



SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF PASAR SAMBAS COSMETICS TRADERS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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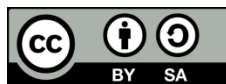
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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the impact of the development of the digital era on cosmetics traders in the Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan, the survival strategies applied by these traders, and how these strategies are seen from an Islamic economic perspective. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the digital era had a significant impact on traditional traders, especially in the form of a decrease in the number of buyers which resulted in a decrease in income. To survive, cosmetics traders in the Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan apply various strategies, such as following product trends, providing discounts, maintaining the quality of goods, expanding social networks with buyers, and improving service quality. In addition, Muslim traders also integrate Islamic economic principles, such as tawhid, honesty, responsibility, and justice, in their survival strategies amid the challenges of the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Era, Traditional Traders, Cosmetics

1. INTRODUCTION

Markets function as a meeting point between sellers who offer goods and buyers who create demand, where transactions occur based on mutual agreement regarding prices. However, with the emergence of competitors offering more attractive products, traditional markets are facing increasing challenges (Pertiwi et al., 2024). In the current era of globalization, continuous learning is important to overcome various challenges. Technological advances, such as the widespread use of smartphones and the internet in Indonesia, driven by the rapid development of information and communication technology, have significantly changed access to information and work flexibility (Wulandari & Tomanggor, 2024).

Modernization has brought major changes in the fields of information, communication, and science and technology (IPTEK). These advancements have changed the way society

is viewed, allowing individuals to fulfill their needs and complete daily tasks more efficiently and practically. Technology has evolved into a system that is widely accessible, adaptable, and deeply integrated into the business sector. Beyond its role in information sharing, technology now facilitates online buying and selling, where business owners utilize social media platforms to promote their products, allowing customers to access them anytime and anywhere (Yuni et al., 2024).

Pasar Sambas was established in 1968 as a trading center that provides a variety of daily necessities, especially cosmetics. Since its inception, the market has served as a place of social and economic interaction for the local community. Pasar Sambas is a part of Medan's trading history that continues to adapt with the times and the needs of the community. The rapid growth of the digital era has had a significant impact on Medan's Sambas traditional market, especially for cosmetics traders. Research observations revealed that the number of visitors to these merchants has declined sharply, leading to a drop in revenue and, in some cases, store closures. This phenomenon is rooted in a societal shift, as people increasingly adopt digital platforms that cater to their evolving needs. As a result, traditional markets, which used to be hubs of activity, are gradually losing their popularity.

Despite these challenges, some cosmetics traders in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan continue to operate by adapting their strategies to survive in this competitive digital era. From an Islamic economic perspective, these strategies should be in line with principles that ensure fairness and benefit all parties involved. Islam emphasizes the importance of hard work (*ikhtiar*), which involves the utilization of one's energy and efforts to achieve positive outcomes that benefit individuals and society (Aryani, 2011).

In this context, strategy plays an important role in helping businesses adapt and compete effectively. As Jack Trout says, strategy involves understanding the dynamic environment, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and effectively communicating value to the public. These elements are critical for vendors to survive and achieve their goals in the face of rapid technological and market changes (Sutami, 2012).

Previous research has explored the survival tactics of cosmetics sellers in traditional markets. For example, Dewi Febriani (2023) found that cosmetics sellers in Pasar Belinyu used various strategies to remain competitive while expanding their presence online. These strategies include waiting for customers, providing frequently requested items, following the latest trends, and seeking government assistance. In addition, the traders rely on social capital, such as social institutions, policies, and community acceptance, to sustain their business.

However, there are still significant research gaps. First, most previous studies have not examined the survival tactics of cosmetics traders from an Islamic economic perspective, which could offer a unique lens to understand these strategies. Secondly, no research has specifically focused on traditional markets in the Sambas area, which has different characteristics and challenges compared to other regions. Based on this background, this study aims to investigate the impact of the digital era on cosmetics traders in Pasar Tradisional Sambas Medan and analyze their survival strategies from an Islamic economic perspective.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Data analysis in this study was carried out using three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This research was conducted in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan by using qualitative method, which allows the collection of authentic data from spoken and written words and observed actions. The research focused on the survival strategy of cosmetics traders in facing the development of the digital era analyzed from an Islamic economic perspective. The data used in this research consists of primary data obtained directly through observation, interviews with several cosmetic trader informants, and documentation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Digital Era Development for Cosmetics Traders in Traditional Markets

Commerce has been greatly influenced by technological advances, including the emergence of online stores. The development of internet shopping is a modern phenomenon that is seen as a trend by the public. Many people prefer to shop online rather than in actual places, especially when buying basic necessities, due to the ease of internet access and the many smartphone applications. This shows the increasing interest of people to shop online. Since so many people use smartphones to pass the time, smartphones have evolved into a very useful tool for buying and searching. Many e-commerce platforms now allow users to buy and sell goods since internet shopping has become so popular. This phenomenon has also accelerated the growth of the digital era in Indonesia. (Suarna et al., 2024)

The digital age is expected to continue to grow rapidly due to several factors, including widely used mobile phones, cheap internet, and safe and reliable payment methods. These elements ensure that internet purchases will continue to become increasingly popular. Customers love online shopping for its ease and convenience, as well as the lower prices, discounts, and other attractive offers provided. On the other hand, traditional markets require direct interaction, which involves verbal communication and negotiation skills. However, this habit has been replaced by changing social values where online transactions do not require haggling between the parties involved. (Yuni et al., 2024).

The emergence of this online market has a direct impact on traditional traders in Pasar Sambas, especially cosmetics traders, by reducing the number of visitors and decreasing their income.

Rise of online markets has had a significant impact on sales at Pasar Sambas in Medan, as fewer consumers choose to shop at traditional markets. According to Ms. Mariani, a cosmetics trader at Pasar Sambas, many consumers prefer online shopping due to the convenience and variety of products available. This shift in consumer behavior has led to a noticeable decline in sales for traders in traditional markets, thus creating challenges for their business. As a result, the traditional market environment is becoming increasingly difficult for merchants to maintain their livelihoods:

“I have been selling cosmetics in this market for almost 20 years. In the past, when I first started selling, the market was still crowded and sales were quite stable. But the last few years, especially now with the rise of online shopping, our income has really slumped.

People prefer online shopping because there are many choices and there are often attractive promos. Only on certain days, like before Eid, the market is crowded, but on weekdays like this, it's quiet."

A similar opinion was also expressed by Mrs. Fitri, another cosmetics trader at Sambas Market in Medan, who felt a decrease in income since the emergence of the pandemic until now due to the development of the digital era.

Based on observations and interviews, cosmetics traders at Pasar Sambas Medan have experienced a significant decline in their daily income. Previously, the traders reported that they could earn more than IDR 1,000,000 per day. However, their current income has dropped to an average of IDR 100,000 to IDR 700,000 per day, leaving some traders struggling to maintain their business and facing financial difficulties.

Survival Strategies of Cosmetics Traders in Traditional Markets Amidst the Development of the Digital Era

Rapid technological advancements have introduced new trading methods, such as online shopping and advertising through smartphone apps, which have significantly impacted traditional markets. Pasar Sambas in Medan, which was once bustling with customers, is now experiencing a decline in activity. Merchants face challenges in maintaining their businesses, as the lack of customers and reduced profits threaten their survival (Setiawan, 2025). The younger generation and women, in particular, are increasingly turning to online shopping due to the convenience and variety offered by digital platforms, further contributing to the decline in traditional market revenue.

To overcome this challenge, traders at Pasar Sambas Medan have implemented various strategies to sustain their business. The aim of this approach is to attract new clients while maintaining relationships that have been established over the years, ensuring their ability to compete in the ever-evolving digital market:

a) Following the Trend of Goods for Sale

Nowadays, people have many alternatives when it comes to buying goods, and they often look for popular items. In particular, the upper middle class and teenagers tend to buy popular products. Product fashions often change quickly, especially in the fashion sector, which has faster design changes than other products. Online stores are usually faster in adopting the latest styles. Therefore, in order not to look outdated, traders in traditional markets must follow the latest trends." (Rahmadani, 2025)

Based on the results of research at Sambas Medan Traditional Market, some traders stated that they follow the latest trends in goods that are in demand by the public. As expressed by Mrs. Fatimah, a cosmetics trader:

"Nowadays we, traders in traditional markets, compete with traders from the digital era. So as much as possible, we have to keep up with the latest models that customers like."

Based on the interview results, cosmetics traders at Pasar Sambas in Medan use a survival strategy by aligning their products with current trends to retain offline customers. In today's era of modern consumption, where consumers are attracted to innovative and trending products, adapting sales strategies to cater to these preferences is crucial. By offering items that follow the latest models and trends, vendors can make their products more appealing to customers. This approach allows

cosmetics vendors in Pasar Sambas to respond to shifts in consumer demand, increase product appeal, and maintain their market share amidst the growing challenges of the digital era.



Figure 1. Interview with a Trader, Mrs. Aini

b) Offer a Discount

One tactic that has proven effective in attracting clients is offering discounts. Offering discounts to customers is one way for sellers to attract customers. This approach is still used by merchants of all sizes. One of the things that customers like the most is discounts, especially for those who love shopping, and this can also attract more customers. As explained by Ms. Eliana, a cosmetics trader at Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan:

“In a market that is now often quiet and because of the competition with online shops that are increasingly prevalent, I often give discounts to customers who come, so that they want to come again. It also helps us deplete old stock and introduce new products. The discount I give depends on the number of items purchased. For example, initially the price of a shirt is Rp180,000, then I lower it to Rp150,000 so that customers are happy with the discount.”

Based on the interview, cosmetics traders at Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan use a strategy to provide discounts in the midst of the development of the digital era. Customers and merchants can directly negotiate prices and payment plans in traditional markets, resulting in a win-win situation. This cannot be done when shopping through online shops, where prices are fixed and cannot be negotiated.

c) Maintaining the Quality of Goods Sold

To survive the transition to the online market, cosmetics traders in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan prioritize maintaining the quality of their products. This strategy differentiates conventional trade from online trade, where buyers can only evaluate products through two-dimensional images, making it more difficult to assess quality. In contrast, traditional markets allow customers to inspect goods in person, thus increasing their trust in the product.

Based on observations and interviews, Soemartono and Silalahi (2024) found that cosmetics sellers use product quality as a key competitive advantage to retain customers. By consistently offering high-quality products, they aim to build trust and

satisfaction among buyers. This approach not only helps businesses remain competitive but also encourages repeat purchases, ensuring the relevance of Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan in the digital era.

d) Improving Buyer Service

There are a number of tactics that can be used if a company wants to succeed, but the main one is to optimize service to provide a positive and satisfying experience for customers. Many consumers who don't mind the price enjoy this. This approach has turned into a survival tactic for cosmetics traders in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan as the digital era advances. According to an interview with Mrs. Masroh, a cosmetics trader:

"The current strategy used to keep customers afloat is that we use a way to improve good service, for example, if there are visitors passing by, we greet them kindly while offering merchandise like 'what are you looking for sis, stop by sis look around first, yes even though sometimes the buyers ask a lot of questions and bargain for low prices but we as sellers must still answer kindly and politely."

Based on the informant interviews above, cosmetics traders at Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan use the tactic of improving customer service to retain customers. This is done because providing excellent customer service is very important because it can make customers feel satisfied and encourage them to return to their business.

e) Increase Social Networking with Buyers

Buyers are just as important as players. Without customers, businesses cannot thrive in the marketplace. Thus, if merchants foster good relationships with customers, maximize the services they provide, and make sales easier with installment payment options, it will create good interactions between the two parties. According to the informant Mrs. Lina's statement below:

"The strategy I use in the midst of the development of this digital era is to allow customers to pay in installments. I have been selling in this market for almost 14 years, so I have known many customers, even though I use the installment method, I do not make a payment period and I also do not add interest to the price of the cosmetics I sell, there is actually a risk from this strategy sometimes there are customers who do not pay at all. But I manage this risk well by only allowing customers who are well known and have a good payment history. Yes, although the profit is smaller because of the delay in payment, with this strategy I can still retain customers and maintain the flow of sales because this debt is a way to bind customers to come back to pay the debt and shop."

The interview revealed that cosmetics traders in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan face competition from the digital age, which enhances clients' social networks by allowing installment payments. By building human relationships that are difficult to obtain in online transactions, this tactic helps them maintain customer loyalty and sales flow. Based on the study findings, cosmetics traders in Pasar Traditional Sambas Medan support Robert Putnam's theory that social capital-which includes social networks, trust, and social norms-is essential for businesses to sustain long-term partnerships. As has happened several times in the new competition in the digital era, the trust that develops between buyers and traders is what creates the situation in the social network.

The Survival Strategy of Cosmetic Traders in the Perspective of Islamic Economics

Due to fierce competition caused by the advent of the digital era, which makes consumers leave traditional markets, traders in pasar Sambas Medan market are currently facing turmoil. The cosmetics traders may experience negative impacts from this, such as a decrease in income. However, they must remain patient and strive to meet consumer needs. According to Nurjannah and Ratnah (2024), Islam offers order in all aspects of human life, including muamalah.

Pasar Sambas Medan traders can use Islamic economics as a tactic in the current scenario. Every Muslim is required to uphold the belief that Allah SWT has control over all cosmic events. The following are Islamic economic ideas that traditional cosmetic market traders use as a tool to survive as the digital era advances:

a) **The Principle of Tawhid (Oneness of God)**

Tawhid, the belief that Allah SWT is the only one who can help mankind, is the foundation of Islamic doctrine. Every Muslim who submits everything to Allah SWT must continue to have the belief that He is in charge of everything that happens in the universe. For cosmetics traders to compete with the advent of the digital era, this idea must be practiced and become their foundation. Cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas Medan can manage their operations profitably and remain relevant in the face of competition from the digital era by using the concept of tawhid in their enterprises.

b) **The Principle of Honesty**

Since honesty is a key principle in Islam, a Muslim must have an honest attitude in transactions. According to a hadith, the Prophet stated: "A Muslim should not sell a product that has a defect unless he gives an explanation for the defect." (HR. Al-Quzwani). Maintaining the quality of the products offered is a survival strategy of cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas Medan, and is in line with this value of honesty. According to the research findings, cosmetics traders always try to be honest with customers. For example, traders will inform consumers in advance if there is a slight defect in the cosmetics. In addition, traders usually provide precise details about the quantity and substances of the cosmetics they sell. Because building trust with consumers requires honesty. Customers will return and even refer others to the business if they already have trust in the merchant. Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that trading can benefit both buyers and sellers as the real goal is to be honest and serve people rather than make money. In fact, most cosmetic merchants consider integrity as very important to the success of their company (Rahman et al., n.d.).

c) **Principle of Responsibility**

Because business and economy have an impact on lives that become unstable without commitment and legitimacy, the Responsibility Principle is essential. This is in accordance with the results of the study that cosmetics traders in pasar Sambas Medan use better customer service as a survival tactic. This indicates that the traders have a responsible mindset, or Amanah. As can be seen from the

results of interviews, traders will take responsibility if the purchased clothes turn out to be does not fit when it arrives home; however, exchanges are allowed. This is done as a result of the application of ethics that is based on trustworthiness expressed in words and deeds. trustworthiness that is expressed verbally as well as in deeds. Because they believe that the merchant is trustworthy, customers tend to come back and make more purchases when this trust technique is used (Syukur, 2015). make more purchases when this trust technique is used (Syari Nurhayani et al., 2023).

d) The Principle of Justice

An essential component of Islamic economics is justice. The importance of maintaining justice in all areas, including social, political and economic, has been underlined by Allah, who revealed Islam as a guide for all people. Cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas Medan can use this concept of justice as a means to survive. Based on the interview results, the cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas Medan provide good service to all customers without discriminating. They also strive to maintain fair prices, avoid taking undue advantage, and base their prices on production costs and quality. traders ensure their prices are fair and do not disadvantage other traders. By applying the principle of fairness, businesses can acquire and retain consumers.

4. CONCLUSION

The advent of the digital era has had a significant impact on cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas, as seen from the declining number of buyers and reduced trader income. Before the digital era, traders experienced higher turnover and greater income. However, the emergence of digital platforms has posed challenges for long-established traditional cosmetics traders. To address these challenges, traders have had to adapt and innovate to sustain their businesses in a competitive market.

To remain competitive, cosmetics traders in Pasar Sambas have adopted various flexible strategies. First, they strive to keep up with modern fashion trends to attract contemporary customers. Second, offering discounts has proven effective in attracting customers. Third, maintaining product quality is essential to build customer trust and encourage direct purchases. Fourth, improving the quality of customer service sets them apart from digital platforms. Lastly, building long-term relationships with customers through installment payment plans has been a successful method to foster loyalty. In addition to these strategies, merchants uphold the basic principles of Islamic economics, such as tawhid, honesty, accountability, and justice. By integrating these values into their business practices, they aim to maintain relevance and ethical standards in the ever-evolving digital age.

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