

# The Nexus of Islamic Digital Marketing Pillars and Localpreneurs Sustainable Growth

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between Islamic digital marketing principles and the sustainable business performance of localpreneurs, specifically asnaf entrepreneurs in Perlis, Malaysia. The research addresses the core problem of how Islamic values, integrated with modern digital marketing and traditional marketing mix strategies (product, price, place, promotion), influence customer trust and business success in a digital economy. A key focus is the underexplored intersection between religious ethics and technological adoption, particularly the challenges of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) within an Islamic marketing framework. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 40 verified asnaf entrepreneurs via structured questionnaires during a business workshop facilitated by Academy Transformasi Asnaf MAIPs (ATAM). The survey assessed demographic factors, digital marketing usage, application of the 4Ps, incorporation of Islamic values, and business performance metrics. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, focusing on descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation, and regression tests. Results show that while several marketing mix factors demonstrated moderate correlation with performance, Islamic values had the strongest positive impact and emerged as the only significant predictor in the regression model ( $p = 0.015$ ). This suggests that ethical principles such as honesty, fairness, and social responsibility are not only culturally aligned but also enhance business viability. Furthermore, respondents demonstrated awareness of ethical marketing by ensuring Shariah compliance, fair pricing, and charity integration in their business practices. The study concludes that Islamic digital marketing offers a viable model for sustainable growth among localpreneurs. It calls for broader research into AI adoption within Islamic contexts and platform-specific marketing strategies on tools like WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram to deepen understanding and improve practical outcomes for small-scale entrepreneurs.

**Keywords**— Islamic digital marketing, Localpreneurs, Sustainable growth

## INTRODUCTION

The steady growth of Malaysia's entrepreneurial sector is an indicator of the country's evolving economic landscape, shaped by both technological advancement and socio-cultural values. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) accounted for 96.9% of all registered businesses in 2023, totaling 1,101,725 enterprises. This reflects an average annual growth rate of 2.5% since 2015, with a net increase of approximately 190,000 MSMEs over the past eight years [1]. This expansion highlights a dynamic shift in Malaysia's economy where localpreneurs who entrepreneurs operating within local communities play a critical role in contributing to income generation, employment creation, and overall socio-economic development.

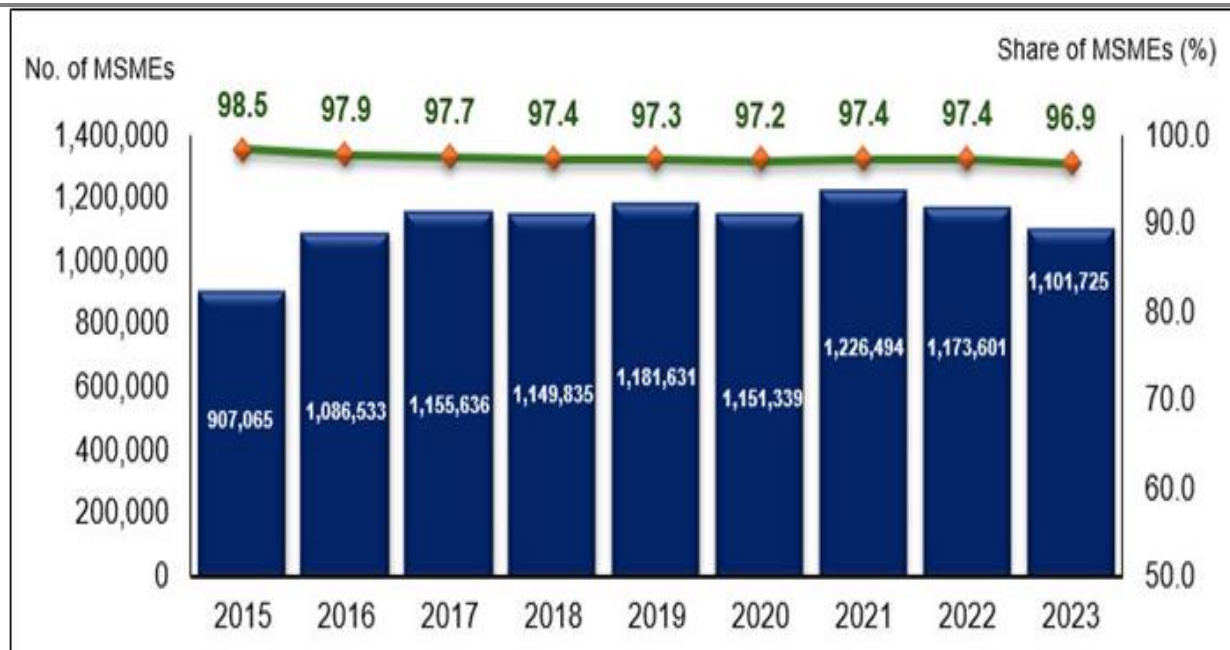


Fig 1: Number of percent share of MSMEs and the number of MSMEs business from year 2015 until 2023

A particularly significant development is the integration of Islamic digital marketing strategies among localpreneurs, which directly correlates with business performance. Islamic digital marketing emphasizes ethical values such as honesty, trust (amanah), and social responsibility, which can enhance customer trust and long-term business sustainability. Research by [2] found that businesses integrating Islamic values into digital marketing not only attract a niche yet loyal customer base but also demonstrate higher levels of brand trust and customer satisfaction. Platforms like social media are frequently used by small entrepreneurs to reach target audiences while maintaining alignment with Islamic ethical standards, further supporting performance outcomes.

A relevant Qur'anic verse that aligns with the ethical values of honesty, trust (amanah), and social responsibility in Islamic digital marketing are

*“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts (amanah) to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.”*

(Surah An-Nisa, 4:58)

This verse underscores the principle of trustworthiness (amanah) and justice, which are foundational in Islamic ethics and deeply relevant in business practices, especially in digital marketing where transparency and integrity are essential for building customer trust and ensuring long-term sustainability.

*“O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of others while you know [it is unlawful].”*

(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:188)

This verse emphasizes ethical financial conduct and discourages manipulation or unjust gain, which aligns with social responsibility and ethical business dealings in marketing.

Despite the progress, one major challenge facing Malaysian entrepreneurs is the slow acceptance and integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within marketing practices, especially when juxtaposed with religious and ethical concerns. While AI tools offer personalization, automation, and analytics, their implementation within an Islamic framework raises questions about data ethics, transparency, and fairness. According to [3], there is a growing concern among entrepreneurs about the compatibility of AI-driven

marketing tools with Islamic principles, particularly regarding privacy, consumer manipulation, and the exploitation of customer behavior. These concerns slow down the full adoption of AI, limiting the potential for digital innovation in Islamic marketing contexts.

In tandem with AI concerns, the rapid growth of the localpreneur economy brings with it the need to understand how traditional marketing strategies, such as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), evolve when combined with Islamic principles and digital tools. Many small entrepreneurs operate in niche markets with distinct cultural and religious demands. Therefore, the implementation of Islamic marketing values within the traditional marketing mix becomes essential in delivering products and services that are not only competitive but also ethically sound. The integration of these values allows businesses to differentiate themselves while fulfilling religious obligations, thus attracting ethically conscious consumers [4].

To sustain this momentum, a research and policy support are needed to bridge the gap between Islamic digital marketing strategies towards business performance. Emphasizing education, training, and ethical AI adoption will enable localpreneurs to harness the full potential of digital marketing while maintaining alignment with Islamic values. In doing so, Malaysia can position itself as a leader in ethical entrepreneurship and Islamic digital commerce, aligning economic growth with the moral and spiritual aspirations of its population.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Localpreneurs Business Performance

The Localpreneurs, or local entrepreneurs, play a significant role in driving grassroots economic development, especially in rural and semi-urban settings. Their performance is often shaped by a range of internal and external factors, including access to resources, digital marketing tools, and socio-cultural values. According to [5], localpreneurs contribute not only to economic growth but also to social cohesion by creating employment and fostering community engagement. Their ventures, though typically small in scale, demonstrate high adaptability, particularly in the face of economic disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The performance of localpreneurs has increasingly been tied to the adoption of digital technologies. Studies show that digitalization has enabled local entrepreneurs to expand their market reach, enhance operational efficiency, and improve customer engagement [6]. In Malaysia, for example, government-backed initiatives such as the Digital Economy Blueprint (My DIGITAL) have empowered localpreneurs through access to e-commerce platforms and digital upskilling programs [7]. This support has shown measurable improvements in revenue generation and customer satisfaction among participating small businesses.

However, performance outcomes vary depending on the entrepreneur's capability to integrate digital marketing with effective business strategies. Research [8] highlights that localpreneurs who incorporate structured marketing frameworks such as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) into their digital strategies tend to report higher business performance metrics. These include increased sales, improved brand visibility, and stronger customer retention. Moreover, localpreneurs who align their branding and communication with local cultural and religious values gain trust and loyalty within their communities [9].

Islamic values also serve as a crucial performance enhancer, especially among Muslim localpreneurs. Incorporating principles such as honesty (şidq), trustworthiness (amanah), and social responsibility (mas'uliyah) into business operations strengthens customer relationships and supports sustainable business practices [10]. For Muslim-majority regions such as Perlis, this alignment of ethical values with business performance is particularly impactful, as customers are more inclined to support businesses that reflect shared beliefs and values.

### Pillars of Marketing Strategies

The traditional 4Ps marketing mix which are Product, Price, Place, and Promotion that continues to be a foundational framework in marketing strategy. However, it has evolved significantly to address the complexities of modern business environments. The inclusion of additional elements such as People, Process,

and Physical Evidence, particularly relevant in-service industries, reflects the growing need for a comprehensive and consumer-centric approach [11]. In parallel, the rise of digitalization and technological advancement has transformed how firms implement the 4Ps, with many adopting integrated digital strategies to stay competitive [12].

## Product

Product strategy now emphasizes innovation, sustainability, and digital integration. Consumers are increasingly drawn to products that reflect ethical practices and social responsibility. According to [13], there is a growing demand for sustainable and environmentally friendly products, prompting businesses to redesign their offerings and supply chains to align with these values. Furthermore, the digital economy has expanded the scope of products, introducing digital goods, subscriptions, and services that cater to tech-savvy consumers. Personalization has also become a key focus, where companies leverage big data and artificial intelligence to deliver tailored product experiences. As noted by [14], personalized product development enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, providing a competitive edge in saturated markets.

## Price

Pricing remains a critical determinant of profitability and market positioning. The adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, facilitated by AI and machine learning, allows businesses to respond in real time to market fluctuations, consumer demand, and competitive actions [15]. Post-pandemic economic challenges have further accelerated flexible pricing models, including subscription services, tiered pricing, and "pay-as-you-go" schemes, to accommodate shifting consumer spending behaviours [16]. Moreover, ethical pricing strategies are gaining traction. Companies are increasingly mindful of consumer perceptions of fairness, particularly in socially conscious markets. Research by [17] indicates that transparent and value-based pricing fosters stronger brand trust and customer retention.

## Place

Distribution strategies have undergone a digital transformation, driven by the growth of e-commerce and shifting consumer preferences. Businesses are investing heavily in omnichannel distribution models that blend online platforms with traditional retail formats to ensure seamless customer experiences [18]. Innovations in logistics, such as same-day delivery, fulfilment centres, and AI-powered inventory management, are becoming standard. Furthermore, the expansion of mobile commerce and social selling platforms has created new avenues for product accessibility. According to [19], integrating digital distribution with social commerce channels enhances reach, especially among younger demographics.

## Promotion

Promotional strategies have shifted towards digital ecosystems, emphasizing targeted engagement over mass communication. Social media marketing, influencer collaborations, and video content now dominate the promotional landscape. [20] reports that global digital ad spending has reached unprecedented levels, with short-form video and live content leading the trend. Influencer marketing continues to be a dominant force, enabling brands to connect authentically with niche audiences. A study by [21] highlights the effectiveness of micro-influencers in building trust and driving purchase intentions. Additionally, artificial intelligence is being used to optimize campaign performance, personalize content, and predict consumer behavior [22].

## Islamic Value

In Muslim-majority markets, Islamic values are increasingly integrated into marketing strategies as businesses align their operations with religious principles. Islamic marketing emphasizes values such as honesty, fairness, trust, and social responsibility, fostering ethical engagement with consumers [23]. Businesses that incorporate Shariah-compliant principles in their products, advertising, and customer dealings tend to build stronger credibility and loyalty among Muslim consumers. Recent research underscores the growing importance of Islamic values in digital marketing and entrepreneurship. According to [24], Islamic marketing



practices influence consumer behavior, especially when brands demonstrate commitment to Halal certification, fair pricing, and ethical conduct. Moreover, digital Muslim entrepreneurs are using platforms like Instagram and TikTok to promote products aligned with Islamic ethics, blending faith with innovation in business [25], [26]. These trends highlight the strategic value of incorporating Islamic perspectives into the broader marketing mix, particularly in regions with strong religious and cultural influences such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Middle East.

## METHOD

This study focuses on asnaf entrepreneurs across the state of Perlis as unit analysis which known as localpreneurs. Specifically, individuals who are classified under the asnaf category and operate small businesses to improve their household income. The sample population was identified and verified by the Akademi Transformasi Asnaf MAIPs (ATAM), which also facilitated their participation in a business workshop organized as part of the research. These entrepreneurs predominantly utilize digital marketing through social media platforms to promote their businesses. The study aims to assess the influence of Islamic values on customer trust and business viability by examining this specific group and identifying key factors that contribute to their online marketing success.

A quantitative research design was employed using structured questionnaires distributed in-person during the workshop sessions. The survey instrument gathered data on digital marketing adoption, the application of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion), the integration of Islamic values, and their impact on business marketing performance. Demographic information such as age, education level, business location, income, and years of experience was also collected. The data will be analysed using SPSS to determine statistical patterns and relationships between the application of Islamic principles and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. While the questionnaire approach allows for a broader data collection and generalization, it is complemented by qualitative focus group discussions to provide deeper insights into the participants' perspectives.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study highlights the critical role of Islamic values and 4P's marketing strategies in shaping business performance among localpreneurs. While factors such as pricing strategies and market reach also show notable correlations, they do not emerge as significant predictors in the regression model. These findings emphasize the importance of incorporating Islamic principles in business strategies to enhance performance, particularly in communities where religious values are a strong guiding force.

### Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis provides an overview of the demographic and characteristics of the respondents which include age distribution, educational background, geographic distribution, household income and business experience.

The majority of respondents (43.5%) are above 41 years old, while 32.5% fall within the 30-40 age group. Notably, there are no respondents below 19 years old, indicating that the sample comprises working-age individuals.

A significant proportion (64.1%) has only completed primary education, while 7% hold a diploma, and only 2.6% possess a bachelor's degree. There are no respondents with master's or PhD qualifications, reflecting a generally low level of formal education. Additionally, 25% fall into the "Other" category, possibly encompassing informal training or alternative education.

The majority of respondents reside in Kangar (55%), followed by Arau (20%) and Padang Besar (15%), while 10% come from other areas. This suggests a concentration of respondents in urban and semi-urban regions.

Most respondents (97.44%) earn less than RM 5,250 per month, placing them in the lower-income bracket.

Only 2.6% fall within the RM 5,251-RM 11,819 range, and none earn above RM 11,819. This suggests financial constraints that may impact business sustainability.

Among the respondents, 35.9% have over seven years of business experience, indicating a significant number of seasoned entrepreneurs. Additionally, 29.1% have been in business for 1-3 years, while 17.9% fall into the 4-6 years category. However, 23.08% have less than one year of experience, highlighting a notable number of new entrepreneurs entering the market.

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 years old and less	0	0
19-29 years old	10	25
30-40 years old	13	32.5
41 years old and more	17	42.5
<b>Education</b>		
Certificate	25	64.10
Fiundation	0	0
Diploma	3	7.69
Degree	1	2.56
Master	0	0
PhD	0	0
Others	10	25.64
<b>Area</b>		
Kangar	22	55
Padang Besar	6	15
Arau	8	20
Others	4	10
<b>Montly Income</b>		
RM 5250 and less	38	97.44
RM 5251 – RM 11 819	1	2.56
RM 11 820 and more	0	0
<b>Business Experience</b>		
1 year and less	9	23.08
1-3 years	11	28.21
4-6 yeras	5	12.82
7 yeras and more	14	35.9

## Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the constructs was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The dependent variable, Business Performance, achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.951, indicating excellent reliability and strong internal coherence. Among the independent variables, Islamic Value demonstrated the highest reliability (0.954), reflecting its strong consistency across measurement items. Price also exhibited strong reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.900, reinforcing its internal stability. Similarly, Product showed good reliability at 0.886, ensuring the consistency of its construct. Meanwhile, Place obtained an acceptable reliability score of 0.763, indicating moderate internal consistency. However, Promotion had the lowest reliability (0.615), which, although above the minimum threshold, suggests weaker internal consistency and potential areas for refinement to enhance its reliability.

Table 2 Reliability Analysis

Variables	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Item
Dependent	Business Performance	0.951	4
Independent 1	Product	0.886	6
Independent 2	Place	0.763	6
Independent 3	Promotion	0.615	6
Independent 4	Price	0.900	6
Independent 5	Islamic Value	0.954	7

## Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between various independent variables and business performance. Among the factors examined, Islamic Value demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with business performance ( $r = 0.624$ ), suggesting that adherence to Islamic principles plays a crucial role in influencing entrepreneurial success. Price ( $r = 0.582$ ) and Place ( $r = 0.577$ ) also exhibited moderately strong correlations, indicating that pricing strategies and market reach significantly contribute to business performance. Meanwhile, Promotion showed a moderate correlation ( $r = 0.556$ ), suggesting that marketing efforts have a positive but comparatively lesser impact. Product, however, displayed the weakest correlation ( $r = 0.349$ ), implying that product attributes are less influential in driving business performance. Additionally, strong interrelationships were identified among the independent variables, particularly between Price and Place ( $r = 0.824$ ) as well as Price and Islamic Value ( $r = 0.810$ ). This suggests that pricing strategies are closely linked to both market reach and the incorporation of Islamic Value, highlighting the interconnected nature of these business factors.

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pillars of Islamic Digital Marketing	Significant Value of Business Performance
Independent 1	Product	0.345 0.013
Independent 2	Place	0.577 0.000
Independent 3	Promotion	0.556 0.000

Independent 4	Price	0.582 0.000
Independent 5	Islamic Value	0.624 0.000

## Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of multiple independent variables on business performance. The ANOVA results confirmed that the overall regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 6.815$ ,  $Sig. = 0.000$ ), indicating that the independent variables collectively influence business performance. However, when assessing individual variables, their significance varied. Islamic Value emerged as the only significant predictor ( $B = 0.576$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ), suggesting that a stronger emphasis on Islamic principles contributes to improved business performance. In contrast, other variables—Product ( $p = 0.203$ ), Place ( $p = 0.257$ ), Promotion ( $p = 0.169$ ), and Price ( $p = 0.748$ )—did not show statistically significant effects, implying that their individual influence on business performance was not strong enough to be confirmed in this analysis.

Table 4 Regression Analysis

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square		F	Sig.	
1	Regression	11.516		5	2.303		6.815	.000 <sup>b</sup>	
	Residual	11.828		35	.338				
	Total	23.345		40					

a. Dependent Variable: AVPERFORMANCE

b. Predictors: (Constant), AVVALUE, AVPROMOTION, AVPRODUCT, AVPLACE, AVPRICE

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	
1	(Constant)	.579	.633		.916	.366	-.705	1.864		
	AVPRODUCT	-.181	.140	-.226	-1.298	.203	-.465	.102	.477	2.096
	AVPLACE	.261	.227	.254	1.153	.257	-.199	.722	.298	3.351
	AVPROMOTION	.273	.194	.257	1.406	.169	-.121	.667	.433	2.308



AVPRICE	- .11 0	.338	-.097	- .324	.74 8	-.795	.576	.160	6.23 7
AVVALUE	.57 6	.225	.544	2.56 3	.01 5	.120	1.033	.321	3.11 7
a. Dependent Variable: AVPERFORMANCE									

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this study reveal that localpreneurs are increasingly integrating Islamic principles into their business operations, particularly within the framework of the marketing mix. All respondents ensure their products comply with *Shariah* law and the concept of *hallalan toyyiban*, emphasizing not only permissibility but also the wholesomeness and ethical benefit to both consumers and the environment. Their offerings are designed to solve real-life problems and add practical value to the daily lives of their customers, which enhances their market relevance and consumer trust. Moreover, the presence of innovation in their product development indicates that these businesses are forward-thinking and competitive, even within a niche segment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

From a pricing perspective, respondents adopt fair and reasonable strategies that avoid burdening customers, thereby upholding the Islamic value of justice in transactions. By avoiding excessive profits and allocating part of their earnings towards charitable activities and community welfare, these entrepreneurs exhibit a strong alignment with the principle of *maslahah* (public interest) and social responsibility. This pricing approach not only supports financial inclusivity but also strengthens the reputation of their businesses in the eyes of ethically conscious consumers.

In terms of promotion, the respondents strategically plan marketing campaigns to align with seasonal demands and ensure that their promotional content adheres to *Shariah* guidelines. The use of contemporary and engaging digital tools further demonstrates their adaptability and relevance in the current marketplace. By leveraging platforms like social media while maintaining ethical boundaries, these businesses successfully balance effective outreach with Islamic marketing values. Their ability to utilize digital platforms for promotion highlights their digital literacy and awareness of current market trends.

Accessibility and physical presence also emerged as key strengths among the respondents. Businesses are strategically located and operate within environments that comply with Islamic requirements. They do not engage in selling prohibited goods, thereby maintaining integrity in their offerings.

For future research, this study recommends expanding the sample to include a broader range of SME entrepreneurs to assess their capability and awareness in applying Islamic digital marketing. Further investigation into platform-specific strategies such as WhatsApp copywriting, TikTok video marketing, or Instagram posting techniques could uncover valuable insights into the effectiveness of these tools. Ultimately, the integration of Islamic values with digital marketing not only enhances the ethical orientation of businesses but also contributes significantly to the economic empowerment of localpreneurs and the evolution of Islamic marketing practices in the digital age.

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