Information And Communication Technology Strategy Of The Cooperative And Sme Trade Office In Empowering Small And Medium-Sized Enterprises Based On Sharia And Islamic Education In East Aceh District

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze and explain the information and communication technology strategy of the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs in empowering micro, small and medium enterprises based on Islamic and sharia education in East Aceh Regency. This research method is qualitative-descriptive which is applied with a phenomenological approach. Based on the research results, researchers found that the use of communication technology by the East Aceh Regency Cooperative and SME Trade Service through the use of web pages as a means of communication and information, shows their commitment to facing the challenges of the digital era as well as showing efforts to encourage the development of sharia-based Islamic education. In an effort to optimize the empowerment of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in East Aceh Regency, the Cooperative and SME Trade Service has formulated a strategy that includes providing the latest information through communication technology, especially through website pages tailored for SMEs. This strategy not only emphasizes conveying information, but also ensures direct involvement of SMEs in the process, so that they can easily access empowerment programs that are relevant to their needs and interests.

Keywords: Information, Communication, Technology, Islamic Education, Sharia

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a story or path to develop and direct oneself into a human figure who has a main and perfect personality Technology has become an integral part of human life, influencing various aspects, including communication (Irwan et al., 2023). These technological innovations not only improve the way humans work and interact, but also open up new opportunities that were previously unimaginable. In the modern era, technology has succeeded in making a major contribution to practical human life. For example, the development of information and communication technology has made it easier for humans to communicate without the limitations of distance and time (Aly et al., 2023). This is in line with the view of (Nur Hidayat et al., 2024) who says that modern technology has brought significant changes in the way humans communicate. He said that with the internet and mobile devices, social interactions have become easier and more efficient. For example, social media platforms allow people to share information and interact in real-time without geographic barriers. In addition, communication technology has replaced traditional ways of communication.

This is in line with the opinion of (Cholik, 2021) that technology has become the main driver in changing the way humans communicate and interact. In this modern age, we can easily connect with people all over the world with just a few clicks. Social media, for example, has become a platform for people to share their ideas, experiences and views instantly. Not only that, technology also allows us to engage in discussions and debates that cross geographical and cultural boundaries (Wilcox et al., 2014; Fauzan et al., 2023).

In the government sector, developments in communication technology also play an important role, where the government can empower the public more effectively and efficiently, which allows the government to increase transparency and accountability through e-government platforms that make it easier to access public information and administrative services (Innes, 1998; Indainanto et al., 2023)). In addition, communication technology allows citizen participation in online decision-making processes, so that people can be more easily involved (Rubino et al., 2023). With technology, information can be disseminated quickly, enabling a more responsive response to community needs and complaints (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Sikumbang et al., 2024).

In this study, researchers focused on efforts to empower Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) carried out by the East Aceh Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service. The main focus of the research is the use of communication technology, especially online communication platforms, as a tool to strengthen and support SMEs. Through observations, it was found that the Department adopted various digital platforms to optimize reach and efficiency in providing support to SMEs. This step was taken to ensure that all SMEs in East Aceh Regency can access the information, training and resources needed to develop their businesses. This approach includes the use of social media, instant messaging applications and e-commerce portals to help SMEs expand their markets and increase their business capacity.

According to (Saifuddin, 2020) in his research, information and communication technology has become the main driver in the transformation of SME businesses in various regions. He highlighted that the adoption of digital technology by SMEs allows them to be more competitive in the global market and improve their operational efficiency. This research shows that SMEs that utilize digital platforms tend to experience improvements in terms of

marketing, sales and operational management compared to SMEs that still rely on conventional methods.

In this study, the researcher uses a sharia-based approach through Islamic communication and Islamic education as an analytical tool, where the researcher considers that this approach makes it possible to explore and understand the values and principles that underlie the interaction between the Cooperative and SME Trade Service with SME actors in Aceh Regency East. This approach allows researchers to examine aspects of communication that are in accordance with Islamic teachings, such as honesty, justice and social responsibility, as well as how these values are implemented by the Cooperative and SME Trade Service in empowering SMEs through communication technology.

The researcher's assumption is based on the results of research A which suggests that Islamic communication plays an important role in the process of influencing the views of communicants. According to B, the communication process is not limited to distributing messages, but also involves obtaining a response, therefore, Islamic communication plays an important role, because its principles prioritize ethical aspects which greatly influence communication responses. Apart from that, C also expressed in his opinion that Islamic communication not only plays a role in conveying messages, but also in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of communicants through an approach that prioritizes moral and ethical values. Based on this background phenomenon, researchers were motivated to examine the Information and Communication Technology Strategy of the Cooperative Trade and SME Service in Empowering Sharia-Based Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in East Aceh Regency.

B. METHODS

This type of research is qualitative-descriptive which is applied with a phenomenological approach. This research is classified as qualitative, because the researcher observed natural phenomena from the Cooperative and SME Trade Service and SME actors who were the objects of the research. The findings that have been collected in the research are processed through data analysis techniques, then explained descriptively regarding aspects of causality and elements of novelty. This is in line with the view (Creswell, 2013). The approach used in this research is a phenomenological research approach. This research was carried out to build knowledge through understanding and discovery. In analyzing the data that has been collected, the author uses descriptive analysis. Biklen's opinion (2014) states that the characteristics of qualitative research are natural, the data is descriptive, not numbers, data analysis is inductive, and meaning is very important in qualitative research. In qualitative research, the main focus is on in-depth understanding of how subjects experience and give meaning to the phenomena being studied, using a variety of data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and text analysis (Chatra et al., 2023). Informants for this research were determined using a purposive sampling technique, where informants were determined based on classification and criteria appropriate to the research context. Purposive sampling technique was used to select informants based on certain considerations relevant to the research objectives (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Bungin, 2001; Pawito, 2008). The choice of type and approach to this research was based on the significance of the information and communication technology phenomenon used by the Cooperative and SME

Trade Service in efforts to empower micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in East Aceh Regency.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Islamic Education, Economic, And Religion As The Three Main Pillars

The East Aceh Regency Cooperative and SME Trade Service has a vision to create a healthy and independent trade system, cooperatives, small and medium enterprises as the main actors in economic growth based on a people's economy with a strong commitment to Sharia principles in every aspect of its activities. This agency focuses on empowering cooperatives and small and medium enterprises (UKM) through various strategic programs that include entrepreneurship training, access to interest-free capital, and Sharia-based business assistance. The aim is to create jobs, improve skills and advance the local economy by prioritizing transparency, justice and community welfare.

In order to achieve its goals, the East Aceh Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service focuses on three main pillars: religion, economics and education. The pillars of religion are emphasized through the application of Sharia values which are the basis for every economic activity. The economic pillar is focused on efforts to improve community welfare through the development of cooperatives and SMEs, as well as creating a conducive business climate. Meanwhile, the education pillar is implemented by providing training and education to the community to improve their skills and capacity in running a business.

The East Aceh Regency Cooperative and SME Trade Service has a clear focus on three main pillars: religion, economics and education. They view religion as a strong moral foundation in economic activities, with Sharia values being the main foundation. Their economic pillar is focused on developing cooperatives and SMEs, which are considered the main drivers of the local economy and improving community welfare. Apart from that, they try to create a conducive business climate for small businesses to grow. Education and training are considered as a means to improve people's skills and capacity in managing businesses, understanding markets, and adopting appropriate technology, thereby increasing competitiveness and product quality. Furthermore, improving the quality of education, culture, youth and sports is the second focus, which aims to create a young generation that is intelligent, creative and highly competitive, while preserving and developing local culture.

Apart from that, they also recognize the importance of improving the quality of education, culture, youth and sports as a strategic step to create a young generation that is intelligent, creative and highly competitive, while still maintaining and developing local culture as an asset for community identity and sustainability.

Use Of Communication Technology, Cooperative Trade And SME Services In Empowering Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises

The East Aceh Regency Cooperative and SME Trade Service strives to create glory and fame in various aspects of community life. In carrying out its vision, this agency pays attention to the principles of gender equality and justice, ensuring that both men and women have the same opportunity to participate and benefit from the programs implemented. This is done to create an inclusive society, where every individual can contribute optimally according to their abilities and potential.

The East Aceh Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service is very committed to realizing gender equality and empowering women in various aspects of their activities. M. Khairurradi emphasized that in all the programs they run, they ensure that there is no gender discrimination and that all levels of society, including men and women, have equal access. Meanwhile, Zuhrawati highlighted the existence of special programs designed to empower women, such as business skills training and easier access to financing.

In addition, this service ensures that all processes of government administration, development implementation and social life are based on the principles of Islamic Sharia. With this approach, the department tries to form a strong and solid foundation in carrying out activities in national and state life. The principles of Islamic Sharia serve as guidelines in every policy and program implemented, so as to create harmony between the economic, social and spiritual development of society (Ritonga et al., 2024). In this way, it is hoped that East Aceh Regency can achieve true glory, which is bright, sparkling, sparkling and amazing in all aspects of life.

They believe that this is not only a form of formal obedience, but also a deep commitment to building a just, just and highly moral society. This approach is expected to create harmony between economic, social and spiritual development, which is the key to success for the progress of East Aceh Regency. The vision they hold is not only about material prosperity, but also about inner peace and spiritual prosperity, which they hope can be an example for other regions in realizing harmony between Islamic values and modern progress.

The strategy formulated by the Department of Cooperative Trade and SMEs to optimize the empowerment of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in East Aceh Regency includes several important patterns. First, planning is carried out by preparing programs that suit the needs of SMEs, including training and providing access to capital and markets. Second, organization is carried out by forming a special team tasked with coordinating various SME empowerment activities and ensuring each program runs according to plan. Third, program implementation is carried out in stages and systematically, involving various related parties, including SME actors themselves, to ensure that the programs being implemented can be accepted and utilized well. Finally, evaluations are carried out periodically to assess the effectiveness of programs that have been implemented, identify obstacles faced, and make improvements and adjustments to strategies so that the goal of empowering SMEs can be achieved optimally and sustainably.

By considering the concept of public service put forward by Rosady (2000), this approach aims to provide satisfaction and build customer trust, in this case, SMEs. The communication carried out by this Department reflects the important role of communication in all aspects of social life, as stated by Arifin (2011), emphasizing that communication is not only in one area, but permeates every aspect of social life.

In addition, Rakhmat (2007) pointed out that understanding the local context and specific needs of SMEs in East Aceh is very important to ensure that the communication carried out by the Department is relevant and has a positive impact. Thus, this strategy is not only about information transfer, but also about building strong and interactive relationships between the Department and SMEs, creating a conducive environment for business empowerment and development.

However, SMEs in East Aceh Regency still face a number of challenges in adopting digital technology, even though information has been provided via web pages by the Cooperative and SME Trade Service. The main obstacles faced are the complexity and lack of relevance of the information presented, as well as the lack of socialization and training from the department. This has resulted in many SME players feeling apathetic and unmotivated to utilize existing facilities. Lack of awareness of the existence of these web pages also exacerbates the situation, creating gaps in access to information.

In facing the complex challenge of increasing the active participation of SMEs in empowerment programs, the East Aceh Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service implemented a communication strategy based on Islamic values. They recognize that Islamic values have strong relevance for local communities, such as honesty, justice and shared prosperity. These principles are used as a basis for building trust and involvement of SME actors in empowerment programs.

Contribution of Islamic Communication in Efforts to Create Sharia-Based Empowerment of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

One of the strategies implemented by the East Aceh District Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs is to use Islamic communication as a foundation to influence the perceptions of SME actors. This approach was chosen because Islamic values are very relevant and familiar to the people of East Aceh, the majority of whom are Muslim. Islamic communication emphasizes principles such as honesty, justice and mutual prosperity, which are in line with the aim of empowering SMEs to improve the economic welfare of society. Direct outreach to SME players is carried out using this approach to create a better understanding of the importance of information technology in developing their businesses. Through dialogue and discussions that prioritize Islamic values, SME players are encouraged to be more open to the use of information technology.

It is hoped that implementing this approach can create better integration between the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs with business actors in the area. This integration is important to build trust and closer cooperation, which in turn will increase the participation and commitment of SME actors in empowerment programs. Through communication and a shared understanding of the goals and benefits of the program, it is hoped that SME players will be more motivated to be actively involved and optimize the use of information technology in their businesses.

Apart from direct outreach, the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs also utilizes other communication media that can reach SME players more widely. For example, they use social media which is more easily accessible to the people of East Aceh. The messages conveyed through this media still prioritize Islamic values and are adapted to the local context, so that they are more easily accepted and understood by SME players. Through this approach, the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs is not only trying to increase information technology capacity among SME players, but also building an ecosystem based on Islamic principles.

This integrative approach also reflects the commitment of the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs to support regional development visions that are in line with local religious and cultural values. By placing Islamic communication as the foundation, they seek

to create harmony between economic empowerment efforts and the moral and ethical values believed in by society.

Overall, this strategy is expected to have a significant positive impact in empowering SMEs in East Aceh Regency. With a better understanding and acceptance of information technology and the application of sharia principles in business, SMEs are expected to be able to progress and develop, thereby improving the overall economic welfare of society, which is the goal of this empowerment.

The results of this research indicate that DinKop UMKM's empowerment strategy in empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has not worked optimally. Empowerment carried out by the government in the initial phase was quite instrumental in providing training and counseling. The next step, the community and government have collaborated in developing SMEs. Meanwhile, the government is still hampered by the emancipatory phase in providing facilities and infrastructure for developing SMEs. The similarity in this research lies in the unit of analysis which focuses on communication strategies and empowerment of SMEs, while the difference lies in the discussion which does not include communication technology as the focus and the Islamic communication approach as the analytical tool.

D. CONCLUSION

The use of communication technology by the East Aceh Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service through the use of web pages as a means of communication and information, shows their commitment to facing the challenges of the digital era. This step not only expands the reach of the SME empowerment program, but also increases the effectiveness of public services by providing wider accessibility for SME actors to get the information, support and training they need. Two-way interaction through interactive features also allows the department to respond directly to the needs and input of SME players, making their services more responsive and relevant. Through these steps, it is hoped that SMEs in East Aceh Regency can further develop, become more competitive, and make a greater contribution to the regional economy. In an effort to create sharia-based empowerment of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in East Aceh Regency , the contribution of Islamic communication plays an important role in implementing sharia values such as honesty, transparency and integrity in communication between the Department of Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs and SMEs in East Aceh Regency. The Department of Cooperative Trade and SMEs creates an environment that supports the sustainable growth of SMEs. Gentle and polite communication also helps build harmonious relationships between all parties involved, so that cooperation and collaboration can run smoothly. Thus, through good and objective communication, sharia-based empowerment of SMEs can have a positive impact on the welfare of local communities.

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