

The Integration Of Digital Marketing And Ecotheological Values In Export-Oriented Msmes To Access Global Markets

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Abstract

This study aims to deeply understand the experiences of export-oriented MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors in implementing digital marketing and ecotheological values as strategies to enter the global market. Employing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method, the research involved six MSMEs in Lombok and fourteen informants, consisting of business owners, production staff, and marketing personnel. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and field documentation. The findings reveal that social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook have been utilized as tools for communication and promotion. However, challenges persist, including limited human resources, concerns over design plagiarism, and irregular content updates. Several MSMEs prefer WhatsApp for its perceived safety and personal engagement, while Instagram usage is restricted to preserve the exclusivity of handmade and limited-edition products. In terms of ecotheology, MSMEs demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability through the use of local raw materials such as seashells, clay, rattan, and water hyacinth, as well as traditional production processes free from chemical additives. A notable challenge arises in obtaining eco-friendly product certification, which must be conducted outside the region and incurs additional time and cost. The findings are analyzed using five grand theories: Resource-Based Perspective (RBP) to assess competitive advantage based on local resources; Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to understand social media adoption; Digital Capability Theory to evaluate internal readiness; Green Export Strategy to highlight sustainability in export practices; and Internationalization Theory to map the process of global market expansion. This study recommends strengthening digital literacy, facilitating green certification, and developing an integrative model that combines spiritual values, technology, and culturally rooted export strategies to enhance the global competitiveness of MSMEs.

Keywords: Integration, Digital Marketing, Ecotheology, Export, Global Market

BACKGROUND

In the past decade, global economic development has become increasingly competitive and integrated, with technological innovation, digitalization, and market mobility emerging as key drivers of growth. Amidst these transformations, the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector plays a vital role as a cornerstone of national economic resilience in many developing countries, including Indonesia. MSMEs not only serve as the backbone of domestic economic

stability but also act as the largest source of employment and a catalyst for community empowerment across diverse regions (OJK Institute, 2025).

Indonesia is home to more than 65 million MSMEs, contributing approximately 61.9% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing over 97% of the total workforce (OJK Institute, 2025). The contribution of MSMEs to economic development is not only quantitative but also qualitative, as they reach informal sectors, remote areas, and culturally rooted communities. In many developing nations, MSMEs are instrumental in poverty alleviation and promoting inclusive economic growth (OECD, 2023).

West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province demonstrates dynamic regional economic growth, significantly supported by the MSME sector. According to data from the NTB Provincial Office for Cooperatives and MSMEs, the region recorded approximately 639,800 MSME units by the end of 2024, spanning sectors such as trade, culinary arts, handicrafts, and processed agriculture (Satu Data NTB, 2024). MSMEs in NTB not only absorb local labor but also drive community-based economic activities rooted in local wisdom. Their contribution to NTB's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) is substantial, particularly through wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, and agriculture, which collectively account for more than 50% of the province's total GRDP (Badan Pusat Statistik NTB, 2024).

In 2023, NTB's GRDP per capita was recorded at approximately IDR 18 million, with notable growth in small and medium industries, especially those based on local products such as organic coffee, traditional woven textiles, and locally processed foods. These figures highlight the significant potential for further development of MSMEs, particularly through export strategies that integrate digitalization and sustainability values to enhance NTB's competitiveness in both national and global markets.

West Nusa Tenggara Province, particularly Lombok Island, possesses rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources that support the growth of export-oriented MSMEs in the craft sector. Signature products such as pottery from Banyumulek, ketak weaving, and pearl jewelry from Sekarbela have become regional export icons. Although official quantitative data on the number of exporting MSMEs in pottery, ketak, and pearl sectors remains limited, reports from the NTB Department of Industry indicate that dozens of MSMEs in these sectors have participated in export programs through international exhibitions and collaborations with national exporters. Lombok pottery, known for its traditional motifs and natural firing techniques, has been exported to countries such as Japan and Australia. Meanwhile, ketak weaving, which is environmentally friendly and made from locally sourced materials, has gained popularity in European markets due to its aesthetic value and sustainability.

One notable success story is the brand "UMKM Mutiara Lombok Waidah." Based on interviews and field observations, this MSME, established in 2016, has exported its

products to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea. The business specializes in crafting authentic Lombok sea pearls combined with silver and gold materials. Marketing is conducted both offline and online, with active participation in local and international exhibitions and consistent digital promotion. International buyers have discovered the brand through exhibitions and online platforms. The success of Lombok's MSMEs in penetrating export markets demonstrates that the integration of digital marketing, institutional support, and ecotheological values can serve as an effective strategy to enhance the competitiveness of local products. This also reinforces the narrative that MSMEs are not merely domestic economic actors but also key players in Indonesia's cultural diplomacy and creative economy on the global stage.

Globalization and digital transformation demand that MSMEs adapt strategically to remain competitive in international markets. One increasingly relevant approach is export orientation through digital marketing integrated with ecotheological values. This strategy emphasizes not only efficiency and global market access but also sustainability, spirituality, and local wisdom as ethical foundations of business practice. Despite their vast potential, Indonesian MSMEs continue to face various barriers in accessing export markets. These include limited access to market information, low digital literacy, financial constraints, and insufficient understanding of international standards (Evangelista et al., 2023). On the other hand, digitalization presents new opportunities for MSMEs to reach global consumers through e-commerce platforms, social media, and digital payment systems (Nanda, 2025).

Digital export strategies enable MSMEs to reduce promotional costs, expand market reach, and enhance the competitiveness of local products. However, the success of such strategies heavily depends on technological readiness, human resource capacity, and the support of an inclusive digital ecosystem (World Bank, 2022). Digital marketing has become a crucial instrument in MSME export strategies. Through the use of social media, websites, marketplaces, and digital analytics, MSMEs can build brand awareness, establish communication with global consumers, and manage business reputation effectively (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In Indonesia, the growing use of platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Instagram has encouraged MSMEs to develop more adaptive and data-driven marketing strategies.

Nevertheless, digitalization is not merely about adopting technology it represents a transformation of organizational culture. MSMEs must cultivate a digital mindset, improve technological literacy, and build strategic partnerships to support the export process (Evangelista et al., 2023). Ecotheology is an approach that integrates spiritual, ecological, and ethical values into business practices. In the context of MSMEs, ecotheology can be manifested through the use of environmentally friendly materials, sustainable production practices, and a

commitment to social justice. This approach not only enhances brand image among global consumers who are increasingly concerned with sustainability issues, but also strengthens the local identity and spirituality of business actors (Nasution, 2021).

Integrating ecotheological values into MSME export strategies creates unique and meaningful product differentiation. Products that embody cultural heritage, spirituality, and sustainability possess distinct appeal in international markets, particularly among consumer segments that prioritize ethics and social responsibility (UNCTAD, 2023).

The synergy between digital marketing and ecotheological values creates an export strategy that is not only economically competitive but also socially and ecologically sustainable. MSMEs that successfully integrate digital technology with local narratives, spirituality, and sustainability are positioned to gain strong leverage in global markets. This strategy aligns with emerging global consumer trends that increasingly prioritize transparency, authenticity, and ethical values in product selection (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that digital marketing serves as a critical catalyst in driving MSME exports. Sharabati et al. (2024) found that the use of social media, e-commerce, and digital content strategies significantly enhances export performance among MSMEs in Jordan, particularly in terms of global visibility and communication efficiency. Similarly, Singh et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of green export strategies in boosting MSME competitiveness in sustainable agriculture, with innovation and policy support acting as mediating factors. Mala et al. (2024), in their study on Indonesian MSMEs, highlighted the role of digital leadership in expanding global market access. However, most of these studies remain focused on technical and performance aspects, without incorporating spiritual, ecological, and cultural values as integral components of export strategy.

Furthermore, the work of Knight and Cavusgil (2004) on born-global firms illustrates that MSMEs leveraging digital technology from inception can penetrate international markets without following traditional stages of internationalization. Nevertheless, this approach has yet to be widely connected to locally rooted sustainability narratives. Research by UNCTAD (2023) and Porter & Kramer (2011) underscores that global consumers increasingly value products that embody ethical standards, sustainability, and cultural authenticity. This opens up opportunities for MSMEs that can integrate digitalization with ecotheological values—such as spirituality, environmental ethics, and local storytelling—to build meaningful product differentiation and foster market loyalty. Therefore, a significant research gap remains in exploring the integration of digital marketing strategies with ecotheological values as a pathway for export-oriented MSMEs to enter global markets.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the experiences of export-oriented MSME actors in implementing digital marketing strategies to enter the global market.
2. To examine the experiences of export-oriented MSME actors in applying ecotheological values as a sustainability and product differentiation approach in the global market.
3. To understand the challenges faced by export-oriented MSMEs and their strategies for integrating digital marketing with ecotheological values in accessing global markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is a strategic approach that emphasizes a firm's competitive advantage as stemming from internal resources that are unique, rare, difficult to imitate, and irreplaceable (Barney, 1991). These resources may include physical assets, organizational capabilities, knowledge, cultural values, and embedded sustainability practices within business operations. In the context of export-oriented MSMEs, RBV is relevant for assessing how local resources such as ecotheological values, digitalization, and community networks serve as strategic strengths for entering global markets. Kaur and Kumar (2024) highlight that optimizing internal resources, including digital marketing and product innovation, is essential for MSME internationalization strategies. Furthermore, Beamish and Chakravarty (2021) argue that firms capable of integrating local values into global strategies are more likely to build sustainable competitive advantages. Ecotheological values such as sustainability, local spirituality, and ethical production can be categorized as intangible resources that contribute to product differentiation in international markets. Kero and Bogale (2023) combine RBV with dynamic capabilities theory to explain that the primary challenge for MSMEs is not merely possessing resources, but having the ability to adapt and develop those resources in changing contexts. In this regard, the challenges of digitalization and the internalization of ecotheological values form part of the dynamic capability landscape faced by MSMEs.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was first introduced by Davis (1989) to explain the factors influencing individual acceptance of technology. The model is built upon two core constructs: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), both of which directly affect users' attitudes and intentions toward using technology. In the context of export-oriented MSMEs, TAM can be applied to understand how business actors evaluate the benefits and ease of

use of digital marketing tools such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and other digital channels in reaching global markets.

Sharabati et al. (2024) emphasize that MSMEs are more likely to adopt digital marketing when they perceive direct benefits to business performance and when the technology is easily integrated into their operational processes. Therefore, MSME actors' perceptions of the effectiveness and usability of technology are critical to the successful implementation of digital marketing strategies.

Digital Capability Theory

The successful implementation of digital marketing is strongly influenced by an organization's digital capability. This theory emphasizes that digital capability encompasses not only access to technology, but also the skills, strategic orientation, and organizational adaptability to digital transformation (Deku et al., 2024). In the context of export-oriented MSMEs, digital capability includes the ability to manage customer data, establish a strong digital presence, and respond swiftly and efficiently to global market dynamics. Deku et al. (2024) demonstrate that MSMEs with a clear technological orientation and structured digital strategies tend to be more successful in leveraging digital marketing to enhance their competitiveness in international markets. This indicates that digital capability is a strategic resource that can serve as a source of competitive advantage, in alignment with the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

This theory explains how firms build and reconfigure internal capabilities to respond sustainably to changes in the business environment (Teece et al., 1997). In the context of export-oriented MSMEs, the ability to adapt ecotheological values into business and export strategies represents a critical form of dynamic capability. Kwartati et al. (2025) emphasize that MSMEs capable of developing dynamic capabilities rooted in local values and sustainability tend to possess stronger export competitiveness. The experiences of MSME actors in internalizing ecotheological values reflect a process of learning and adaptation, which lies at the core of this theoretical framework.

Green Export Strategy

The Green Export Strategy is an approach that emphasizes the integration of sustainability principles throughout the entire export process, from product design and production to distribution. This strategy includes the use of environmentally friendly materials, energy efficiency, and ethical values that reflect a company's social and ecological responsibility. Singh et al. (2024) state that MSMEs implementing green export strategies demonstrate improved export performance through product innovation, organizational readiness, and environmentally oriented activities. Ecotheological values such as ecological awareness and local spirituality can be incorporated into this strategy, contributing to a unique and meaningful product differentiation in international markets.

Internationalization Theory

Internationalization Theory describes the gradual process by which firms enter international markets, beginning with passive exporting and progressing toward the establishment of foreign operations. This theory emphasizes the importance of learning, market knowledge accumulation, and incremental risk reduction (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). Giakoulas (2025) notes that MSMEs face various challenges in the internationalization process, including limited resources, lack of market information, and regulatory barriers. Strategies employed to overcome these challenges include collaboration, product adaptation, and the use of digital technologies to reduce costs and enhance market access.

Previous Research

Previous studies serve as a critical foundation for constructing the conceptual framework and analytical direction of this research. By reviewing relevant scholarly work, researchers can gain insights into the theoretical and empirical dynamics that have evolved, while also identifying underexplored research gaps. Several pertinent studies include Sharabati et al. (2024), who demonstrate that the adoption of digital technology by MSMEs is influenced by perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, as outlined in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Social media, e-commerce, and search engine optimization (SEO) are identified as key channels for enhancing visibility and access to international markets.

Alsharif et al. (2023) further emphasize that social influence and organizational support play a significant role in driving digital technology adoption among MSMEs, particularly in developing countries. Meanwhile, Nguyen et al. (2024) highlight the importance of dynamic capabilities in integrating digital marketing into export strategies, showing that strategic technological adaptation contributes to long-term competitiveness.

Ecotheological values, which combine ecological awareness and local spirituality, are increasingly recognized as a strategic approach in sustainable business practices. Singh et al. (2024) argue that green export strategies integrating sustainability principles and product innovation can enhance the export performance of MSMEs. Products that embody environmental values and ethical production practices hold unique appeal in global markets that are increasingly concerned with sustainability. Bhardwaj and Jain (2024) add that circular economy and digital approaches can further strengthen the export competitiveness of MSMEs. Degregori et al. (2025) show that sustainability reporting based on local values and digital technologies is becoming a common practice among export-oriented MSMEs.

Several studies have attempted to link digital marketing with sustainability, but have not explicitly integrated ecotheological values. Noer et al. (2025), through a bibliometric analysis of 754 articles, conclude that the literature remains fragmented and lacks deep integration of sustainability aspects within MSME digital strategies.

Saputra and Zawawi (2023) emphasize that digitalization supports export efficiency and sustainability, yet does not address the dimension of local spirituality. Gustina (2020) identifies sustainable digital marketing strategies for MSMEs, but the approach remains technical and does not incorporate ecotheological values as a basis for export product differentiation.

Thus, a significant research gap remains. No existing studies have explicitly integrated ecotheological values into the digital marketing strategies of export-oriented MSMEs. A phenomenological approach—emphasizing meaning, values, and the lived experiences of MSME actors in internalizing local spirituality and digital technology—is particularly relevant to address this gap. This study contributes not only academically by expanding the conceptual framework of sustainability and digitalization, but also practically by offering insights for designing value-based export strategies that are both contextual and sustainable.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data

Data collection is a process that involves searching for, selecting, and gathering relevant information from various sources to provide insights into the phenomenon under study. In this research, data were collected through interviews, non-participant observation, and relevant documentation. The research sites included three types of MSMEs located on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara, comprising a total of six MSMEs. These include MSMEs producing pearl and seashell crafts—namely Regenda MOP and Mutiara Lombok Waidah; MSMEs specializing in pottery namely Dimas Patuh and Lombok Putri Cinderamata/Pottery; and MSMEs producing ketak, rattan, and bamboo crafts namely Unique Art Shop and Purnama Shop. These MSMEs are situated in different locations and are distinguished by their locally rooted products, which are handmade or traditionally crafted using materials sourced from the surrounding environment. Notably, these enterprises have successfully exported their products to several countries, as evidenced by photographic documentation and export-related documents.

Interview data were obtained from key informants and supporting informants. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, in which research subjects were determined based on the researcher's judgment (Turner, 2020). The selection of informants was guided by the consideration that they possessed the necessary knowledge and were directly involved in the implementation of digital marketing and ecotheological values within export-oriented MSMEs entering global markets, as well as in addressing the challenges and strategies faced by these enterprises. Interviews are one of the most essential sources in qualitative research for gaining deep insights into how individuals experience, perceive, and interpret the social world (Creswell, 2014). This study employed semi-structured interviews, which followed a set of open-ended questions. This method allowed new questions to emerge based on the responses provided by informants, enabling a deeper

exploration of the subject matter during the interview sessions. Interviews were conducted with both key and supporting informants using an open-ended interview guide. They were carried out in both formal and informal settings to gather information relevant to the sub-focus areas of the research. All interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and subsequently transcribed into written form for analysis.

The informants in this study consist of business owners or persons in charge of MSMEs, who serve as key informants for obtaining data relevant to the research objectives. These MSME owners possess highly relevant and essential knowledge and experience. They are considered key informants because they are the primary actors responsible for decision-making and the implementation of digital marketing integration and ecotheological values, as well as having direct insight into the challenges faced by their enterprises. Additional data sources were obtained through interviews with supporting informants from within the MSMEs, such as marketing staff or employees involved in identifying customer needs, exploring market opportunities, promoting products, and engaging directly with customers. Interviews were also conducted with production staff involved in the manufacturing process, including product and technological innovation, as well as resource management within the MSMEs. The number of key informants in this study consists of six MSME owners, while the supporting informants include eight employees (from marketing and production divisions), resulting in a total of 14 informants.

In addition to interviews, data collection was also conducted through observation. According to Angrosino (2007), observation involves perceiving phenomena in the field through the researcher's five senses, often with instruments or devices, and recording them for scientific purposes. In this study, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer. Observations were carried out at the locations of export-oriented MSMEs.

The observations included examining the product-making process, the materials used, the tools employed, and observing the workers involved in production. The researcher also observed the products resulting from innovation efforts by the MSMEs, as well as the social media platforms used for promotional activities, such as Instagram, TikTok, and others.

Documentation refers to records of past events. In this study, documentation was obtained from both the researcher and the MSMEs relevant to the research sub-focus. These included photographs of products, exhibitions attended by the MSMEs, Certificates of Origin (SKA/COC), official invitations from ambassadors for exhibitions, and other activities carried out by the MSMEs.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design, as it aims to describe and interpret the lived experiences of export-oriented

MSME actors in Lombok, particularly those rooted in local wisdom, in implementing digital marketing and ecotheological values to enter global markets. Data analysis in this study involves organizing, interpreting, and connecting the collected data to uncover the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation.

The data organization stage involves collecting, arranging, and storing data in a systematic format to facilitate access and further analysis. In this study, data were gathered from interviews, observation notes, and relevant documents. The next stage reading and understanding the data was carried out by repeatedly reviewing the data to gain a deep comprehension. This process aims to grasp the overall content and emotional tone of the data. In-depth reading helps the researcher identify recurring ideas or phrases that may serve as the foundation for subsequent coding. Coding and categorizing the data involves identifying meaningful units within the data and assigning codes to them. These codes represent the initial step in grouping data into specific themes or patterns. Categorization follows by clustering similar codes into broader categories, which form the basis for identifying key themes or patterns. Identifying core themes is the next step, where the researcher determines the main themes emerging from the grouped codes or categories that represent deeper patterns within the data. This process aims to uncover the essence of the phenomenon under investigation, thereby making the research findings more focused and meaningful. Presenting the findings involves organizing the results into coherent narratives or descriptive accounts. Interpreting the meaning is the final stage, in which the researcher analyzes the themes through a hermeneutic lens connecting them to the social and cultural context to uncover the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

In addition to data analysis, qualitative research requires validation of findings to meet credibility standards. According to Creswell (2014), this can be achieved through various techniques, including triangulation. This study employed multiple methods of data collection, such as observation, interviews, and documentation, allowing the researcher to validate findings and ensure that the data obtained are consistent and accurate from multiple perspectives. The researcher also conducted source triangulation by interviewing several key and supporting informants to verify the accuracy of the information. Cross-checking data obtained from different informants helped ensure consistency and enhance the validity of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that all MSMEs have implemented digital marketing in their promotional activities. For instance, Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME, which previously relied solely on Facebook and WhatsApp, now utilizes platforms such as TikTok Live, Instagram, Padi, and Blibli for marketing purposes. According to the owner, social media has proven to be more profitable, as marketplace platforms often struggle to compete

with mass-produced goods offered at lower prices. Consequently, marketplaces are used primarily to signal the presence of their store, rather than as a main sales channel. One of the limitations faced by MSMEs is their inability to produce goods in large quantities within a short timeframe, as their products are entirely handmade. Based on observations, Mutiara Lombok Wahidah is one of the most active MSMEs in utilizing digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. This includes creating content and conducting live sessions on TikTok. The MSME is also active in sharing product photos on Instagram and within a dedicated WhatsApp group for resellers. According to the owner of Mutiara Lombok Wahidah, Instagram and WhatsApp are effective in attracting buyers, including those from overseas, while TikTok primarily reaches domestic customers interested in purchasing their products.

Observations of the WhatsApp reseller group managed by Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME, which consists of approximately 126 members, revealed that product photos are shared daily both new items and reposts of existing products. These photos are accompanied by pricing information. In addition to images, short videos are also distributed. For example, a newly launched product shared in the group was a brooch mixed with a pendant made from shell and silver, offered at a selling price of Rp. 925,000. The accompanying photo also illustrated how the product could be worn either as a brooch or as a necklace accessory.



Figure 1. One of the New Product Photos Shared via Instagram and WhatsApp Group

(Source: Documentation of Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME)

Digital marketing has become a strategic necessity for MSMEs, particularly those producing handmade goods with limited production capacity. Based on field data from interviews, observations, and documentation, Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME demonstrates active adoption of digital platforms, transitioning from basic usage of Facebook and WhatsApp to more dynamic channels such as TikTok Live, Instagram, Padi, and Blibli. This shift reflects global trends, as noted by Gusipian and Zahri (2024), who argue that social media enables craft-based MSMEs to overcome geographical constraints and promote their products through visual storytelling and

community engagement. The owner's preference for social media over marketplace platforms is grounded in economic logic. As revealed in interviews, marketplaces often favor low-cost, mass-produced items, making it difficult for handmade producers to compete. This aligns with the findings of Ekasari (2024), who emphasizes that digital platforms allow MSMEs to preserve brand authenticity and reach niche markets without compromising on price. In this case, the marketplace serves more as a visibility tool than a primary sales channel—a strategy that reflects digital literacy and adaptive marketing practices.

The use of a WhatsApp reseller group by Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME, with 126 active members, reflects a micro-community marketing model. The daily distribution of product photos and short videos including usage demonstrations (e.g., how to wear a shell and silver brooch as a necklace pendant) illustrates content-based engagement. According to Sunggara et al. (2024), visual content and direct communication are key drivers of consumer trust and purchase intention among MSMEs, especially when targeting international buyers through platforms such as Instagram.

Moreover, the observed segmentation TikTok for domestic reach and Instagram/WhatsApp for international interest demonstrates a platform-based strategy, which is characteristic of mature digital marketing implementation. This supports the notion that MSMEs should tailor their digital presence based on audience behavior and platform dynamics (Guspian & Zahri, 2024). In conclusion, the digital marketing practices of Mutiara Lombok Wahidah MSME reflect a thoughtful

integration of local wisdom, handmade product authenticity, and platform-driven strategy.

The results of interviews and observations with the person in charge of Dimas Patuh MSME indicate that digital marketing has been adopted through social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Email. Instagram is used to share images and videos of activities. Customized product photos are typically uploaded only after obtaining permission from customers. Usually, customer-related content is posted several months after the sale, depending on consent—except for designs that are originally created by the MSME itself. Ragenda MOP MSME, which produces limited-edition pearl jewelry, utilizes digital marketing exclusively through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. However, the MSME refrains from posting many product designs online to prevent plagiarism.

According to the person in charge, Lombok Pottery MSME has also adopted digital marketing in its promotional activities. Previously relying solely on email, it now utilizes a website, Instagram, Facebook, and PADI UMKM. These platforms are used to offer products to inactive, active, and new customers by continuously sharing new products and updating content on social media. Similarly, the owners of Purnama Shop and Unique Artshop stated that, in addition to participating in exhibitions, they also conduct online marketing through Instagram, TikTok,

Facebook, WhatsApp, and PADI UMKM. Instagram is specifically used to share activity videos and product photos, allowing followers to view the MSMEs' offerings.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that all MSMEs have implemented digital marketing to promote their products, targeting both domestic and international markets. For several MSMEs with international market reach, Instagram, email, and WhatsApp have proven to be more effective than other social media platforms. MSMEs that produce limited-edition or custom products tend to avoid posting extensive design content on social media to protect their uniqueness. Digital marketing serves as a key communication tool with consumers, especially for introducing new products. This approach is effective in helping MSMEs enter export markets, as strong communication fosters meaningful relationships with potential buyers and business partners abroad. Moreover, through ongoing communication, MSMEs gain insights into customer preferences, enabling them to tailor products to market needs.

Based on interviews with several MSMEs, they expressed hope that the product photos they share will attract buyers. The presence of visual content and product samples helps buyers make purchasing decisions, ultimately leading to actual transactions. The MSMEs' experience of sending new product photos and engaging with buyers has resulted in confirmed purchases from customers.

Several MSMEs, particularly those producing pearl and seashell jewelry, face limitations in sharing new product photos via social media due to concerns over design imitation. However, the MSME owners believe that the unique characteristics of the raw shell materials—each with distinct patterns—make replication difficult. In contrast, pottery-based MSMEs prefer to introduce new products through email or WhatsApp, as many customers do not wish for their purchased items to be copied. Therefore, new products shared on social media platforms such as Instagram are only posted after obtaining customer consent, typically several months after the transaction.

The implementation of digital marketing among export-oriented MSMEs producing handmade goods reflects a strategic adaptation to global market demands. Observations of several MSMEs in Lombok—including Dimas Patuh, Ragenda MOP, Lombok Pottery, Purnama Shop, and Unique Artshop—show that platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and email are used not only for promotional purposes but also to build customer relationships and preserve product uniqueness. This aligns with the findings of Dwivedi et al. (2021), who emphasize that social media marketing empowers small businesses to engage with customers through personalized content and foster brand authenticity in competitive environments.

Several MSMEs demonstrate caution in sharing product designs, particularly for custom-made or limited-edition items. For example, pearl jewelry producers such as Ragenda MOP and pottery-based MSMEs like Dimas Patuh delay publishing their designs until they receive customer consent, as a means of protecting against the risk of digital plagiarism. This practice aligns with the perspective of Kumar et al. (2022), who argue that digital marketing strategies must strike a balance between visibility and intellectual property protection, especially within the creative industries. Such an approach helps preserve the uniqueness of handmade products while still leveraging the reach of digital platforms.

In addition, the use of WhatsApp and email for direct communication with buyers particularly in the context of export highlights the importance of relational marketing approaches. According to Chatterjee and Kar (2020), personalized digital communication fosters trust and facilitates cross-border transactions, especially when visual content such as product photos and usage demonstrations is shared regularly. This is reflected in the practices of MSMEs that send daily updates, videos, and sample images to reseller groups and international buyers.

A platform-based strategy is also evident, with Instagram and email preferred for reaching international markets, while TikTok proves more effective for domestic audiences. This segmentation reflects a deep understanding of cross-platform audience behavior, supporting the view of Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) that effective digital marketing requires content adaptation and channel selection based on consumer preferences and cultural context. Thus, the digital marketing practices of MSMEs in Lombok illustrate a thoughtful integration of technological adoption, cultural sensitivity, and strategic communication.

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Figure 2. Souvenirs Inspired by Local Wisdom (Bale Lumbung and Peresean)
(Source: Documentation of Ragenda MOP)

One of the MSMEs specializing in ketak (woven grass) crafts has innovated its products by drawing inspiration from local wisdom, such as the traditional gandeke bagan oldstyle rattan bag which has been modified into contemporary items like handbags, food covers, and lampshades. Pottery-producing MSMEs have also incorporated local cultural designs such as teapots and water jars, while combining materials with decorative elements made from cukli (inlaid shell), eggshells, rattan, and coconut shells. These MSMEs maintain traditional production processes, emphasizing the narrative value of their crafts and avoiding chemical additives, making their products suitable for food contact. The coloring process remains natural, without synthetic paints or substances. The clay used has a distinct texture that, when fired, produces a brighter and more refined terracotta finish compared to other regions. Moreover, the products have received food safety certification from the TUV laboratory in Hong Kong. The practices of MSMEs in Lombok in implementing ecotheological values reflect an entrepreneurial approach that prioritizes not only economic gain but also environmental preservation, local spirituality, and social sustainability. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, MSMEs such as Ragenda MOP, ketak artisans, and pottery makers demonstrate that the use of shell waste, local materials like rattan and clay, and traditional chemical-free production methods are not merely production strategies, but expressions of ecotheological values embedded in the community.

The concept of ecotheology in the MSME context can be understood as the integration of spiritual values, environmental ethics, and sustainable business practices. As explained by Luetz and Nunn (2023), spirituality and sustainability are

interrelated dimensions that are often overlooked in conventional development approaches. They emphasize that sustainable development must incorporate local and spiritual values as part of a more holistic strategy. In the practices of Lombok's MSMEs, this is reflected in their commitment to natural coloring processes, avoidance of chemicals, and the preservation of culturally rooted designs such as lumbung-shaped brooches and gandeke bags.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with the theory of ecological wisdom developed by Yang and Young (2019), who define ecological wisdom as knowledge and practices that integrate local traditions with scientific approaches to create sustainable socio-ecological solutions. MSMEs that produce pottery using Lombok's distinctive clay and have obtained food safety certification from international laboratories such as TUV Hong Kong demonstrate that local wisdom can synergize with global standards without compromising identity. This affirms that sustainability does not have to come at the expense of quality or international competitiveness.

In the context of the circular economy, the utilization of non-exportable seashell waste as raw material for home décor and jewelry serves as a tangible example of resource circularity. This approach not only reduces waste but also generates added value rooted in local creativity and aesthetics. According to Bani-Khaled et al. (2025), the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) dimensions of business are not only relevant to large corporations but can also be applied by MSMEs to enhance their value and competitiveness. The practices of Lombok's MSMEs in maintaining ethical production, fostering transparent communication with customers, and engaging local communities represent concrete applications of ESG principles at a micro scale.

Moreover, the communication strategies employed by MSMEs through platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and email to share product stories, distribute images, and build relationships with buyers demonstrate that ecotheological values are also embedded in their market interactions. Ethical communication, visual content sharing, and respect for customer privacy are part of a business spirituality that places human relationships and social connection at the center of economic activity. This supports the view of Chatterjee and Kar (2020), who argue that personalized digital communication can enhance trust and strengthen cross-cultural and international business relationships.

Overall, the practices of export-oriented MSMEs in Lombok illustrate that ecotheological values can be meaningfully implemented in product design, production processes, marketing strategies, and customer relations. This is not merely about technical sustainability, but about a form of sustainability rooted in spirituality, culture, and community ethics. In an era of globalization and digitalization, such an approach offers a powerful and meaningful alternative to conventional business models that often overlook human and ecological dimensions.

MSMEs implementing digital marketing and ecotheological values in their efforts to enter global markets also face several challenges. Based on observations, although many MSMEs utilize social media, some have not updated their product offerings in recent times. Most MSME owners appear to be more active in updating their WhatsApp status to showcase business activities, including uploading recent product photos. One MSME, due to concerns about product imitation, refrains from

posting extensively on Instagram, particularly because their products are produced in unlimited quantities.

Nevertheless, MSMEs continue to promote their products through social media platforms such as Instagram, primarily for branding purposes. While Instagram poses a risk of design imitation, shell-based products are considered more difficult to replicate. When customers express interest and place orders, MSMEs typically offer several product options. Another challenge, as noted by Ragenda MOP MSME, is the limited utilization of social media due to human resource constraints. Despite this, they still manage to attract domestic buyers through digital marketing. According to the researcher, this HR-related challenge is not unique to Ragenda MOP but is also experienced by other MSMEs such as Lombok Pottery.

In applying ecotheological values such as preserving traditional production processes, emphasizing product narratives, and maintaining purely handmade methods without mass production MSMEs often struggle to meet market demand, necessitating careful production scheduling. Another challenge faced by pottery MSMEs is the need to obtain chemical-free certification from laboratories outside the region, which requires additional time and financial resources. However, for MSMEs using natural materials, some do not face significant obstacles, as they utilize locally available dyes such as gambir. Similarly, pottery MSMEs use clay and often incorporate water hyacinth, which is abundant around Lombok's waterways. MSMEs producing ketak, bamboo, and rattan crafts also source their materials from forests and plantations surrounding the island.

The implementation of digital marketing and ecotheological values by export-oriented MSMEs in Lombok as part of their efforts to enter global markets represents a strategic initiative that blends technological innovation with the preservation of local wisdom. However, based on observations and interviews, this process is not without challenges. MSMEs face structural, technical, and cultural obstacles that affect the effectiveness of their digital strategies and the sustainability of their production.

One of the main challenges is the irregularity in updating digital content, particularly on platforms such as Instagram. Several MSMEs are more active on WhatsApp, using it to showcase business activities such as uploading recent product photos or documenting production processes. This indicates that while social media has been adopted, its strategic utilization remains suboptimal. According to Munmun (2023), artisan-based MSMEs often face a dilemma between digital exposure and the risk of design imitation, especially in culturally rooted creative industries. Concerns about plagiarism lead business owners to hesitate in publicly sharing product designs, particularly for limited-edition or custom items. While this strategy protects product identity, it also limits digital market reach.

In addition, human resource (HR) constraints pose a significant challenge. MSMEs such as Ragenda MOP and Lombok Pottery acknowledge that they lack dedicated personnel capable of managing social media consistently and professionally. According to Rubedo et al. (2024), the digital transformation of MSMEs rooted in local wisdom requires adequate HR capacity to ensure the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Without training and mentoring, the potential of social media as an export tool cannot be fully realized. This issue is compounded by low digital literacy among MSME actors, making them more comfortable using personal platforms like WhatsApp rather than public platforms such as Instagram or TikTok.

On the ecotheological front, MSMEs demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability and spiritual values in production. The continued use of traditional techniques, natural materials such as gambir, clay, water hyacinth, and rattan, and the rejection of mass production reflect ecotheological principles rooted in local wisdom. Nonetheless, challenges persist. For example, pottery MSMEs must send their products to laboratories outside the region to obtain chemical-free certification, which requires additional time and financial resources. According to Sugito et al. (2024), culture- and ecology-based MSMEs often face administrative and logistical barriers in meeting international standards, despite their products being intrinsically sustainable. This highlights the need for supportive policies and infrastructure to facilitate MSMEs' access to certification and export markets.

The ecotheological approach adopted by Lombok's MSMEs aligns with the ideas of Luetz and Nunn (2023), who emphasize that spirituality and sustainability are interconnected dimensions often overlooked in conventional development frameworks. In the MSME context, values such as simplicity, sustainability, and reverence for nature are reflected in product design, production processes, and communication strategies. Products such as lumbung-shaped brooches, rattan gande bags, and pottery adorned with natural elements not only showcase creativity but also embody local spirituality, offering a unique appeal in global markets.

This concept is also supported by the theory of ecological wisdom developed by Yang and Young (2019). They define ecological wisdom as a scientific and practical approach that integrates traditional and modern knowledge to achieve sustainable socio-ecological development. MSMEs that produce pottery using Lombok's distinctive clay and have obtained food safety certification from international laboratories demonstrate that local wisdom can synergize with global standards without losing its identity. This proves that sustainability does not have to come at the expense of quality or international competitiveness.

Overall, export-oriented MSMEs in Lombok are strategically positioned to integrate ecotheological values with digital marketing. However, to fully realize this potential, support is needed in areas such as human resource capacity building, design

protection, access to certification, and digital literacy. An approach that combines technology, spirituality, and local wisdom not only enhances the competitiveness of MSMEs but also contributes meaningfully to the global narrative on ethical production, sustainability, and the preservation of cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of a study on export-oriented MSMEs in Lombok, it can be concluded that the implementation of digital marketing and ecotheological values has become a vital strategy in efforts to enter global markets. MSMEs utilize social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to establish communication with customers, introduce products, and maintain brand presence. However, the execution of these strategies still faces various challenges, including limitations in human resources (HR), concerns over design plagiarism, irregular digital content updates, and administrative barriers in obtaining certification for natural materials.

From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), MSMEs have leveraged unique resources such as locally sourced raw materials, culturally inspired designs, and handmade production processes as competitive advantages. Nevertheless, limitations in digital management indicate that internal capabilities are not yet fully optimized. Through the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), social media adoption is influenced by perceived ease of use and usefulness, yet resistance to open platforms like Instagram reveals psychological and structural barriers. The Digital Capability Theory reinforces the finding that successful digital transformation is highly dependent on internal capacity, including digital literacy and content management.

Within the framework of the Green Export Strategy, ecotheological values – such as the use of natural materials and the preservation of local culture – serve as important assets for penetrating increasingly sustainability-driven export markets, although certification challenges remain a significant obstacle. Meanwhile, Internationalization Theory suggests that Lombok's MSMEs are in the early stages of internationalization, with digital strategies and local values serving as the foundation for building networks and trust in foreign markets.

For future research, it is recommended to focus on strengthening MSMEs' digital capabilities through community-based training models that include digital literacy, content management, and digital security. Additionally, a conceptual model should be developed that integrates ecotheological values with digital marketing strategies based on TAM and RBV, to explore how spirituality and sustainability can enhance global customer loyalty. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to map the stages of internationalization among MSMEs producing cultural and handmade products, and to identify the driving and inhibiting factors. On the policy side, further studies may explore how local and national governments can facilitate

eco-friendly product certification and provide incentives for MSMEs implementing green export strategies. Finally, comparative studies across regions with similar cultural and product characteristics could offer new insights into success patterns and challenges in the internationalization process rooted in local values.

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