THE USE OF E-COMMERCE AS A MARKETING STRATEGY TO SUSTAIN MUSLIM AND MUSLIMAH CLOTHING STORES

Yuni Harmiyanti[1], Elex Sarmigi[2], Yuserizal Bustami[3]
[1,2,3]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci
[1] yuniharmiyanti62@gmail.com, [2]elexsarmigi@gmail.com, [3]yuserizalbustami82@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines how e-commerce serves as a marketing strategy to support Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh City. In today's digital age, e-commerce is a vital tool for enhancing business competitiveness through platforms like marketplaces, social media, and Google Business. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were gathered via interviews, observations, literature review, and documentation. The results indicate that many stores have adopted digital marketing through Shopee, Tokopedia, Facebook, and Instagram. E-commerce has enabled stores to reach wider markets, attract more customers, and improve brand recognition. Challenges such as price competition, low digital literacy, and logistical issues persist. However, with suitable digital marketing strategies, these stores can remain competitive and grow. Creating engaging content and fostering active customer participation on digital platforms are crucial for maintaining business sustainability in the e-commerce landscape.

Keywords: Fashion industry; Market expansion; Marketing strategy

Introduction

The digital era has brought significant changes to global business. Advances in information and communication technology, particularly the internet, mobile devices, artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and cloud computing, have transformed the way companies operate and interact with consumers (Tahir et al., 2023) . According to Sitorus et al. (2025) e-commerce, as one of the applications of digital technology, it has become a highly popular and widely used platform among both consumers and business actors. E-commerce refers to buying and selling activities conducted online using the internet as a medium. It is a business process that utilizes electronic technology to connect companies, consumers, and communities through electronic transactions. Various e-commerce platforms are used for online shopping, including marketplaces, websites, and social media (Supriyanto, 2020).

The phenomenon of social media has also reinforced the existence of e-commerce within the modern business landscape. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become essential channels for promotion, communication, and interaction between sellers and customers. According to Siregar, (2022) social media, it has transformed the way people communicate, not only in their social lives but also in business contexts, including marketing and customer service. This development enables businesses to reach a broader audience at relatively low costs while simultaneously fostering emotional connections with customers in a more direct and personal manner.

Attracting consumer interest requires effective marketing strategies that align with globalization trends and ongoing societal changes (Ryan, 2021). In the era of globalization, marketing approaches have become increasingly diverse. One of the most frequently discussed methods is online marketing, whether through specific websites or dedicated applications. A strategy is a plan developed to increase market influence in both the short and long term. This planning is generally based on market research, product development, and evaluations of sales and distribution systems. In the context of marketing, such strategies play a crucial role in driving growth through promotional activities or product introductions using internet-based social networking platforms, as stated by (Wulandari, 2022).

The phenomenon of utilizing e-commerce as a marketing strategy to sustain businesses in the digital era is increasingly being adopted by various types of enterprises, including Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores. These stores use e-commerce platforms to expand their market reach, both locally and internationally, at a more cost-effective rate compared to traditional marketing methods (Lestari, D., & Sutabri, 2024). E-commerce enables Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores to easily manage online transactions easily, conduct promotions, and leverage social media and

36

other digital platforms to enhance their brand visibility. Through e-commerce, businesses can offer a wide range of products at competitive prices, providing convenience for customers to shop anytime and from any location (Laudon, K. C., & Traver, 2019).

Sungai Penuh City is located in Jambi Province, with a population of 101.72 million people. The majority of the population adheres to Islam, accounting for 99.1% of the population Badan statistik kota sungai penuh, 2023. As most of the residents of Sungai Penuh City are Muslim, Muslim and Muslimah clothing play a crucial role in daily life. Many Muslims and Muslimahs wear Shari'ah-compliant clothing, such as the koko shirt and sarong for men, and the gamis and hijab for women, both for religious events and daily activities. This reflects deep religious values and traditions that have been preserved amidst the passage of time.

This study focuses on the utilization of e-commerce as a marketing strategy to sustain Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh. Along with the advancement of digital technology, e-commerce has become one of the leading solutions for business actors to enhance competitiveness, reach broader markets, and maintain business continuity amid increasingly intense competition (Laudon, K. C., & Traver, 2019).

The RACE Model is a practical framework for managing digital marketing strategies in a structured manner, beginning with reaching the audience (Reach), encouraging interaction (Act), converting interest into purchase (Convert), and building long-term relationships with customers (Engage) (Smith, P. R., & Zook, 2016). This model helps businesses enhance visibility and foster customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. Adds that the application of the RACE Model enables companies to integrate various digital marketing channels such as social media and online advertising (Chaffey, 2019). It maximizes campaign effectiveness, increases conversions, and retains customers through active communication and reward programs (Chaffey, 2022).

Based on the results of the observation conducted on 50 residents of Sungai Penuh City, five Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores were found to be the most popular and became the primary focus of the respondents. According to the observation, five stores in Sungai Penuh have implemented e-commerce as a marketing strategy, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Muslim and Muslimah Clothing Stores in Sungai Penuh City

Business Name	Location	Year	Platfrom
Zaskia Sungkar	Jln Muradi no 19 sungai penuh	2015	Instagram: Zaskisungkar_sungaipenuh
Eva Muslimah qlq	Jln Muradi Sungai penuh	2015	Instagram: Evamuslimahqlq_boutique
Adora Bella	Jln yos Sudarso Sungai penuh	2022	Instagram: Adora_bellaboutique
DND Modest Fashion	Jl sisigamangaraja No. 24 pasar Sungai penuh	2019	Instagram: Deestyle.d2
Bilal Al-Asas	Koto Renah	2010	-

Source: Observation of the community on January 28, 2025

According to the table above, the results of the community observation on January 28, 2025, indicate that Sungai Penuh City has various Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores, which have been established for diverse periods and are strategically located. Most of these stores utilize Instagram as their primary marketing platform for promotions and to reach customers. This study will analyze how digital marketing strategies, including the use of marketplaces, social media, and online promotional methods, can support Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh in sustaining and advancing their businesses.

Since some Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh have already adopted e-commerce, this study will also evaluate the factors that influence the success of marketing through e-commerce, including consumer behavior when shopping online, the challenges faced by business owners, and the impact of e-commerce on business sustainability. By understanding efficient marketing strategies, it is expected that this study will guide business owners in optimizing the use of e-commerce to enhance competitiveness and increase the profitability of Muslim and Muslimah clothing businesses in Sungai Penuh.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how e-commerce is utilized as a sustainable marketing strategy by Muslim and Muslimah clothing store owners. This approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, strategies, and challenges faced by business actors in integrating e-commerce into their marketing practices (Creswell, 2014). The study involved 10 informants, comprising store owners and managers of Muslim and Muslimah clothing businesses that actively utilized e-commerce platforms. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the main criteria that they had operated their businesses online for

at least one year and marketed their products via marketplaces, websites, or social media (Sugiyono., 2019).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted either online or face-to-face, depending on the informants' availability. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded (with informed consent) to facilitate accurate transcription and analysis (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, 2018). The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which included the processes of coding, categorization, and identification of emerging themes from the interview data. The analysis was conducted in several stages, starting from transcript reading, initial coding, clustering codes into categories, and identifying themes that represent marketing strategies employed through e-commerce (Braun, V., & Clarke, 2006). To ensure data validity, the study applied source triangulation and member checking techniques. Preliminary findings were returned to the informants to verify the accuracy and consistency of the information provided (Moleong, 2019; Patton, 2002)

Results And Discussion

Result

Digital Strategies in E-Commerce for Muslim & Muslimah Clothing Stores in Sungai Penuh City

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

According to the informants, they explained:

"SEO has increased the traffic to our website. By optimizing keywords like 'premium hijab' or 'trendy Muslim fashion,' our site is easier to find. It helps build brand awareness despite tight e-commerce competition" (Interview with NZ, RA, FR, and SH, February 2025).

SEO is used to enhance the store's visibility on search engines such as Google. By targeting relevant keywords like "trendy Muslim clothing in Sungai Penuh," these stores ensure their products are easily discoverable by potential customers. However, although SEO offers long-term benefits and lower costs compared to paid advertising, its main limitation lies in the time-consuming nature of the process and the need for adequate technical expertise. In addition, the store's website platform must be responsive and user-friendly to ensure effective SEO optimization. The primary distinguishing factor of SEO is its focus on organic search and delivering relevant, educational, and informative content.

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

From interviews with the informants, they stated:

"We primarily use Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook as our main platforms. Short videos and tutorial content attract more customer attention and help build brand awareness." (Interview with NZ, RA, FR, and SH, February 2025).

Social media serves as the primary channel for promoting products and building customer communities. Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are utilized to share engaging and interactive content. Each social media platform has its strengths and limitations that set it apart. Instagram excels in showcasing aesthetically pleasing product visuals through photos and reels, but its algorithm limits organic reach without advertising support. TikTok offers a high potential for virality through short and creative video content, yet it demands consistency in trends and style. Facebook remains effective for reaching adult demographics, but it has seen a decline in popularity among younger users. These demographic differences and platform-specific features are crucial considerations in formulating a social media-based marketing strategy.

Content Marketing

According to the information obtained from the informants, they stated:

"We focus more on managing a blog that discusses Muslimah fashion trends, from the latest hijab styles to outfit inspirations for various occasions." (Interview with RA, February 2025).

Content marketing involves providing customers with relevant articles, videos, or infographics. This content includes hijab tutorials, mix-and-match tips for Muslim attire, or interviews with fashion influencers. The main advantage of this strategy lies in building brand authority, enhancing customer trust, and providing educational value. However, producing high-quality content requires time, effort, and skills in writing or design. What differentiates content marketing is its focus on creating value and fostering long-term relationships, rather than solely on sales.

Search-Based Advertising (Pay-Per-Click - PPC)

Based on the interviews conducted, the informants revealed:

"Yes, we use Google Ads, Facebook Ads, and Instagram Ads to target potential customers." (Interview with RA, NZ, and FR, February 2025).

The PPC strategy is used to attract potential customers through paid advertisements on platforms like Google Ads. By targeting specific keywords, the stores can increase traffic to their websites.

Email Marketing for Customer Loyalty

According to the statements provided by the informants, they emphasized:

"Email marketing helps retain existing customers by offering special promotions." (Interview with SH, February 2025).

Email marketing is utilized to build and maintain long-term relationships with customers. Newsletters are regularly distributed to inform customers about new products, discounts, or exclusive events. The benefits include building customer loyalty, maintaining communication, and increasing repeat orders at a relatively low cost. Its main limitation is the low open rate if emails are not properly personalized. The distinguishing factor of email marketing lies in its personal and direct nature, targeting customers who have already expressed interest in the products.

Marketing Strategies of Muslim and Muslimah Clothing Stores in Sungai Penuh City

Reach

Based on the information obtained from the informants, they stated:

"We implement digital marketing strategies by optimizing SEO and actively using Instagram and TikTok. We also collaborate with Muslim fashion influencers to increase brand recognition." (Interview with RA, February 2025).

To attract new customers, Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh utilize strategies such as SEO, social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok), and e-commerce marketplaces (Shopee, Tokopedia). They also utilize paid advertisements and influencer collaborations to expand their reach. Although SEO offers long-term benefits and relatively lower costs compared to paid advertising, its drawback lies in the time-consuming nature of the process and the need for technical expertise. The success of this strategy is highly influenced by the quality of content and the responsiveness of the website. What distinguishes SEO from other strategies is its emphasis on organic search and the provision of educational and informative content.

Act

Based on the interviews conducted, the informants stated:

"We ensure that our product catalog on social media and our website is attractive, featuring high-quality photos. In addition, we frequently hold live shopping sessions on Instagram and TikTok to directly address customer inquiries." (Interview with NZ and RA, February 2025).

The stores under study that utilize e-commerce present engaging product catalogs through photos, videos, and customer testimonials to encourage customer interaction and facilitate the decision-making process. Each social media platform has its strengths and limitations. Instagram excels at presenting aesthetically pleasing product visuals, but it has limited organic reach without advertising. TikTok is effective for viral content but requires high consistency and creativity. Facebook remains relevant for targeting older age groups, although its popularity has declined among younger users. These demographic characteristics and platform-specific features are critical differentiating factors in selecting the most appropriate marketing channel.

Convert

From the discussions with the informants, it was revealed that:

"We offer direct discounts for bulk purchases while maintaining product quality to ensure customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. We also provide convenient payment options such as QRIS, e-wallets, and cash on delivery." (Interview with FR and SH, February 2025).

To encourage potential customers to make a purchase, Muslim fashion stores can implement strategies such as remarketing to visitors who have not completed a transaction, offering loyalty programs and first-time buyer discounts, and ensuring a smooth and secure checkout process. This strategy is further reinforced by marketing content such as articles and tutorial videos that provide education and enhance brand credibility. Although it is effective in building authority and fostering long-term relationships, content marketing requires significant time and expertise in design or writing. Its key differentiating factor lies in its focus on value creation rather than immediate sales.

Engage

Information provided by the informants indicates that:

"We follow up with customers via WhatsApp or email to inquire about their experience after purchasing our products, and we offer special deals for their next purchase." (Interview with SH, February 2025).

Customer engagement is built through interactive content such as quizzes, polls, giveaways, and outfit inspirations. WhatsApp groups are created for exclusive promotions, and offline events like hijab styling workshops or Islamic lectures are held. Follow-up messages, including thank-you notes and review requests, help maintain strong customer relationships. Email marketing serves as an effective tool for maintaining customer loyalty. Its advantages include low cost and a personalized mode of communication. However, the main challenge lies in the low open rate when emails are irrelevant or lack proper personalization. The uniqueness of this strategy lies in its ability to reach customers who have already expressed interest in the product through a direct and personal approach.

Sustainability Strategies of Muslim and Muslimah Apparel Stores in Sungai Penuh City

Valuable Resources

Each store offers high-quality products with unique designs. Their products cater to customers seeking trendy and high-quality Muslim fashion. Based on the interviews conducted, the informants from Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh revealed that:

"We always ensure that each collection is made with carefully selected materials and designs that follow the latest trends, because our customers really care about quality. We prioritize customer satisfaction, so our service is fast,

friendly, and responsive, which makes them come back." (Interview with RA, NZ, FR, SH, and AM, February 2025).

Rare Resources

They provide exclusive collections or limited editions that are not easily found in other stores, which attracts customer interest. The scarcity of the products can enhance the perception of value and the desire to own them. According to the information provided by the informants from the Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh, they explained that:

"Every year we launch a special Ramadan collection that is only available in limited quantities, making it highly sought after by our loyal customers." (Interview with NZ and RA)

Inimitable Resources

The uniqueness of the brand identity and the close relationship with customers make these stores difficult for competitors to replicate.

According to the statement from the informant at the Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh, it can be understood that:

"Here, customers can directly discuss size, color, and style with me. Other dostores is not easily replicate this personal relationship, and we don't need much online promotion; customers already know our distinctive style. They come because they feel comfortable, especially since we personally know many of our customers." (Interview with AM, February 2025)

Non-substitutable Resources

These stores create a unique shopping experience that is difficult for competitors to replace. In addition to the quality of their products, they offer supplementary services, including fashion consultations and friendly customer service. From the interviews, the informants from the Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh stated:

"We provide free styling consultations through chat or directly at the store. Customers feel helped and become more confident. We also have a loyalty program with vouchers and special discounts for returning customers. This makes them feel valued." (Interview with SH and NZ, February 2025)

Discussion

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, developed by (Barney, 1991) The Resource-Based View (RBV) emphasizes that a company's competitive advantage stems from the management of unique and valuable internal resources. RBV posits that to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage, an organization must possess and manage resources that meet four key criteria: Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable. These resources encompass not only physical assets but also

intangible assets such as managerial capabilities, brand reputation, customer loyalty, and employee expertise (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984)

In the context of Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores, the Resource-Based View (RBV) provides a relevant framework to analyze how internal advantages such as product quality, personalized service, exclusive designs, and the utilization of digital technology can create strong differentiation in a competitive market. Stores that can strategically leverage these resources are not only able to survive but also expand their market share and enhance customer loyalty. For example, the emotional connection with customers built through fashion consultation services or customer loyalty programs can become a resource that is difficult for competitors to imitate, thus contributing to the long-term sustainability of the business. (Barney, J. B., & Hesterly, 2019).

Digital Strategy in E-Commerce

According to (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017) E-commerce can be defined as the use of digital technology to create, communicate, and deliver value to customers in a more efficient manner. E-commerce involves various elements, including search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing (SMM), content marketing, pay-per-click advertising (PPC), and email marketing. These elements are integrated to achieve optimal marketing goals. For Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores, e-commerce strategies are crucial in attracting customers, building loyalty, and increasing sales. With the growing demand for sharia-compliant and modest fashion, the utilization of digital marketing enables Muslim clothing stores to reach a broader and more effective market. According to (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, 2021), E-commerce is one of the sectors that benefits the most from digital marketing strategies. By utilizing digital platforms, businesses can expand their market reach, improve transaction efficiency, and offer a more seamless shopping experience for consumers. There are several crucial elements in digital marketing for e-commerce, including:

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is a technique used to enhance a website's visibility on search engines, such as Google. In the Muslim fashion industry, using keywords such as "premium hijab" or "latest syar'i gamis" is highly effective in reaching potential customers actively searching for similar products online. This strategy makes it easier for prospective customers to find the store amidst intense digital competition (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). In addition, paying attention to SEO aspects of product images, such as using descriptive file names and adding relevant alt text tags, can help search engines understand and display products in image search results.

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social media marketing (SMM) is crucial in building brand awareness among a younger audience. With features such as Instagram Stories, TikTok Challenges, or Facebook Ads, Muslim clothing

stores can educate and inspire customers on how to wear their products, offer special promotions, and highlight religious and cultural values in their content. Furthermore, the use of storytelling techniques on social media allows brands to connect more emotionally with the audience, making the brand more memorable and fostering loyalty (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, 2021).

Content Marketing

Content marketing plays a vital role in delivering added value to customers through informative and relevant content. For instance, creating materials such as guides on selecting appropriate attire for religious events or tips for caring for hijabs can be particularly useful for the target audience. Through this approach, Muslim fashion stores are not only selling products but also offering solutions and education related to a lifestyle aligned with Islamic principles. Such educational content can foster a deeper relationship between the brand and its customers, ultimately enhancing trust and increasing conversion rates. (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017).

Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC)

PPC (Pay-Per-Click) allows Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores to reach highly specific audiences based on their search behavior, such as queries like "affordable women's gamis" or "premium hijab for sale." Additionally, by utilizing retargeting features on platforms such as Google Ads or Facebook, advertisers can display ads to users who have previously visited the store's website but have not yet made a purchase, thereby increasing the chances of conversion. PPC also enables real-time monitoring of ad performance, allowing businesses to adjust their budget and marketing strategies to achieve more optimal results (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, 2021).

Email Marketing for Customer Loyalty

Email marketing strategies for customer loyalty go beyond sending regular newsletters they aim to deliver personalized experiences. For example, by analyzing customers' purchase histories, stores can send emails containing tailored product recommendations or exclusive discounts for items previously viewed. Loyalty programs delivered via email, such as vouchers or reward points for every purchase, can also encourage repeat transactions. Moreover, email allows stores to maintain connections with customers even when they are inactive on social media, making it a highly effective channel for boosting engagement and reducing churn rates. (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). Digital marketing strategies are crucial in enhancing the competitiveness of businesses, particularly in e-commerce for Muslim and Muslimah fashion products. (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017) Introducing the RACE model (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) as a systematic framework for managing digital marketing strategies comprehensively. This model covers the entire customer relationship cycle, from the initial stage of reaching the audience to retaining customer loyalty. (Drokina, 2018) It also emphasizes that this model is highly effective in driving customer

interaction through structured digital activities. In the context of Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores based on e-commerce, the RACE model can be applied to enhance visibility, encourage interaction, convert customers, and build loyalty, as follows:

Reach

In this stage, the primary goal is to increase brand awareness and reach potential customers. Strategies such as SEO, social media marketing, influencer collaborations, and content marketing have proven effective in enhancing the visibility of online stores on digital platforms. In the context of Muslimah fashion, utilizing relevant hashtags, leveraging product visuals on Instagram and TikTok, as well as creating blog articles about the latest hijab or gamis trends, are essential tools for capturing the attention of potential customers (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017; Drokina, 2018). Stores can utilize Google Trends and keyword research to understand customer search preferences, allowing content strategies to be aligned with the dynamic needs of the market.

Act

This step focuses on encouraging the audience to engage further, such as visiting the website, reading the content, or subscribing to the email list. Attractive product page designs, informative descriptions, and customer testimonials are key factors in driving engagement. Email marketing and live shopping sessions on social media also serve as effective channels for direct interaction between the brand and potential consumers (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). Interactivity can be enhanced through short quizzes or polls on Instagram Stories, inviting followers to select their favorite collections, thereby providing insights while increasing engagement.

Convert

The conversion stage aims to turn visitors into customers. Strategies such as remarketing, first-time purchase discounts, loyalty programs, and streamlined, secure checkout processes have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. In e-commerce, the efficiency and security of payments are key determinants of successful conversion (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017; Drokina, 2018). The addition of features such as 'Buy Now, Pay Later' (BNPL) and integration with fast delivery services can also be factors that increase conversion rates, particularly for customers who value payment flexibility.

Engage

After a purchase, the brand must maintain the relationship with customers to build loyalty. Quick responses via WhatsApp or social media, retargeting campaigns, and personalized product recommendations based on purchase history are widely used strategies. Building customer communities, such as discussion groups or Muslimah fashion forums, also helps create an emotional connection between customers and the brand (Drokina, 2018). Follow-up messages

such as thank-you notes, product usage tips, and review requests also strengthen customer relationships. In addition, brands can organize competitions or exclusive giveaways for loyal customers as a form of appreciation.

In the context of sustaining business, the Resource-Based View (RBV) plays a crucial role in helping companies understand how internal resources can be strategically managed to remain competitive amidst market competition (Chaffey, 2022a). There are several critical elements in sustaining a business, which include:

Valuable Resources

A resource is considered valuable if it contributes to value creation, either through improving operational efficiency or enhancing customer satisfaction. In the context of Muslim and Muslimah clothing businesses, valuable resources include product quality, fast and friendly customer service, and digital capabilities such as social media management and e-commerce (Barney, 1991).

Rare Resources

Rare resources are those that are not possessed by many of one's competitors. Examples include exclusive collections, strong customer loyalty networks, or strategic partnerships with influential Muslimah influencers who have a significant impact in specific markets. This rarity creates a substantial differentiation between one business and its competitors (Wernerfelt, 1984).

Inimitable Resources

These resources are difficult to imitate because they are unique, built over a long history, or rely on interpersonal relationships within the organization. Service culture, brand communication style, and personal connections with customers are examples of resources that competitors cannot easily replicate (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993).

Non-substitutable Resources

A resource is considered non-substitutable if there is no alternative strategy that can provide similar benefits. For instance, a personalized shopping experience and styling consultation services provided by offline stores that have adapted to digitalization are elements that automated systems cannot easily replace (Barney, 1991; Chaffey, 2022a)

The utilization of e-commerce as a marketing strategy by Muslim and Muslimah clothing stores in Sungai Penuh is highly relevant to the theory of Chaffey and Smith (2017), which states that e-commerce involves the use of digital technologies to create and deliver value to customers efficiently. The use of SEO, educational content, social media, PPC, and email marketing is a practical implementation of these digital strategy components (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). Furthermore, promotional practices through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok reflect the approach of Social Media Marketing (SMM), which, according to Kotler et al. (2021), is

highly effective in expanding reach, enhancing engagement, and building customer loyalty, especially in the fashion sector (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, 2021).

The use of content marketing, such as blogs and tutorial videos, supports the enhancement of brand engagement and customer education. This strategy is crucial in building brand credibility and also serves as a form of value-driven information service. This aligns with the principles of content marketing, which emphasize value creation for customers (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). Furthermore, the PPC strategy and email marketing indicate that business owners understand the importance of a data-driven approach and the value of long-term relationships. The stores focus not only on acquiring new customers but also on retaining existing ones through personalized offers and precise retargeting (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, 2021).

The RACE model (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) is used to describe the customer journey in digital strategy. The informants appear to have consistently applied all four stages to create a comprehensive digital experience and support sales conversion (Chaffey, D., & Smith, 2017). The business sustainability strategy is explained using the VRIN approach (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable). The resources owned by these stores, such as personalized services, exclusive products, and emotional connections with customers, represent competitive advantages that are difficult for competitors to replicate. This indicates that they have built a loyal customer base, which serves as a long-term asset (Barney, 1991).

Conclusion

Field findings indicate that business actors have creatively and strategically adapted digital technology. They have maximized the potential of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, leveraged the power of educational content, and built personal relationships with customers, a key aspect that competitors struggle to replicate. Additionally, strategies such as styling consultations, exclusive collections, and fast, friendly customer service have further strengthened the position of these stores in a competitive market. Thus, the integration of digital marketing strategies with unique internal resources provides a strong foundation for maintaining the existence and growth of Muslim and Muslimah clothing businesses in the digital era. However, some stores still have not adopted e-commerce and continue to rely on conventional marketing strategies, such as offline promotions and word-of-mouth. This approach has limitations in reaching a broader market and adapting to changing consumer behavior in the digital age. Therefore, integrating e-commerce becomes a strategic step for business actors in Sungai Penuh City to sustain and expand their businesses in a competitive and increasingly digital market environment.

References

Badan statistik kota sungai penuh. (2023). *Kota Sungai Penuh Dalam Angka 2024.*

Barney, J. B., & Hesterly, W. S. (2019). *Strategic Management and Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases (6th ed.). Pearson.*

Barney, J. B. (1991). *Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. Journal of Management, 17(1), 99-120.*

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.*

Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R. (2017). *Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing and Integrating Online Marketing. Routledge.*

Chaffey, D. (2019). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice (7th ed.). Pearson Education.*

Chaffey, D. (2022a). *Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation, and Practice. Pearson Education.*

Chaffey, D. (2022b). *The RACE Framework: A practical digital marketing strategy. Smart Insights.*

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education (8th ed.). Routledge.*

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.*

Drokina, N. (2018). *Essential digital marketing tools across the RACE planning framework.*

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity. Wiley.*

Laudon, K. C., & Traver, C. G. (2019). *E-commerce: Business, Technology, Society (Edisi 13). Pearson Education.*

Laudon, K. C., & Traver, C. G. (2021). *E-commerce 2021: Business, Technology, and Society (16th ed.). Pearson.*

Lestari, D., & Sutabri, T. (2024). *Pemanfaatan E-Commerce dalam Penjualan Busana Muslim Menggunakan Metode Riset Marketing. Scientica: Jurnal Ilmiah Sains dan Teknologi, 2(5), 93–97.*

Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methodology (Rev. ed.). Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.*

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.*

Peteraf, M. A. (1993). *The Cornerstones of Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based View. Strategic Management Journal, 14(3), 179–191.*

Ryan, D. (2021). *Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing Strategies for Engaging the Digital Generation. Kogan Page.*

Siregar, H. (2022). Analisis Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Sarana Sosialisasi Pancasila. *Pancasila:*

Jurnal Keindonesiaan, *1*, 71–82. https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v2i1.102

Sitorus, D. P., Teknik, F., & Asahan, U. (2025). *Analisis Faktor Keberhasilan Aplikasi E-Commerce dalam Meningkatkan Penjualan di Era Digital. 1.*

Smith, P. R., & Zook, Z. (2016). *Marketing communications: Integrating offline and online with social media (6th ed.). Kogan Page.*

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta.*

Supriyanto, E. (2020). *Strategi Bisnis E-Commerce di Era Digital.*

Tahir, R., Harto, B., Rukmana, A. Y., Subekti, R., Waty, E., Situru, A. C., & Sepriano. (2023). Transformasi Bisnis di Era Digital (Teknologi Informasi dalam Mendukung Transformasi Bisnis di Era Digital). In *Sonpedia Publishing* (Issue August).

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). *A Resource-Based View of the Firm. Strategic Management Journal, 5(2), 171–180.*

Wulandari, P. (2022). Analisis Pemanfaatan E-Commerce dan Strategi Pemasaran pada Usaha Kecil Mikro Berdasarkan Perspektif Ekonomi Islam (Studi Pada Pedagang Keripik Pisang di Gang PU Kedaton Kota Bandar Lampung). *Paper Knowledge . Toward a Media History of Documents*, *Desember*, 27–28.