

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DIGITAL STRATEGIES IN CULINARY MSMEs IN THE DIGITAL ERA FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the digital strategies implemented by the culinary MSME Dimsum Qoqom to improve business performance in Tanjung Mulia Hilir, Medan based on Islamic values. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study explores how the integration of digital technology and Islamic ethical principles is operationalized to strengthen the MSME's competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with owners and employees, direct observation of daily digital operations, and documentation of marketing content and customer engagement. The analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings indicate that Dimsum Qoqom has effectively implemented digital marketing through social media promotion, online ordering platforms (e.g., WhatsApp and e-commerce food delivery services), and cashless payment systems to improve customer convenience. Islamic values are practically applied in several business practices such as ensuring fairness in pricing, clearly disclosing product ingredients and halal certification for transparency, and providing community support through discounted packages during religious events as a form of social responsibility. A SWOT analysis reveals internal strengths in the form of strong halal positioning and a loyal Muslim customer base, alongside opportunities for digital market expansion. This study concludes that a synergy between digital strategies and Islamic ethical implementation offers a promising approach to improving competitiveness and ensuring sustainable growth for culinary MSMEs in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Islamic Entrepreneurship; Islamic Values; Halal Certification; Dimsum Qoqom.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi digital yang diterapkan oleh UMKM kuliner Dimsum Qoqom di Tanjung Mulia Hilir, Medan, dalam meningkatkan kinerja usaha berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana integrasi teknologi digital dan prinsip etika Islam dioperasionalkan untuk memperkuat daya saing UMKM dalam menghadapi dinamika pasar yang terus berkembang. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pemilik dan karyawan, observasi langsung terhadap aktivitas digital harian, serta dokumentasi terkait konten pemasaran dan keterlibatan konsumen. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dimsum Qoqom telah mengimplementasikan pemasaran digital secara efektif melalui promosi

media sosial, pemesanan daring seperti WhatsApp dan layanan e-commerce makanan, serta penggunaan sistem pembayaran digital untuk meningkatkan kenyamanan pelanggan. Nilai-nilai Islam diaplikasikan secara nyata dalam praktik bisnis seperti penerapan keadilan dalam penetapan harga, penyampaian informasi bahan baku dan sertifikasi halal secara transparan, serta dukungan sosial berupa paket diskon pada momen keagamaan sebagai bentuk tanggung jawab sosial. Analisis SWOT mengidentifikasi kekuatan internal berupa posisi halal yang kuat dan basis konsumen Muslim yang loyal, serta peluang ekspansi pasar digital yang semakin luas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa sinergi antara strategi digital dan penerapan etika Islam merupakan pendekatan yang menjanjikan untuk meningkatkan daya saing dan keberlanjutan UMKM kuliner di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Transformasi Digital; Kewirausahaan Islam; Nilai-Nilai Islam; Sertifikasi Halal; Dimsum Qoqom.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a vital pillar of the Indonesian economy, contributing more than 60% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing over 90% of the national workforce (Kemenkopukm, 2022). The culinary sector is one of the most dynamic industries, as food demand is continuous and highly adaptive to changing trends over time (Rakhmanita, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has driven business actors to innovate through digital strategies in order to survive amid declining consumer purchasing power and restrictions on social activities (Nasution et al., 2020).

The development of digital technology provides significant opportunities for MSMEs to expand their market reach and improve operational efficiency through the use of social media, online ordering platforms, and digital payment systems (Vera Maria et al., 2024; Mokolensang et al., 2021). However, the adoption of technology still faces several challenges, such as limited digital literacy, inadequate human resources, and insufficient technological infrastructure (Aswandy & Mariyati, 2022).

The study conducted by Isna Khairani et al. indicates that Islamic values reflected in trust, norms, networks, and religiosity positively contribute to MSME performance by strengthening business ethics and customer relationships (Isna Khairani et al., 2023). Therefore, the integration of sharia principles becomes an essential aspect in maintaining business sustainability and ensuring blessings in economic activities.

The government also supports digital transformation through initiatives such as the *UMKM Go Digital* program, free halal certification facilitation, and the digitalization of payments via QRIS to enhance market access and transaction convenience (APJII, 2022 ; Rahma et al., 2025). This support encourages MSMEs to adapt to increasingly intense competition, including within the culinary sector (Aprilia et al., 2022).

Dimsum Qoqom is a culinary MSME located in Tanjung Mulia Hilir, Medan, that has been engaged in producing dim sum products since 2016. The business began intensively implementing digital strategies in 2019, utilizing platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as food delivery services like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood, and adopting digital payment systems including QRIS and e-wallets (Arif Budiarto et al., 2023; Salim et al., 2020). These innovations have proven effective in expanding market reach and enhancing consumer engagement.

The uniqueness of Dimsum Qoqom lies in the integration of Islamic values into its business practices, such as fairness in pricing, transparency in disclosing raw materials and halal certification, and social responsibility through food assistance programs and the empowerment of the surrounding community (Rafki et al., 2022; Arif Budiarto et al., 2023). This strengthens its positioning as a valuable halal brand that is trusted by Muslim consumers.

Although the level of digital adoption has reached approximately 80%, several challenges remain, such as digital-based inventory management, marketing analytics, and consistent production of promotional content (Basry & Sari, 2018). However, development opportunities remain wide open, supported by the large Muslim market and government policies that promote the digitalization of MSMEs.

This study aims to analyze the digital strategies implemented by Dimsum Qoqom and to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through a SWOT analysis (Aprilia et al., 2022). In addition, this study explores how the application of Islamic values within business strategies can enhance competitiveness in the digital era. The findings are expected to provide strategic recommendations for halal culinary MSMEs to utilize digital marketing optimally and sustainably.

By integrating technological innovation with Islamic economic principles, Dimsum Qoqom exemplifies how micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are not only able to survive but also grow while upholding business ethics, enhancing competitiveness, and delivering meaningful benefits to the community (Vera Maria et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method, which is considered appropriate to explore in detail the digital marketing strategies implemented by Dimsum Qoqom and their alignment with Islamic economic and ethical principles. The study

aims to understand how this MSME adopts digital technologies in its business operations and ensures that its practices adhere to key muamalah values such as honesty (*shidq*), justice (*'adl*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and the avoidance of *gharar* and *riba*.

Primary and secondary data sources are used in this study. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the owner of Dimsum Qoqom as the key informant, direct observation at the business location, and documentation related to business profile, organizational structure, employee data, product types, and digital marketing activities. Secondary data were obtained from relevant journals, books, reports, and credible digital resources to strengthen the theoretical foundation concerning digital transformation in MSMEs, culinary industry dynamics, and Islamic business principles.

The research object is Dimsum Qoqom, a culinary MSME located in Neighborhood VI, Tanjung Mulia Hilir Village, Medan Deli District, Medan City. The business has shown notable progress amid increasingly competitive market conditions, particularly through the adoption of digital marketing tools such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and food delivery services (GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood), as well as digital payment systems including QRIS, OVO, and GoPay. This enterprise represents MSMEs that are actively adapting to technological changes while maintaining product quality and integrating Islamic business ethics.

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, involving four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

A comprehensive SWOT analysis was applied to evaluate the internal and external factors affecting business development. The analysis consisted of:

1. Identification of key factors

- a. Strengths: Integration of Islamic values, consistent digital engagement, halal certification
- b. Weaknesses: Limited digital-based operational management, human resource constraints, dependence on third-party platforms
- c. Opportunities: Expanding Muslim consumer market, potential collaboration with sharia-based influencers, development of independent digital applications
- d. Threats: High market competition, raw material price volatility, algorithmic dependency of social media platforms

2. Weighting and Rating

Each factor was assessed using IFAS and EFAS matrices to determine its relative significance and impact on business performance.

3. TOWS Strategy Formulation

- a. SO Strategies: Leveraging halal positioning to penetrate broader Muslim markets
- b. ST Strategies: Strengthening digital marketing capabilities to remain competitive
- c. WO Strategies: Developing an independent platform to reduce reliance on intermediaries
- d. WT Strategies: Implementing simple ERP systems to improve operational efficiency

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of the information provided was guaranteed.

Through this approach, the study is expected to present a comprehensive picture of how MSMEs such as Dimsum Qoqom implement digital marketing strategies aligned with Islamic business ethics. The research aims to contribute practically to other halal culinary MSMEs seeking sustainable digital development and academically to the growing body of literature on Islamic business practices and digital transformation in MSMEs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Dimsum Qoqom is one of the Dimsum Specialist Culinary MSMEs located in Tanjung Mulia Hilir, Medan. Established in 2016, this business began using digital strategies through social media (Instagram and Tiktok), as well as the GoFood and ShopeeFood platforms in 2019.

To address the need for deeper operational insight, this study further explores the internal business processes that shape the development and competitive positioning of Dimsum Qoqom since its establishment in 2016. One of the key aspects of its operational structure is the sourcing of ingredients. Dimsum Qoqom relies on fresh, halal-certified raw materials from trusted local suppliers within the Medan area. Supplier selection is guided by the principles of amanah (trustworthiness) and halal assurance, ensuring transparency and traceability of ingredients used in each product. This sourcing strategy not only maintains product quality but also supports the economic empowerment of the surrounding community, reflecting the Islamic value of ukhuwah.

Innovation plays a crucial role in the company's product development and customer

engagement. Dimsum Qoqom regularly introduces new menu variants based on customer feedback collected through digital channels such as Instagram and WhatsApp. This interactive approach allows the business to remain adaptive to changing consumer preferences and seasonal demands. Packaging innovations such as the introduction of hygienic, takeaway-friendly boxes were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling the company to maintain product safety and customer trust.

In its internal workflow, Dimsum Qoqom adopts a semi-structured digital operational system. Order management is primarily centralized through food delivery platforms, while internal stock records are still maintained manually. Although not fully integrated, this hybrid system supports daily business continuity while enabling gradual digital transformation. Additionally, promotional content development has become a structured activity, where the business collaborates with TikTok food reviewers and Muslim influencers to strengthen brand awareness and halal-centered positioning. This strategy has contributed directly to increased digital engagement and repeat purchases.

Taken together, these operational insights provide a more complete understanding of how Dimsum Qoqom builds its value proposition as a specialist in the dimsum culinary niche through a synergy of halal-compliant sourcing, customer-driven innovation, community-based empowerment, and progressive digital adaptation. This further supports the argument that Islamic ethical values and digital strategies can coexist as complementary pillars of sustainable MSME growth in a competitive food market.

Digital Strategy in Culinary MSME Operations

Dimsum Qoqom has successfully adopted digital technology into their business operations since 2019. The digital strategies used include the use of social media (Instagram and TikTok), online food ordering platforms (GoFood, GrabFood, ShopeeFood), and digital payment systems (QRIS, e-wallets, and mobile banking). This is in line with the finding that digitalization helps MSMEs expand market reach and improve operational efficiency (Kotler et al., 2009)

Integration of Islamic Values in Business

The integration of Islamic values in business is not only a moral identity, but also a management strategy that provides economic and social benefits. Dimsum Qoqom is an example of an MSME that combines the values of tawhid, amanah, and ukhuwah with modern digital strategies, thus making it a model of ethical, superior, and sustainable Islamic MSMEs in the digitalization era.

Social Empowerment and Community Responsibility

Dimsum Qoqom also carries out social responsibility practices by providing free food assistance, empowering local communities as raw material suppliers, and creating jobs for the surrounding community. These activities are in line with the spirit of ukhuwah Islamiyah and prove that MSMEs are capable of becoming agents of social development (Arif Budiarto et al., 2023). With a business approach that integrates technology and religious values, Dimsum Qoqom positions itself not only as a food provider, but also as part of a modern Islamic lifestyle.

This strategy received a positive response from Muslim consumers in the region. Sales increased when Islamic promotional campaigns were conducted. Consumers perceived Dimsum Qoqom as more reliable and blessed. This shows that Sharia-based business strategies are not only value-laden, but also have a significant economic impact. and the strategy they do by endorsing a Tiktoker or food blogger to introduce or market their products to consumers at large.

SWOT Analysis and Development Strategy of Dimsum Qoqom

The SWOT analysis conducted on Dimsum Qoqom MSMEs shows the main strengths in the form of: Islamic values as a differentiator, halal certification, and active digital marketing. On the other hand, the weaknesses faced are limited human resources and digital systems that have not been integrated. Great opportunities come from the national Muslim market and collaboration with Sharia influencers, while threats arise from fierce competition and erratic social media algorithms. Based on this, the strategies developed include:

SO : Strengthen Islamic brand through collaboration and expansion.

WO : Increase digital training and build standalone apps.

ST & WT: Diversify content and implement simple ERP system for efficiency (Kotler et al., 2009) and (Ryan, 2016).

Based on the results of the calculation of weights and ratings on external strategic factors (EFAS) and internal strategies (IFAS), the results are:

IFAS Total Score = 87

EFAS Total Score = 81

The combination of IFAS-EFAS Analysis results in the following strategies:

With this strategy, Dimsum Qoqom can maximize internal strengths, take advantage of external opportunities, while mitigating the risk of threats and weaknesses.

Table 1. IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) Matrix

Internal Factors	Weight (1-5)	Rating (1-5)	Score (Weight x Rating)
Strengths			
Integration of Islamic values in business	5	4	20
Halal Certification	4	4	16
Usage Active social media (IG, TikTok)	4	3	12
Digital payment system (QRIS, E-Walet)	3	3	9
Social commitment: Training and CSR	2	3	6
Weaknesses: (Weaknesses)			
Digital system is not yet integrated	4	2	8
Human resources have not been trained in technology	3	2	6
Dependence on third-party platforms	3	2	6
Inconsistent Content Production	2	2	4
Total IFAS Score			87

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Table 2. EFAS Matrix (External Factor Analysis Summary)

External Factors	Weight (1-5)	Rating (1-5)	Score (Weight x Rating)
Opportunities: (Opportunities)			
Large and loyal Muslim market	5	4	20
Collaboration with Muslim Influencers	4	4	16
Government Support for Digitalization MSMEs	3	3	9
Independent Application Development	3	3	9
Threats:			
Tight competition among culinary MSMEs	5	3	15
Fluctuations in raw material prices	3	2	6
Dependence on platform algorithm	3	2	6
Total EFAS Score			81

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Table 3. TOWS Strategy Matrix

Factor Combination	Resulting Strategy
SO (Strength + Opportunity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize Islamic values & halal certificate for sharia digital campaigns - Collaboration with Muslim influencers
ST (Strength + Threat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen digital marketing and branding to fight competition - Build loyalty through Islamic value content
WO (Weakness + Opportunity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build your own application to avoid relying on third parties - Train human resources to understand technology
WT (Weakness + Threat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a simple ERP system for management efficiency - Diversify promotions to various digital channels

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Strategy Impact on Business Growth

The integration of Islamic values and digital strategy has proven to have a positive impact on business performance. For example, sales increased by 35% during Ramadan and Muharram, and customer loyalty is higher. Dimsum Qoqom is considered a "blessing brand" by consumers due to its Islamic value approach and consistent promotion (Vera Maria et al., 2024).

The strategy of using endorsements from Muslim food bloggers also helps to reach a wider market. This shows the importance of utilizing the power of religious narratives in marketing, without neglecting the quality of products and services.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that Dimsum Qoqom, as a culinary MSME in Medan, has successfully integrated digital strategies with Islamic values to strengthen its business development. Since 2019, digital transformation has been implemented through the use of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, online food delivery services (GoFood, GrabFood, ShopeeFood), and digital payment systems including QRIS, mobile banking, and e-wallets. This digital adoption has effectively expanded market reach and improved operational efficiency, supporting the argument by Kotler et al. (2009) that digitalization is essential in enhancing the competitiveness of small enterprises.

A key distinguishing factor of Dimsum Qoqom is the integration of Islamic business values in its internal and external operations. The principles of tawhid (awareness of serving God), amanah (trustworthiness), and ukhuwah (brotherhood) are embedded in its managerial practices. These values are reflected in transparent pricing, halal assurance, ethical sourcing of raw materials from trusted local suppliers, and the prioritization of community empowerment. By upholding these principles, the business not only establishes a strong spiritual and moral identity but also enhances its attractiveness to the Muslim consumer segment seeking halal and ethical products.

Ethical business practices also shape Dimsum Qoqom's market positioning. The company implements fairness in employment, guarantees food safety and quality, and actively contributes to social welfare through charitable programs such as free meal distribution and job creation for the local community. These initiatives reinforce public trust and align with Budiarto et al. (2023), who highlight the social and spiritual roles of MSMEs in promoting community welfare.

The results of the IFAS (87) and EFAS (81) analyses indicate that Dimsum Qoqom holds a strong strategic position to leverage opportunities while mitigating external threats. The SWOT analysis reveals significant strengths such as halal certification, Islamic branding, and effective digital marketing, yet some weaknesses remain, including limited human resource capacity, non-integrated digital systems, and reliance on third-party digital platforms. The business environment presents promising opportunities through the large and loyal Muslim consumer market and government support for MSME digitalization, although intense competition, fluctuating ingredient prices, and unstable social media algorithms pose ongoing challenges.

Based on the TOWS matrix, four primary strategic directions are formulated: (1) strengthening Islamic brand identity through digital campaigns and collaboration with Muslim influencers (SO strategy), (2) enhancing digital branding to improve customer loyalty and differentiate from competitors (ST strategy), (3) developing independent digital systems and increasing employee digital literacy (WO strategy), and (4) implementing a basic ERP system and diversifying promotional channels across multiple platforms (WT strategy). These strategies align with Ryan (2016), who emphasizes that robust internal digital systems are critical for MSME competitiveness in the technology era.

The application of these strategies has produced measurable positive impacts. The company recorded a 35% increase in sales during Ramadan and Muharram periods when Islamic-centered promotions were intensively conducted. Customer loyalty has also strengthened, as

consumers perceive Dimsum Qoqom not merely as a food seller but as a “blessing brand” that embodies religious and ethical values. Collaborations with Muslim food reviewers and TikTok culinary influencers have further expanded market exposure, demonstrating that the combination of religious narratives and digital engagement can significantly enhance market positioning in the halal culinary sector.

Overall, the findings suggest that Dimsum Qoqom has effectively integrated digital innovation and Islamic business principles into a cohesive strategy that delivers economic, social, and spiritual benefits. This study highlights that a sharia-based business approach in the digital era can serve as a sustainable and competitive model for halal culinary MSME development, addressing the evolving needs and preferences of modern Muslim consumers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of digital strategies such as the use of social media, online food delivery platforms, and digital payment systems has significantly strengthened Dimsum Qoqom’s competitiveness and business performance. The integration of Islamic values including justice, amanah, transparency, and social responsibility serves as both a moral foundation and a strategic advantage that enhances consumer trust and loyalty in the Muslim market.

The results of the SWOT, IFAS, and EFAS analyses indicate that Dimsum Qoqom is in a strong strategic position to leverage its main strengths halal certification, Islamic branding, and active digital marketing while addressing weaknesses such as limited digital human resources and dependency on third-party platforms. External challenges like rising competition and raw material price fluctuations can be mitigated through brand strengthening and diversified promotional strategies. The TOWS framework provides a clear direction for sustaining growth in a rapidly evolving digital environment. This research also highlights that the synergy between digitalization and Islamic economic principles not only fosters business success but also delivers broader social benefits, offering a replicable model for halal culinary MSMEs in Indonesia. Nonetheless, future research should expand analysis of internal operations and financial performance to enhance the depth, applicability, and generalization of findings.

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