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Information technology innovation in improving the strategy of local MSME market reach

Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in local economic growth and maintaining cultural preservation, MSMEs that promote local culture still face limited market and information coverage constraints due to conventional marketing systems and digital technology that continue to increase. The research was taken on local MSMEs that raise Lampung batik in Beringin Raya Village, Bandar Lampung City, which has problems in the form of low digital literacy, lack of use of social media and marketplaces, and not optimal product branding strategies. This research aims to increase the market reach of Local MSMEs through optimizing information technology innovations with training, mentoring and application of appropriate technology methods. Qualitative analysis with the appropriate technology training survey approach method and the results were analyzed with SWOT, based on the results of the analysis, the main strength lies in the quality and uniqueness of local batik motifs, while the weakness of MSMEs lies in the limitations of digital literacy. Opportunities for MSMEs are wide open through the growth of the digital market, despite the threat of competition from similar products. The recommended strategies are SO and WO strategies through strengthening digital branding and increasing the capacity of human resources. The conclusion of the study states that information technology optimization has proven to be effective in applying it for local MSMEs in increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of culture-based MSMEs in the digital era.

Keywords: MSMEs, Information Technology Innovation, Digital Marketing, Competitiveness.

Abstrak

Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) memiliki peran penting dalam pertumbuhan ekonomi lokal serta pelestarian budaya. Namun, UMKM yang mengangkat budaya lokal masih menghadapi kendala berupa keterbatasan jangkauan pasar dan akses informasi akibat masih diterapkannya sistem pemasaran konvensional, sementara perkembangan teknologi digital terus meningkat. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada UMKM lokal yang mengembangkan batik Lampung di Kelurahan Beringin Raya, Kota Bandar Lampung, yang menghadapi berbagai permasalahan, seperti rendahnya literasi digital, kurangnya pemanfaatan media sosial dan marketplace, serta belum optimalnya strategi branding produk. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan jangkauan pasar UMKM lokal melalui optimalisasi inovasi teknologi informasi dengan metode pelatihan, pendampingan, dan penerapan teknologi tepat guna. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan survei pelatihan teknologi tepat guna dengan analisis kualitatif, sedangkan hasil penelitian dianalisis menggunakan metode SWOT. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, kekuatan utama UMKM terletak pada kualitas dan keunikan motif batik lokal, sedangkan kelemahannya berada pada keterbatasan literasi digital. Peluang bagi UMKM terbuka lebar seiring dengan pertumbuhan pasar digital, meskipun terdapat ancaman berupa persaingan dengan produk sejenis. Strategi yang direkomendasikan adalah strategi SO (Strengths–Opportunities) dan WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities) melalui penguatan branding digital serta peningkatan kapasitas sumber daya manusia. Kesimpulan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa optimalisasi teknologi informasi terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan daya saing dan keberlanjutan UMKM berbasis budaya di era digital.

Kata Kunci: UMKM, Inovasi Teknologi Informasi, Pemasaran Digital, Daya Saing

Implementasi **IMKA**
Manajemen & Kewirausahaan

E-ISSN 2776 – 8554

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1. Introduction

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the competitive landscape of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) worldwide. The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has enabled MSMEs to expand market access, strengthen customer engagement, improve operational efficiency, and enhance business resilience in increasingly dynamic markets. Digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, and online marketplaces have become strategic tools that allow small businesses to overcome geographical barriers and compete more effectively in local, national, and international markets. However, the benefits of digital transformation are not equally experienced across all sectors. Culture-based MSMEs, whose competitive advantage is closely linked to preserving local identity, traditional knowledge, and cultural authenticity, often face greater challenges in adopting digital technologies.

Unlike conventional business sectors, these enterprises must balance the commercialization of their products with the preservation of cultural values, making the process of digital transformation considerably more complex. According to the World Bank (2024), SMEs represent around 90% of businesses worldwide and account for more than 50% of global employment, underscoring their crucial role in economic growth and job creation. Furthermore, the OECD (2024) emphasizes that digital transformation has become a key determinant of MSME competitiveness by expanding market access, improving productivity, strengthening resilience, and supporting sustainable business growth in an increasingly interconnected global economy (World Bank, 2024; OECD, 2024).

The development of the digital era has significantly changed consumer behavior patterns and trading systems. Digital transformation encourages business actors to adapt to the use of information technology, especially in marketing strategies. Digital marketing, social media, marketplaces, and online catalogs are important instruments in expanding market access without geographical boundaries. MSMEs that are able to integrate information technology innovations in their marketing systems are proven to have higher competitiveness compared to businesses that still rely on traditional methods. Recent studies demonstrate that digital capabilities significantly improve SME performance by strengthening opportunity capability and entrepreneurial performance (Kim & Jin, 2024). Nevertheless, other studies report that many MSMEs fail to obtain these benefits because digital adoption is constrained by limited technological capability, inadequate human resources, and organizational readiness (Iqbal et al., 2026; Adiatma & Harinda, 2025; Pingali et al., 2023).

However, previous studies have mainly focused on manufacturing, food, and urban MSMEs, while limited attention has been given to culture-based MSMEs whose competitive advantage depends on preserving local identity. Although many studies conclude that digital technologies improve business performance, little empirical evidence explains how digital capability functions as a strategic organizational resource that simultaneously strengthens market competitiveness and cultural preservation. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on digital marketing adoption, this study examines digital capability as a strategic organizational resource that simultaneously supports market competitiveness and cultural preservation in culture-based MSMEs.

Lampung Batik represents an important case because its competitive advantage is derived not only from product quality but also from its distinctive cultural identity, making digital transformation more complex than in conventional MSMEs.

Consequently, this case provides an opportunity to examine how digital capability interacts with cultural preservation in generating sustainable competitiveness. Batik is one of Indonesia's most important cultural heritages that has high artistic value as well as great economic potential. MSMEs located in Beringin Raya Village, engaged in Lampung batik handicrafts, have an important role in preserving culture while improving the local economy. However, the development of the digital era requires MSME actors to be able to adapt to advances in information technology in order to survive and compete in an increasingly competitive market (Lutfi Auliarahman, 2024).

Field observations conducted in Beringin Raya Village revealed that Lampung Batik MSMEs continue to face several challenges, including limited digital literacy, minimal utilization of business-oriented social media, the absence of standardized digital catalogs, insufficient knowledge of digital branding strategies, and a heavy reliance on conventional marketing channels. These conditions have limited market expansion and reduced business competitiveness (Sitepu Bahari Fund, 2025).

Therefore, examining how information technology innovation can strengthen digital capability and improve the competitiveness of culture-based MSMEs becomes an important research agenda. The main problem faced by Batik MSMEs is the low digital marketing ability which has an impact on limited market share and low sales volume. In addition, there are still challenges in the form of limited access to technology training, lack of digital-based promotion, and lack of understanding of effective product branding. This condition has the potential to hinder business sustainability and reduce the competitiveness of MSMEs in the midst of increasingly fierce market competition (Masrukhan and Riska Khajiyah Isn, 2025).

Resource-Based View explains how valuable organizational resources create sustainable competitive advantage, whereas Innovation Diffusion Theory explains the adoption process of new technologies among organizations. Combining these perspectives provides a more comprehensive explanation of how digital capability contributes to MSME competitiveness. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how information technology innovation enhances digital capability and expands the market reach of Lampung Batik MSMEs through the perspectives of Resource-Based View and Innovation Diffusion Theory. This study contributes theoretically by extending the Resource-Based View through the integration of digital capability and innovation diffusion in explaining the competitiveness of culture-based MSMEs. Practically, the findings provide strategic recommendations for policymakers and MSME managers in designing sustainable digital transformation initiatives while preserving local cultural identity.

2. Literature review

2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV), introduced by (Barney, 1991), explains that sustainable competitive advantage is achieved when organizations possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and well-organized (VRIO) resources that cannot be easily replicated by competitors. According to RBV, internal organizational resources are more important than external market conditions in determining long-term competitiveness. In the context of culture-based MSMEs, strategic resources include not only tangible assets but also

intangible resources such as local cultural identity, traditional knowledge, product uniqueness, and digital capabilities.

Digital capability has increasingly been recognized as a strategic organizational resource because it enables MSMEs to integrate digital technologies into business operations, marketing, and customer relationship management. For culture-based MSMEs, the combination of cultural uniqueness and digital capability creates a distinctive competitive advantage that is difficult for competitors to imitate. Therefore, this study employs RBV to explain how information technology innovation strengthens the competitiveness of Lampung Batik MSMEs through the effective utilization of internal strategic resources.

2.2 Innovation diffusion theory

Innovation Diffusion Theory, proposed by (Everett M. Rogers, 1962), explains how new technologies and innovations are adopted by individuals and organizations through the stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The theory emphasizes that successful innovation adoption depends on organizational readiness, perceived usefulness, compatibility with existing practices, and effective communication.

Within the context of MSMEs, digital transformation represents an innovation adoption process rather than merely the introduction of new technologies. The implementation of digital marketing platforms, social media, online marketplaces, and digital catalogs requires entrepreneurs to develop new capabilities and adapt their business processes. Consequently, Innovation Diffusion Theory provides an appropriate framework for explaining how information technology innovation enhances digital capability and supports sustainable competitiveness among culture-based MSMEs.

2.3 Digital capability and MSME competitiveness

Digital capability refers to an organization's ability to utilize digital technologies effectively in creating value, improving operational performance, and responding to market changes. Recent studies indicate that digital capabilities contribute significantly to entrepreneurial performance by strengthening opportunity capability and supporting business growth in SMEs (Kim & Jin, 2024). Similarly, digital readiness has been identified as a critical determinant of successful digital transformation because technological capability, implementation capacity, and organizational preparedness influence the effectiveness of technology adoption (Pingali *et al.*, 2023).

Despite these findings, previous studies have primarily focused on manufacturing firms, food industries, or urban MSMEs. Limited attention has been devoted to culture-based MSMEs, where business competitiveness depends not only on digital capability but also on preserving cultural identity and traditional values. Consequently, little empirical evidence explains how digital capability functions as a strategic organizational resource while simultaneously maintaining cultural authenticity. This study addresses this gap by integrating Resource-Based View and Innovation Diffusion Theory to explain how information technology innovation enhances the competitiveness of Lampung Batik MSMEs.

3. Method

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to examine how information technology innovation enhances the digital capability and market reach of Lampung Batik MSMEs in Beringin Raya Village, Bandar Lampung. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). Beringin Raya Village was purposively selected as the research site because it is one of the centers of Lampung batik production whose MSMEs continue to experience challenges in adopting digital technologies and expanding market access.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) actively managing a Lampung Batik MSME, (2) participating in information technology innovation and digital marketing activities, and (3) possessing direct experience in implementing digital business strategies (Palinkas *et al*, 2015). A total of 15 MSME owners participated in this study because they represented the active batik entrepreneurs involved in the digital transformation initiatives implemented in Beringin Raya Village.

Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Field observations were conducted to examine the implementation of digital marketing activities and the utilization of information technology in daily business operations. Semi-structured interviews were carried out using interview guidelines focusing on digital literacy, technology adoption, branding strategies, marketplace utilization, digital capability, and perceived changes in business competitiveness. Documentary evidence included photographs, training materials, digital catalogs, promotional content on social media, and other supporting documents related to the implementation of digital transformation activities.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the procedures of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme refinement, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After the themes were identified, SWOT analysis was employed as a strategic analytical tool to evaluate the internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats influencing the competitiveness of Lampung Batik MSMEs. The SWOT matrix was developed based on findings obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence to formulate appropriate strategic recommendations for strengthening digital capability and expanding market reach.

The research was conducted over a 30-day period, during which intensive field observations, interviews, and continuous monitoring of digital marketing implementation were undertaken. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. In addition, member checking was conducted by returning interview summaries to several participants for confirmation, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings.

Ethical principles were maintained throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, all participants received information regarding the objectives of the study and voluntarily agreed to participate. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and all personal information was treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

4. Results

4.1 Initial Conditions of Lampung Batik MSMEs

Field observations and semi-structured interviews revealed that Lampung Batik MSMEs in Beringin Raya Village possess strong competitive potential due to their distinctive cultural motifs, high product quality, and local cultural identity. These characteristics represent valuable organizational resources that differentiate Lampung Batik products from mass-produced batik available in the market. However, the findings also indicate that these competitive advantages have not been fully optimized because business operations continue to rely on conventional marketing practices.

Most participating MSMEs depended primarily on direct selling and word-of-mouth promotion, while the utilization of digital platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and digital catalogs remained limited. As a result, market reach was largely confined to local consumers, reducing opportunities to expand into regional and national markets. Interviews further revealed that limited digital literacy, inadequate branding knowledge, and insufficient experience in utilizing digital marketing technologies constituted the major barriers to business development.

These findings indicate that although Lampung Batik MSMEs possess valuable cultural resources, their limited digital capability constrains the development of sustainable competitive advantage. Consequently, information technology innovation was identified as an essential strategy for strengthening digital capability and improving business competitiveness.

4.2 Implementation of information technology innovation

Based on the identified challenges, information technology innovation was implemented through the introduction of digital marketing tools, including business-oriented social media, digital product catalogs, online marketplace utilization, and digital branding strategies. These innovations were designed to improve the participants' capability to promote products, communicate with customers, and expand market access beyond conventional distribution channels.

During the implementation process, MSME owners gradually adopted digital platforms to display product information, strengthen brand identity, and interact directly with potential consumers. Digital catalogs enabled products to be presented more professionally, while marketplace platforms facilitated broader product accessibility. Participants also demonstrated increasing confidence in utilizing digital technologies for business promotion and customer communication.

4.3 Changes in digital capability and competitiveness

The implementation of information technology innovation resulted in several observable improvements. Field observations showed greater utilization of social media for business promotion, increased consistency in digital content creation, and broader dissemination of product information through digital platforms. Interview findings further indicated that participants experienced improved digital capability, enhanced confidence in managing

online promotion, and wider market exposure compared with their previous conventional marketing practices.

Participants also reported increased customer interaction through digital communication channels and greater opportunities to receive inquiries from consumers outside the local area. Although quantitative sales measurement was beyond the scope of this study, participants consistently perceived that digital technologies had improved business visibility, strengthened customer engagement, and expanded marketing opportunities.

5 Discussion

5.1 Digital capability as a strategic resource for competitive advantage

The findings demonstrate that information technology innovation has strengthened the digital capability of Lampung Batik MSMEs by improving their ability to utilize social media, digital catalogs, and online marketplaces as marketing channels. Prior to digital transformation, most MSMEs relied on conventional marketing practices, limiting their market reach to local consumers. Following the adoption of digital technologies, participants demonstrated greater confidence in managing online promotion and communicating with customers through digital platforms.

From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), digital capability represents a strategic organizational resource that complements the existing cultural resources possessed by Lampung Batik MSMEs. Barney (1991) argues that sustainable competitive advantage is achieved when organizations effectively utilize valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized (VRIO) resources. In this study, the uniqueness of Lampung Batik motifs constitutes a valuable and difficult-to-imitate cultural resource, while digital capability enhances the commercialization of these cultural assets by expanding market visibility and customer engagement.

These findings are consistent with Kim and Jin (2024), who found that digital capabilities significantly improve entrepreneurial performance by strengthening opportunity capability and organizational competitiveness. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that digital capability is equally important for culture-based MSMEs, where technological innovation must be integrated with cultural preservation to generate sustainable competitive advantage.

5.2 Innovation diffusion in the digital transformation of culture-based MSMEs

The process of digital technology adoption observed in this study reflects the stages proposed in Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 2003). Initially, MSME owners became aware of the potential benefits of digital marketing technologies, followed by gradual adoption of social media, online marketplaces, and digital catalogs as integral components of their business operations.

The findings indicate that technology adoption was influenced not only by the availability of digital platforms but also by the willingness of MSME owners to develop

digital literacy and incorporate technological innovation into their daily business activities. These results support Pingali et al. (2023), who argue that organizational readiness, technological capability, and human resource competence remain major determinants of successful digital transformation among SMEs.

Unlike previous studies that mainly focus on technology adoption in manufacturing or urban SMEs, this study demonstrates that the diffusion of innovation within culture-based MSMEs involves balancing technological modernization with the preservation of local cultural identity. Consequently, successful digital transformation requires both technological capability and sensitivity toward cultural values.

5.3 The contribution of information technology innovation to MSME competitiveness

The implementation of information technology innovation contributed to improvements in business competitiveness through broader market exposure, stronger customer interaction, and improved branding capability. Field observations revealed increased utilization of social media for product promotion, more consistent digital content creation, and greater interaction with consumers beyond the local market.

Although this study did not quantitatively measure sales performance, interview findings consistently indicated improvements in business visibility, customer engagement, and market expansion. These findings suggest that digital capability functions as an enabling resource that strengthens the competitiveness of culture-based MSMEs by improving communication efficiency and facilitating wider market access.

These results reinforce previous research indicating that digital transformation contributes to SME competitiveness through improved organizational capability and market responsiveness (Kim & Jin, 2024). However, the present study also highlights that competitiveness among culture-based MSMEs depends not only on technological adoption but also on maintaining the authenticity and uniqueness of local cultural products.

5.4 SWOT analysis and strategic implications

The SWOT analysis further supports the findings by identifying both internal and external factors influencing the competitiveness of Lampung Batik MSMEs. The principal strengths include the uniqueness of Lampung batik motifs, high product quality, and strong cultural identity, all of which provide important differentiation in the marketplace. However, several internal weaknesses remain, including limited digital literacy, insufficient branding capability, dependence on conventional marketing channels, and limited utilization of digital technologies.

From the external environment, growing consumer interest in local cultural products, government support for MSMEs, and the expansion of digital commerce create significant opportunities for business development. Nevertheless, increasing competition from mass-produced batik, design imitation, and rapidly changing digital market trends constitute major threats that require strategic responses.

From the perspective of the Resource-Based View, strengthening digital capability through continuous utilization of information technology enables MSMEs to maximize their valuable cultural resources while responding to changing market conditions.

Therefore, integrating digital innovation with cultural preservation represents an effective strategy for achieving sustainable competitiveness among culture-based MSMEs.

6 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that information technology innovation plays an important role in strengthening the digital capability and competitiveness of Lampung Batik MSMEs in Beringin Raya Village. The findings indicate that the adoption of digital marketing technologies, including social media, digital catalogs, and online marketplaces, has improved product visibility, expanded market reach, strengthened customer engagement, and enhanced the ability of MSME owners to manage digital promotion more independently. These findings suggest that digital capability has become an essential factor in supporting the sustainable competitiveness of culture-based MSMEs.

From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), the unique cultural identity of Lampung Batik represents a valuable strategic resource that can generate sustainable competitive advantage when supported by effective digital capability. Furthermore, the findings support Innovation Diffusion Theory, demonstrating that the gradual adoption of digital technologies enables MSMEs to improve organizational capability and adapt to changing market environments while preserving local cultural identity.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the application of the Resource-Based View through the integration of digital capability and Innovation Diffusion Theory in explaining the competitiveness of culture-based MSMEs. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for MSME managers and policymakers to strengthen digital capability, improve digital literacy, and design sustainable digital transformation strategies that simultaneously support business competitiveness and cultural preservation.

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