

Digital Transformation Through Social Media in Silk Weaving Business: A Case Study in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the impact of digital transformation through social media on the sustainability of the silk weaving business. This research uses qualitative research, case study approach. The subjects in this study were four silk entrepreneurs. Data collection was carried out in three stages (1) observation, (2) documentation, and (3) semi-structured in-depth interviews. The results show that digital transformation through social media affects the sustainability of the silk weaving business which has a positive impact on the marketing of silk fabrics in Wajo Regency which indirectly has an impact on economic development. This study proposes that the silk weaving business can be used as an educational tour and part of the curriculum in schools which indirectly is a form of cultural preservation because the silk weaving business is the identity of Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Social Media, Silk Weaving Business, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi*

1. INTRODUCTION

The silk weaving business is one of the cultural heritages of Wajo Regency which produces luxurious fabrics [1] [2]. Woven fabrics are intellectual works of the nation's children who have close relationships with the creative industry [3]. Silk weaving business is a labor-intensive economic activity that is a reliable livelihood [4]. It is proven in the silk weaving business in Wajo Regency, there are 20 large and medium industries, 13 of which are oriented to the silk industry [5]. This proves that the silk weaving business plays an important role and contributes to sustainable development [6]. The sustainability of the silk weaving business itself cannot be separated from cultural support, considering that the weaving business is mandatory clothing for the Bugis tribe, especially in weddings, deaths, and other traditional activities [7]. So that the silk weaving business needs to be preserved because it is a local cultural heritage [8].

The sustainability of the silk weaving business in Wajo Regency cannot be separated from the support of the

government and the private sector such as the facilitation of silk villages by Bank BNI as a center for selling silk woven fabrics. In addition, the development of the silk weaving business is supported by the ability of silk entrepreneurs to adapt to the times, especially in the marketing of silk fabrics that have undergone digital transformation. Because a mature digital business can change the way a business works.[9]. The existence of digital transformation in the use of digital technology in the silk weaving business allows business improvements that affect all aspects of customers' lives making it possible to interact across borders with suppliers, customers, and competitors [10] [11]. Silk entrepreneurs need to realize the importance of creating satisfied and loyal customers so that customers can tell others about their positive experiences [12].

The digital transformation that occurs in the silk weaving business can be seen from the use of social media in marketing silk fabrics. Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp can change the way we communicate, consume, collaborate, and create which

have a transformative impact on business [13]. Social media as a tool can be used to identify products, collect information about products, evaluate products, and make product purchases [14]. The inclusion of social media has many advantages in marketing silk fabrics in Wajo Regency. This media can be used to understand the needs of buyers and reach new customers without being limited by space and time and can indirectly increase foreign exchange and people's income [12] [15]. Social media also has a positive effect on customer satisfaction, sales, and customer relationships [16].

The urgency of this research is to describe the development of digital transformation carried out by four silk batik entrepreneurs in South Sulawesi. In addition, the use of social media in the development of marketing and the presence of workers involved in this business. The use of digital technology apparently maintains the sustainability of the silk weaving process carried out by these entrepreneurs. Digitalization plays a major role in contributing to sustainable development goals. Without transformation in a business, future economic and environmental challenges cannot be solved sustainably [17].

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The analysis technique uses qualitative analysis techniques [18], including data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The focus of the problem: digital transformation through social media in the silk weaving business. The research questions are: How is the impact of digital transformation through social media on the sustainability of the silk weaving business?

The research was conducted in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi. There are several informants (four silk entrepreneurs consisting of entrepreneurs who have the largest silk weaving business namely BJ, RM, GN, and JM. These four informants were chosen because they are business owners who control the continuation of this silk weaving business. The four informants plan, implement, and evaluate business performance. In addition, they have also started marketing their products through social media. Meanwhile, other entrepreneurs still rely on their traditional marketing model.

Data collection in this study was carried out using 3 (three) stages: (1) observation, (2) documentation, and (3) in-depth semi-structured interviews. Observations or observations were made to observe various phenomena that occurred during the study by making direct visits to the subject and object of research to see how the silk weaving business activities and observing the living conditions of the silk entrepreneurs who were the research subjects. Documentation is done by collecting data through written information related to research. In-depth semi-structured interviews analyzed and conducted in this study lead to the depth of information obtained through direct dialogue with informants.

3. RESULT

Silk weaving business plays an important role that can open new jobs and absorb labor. It can be seen from the number of workers absorbed by 18,510 or about 10.8% of the total workforce in Wajo Regency [19] so the silk weaving business needs to be taken seriously. Silk entrepreneurs must be able to see opportunities and adapt to the times, such as digital transformation which has become a necessity in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. The ASEAN Economic Community makes SMEs more established and able to take advantage of advances in information technology in their business processes. [20].

Using information technology, a business has the potential to reach more customers, introduce new products and services quickly, and collaborate with business partners from around the world. [21] The same goes for the silk weaving business, where digital transformation using social media has changed the way silk entrepreneurs market silk fabrics. Silk fabrics which were initially only marketed offline (in stores) are now marketed online using social media such as Facebook and Instagram so that they can reach customers in all directions. Social media can improve marketing and change the way silk entrepreneurs do business so that customers can more easily access and choose goods to buy anytime and anywhere [9] [22] [23]. Thus, digital transformation is changing society and forcing the industry to react more frequently to the market [24]. This was confirmed by the informants in this study. Here are the results of the interview:

"...Before using social media in marketing silk fabrics and silk products, my market share was only limited to Wajo Regency even if there were buyers from outside, generally buyers who had become regulars or government guests and tourists. However, after I used social media in marketing silk fabrics my customers grew more and more. Not only from the local community but various islands such as Java and Sumatra and some even from Singapore. Social media has greatly changed the silk weaving business, where in the past I had to offer silk fabrics individually so that now I can simply upload them to social media such as Instagram and Facebook, the woven fabrics that I offer can reach consumers directly without the need to spend a lot of energy, effort, and additional cost." (RM, 39)

In line with the opinion above, several informants also expressed the same thing. Here are the results of the interview:

"...we are well aware of the benefits of digital transformation in business, such as the use of social media in selling silk fabrics. This social media made my silk sales increase. The buyers are not only from residents around Wajo Regency but also many from Java and Sumatra, some even from Malaysia. Social media makes buying and selling activities more effective and efficient because it can be done anytime and anywhere. Thus, I am

optimistic that the sustainability of the silk weaving business will be even more brilliant” (BJ, 50)

“... so far I have used social media such as Instagram in marketing silk products, whether it's cloth, sarongs, as well as bags and wallets. Customers are buying more and more. Currently, more buyers are buying through social media than directly. even many customers who come from Wajo Regency themselves order silk fabrics or other silk products through social media because they are more practical. So I as a seller must always update new product information. This is intended so that buyers have an alternative to buying the new product. The existence of social media has made a significant difference to my business, and I believe with good marketing the silk weaving business will continue to survive.” (GN, 26)

Silk entrepreneurs not only use social media as marketing but also as a place to absorb new knowledge. The following are the results of interviews with informants in this study:

“... not only do I use social media to market silk fabrics but on the other hand, I use it to increase knowledge that generates new ideas from fellow silk entrepreneurs who use social media as a marketing medium as well as other woven fabric entrepreneurs such as batik and ikat so The silk products that I produce are more varied in terms of colors, shapes, and motifs. At first, I only produced silk cloth, now I also produce bags and wallets.” (JM, 38)

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews and related literature studies, the following discussion will be presented.

The use of Facebook shows that digital transformation through social media in the silk weaving business makes the interaction of buyers and sellers more effective because it is not limited by space and time. Because social media has become an important marketing tool [25]. The use of social media is not only a medium of interaction that can increase the demand for silk products but can also indirectly create a sustainable business [26]. This is because social media fills the gap between sellers and buyers which creates a continuous dialogue, builds trust, and generates interactions in an appropriate, fast and correct manner [27]. With the existence of social media, silk entrepreneurs do not need to sacrifice many resources because social media can be a platform for sustainable business [28].

Social media is not only used by silk entrepreneurs as a marketing tool but as a means to share knowledge and develop professionalism [29]. With social media, the process of sharing knowledge primarily about the silk weaving business has become more effective and easier. [30]. So that it can increase the productivity of silk entrepreneurs which can indirectly increase foreign exchange and people's income which will have an impact on welfare [15]. This shows that the sustainability of the

silk weaving business will be clearer because silk entrepreneurs have good adaptability.

The existence of a digital transformation in the silk weaving business through social media during the Covid 19 pandemic which is a global phenomenon is currently an alternative that has a positive impact on the development of the silk weaving business in Wajo Regency. Entrepreneurs still carry out buying and selling transactions, so the silk weaving business is still able to survive today. This proves that the importance of marketing using social media in the silk weaving business is increasingly important, which makes it easier to conduct business transactions because it can be done from home. [14] [31]. The use of social media for marketing during the Covid 19 pandemic has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs, especially in increasing sales, customer relations, productivity, and creativity [32]. So that the silk weaving business needs to be maintained and developed to provide benefits to the community in a sustainable manner [33].

Implication of this research. The use of social media is very helpful for these silk entrepreneurs in increasing the sales of their silk products. In addition, direct communication and transactions between entrepreneurs and buyers are increasingly intense through social media. Seeing a promising increase in sales, entrepreneurs must improve product quality and design through various catalogs that they upload on social media. In addition, the sustainability of this business is increasingly maintained with the existence of quite a lot of profits and can also absorb many employees in the silk industry.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the digital transformation that occurs in the silk weaving business through social media has a positive impact on the sale of silk fabrics in the Wajo Regency. The products produced from the silk weaving business are not only marketed in Indonesia but also abroad. Communication between silk entrepreneurs and consumers does not have to be done directly so that it is more efficient and effective. The use of social media in silk weaving business activities is also one of the media in increasing knowledge about the silk weaving business which makes silk entrepreneurs more creative. This indirectly increases the economic productivity of silk entrepreneurs and encourages economic growth, especially in Wajo Regency. Therefore, in the development of the weaving business in the future, serious attention from the government is needed, such as digital transformation, which is not only limited to the marketing process but can continue to the silk fabric production process to be more efficient and effective. In addition, it is hoped that the silk weaving business can become one of the educational tourist destinations. And it can be used as a part of the school curriculum, especially in Wajo Regency which indirectly becomes an alternative for the preservation of local culture.

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