketing strategies, as well as identify relevant market trends and preferences. This research shows that the correct use of digital platforms can be a key factor in achieving success for MSMEs, as proven by the various case studies mentioned previously.

Thus, for MSMEs investing in digital technology is not just an adaptation step, but is also a long-term strategy that can encourage growth, competitiveness and sustainability in an increasingly competitive business ecosystem.

### **3.2 Halal Competition Strategy**

MSMEs are business groups managed by individuals or business entities with a focus on productive economic activities, in accordance with the criteria set out in law. Based on this definition, MSMEs are divided into micro, small and medium categories. The government really hopes that the growth and development of MSMEs based on regional potential and market orientation can contribute to the country's economic development. In addition, MSMEs often originate from community businesses that can create jobs and produce goods or services that meet community needs. MSMEs have the ability to equalize income distribution, improve community welfare, as well as promote economic growth and support national stability (Djuniardi et al., 2022).

To build and increase the competitiveness of SMEs, uniqueness is needed that comes from different geographical locations and business sectors. The main challenges in increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs include maintaining quality standards, skills, access to funding and market penetration. Factors that support the competitiveness of MSMEs include innovation, entrepreneurship, capital, human resources, access to funds, market potential, business strategy, as well as government support in expanding marketing networks and facilitating access to financial institutions (Suharyati, 2021).

In implementing halal competition strategies, MSMEs have demonstrated various innovative approaches to adapt to market demands that increasingly demand compliance with halal standards. One strategy that has been successfully implemented is halal certification, which not only ensures compliance with sharia principles but also increases consumer confidence. Halal certification allows MSMEs to enter a wider market, including international markets, with the confidence that their products meet globally accepted standards (Al-Mutairi, A., & Kadhim, 2019).

Apart from that, halal certification is a strategic step to retain consumers for the company, increase competitiveness and provide added value to a product (Akmad Salindal et al., 2018). The halal label or halal certification has a positive impact on increasing profits (Perdana, Firdaus Fanny, P. and Kartika, 2018). And can expand the global market and open export doors for business actors, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Ridhiyah, 2019).

The implementation of halal certification for business actors who obtain certification for the products they sell turns out to have a positive impact on economic development in Indonesia. From a macro perspective, halal products remain a global trend. With 87% of Indonesia's population being Muslim, the potential for the halal market in this country is very large. It is important to have mutual awareness regarding the need to utilize the available captive market, so that it is not exploited by outside parties. Halal products must be encouraged to optimize this opportunity.

Indonesian halal products have a big opportunity to be able to compete with other countries. Business actors, both Indonesian producers and exporters, who

have obtained halal certificates will find their products more easily accepted by consumers of halal products in other countries just by looking at the halal label listed on their products. For example, if a consumer of halal products in another country wants to buy canned food and there are two choices of canned food of the same type, then the consumer will tend to choose a product that has a halal label because they feel they have a guarantee that the product they are going to consume is truly halal and good. For animal meat, for example, slaughter is done by cutting the animal's neck with the aim of taking the meat. Islamic slaughter is defined as slaughter in accordance with Islamic law. Meat produced from Islamic slaughter produces meat that is rich in taste, soft, safe and hygienic. This is what makes other than Muslim consumers interested in products with guarantees (Ekspor, 2015).

In reality, in the realm of implementation, many polemics have arisen in circles. Business Actors, especially Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), due to the low level of awareness of regulations regarding digitalization of halal certification procedures, requirements for completeness of documents, especially regarding the processing of business permits, are still an obstacle in processing halal certification for good Business Actors in urban areas, especially for business actors in rural areas with low levels of internet accessibility. In fact, one of the keys to maintaining the current momentum of economic recovery and achieving better economic growth is through strengthening MSMEs. MSME players are critical engines for the economy, considering that their contribution to GDP reaches 61% by absorbing 97% of the national workforce (Airlangga Hartarto, 2022).

The government requires business actors to obtain halal certification for the products they produce and sell to the public. Apart from maintaining consumer confidence, especially the Muslim community, in guaranteeing halal products, halal certification also aims to prepare business actors to be able to compete in an ever-changing market. This is because the market has various demands that develop over time.

Overall, the halal competition strategy implemented by MSMEs shows its effectiveness in expanding market share and increasing consumer confidence. Despite challenges such as certification costs and supply chain adjustments, the solutions implemented by MSMEs show that with the right approach, these challenges can be overcome to achieve compliance with halal standards and capitalize on existing market opportunities.

### **3.3 Innovation and its Impact**

Digital innovation implemented by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has shown a significant impact on competitiveness and business success. This type of innovation includes the adoption of e-commerce, digital marketing, and cloud-based management systems. E-commerce, as one of the most significant forms of innovation. With an e-commerce platform, MSMEs can offer their products online and reach customers from various areas that were previously difficult to reach (Keller, 2021). This innovation not only expands market reach but also allows MSMEs to operate more efficiently and reduce dependence on physical locations.

Many MSMEs have utilized e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak to expand their market reach. This innovation allows MSMEs to sell their products online, reach a wider range of customers, and reduce dependence on physical locations (Lutfi, M. F., & Harun, 2020). E-commerce platforms provide the infrastructure necessary to process transactions, manage inventory, and conduct marketing digitally. The emergence of e-commerce models such as Online physical stores, online transaction groups,

and e-commerce platforms proves that people today want easy access to what they want (Siska Meilya P.M, Silviana, Fiqia, 2022).

For example, MSMEs in Indonesia such as Kopi Kenangan have successfully utilized digital technology to optimize their operations and expand their markets. Kopi Kenangan, a local coffee shop, uses an e-commerce platform and mobile application to simplify the ordering and payment process, and increase customer loyalty through a digital rewards program (Hadi, I., & Sari, 2023). With this strategy, Kopi Kenangan not only expanded its market reach but also increased operational efficiency, allowing them to compete with larger international coffee brands.

Furthermore, digital marketing has become an important tool for MSMEs to increase their brand visibility and appeal. Through the use of social media, digital advertising and data-driven marketing campaigns, MSMEs can reach a larger and more relevant audience. Research shows that effective digital marketing strategies can increase customer engagement and sales conversions (Smith, J., & Chang, 2022). MSMEs are better able to make the most of their marketing spending when they use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Google Ads, which offer channels that can be customized to particular target markets. As a result, digital marketing not only raises brand awareness but also makes it easier to communicate directly with customers, which is crucial for establishing lasting bonds.

The use of a cloud-based management system to assist MSMEs in more effectively managing their operations is another innovation. This system offers a mobile-friendly, integrated solution for financial, inventory, and customer relationship management. (Johnson, 2023). Cloud technology reduces the need for expensive IT infrastructure and allows MSMEs to focus on business development without worrying about hardware maintenance. Implementing cloud-based systems also supports better collaboration among teams and business partners, which contributes to operational efficiency and cost savings

For example, MSMEs can improve customer relationship management by implementing cloud-based customer management (CRM) solutions. Utilization of digital payment technology can also increase consumer satisfaction and speed up transaction processes. CRM innovation optimizes customer interactions and management of MSME business relationships, thereby bringing great benefits. Implementing CRM (client relationship management) can be an important tactic for MSMEs and startup companies looking to improve overall business performance and foster strong client relationships (Wahyudi et al., 2024).

CRM is used, among other things, to notify customers and get their input in the form of suggestions, grievances, and responses to the services rendered (Oltra-Badenes, R., Oltra-Badenes, R., Gil-Gómez, J. A., Gil-Gomez & Badenes, R. F. O., Soto-Acosta, P., & Soto-Acosta, 2022). Customer relationship management (CRM) has proven to be a highly influential business strategy and powerful business management technology solution, while CRM has helped drive growth and future expectations and delivered excellent management results in terms of return on investment wherever it is implemented.

The impact of this digital innovation on the competitiveness of MSMEs is very significant. By utilizing digital technology, MSMEs can speed up the innovation process, increase responsiveness to market changes, and reduce operational costs (Harrison, 2022). MSMEs' ability to compete in the market is frequently based on how well they are able to adjust to changes in technology. Because digital innovation can optimize processes and improve corporate performance without requiring huge investments, MSMEs can compete with larger organizations that have greater resources.

MSMEs' long-term success is positively impacted by digital innovation as well. MSMEs that use technology into their operations not only become more efficient but also solidify their place in the market (Brown, 2023). MSMEs are better equipped to make strategic decisions and customize their offerings to the tastes of their customers thanks to the customer data gathered through digital platforms. In addition to raising customer happiness, this also raises MSMEs' chances of long-term growth and success.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Digital platforms have a key role in encouraging the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by providing access to global markets and simplifying business processes. Platforms such as e-commerce, Go-Jek, and cloud-based management solutions have opened wider market access, increased operational efficiency, and enabled MSMEs to compete with large retailers. Halal certification is also an important strategy that expands market share and builds consumer trust. Digital innovation, including marketing and management systems, provides significant competitive advantages, encouraging MSMEs to adapt to market changes and optimize inclusive economic growth. Thus, the use of digital technology is a crucial step for the desires and competitiveness of MSMEs.

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