

## Community Service : Helping Businesses Grow H. Ridwan By's Tenun Kubang through Business Strategy Development in The Digital Era

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### ABSTRACT

H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving strives to maintain its existence through digital marketing by using unique traditional motifs and the distinctiveness of Minangkabau motifs as a Minangkabau cultural heritage to local and international communities. By adopting digital technology and design, H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving can increase the attractiveness of Minangkabau weaving products, thus reaching a broader market. The research methodology used was observation and interviews with the owner and craftsmen of H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving. The marketing strategy used is social media and e-commerce platforms to increase the visibility and accessibility of Minangkabau weaving products globally. To positively impact the business, expand the market, and introduce the richness of Minangkabau culture to the world.

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## INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been the focus of business research because of their ability to drive positive change and increase resilience in the economy (Salamzadeh et al., 2022; (Avelar et al., 2024). They contribute to job creation, economic growth, and national export performance. Rahman et al (2022), SME development is an essential component in promoting equitable and sustainable economic growth. SMEs are one example of Indonesia's increasingly advancing nation (londa et al., 2023). According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, in 2022, the number of SMEs in Indonesia reached 65.5 million out of the total business units. According to data from the central statistics agency in 2023, SMEs in Indonesia could absorb 97% of the workforce, contribute 61% to gross domestic product (GDP), and contribute 15% to national exports.

Currently, most SMEs developing in Indonesia are in the creative or cultural industries. West Sumatra is one of Indonesia's provinces that is developing the creative industry. West Sumatra has excellent potential, but some sectors have not developed to their fullest potential in the creative industry due to a lack of understanding. One creative industry currently growing in West Sumatra is the weaving craft industry (Rahmidani, 2020). Weaving is the process of making fabric by combining threads vertically and horizontally. Weaving fabrics are usually made from wood fiber, cotton, silk, and other materials (Nuraini & Miftahul, 2022).

West Sumatra is known for three famous weaving crafts: Kubang, Silungkang, and Pandai Sikek. Each type of weaving has unique and exciting characteristics, making them distinctive souvenirs of West Sumatra (Lita et al., 2020). One of the remaining Kubang home weavings still exists today is the Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By. Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By is a traditional woven fabric from Nagari Kubang, Guguk District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra Province. Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By is a traditional woven fabric from Nagari Kubang, Guguk District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra Province. It is one of the local products that preserves the culture and motifs of Minangkabau. The business was established in the 1980s, starting with two inherited ATBM (Non-Machine Looms) weaving machines and employing neighbors and relatives from the village. The business has since grown to more than 20 Non-Machine Looms weaving machines. However, in the early 1990s, this weaving business began to slow down and stagnate due to poor management, unhealthy competition, and a lack of consumer interest caused by the introduction of other clothing options in society. As a result, the business eventually became defunct (Gusmai, 2019).



**FIGURE 1.** Craftswomen use non-machine looms to process yarn into fabric

Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By weaving business resumed production in 2007 and has been led by the second generation, HJ Risna Ridwan. Kubang weaving has been selected by the Department of Cooperatives, Industry, and Trade of the Province to represent West Sumatra in national-level events and

has participated in domestic production exhibitions. The advantage of H. Ridwan woven fabric compared to other woven fabrics in West Sumatera is its varied and unique motifs, according to Gusmai (2019).

The advantages of H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving can vary depending on the expertise, creativity, and techniques applied. Some of the advantages possessed by H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving include:

- Handicraft quality: H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving is known for its skill in producing high-quality Kubang weaving through skill and experience in creating woven fabrics.
- Distinctive patterns and designs: H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving has the expertise of combining traditional motifs with a contemporary touch. Thus adding value to the Kubang weaving.
- Quality of materials and details: H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving has fine details in the manufacturing process, such as the thickness of the threads, the right blend of colors, and the precision in finishing the fabric.
- Reputation: H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving has been widely recognized for the quality of his work. Recognition from the weaving community or traditional fabric enthusiasts can increase reputation and value.

Behind the excellence of H. Ridwan's Kubang woven fabric, this fabric's existence depends on internal and external factors generally experienced by SMEs in Indonesia. Internally, there is usually a lack of institutional support in managing SMEs, a shortage of human resources, slow adoption of technology, and marketing difficulties. Externally, there are high production and distribution costs and inefficient bureaucratic services. In addition, the policies of both central and regional governments are not yet optimal in supporting the development of SMEs. Media support for SME development is also lacking. This phenomenon is interesting to study in terms of how H. Ridwan's woven Kubang SMEs can survive and face various challenges in the current era of digitization. According to (Gregori and Holzmann, 2020), SMEs use digital technology to develop businesses that can increase the value of the products produced. Sustainable practices in the widespread, accessible, and feasible use of digital technologies. The use of digital technology has the potential to increase the connectivity of business actors within it in terms of creating community development and stakeholder integration) Moreover, increasing convenience and efficiency in efforts.

## METHOD

Based on community service carried out by lecturers together with international students of the Faculty of Economics, Andalas University at Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By, located in Lima Puluh Kota Regency in August 2023, the implementation methods carried out are:

- Observation; Lecturers and students observe the H. Ridwan By Kubang weaving business.
- Implementation of community service activities in the form of assistance in developing H. Ridwan By's Kubang Weaving Business through developing Business Strategies. In its implementation, lecturers of the Faculty of Economics, University of Andalas are accompanied by students.
- Analysis; Lecturers analyze the business strategy development needed by the H. Ridwan By Kubang weaving through in-depth interviews, namely discussing with the owner and craftsmen of the H. Ridwan By Kubang weaving regarding the right business strategy and the needs of the H. Ridwan By Tenun Kubang business.

Here is the flow chart for these activities.

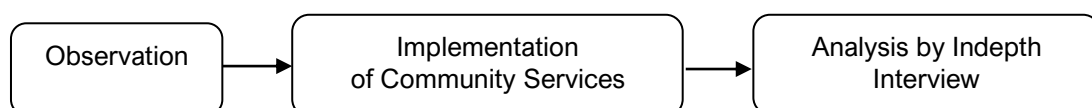


FIGURE 2. Flow activities



**FIGURE 3.** Lecturers and international students of the faculty of economics and business, Universitas Andalas, take a picture together with the owner of the Kubang weaving, H. Ridwan By

As stated in the introduction, H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving faces several issues and challenges in the current era of digitalization. The relationship between SMEs and digitalization approaches can improve the ability of these firms to develop innovative solutions in terms of products and services (Kraus et al., 2023). Furthermore, SMEs may perform better economically due to the positive correlation between innovation and social and environmental performance (Hou et al., 2021). With their ideas, sustainable SMEs have the power to influence markets and society. They can accomplish environmental and social goals by creating products or processes of exceptional quality and success, which will lessen environmental impact and increase environmental success, which will lessen environmental impact and enhance the quality of life (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

- Competition with mass products: H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving competes with mass production of cheaper fabrics and modern industrial processes.
- Marketing and market access: H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving still has difficulties accessing a broader market in global competition.
- Lifestyle changes: The younger generation prefers buying modern products over traditional fabrics.
- Technology and innovation: Technology is challenging for H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving. Too much technology can reduce the value of weaving authenticity, while innovation is needed to improve efficiency and quality. SMEs face a range of barriers to digitalization, which might reduce their effectiveness in stimulating innovation, productivity, and other aspects of firm performance (Estensoro et al., 2022).
- H. Ridwan Kubang weaving craftsmen have carried out digital design, but there is still a lack of skills and knowledge in using the software and digital design.
- Education and the next generation: H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving needs to be preserved and passed on to the younger generation. However, it depends on the younger generation's interest in becoming weaving craftsmen.
- Protection of intellectual property rights; traditional weaving designs and motifs must be IPR'd to prevent misuse by other parties.

In research conducted by (Lita et al., 2020), Kubang H. Ridwan Weavers has already implemented digital design. However, they still lack the skills and knowledge to utilize the software and digital design tools fully. The preservation and inheritance of the Kubang H. Ridwan woven fabric by future generations depends on young people's interest in becoming weavers. It is essential to protect the intellectual property rights of traditional woven designs and motifs through legal means to prevent misuse by others.



FIGURE 4. Products produced by H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After the lecturers and students visited the location of H. Ridwan By's Kubang weaving, the lecturers and students discussed with the owner and craftsmen about the condition of H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving, especially in terms of the production process of woven fabrics to the sales process. During the discussion, especially the concern is how business strategies in the digital era are well utilized by the owner of H. Ridwan's Kubang weaving. In addition, several marketing strategies can be considered to increase the sales of H. Ridwan's Kubang Weaving or other weaving products in the current market. These include:

### Digital Technology

Developing motifs and designs by craftsmen using digital technology such as Illustrator, which can modify motifs more quickly and creatively to enhance attractiveness and competitiveness in the market. This has been implemented but needs to be developed and sustained. This is supported by research conducted by (Choi, 2022; Sharma, 2016), their research highlights the potential of digital technology to increase the speed, creativity, and market competitiveness of traditional motifs and designs. The development and sustainability of these digital methods is crucial for the future of artisanal craftsmanship.

### E-commerce Platform

A focus should be on strengthening digital marketing, such as creating a website or e-commerce platform to expand the online market reach, existing platforms should be developed more creatively (Wardhani & Romas, 2022; Wang & Wang, 2021; Rosário & Raimundo, 2021; Gao et al., 2023; Purnomo, 2023). Their research highlights the businesses should prioritize the adoption of e-commerce platforms and the implementation of successful digital marketing tactics in order to extend their online market reach. Creating a user-friendly website and utilizing digital channels can have a substantial impact on financial performance and sustainability, particularly during difficult periods such as the COVID-19 epidemic.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest should be utilized consistently to showcase products and share stories about weaving to reach a broader market—collaboration with designers or well-known figures to create products that attract a more comprehensive range of consumers. This is also supported by (Studies & Program, 2024)Studies & Program (2024) who state that in today's digital era, social media is very familiar and has become a necessity in people's lives. Social media is very important in the business world, the world of information, and the world of learning. The use of social media to meet the needs of people's lives in practical ways such as online transactions, online sales to online shopping. In today's digital era, businesses are increasingly using social media to increase marketability and interaction with consumers. Social media provides a new platform for communication between businesses and customers, providing advantages in product promotion. Instagram, as one of the social media options, is often chosen to expand the market and promote products.

Besides that, participate in digital design training and practice sessions, which universities, government institutions, and others can facilitate. Actively participate in industry exhibitions, creative markets, or arts and culture festivals locally and nationally to expand networks and attract potential buyers. Continuously improve the quality of Kubang weaving in terms of design, raw materials, and production to provide added value to consumers. In addition, new product variations with innovative motifs or designs are introduced while still maintaining the uniqueness of Kubang weaving. In addition, educational events showcase the cultural values and importance of preserving traditional heritage while making traditional weaving and building partnerships with local stores, boutiques, or online shops that share the same values in supporting local products to increase sales and strengthening relationships with customers by offering special deals and using testimonials and reviews from satisfied customers to build consumer trust and confidence in the quality and value of H. Ridwan's woven products.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Tenun Kubang H. Ridwan By is one of Kabupaten Limapuluh Kota's flagship products, featuring unique motifs. However, the motifs are still manually designed, which takes a long time and makes it difficult for craftsmen to create more varied designs. In facing the challenges of the current digital era, Tenun Kubang H Ridwan By has developed its motifs and designs by utilizing digital technology to enhance its attractiveness and competitiveness in the market. Craftmen have been trained to use digital software, such as Illustrator, to create and modify motifs more quickly and creatively. In addition, craftsmen need to learn how to design patterns using other digital technologies such as Corel Draw, Photoshop, and others. These digital patterns are applied to weaving, creating more varied and customized woven products.

Digital technology helps craftsmen access information about current fashion trends and consumer preferences and promote their products online. The existence of Tenun Kubang H Ridwan By in the current era of digitalization demonstrates the possibility of integrating traditional and modern elements to create innovative and sustainable products that reflect local culture and identity.

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