

A Resource-Based and Dynamic Capabilities Perspective on Batik SME Performance: The Sequential Mediating Roles of Digital Marketing and Innovation Capability

Intan Muliana Rhamdhani¹, Sulis Riptiono^{2*}

¹Manajemen, Universitas Putra Bangsa, Indonesia

²Magister Manajemen, Universitas Putra Bangsa, Indonesia

*e-mail: sulis.riptiono@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships between entrepreneurial capability, Digital Marketing Capability (DMC), Innovation Capability (IC), and Business Performance (BP) in batik SMEs. Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), it proposes a serial mediation model in which DMC and IC elucidate the link among EC and business performance. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among owners of batik SMEs in Central Java, Indonesia. Using purposive sampling, 380 valid responses were collected and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-AMOS). The proposed mediation effects were evaluated using a bootstrapping procedure. The results reveals that EC is positively associated with DMC, IC, and BP. DMC and IC are also positively effects with business performance. Bootstrapping results support the sequential mediating roles of DMC and IC in linking EC to business performance. This study extends RBV and DCT by empirically validating a serial mediation model that explains how EC is translated into BP through the sequential development of DMC and IC. The findings provide new evidence from batik SMEs in Indonesia, an underexplored context in the capability and digital marketing literature.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial capability, Digital marketing, Innovation, Business performance, Serial mediation

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of growth for SMEs operating in highly competitive environments (Utonga et al., 2026). To remain competitive, firms are required to adapt and strategically utilize digital technologies across their business activities (Bekele & Raj, 2025; Rhamdhani & Riptiono, 2023). Along with these changes, the rapid development of internet-based technologies has transformed contemporary marketing practices (Zahara et al., 2023). In this context, digital marketing has emerged as a strategic tool that enables firms to broaden their market reach, access real-time information, and conduct more efficient and flexible transactions through digital platforms (Munir et al., 2023). Additionally, digital platforms empower consumers to compare products, obtain detailed information, and make purchasing decisions without geographical limitations (Munir et al., 2023).

However, despite its growing importance, the adoption of digital technologies among SMEs remains uneven and relatively limited (Truong et al., 2026). In many developing countries, the use of digital marketing has not yet resulted in optimal performance (Agyapong et al., 2026). This indicates that the mere adoption of digital tools does not guarantee improved outcomes; instead, firms must develop the capabilities required to effectively utilize these technologies (Antenozio et al., 2026).

In response to ongoing digital transformation, SMEs need to integrate digital strategies to sustain competitiveness and support long-term growth (Bhatti et al., 2025). A key challenge lies in the limited development of Digital Marketing Capability (DMC), which refers to a firm's ability to design, implement, manage, and evaluate digital marketing strategies effectively (Danzen, 2022; Hidayati et al., 2025; Koliby et al., 2024). Although previous studies have reported a positive relationship between DMC and BP (Apasrawirote et al., 2022), SMEs in developing countries continue to face barriers such as low digital maturity, insufficient capabilities, and uncertainty regarding the performance outcomes of digitalization (Hidayati et al., 2025).

Although previous studies have extensively explored the roles of digital transformation and digital marketing in improving business performance, several key theoretical and empirical gaps remain. From an empirical standpoint, the relationship between DMC and BP shows mixed and context-specific findings. A number of studies report a positive influence of DMC on innovation and firm performance (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Hat et al., 2025; Koliby et al., 2024; F. Wang, 2020). However, other research suggests that this relationship is contingent upon factors such as digital maturity, organizational readiness, and entrepreneurial characteristics across different regions (Antenozio et al., 2026; Yadav et al., 2024; Zahara et al., 2023). In addition, much of the existing literature focuses on large firms or developed economies, resulting in limited empirical evidence on SMEs in developing countries, particularly at the regional level (Sackey et al., 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, prior research has largely emphasized digital technology adoption as the main driver of firm performance, while paying less attention to DMC as a strategic, resource-based construct (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; Bhatti et al., 2025; Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020). In contrast, the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) suggest that competitive advantage depends not merely on the possession of technology, but on the firm's ability to effectively integrate, reconfigure, and leverage resources to generate sustainable value (Agyapong et al., 2026; Hat et al., 2025). This indicates a conceptual gap in understanding how DMC functions as a strategic mechanism that connects digital technology adoption to SME business performance.

Building on the identified theoretical and empirical gaps, this study develops a conceptual framework that positions EC as a key antecedent, DMC as a strategic mechanism, and BP as the outcome within SMEs. Empirically, the study offers new evidence from SMEs in Central Java, Indonesia, an underexplored context in the digital marketing literature, which has been largely dominated by studies in developed economies. From a theoretical standpoint, this research extends prior work by framing DMC as a dynamic capability, grounded in the Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, rather than viewing it solely as a technological tool or level of adoption. In addition, this study integrates EC as a critical antecedent and examines the roles of DMC and IC as sequential mediators linking firm-level resources to business performance. Accordingly, this study contributes to the literature by offering a more comprehensive explanation of how SMEs develop and integrate capabilities to achieve sustainable competitive performance in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

2. METHOD

This study a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships among Entrepreneurial Capability (EC), Digital Marketing Capability (DMC), Innovation Capability (IC), and SMEs performance in Central Java, Indonesia. Batik SMEs were selected because they represent one of Indonesia's leading creative industries and play an important role in regional economic development. The target population comprised registered batik SMEs operating in Central Java. Respondents were required to meet two eligibility criteria: (1) they were the owner or manager of the business, and (2) they were directly involved in strategic decision-making and

digital marketing activities. The sampling frame was compiled from the databases of Central Java across major batik-producing regions with similar characteristics. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents possessed adequate knowledge of the firm's marketing and operational practices.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and through direct field visits between November and December 2025. Data were collected through face-to-face distribution of questionnaires by trained enumerators and through online questionnaires distributed via Batik SME associations and local business networks. Data collection was conducted in the major Batik-producing districts and municipalities of Central Java (Purbalingga, Kebumen, Banyumas, Banjarnegara, and Cilacap). These regions were selected because they represent the principal Batik production clusters in Central Java. A total of 425 questionnaires were returned. After excluding 45 incomplete responses because of substantial missing data, 380 usable questionnaires remained for analysis, representing a valid response rate of 89.4%. Data screening indicated that the final dataset contained no missing values because incomplete questionnaires had been excluded prior to analysis. Therefore, no imputation procedure was required.

Missing values accounted for less than 5% of the dataset and were handled using the expectation-maximization procedure before analysis. Outlier detection was performed using Mahalanobis distance, and no influential multivariate outliers were identified. Data normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis statistics, which were within acceptable ranges for SEM estimation. To assess potential non-response bias, early and late respondents were compared using independent-samples t-tests, and no significant differences were observed across the study variables ($p > 0.05$), indicating that non-response bias was unlikely to affect the findings.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS following the two-step approach recommended by Hair et al. (2019). First, the measurement model was evaluated by examining reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Subsequently, the structural model was estimated to test the proposed hypotheses. The indirect effects, including the proposed serial mediation relationships, were assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Responses were measured using a seven-point Likert scale. All constructs in this study were measured using established scales adapted from previous studies to ensure validity and reliability. EC was measured using five indicators adapted from previous studies (Ngo & Vu, 2025; Somwethee et al., 2023; Umar et al., 2018). DMC was also measured using five indicators adopted from prior research (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Hat et al., 2025; Zahara et al., 2023). IC was assessed using four indicators adapted from Hashim et al. (2023), Koliby et al. (2024), and Sari et al. (2023). Meanwhile, BP was measured using five indicators derived from previous studies (Agyapong et al., 2026; Hashim et al., 2023; Hussein et al., 2026; Yadav et al., 2024).

Because the original measurement scales were developed in English, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia by a bilingual researcher. A second bilingual expert independently translated the Indonesian version back into English. The original and back-translated versions were compared to ensure semantic equivalence, and minor wording revisions were made before administering the final questionnaire. This study involved a voluntary survey of owners and managers of batik SMEs and did not include medical procedures, clinical interventions, or vulnerable populations. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were treated anonymously and used solely for academic research purposes. The data were stored securely and reported only in aggregate form to ensure participant confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to completing the questionnaire. We have also clarified the institutional requirements regarding ethical approval and added a statement explaining whether formal ethics approval was obtained or was not required under the applicable institutional policy.

To assess the potential influence of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was performed. The results showed that the first unrotated factor explained 36.47% of the total variance, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of 50%. This indicates that common method bias is unlikely to have substantially affected the relationships among the study constructs.

The grounded theory in this study adopts the Resources Based Theory (RBV) and Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT). The RBV suggests that a firm's competitive advantage is derived from its ability to effectively utilize internal resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). In particular, intangible capabilities play a crucial role in enabling firms to generate superior value and achieve sustained performance (Barney et al., 2021). In contrast, DCT focuses on the firm's capacity to adapt to changing environments by identifying opportunities, implementing strategic actions, and reconfiguring resources accordingly (Teece et al., 1997). While RBV explains the source of competitive advantage, DCT emphasizes the processes through which such advantage is maintained over time.

Building on these perspectives, this study draws on the RBV and DCT frameworks to examine DMC as a strategic organizational resource that facilitates value creation and appropriation, ultimately escalating SME performance (Barney et al., 2021). However, in rapidly expanding online environments, the mere possession of such resources is insufficient. Instead, firm performance depends on the competence of constantly integrate, transform, and leverage digital marketing resources in reaction to market changes (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Koliby et al., 2024).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) performance has been widely studied as a multidimensional construct reflecting financial results, market position, growth, and long-term sustainability (Abbas et al., 2024; Abrokwhah-Larbi & Awuku-Larbi, 2023; Agyapong et al., 2026; Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Ramadani et al., 2025; Robertson et al., 2023; Salah & Ayyash, 2024; Scuotto et al., 2017). Firm performance generally reflects an organization's effectiveness in achieving its strategic objectives, fulfilling stakeholder expectations, and sustaining competitive advantage (Hidayati et al., 2025; Hussein et al., 2026; Lestari et al., 2020; Wongsansukcharoen & Thaweechaiwong, 2023). In today's digital era, SME performance is increasingly shaped by the transformation of digital platforms, which have redefined industry structures and are widely recognized as strategic drivers of organizational sustainability (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; Holopainen et al., 2026; S. Wang & Zhang, 2025). However, the causal mechanisms explaining how digital platform utilization translates into competitive advantage and sustainable performance remain inadequately understood, particularly in the context of SMEs in developing countries (Asadullah & Faik, 2026; Bhatti et al., 2025).

EC refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, and experience and skills that allow firms to identify and pursue business opportunities, supported by technological expertise, strategic orientation, problem-solving ability, and decision-making under uncertain conditions (Somwethee et al., 2025). Traditionally, entrepreneurship has been viewed as an individual-level construct associated with personal traits and behaviors (Salamzadeh et al., 2023). However, more recent perspectives extend this view by conceptualizing EC as an organizational-level construct embedded in routines, processes, and collective competencies that support innovation and firm performance (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2026; Somwethee et al., 2025).

From the perspective of the RBV, EC represents a valuable intangible resource that enhances firm performance through innovation behavior (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026). In addition, the DCT conceptualizes EC as a strategic capability that enables firms to sense opportunities in response to environmental changes (Musah et al., 2026). Through this capability, SMEs can better align their resource utilization with evolving market conditions, thereby improving adaptability. Empirical studies had consistently demonstrated that EC closely liaise with SMEs to improve their performance by facilitating opportunity recognition, and effective resource mobilization (Gomes

et al., 2022; Ribau et al., 2017; Somwethee et al., 2023). Furthermore, EC has been identified as an important antecedent of DMC (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Fernandes et al., 2025), and a key predictor of IC (Koliby et al., 2024; Santos-Vijande et al., 2022; Somwethee et al., 2023).

H1. Entrepreneurial capability positive and significant toward SME's business performance

H2. Entrepreneurial capability positive and significant toward SME's DMC

H3. Entrepreneurial capability positive and significant toward SME's IC

DMC represents a firm's ability to plan, implement, and manage marketing activities through the effective use of digital technologies and platforms to create customer value, strengthen competitive positioning, and improve performance (Koliby et al., 2024; Masrianto et al., 2022; F. Wang, 2020). Substantial heterogeneity in the level of digital technology utilization by companies emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of DMC (Mulyana et al., 2024; F. Wang, 2020). DMC enables companies to leverage digital technologies and platforms to interact with customers, gather market insights, and obtain real-time customer feedback, a strategic effort to explain how companies leverage digital technologies to achieve competitive market and business outcomes (Sackey et al., 2026).

Through digital channels such as social media, online platforms, and data analytics, companies can identify emerging trends and develop new ideas that support innovation activities. Previous studies have shown that companies with stronger DMC are more likely to strengthen their IC (Koliby et al., 2024; S. Wang & Zhang, 2025). Furthermore, DMC enable companies to increase market responsiveness and create greater customer value, ultimately leading to improved organizational outcomes. Previous studies also show that DMC play a significant role in improving BP (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Hat et al., 2025; Kim & Jin, 2024). Therefore, the hypotheses tested are:

H4. DMC positive and significant toward SME's IC

H5. DMC positive and significant toward SME's business performance

IC is often viewed as a company's ability to continuously update their products, services, and operational processes, which plays a crucial role in enabling companies to maintain long-term competitiveness and growth (Bansal et al., 2023; Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023). Companies with strong IC are better able to identify emerging opportunities, respond to customer needs, and introduce new solutions that differentiate them from competitors (Sari et al., 2023). In the context of SMEs, IC is crucial because it enables companies with limited resources to compete effectively through creativity, flexibility, and rapid adaptation (Wongsansukcharoen & Thaweepaiboonwong, 2023).

Within the RBV framework, SMEs with strong innovation capabilities are able to leverage their internal knowledge, skills, and technological resources to produce unique products and services to create competitive advantage (Robertson et al., 2023). DCT emphasizes that IC is an importance mechanism used by firms to adapt to environmental changes such as technological change, evolving customer preferences, and increasingly intense market competition (Robertson et al., 2023). Empirical studies consistently show that IC positively contributes to firm performance (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023; Nahar & Alam, 2026; Santos-Vijande et al., 2022; Wiwoho & Riptiono, 2025). Thus, the hypothesis tested is:

H6. IC positive and significant toward SME's business performance

Previous studies revealed that EC directly contributes to BP (Gomes et al., 2022; Ribau et al., 2017; Somwethee et al., 2023). In addition, DMC plays a crucial role in enhancing IC, because the use of digital technology allows companies to obtain market insights more quickly and

accurately (Koliby et al., 2024; S. Wang & Zhang, 2025). Besides that, DMC has also been shown to contribute to improving firm performance through increased market visibility, customer engagement, and the effectiveness of online strategies (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Hat et al., 2025; Kim & Jin, 2024). Furthermore, IC also an important aspect in improving business performance, especially in an increasingly dynamic and digitalized business environment, because it enables companies creating value through the development of products, processes, and business strategies (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023; Nahar & Alam, 2026; Santos-Vijande et al., 2022).

Based on these relationships, it can be assumed that EC not only directly influences BP but also indirectly through the development of DMC and IC. In this context, EC enables business actors to utilize digital technology more effectively, which in turn drives the innovation process and ultimately improves business performance. Therefore, this study proposes a serial mediation mechanism, where DMC and IC sequentially mediate the relationship between EC and business performance. Therefore, the hypotheses tested are:

H7. DMC mediates positive and significant between entrepreneurial capability and business performance.

H8. IC mediates positive and significant between entrepreneurial capability and business performance.

H9. DMC and IC sequentially mediate positively and significantly between entrepreneurial capability and business performance.

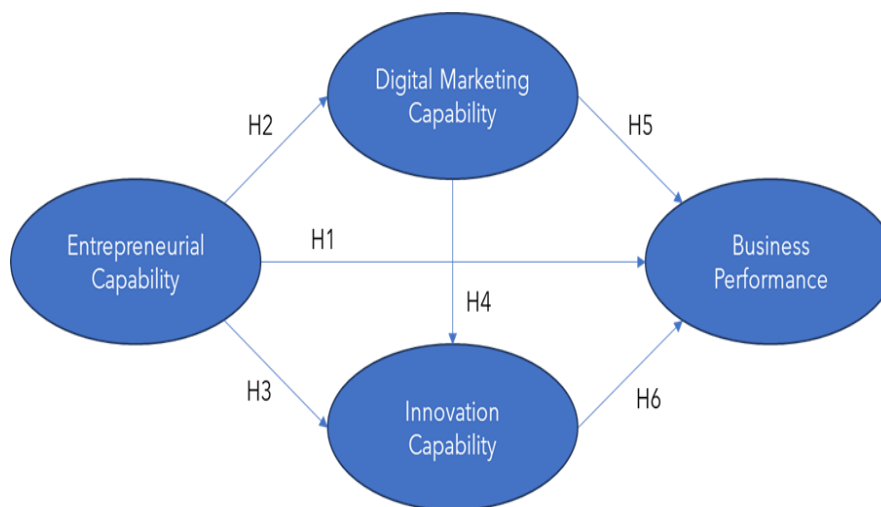


Figure 1. conceptual research framework

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Profiles of Respondents

The sample comprised 380 valid responses from batik SME owners or managers in Central Java, Indonesia who are actively involved in business operations and marketing activities.

Table 1. Profiles of Respondents (N=380)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	219	57.63

Female	161	42.37
Age		
20 – 29 years	56	14.74
30 – 39 years	89	23.42
40 – 49 years	135	35.53
50 – 59 years	66	17.37
>60 years	34	8.95
Level of Education		
Junior high school and below	45	11.84
Senior high school	102	26.84
Diploma	97	25.53
Bachelor	126	33.16
Magister and above	10	2.63
Age of Business		
1 – 4 years	87	22.89
5 – 9 years	102	26.84
10 – 14 years	136	35.79
>15 years	55	14.47

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents. The majority of respondents were male (57.63%), while 42.37% were female. Most respondents were aged 40–49 years (35.53%), followed by those aged 30–39 years (23.42%), indicating that batik SMEs are mostly managed by individuals in their productive entrepreneurial age. In terms of education, the largest proportion of respondents had a bachelor's degree (33.16%), followed by high school graduates (26.84%), indicating a relatively adequate educational background among SMEs owners. Regarding business experience, most respondents had run their businesses for 10–14 years (35.79%), followed by 5–9 years (26.84%), indicating that most companies have considerable business experience.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Items	Loading Factors	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Entrepreneurial Capability (5)				
• EC1	0.833	0.600	0.882	0.915
• EC2	0.801			
• EC3	0.788			
• EC4	0.719			
• EC5	0.726			
Digital Marketing Capability (5)				
• DMC1	0.874	0.638	0.898	0.928
• DMC2	0.815			
• DMC3	0.724			
• DMC4	0.762			
• DMC5	0.812			
Innovation Capability (4)				
• IC1	0.791	0.587	0.850	0.882
• IC2	0.712			
• IC3	0.813			
• IC4	0.745			
Business Performance (5)				
• BP1	0.807	0.590	0.878	0.891
• BP2	0.742			
• BP3	0.765			
• BP4	0.741			
• BP5	0.783			

EC= Entrepreneurial Capability; DMC= Digital Marketing Capability; IC= Innovation Capability; BP= Business Performance

The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.70, while all factor loadings are above 0.70 and AVE values surpass 0.50. These results confirm that the constructs are suitable for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Constructs	EC	DMC	IC	BP
Entrepreneurial Capability (EC)	0.775			
Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	0.63	0.803		
Innovation Capability (IC)	0.58	0.66	0.837	
Business Performance (BP)	0.69	0.62	0.71	0.833

Table 4. Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	EC	DMC	IC	BP
Entrepreneurial Capability (EC)	-			
Digital Marketing Capability (DMC)	0.631	-		
Innovation Capability (IC)	0.587	0.662	-	
Business Performance (BP)	0.714	0.690	0.628	-

Table 3 and 4 captured the results of discriminant validity which evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT. The square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its inter-construct correlations, and all HTMT values are below 0.90, confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct. Overall, the measurement model meets the requirements for discriminant validity, as well as reliability and convergent validity.

Table 5. Suggested and actual value of the model fit

Fit Indices	CMIN (X2)/df	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Suggested value	<3	≥0.95	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	< 0.08
Actual value	2.009	0.961	0.912	0.924	0.919	0.057

Note: CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; NFI = normed fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; X2 = chi-square

The model fit indices indicate a satisfactory fit, with all values meeting the recommended thresholds (CMIN/df = 2.009; CFI = 0.961; NFI = 0.912; IFI = 0.924; TLI = 0.919; RMSEA = 0.057). These results confirm the adequacy of the structural model for further hypothesis testing.

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis

Hypothesis and Path	Estimate	C.R	P-value	Result
H.1 EC → BP	0.671	7.179	0.000	Accepted
H.2 EC → DMC	0.523	3.965	0.000	Accepted
H.3 EC → IC	0.489	3.448	0.000	Accepted
H.4 DMC → IC	0.462	3.341	0.000	Accepted
H.5 DMC → BP	0.495	4.832	0.000	Accepted
H.6 IC → BP	0.387	3.449	0.000	Accepted

EC = Entrepreneurial Capability; DMC = Digital Marketing Capability; IC = Innovation Capability; BP = Business Performance

Table 6 shows that all hypothesized paths are positive and significant, supporting H1–H6. EC influences DMC, IC, and business performance, while digital marketing and innovation capabilities further enhance performance.

3.2. Discussion

The results show that EC has a significant effect on SMEs business performance, indicating that the higher the EC possessed by SMEs, the better the performance achieved. This finding aligns with the RBV perspective, which emphasizes that a company's competitive advantage is determined by its ability to develop and utilize valuable and difficult-to-imitate internal resources (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026). In this context, EC can be viewed as a strategic intangible resource because it enables business owners to recognize market opportunities, make appropriate decisions, and effectively allocate and coordinate organizational resources to achieve higher performance. Furthermore, this finding can also be explained through the perspective of DCT, which emphasizes a company's ability to adapt to changes in a dynamic business environment (Musah et al., 2026). EC enables SMEs to proactively respond to market changes, identify new opportunities, and flexibly adjust business strategies. In the issues of batik SMEs, this capability is crucial because business actors must face market competition, changing consumer preferences, and developments in digital technology. The results of this study are in line with previous studies which state that SMEs with strong EC tend to be more capable of developing adaptive and innovative strategies so that they can improve performance sustainably (Gomes et al., 2022; Ribau et al., 2017; Somwethee et al., 2023).

The results indicate that EC has a significant effect on DMC. This indicates that entrepreneurs with higher EC tend to be more capable of utilizing digital technology in their marketing activities. From a RBV perspective, EC can be viewed as a strategic intangible resource because it reflects the knowledge, skills, and experience that enable entrepreneurs to develop and utilize digital resources effectively (Abrokwah-Larbi & Awuku-Larbi, 2023; Antenzio et al., 2026; Hat et al., 2025). Thus, EC serves as an internal foundation that supports the escalate of DMC within an organization. Furthermore, from a DCT perspective, EC enables companies to perceive market opportunities, utilize digital technology, and adapt marketing strategies to changes in the dynamic business environment (Tapanainen et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021). The results of this study are in line with previous studies which stated that entrepreneurial skills help business actors utilize social media, marketplaces, and various other digital platforms to expand market reach, increase interaction with customers, and strengthen their competitive position in an increasingly digital market (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Fernandes et al., 2025).

This research also show that EC has a significant effect on IC. This indicates that SMEs with strong EC tend to be more capable of developing product, process, and business strategy innovations. These findings suggest that EC encourage entrepreneurs to be more proactive in generating new ideas, conducting business experiments, and adapting to market changes. From a RBV perspective, EC are intangible strategic resources that reflect the knowledge, skills, and experience possessed by entrepreneurs in managing a business (Somwethee et al., 2023). These resources enable companies to develop IC that form the basis for creating competitive advantage. Furthermore, from a DCT perspective, EC enable companies to proactively respond to changes in the business environment by identifying new opportunities, integrating market knowledge, and reconfiguring resources to support the innovation process (Fernandes et al., 2025). The results of this study confirm previous studies that innovation can be reflected through the development of new designs or motifs, the application of more efficient production techniques, and more creative marketing strategies to adapt to the dynamics of consumer preferences (Koliby et al., 2024; Santos-Vijande et al., 2022; Somwethee et al., 2023).

Next, DMC has a significant effect on IC. This finding suggests that the use of digital technology in marketing not only increases market visibility but also drives innovation processes within organizations. Digital platforms enable businesses to obtain real-time consumer feedback, understand market trends more quickly, and identify customer needs more accurately (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; Hashim et al., 2023; F. Wang, 2020). This information is an important resource for companies to develop product innovations and business strategies that are more

relevant to market needs. From a RBV perspective, DMC can be viewed as a strategic capability for companies to develop innovations that align with customer needs (Abrokwah-Larbi & Awuku-Larbi, 2023; Yadav et al., 2024). Furthermore, from the perspective of DCT, DMC help companies identify market opportunities through the use of data and digital interactions with customers to support sustainable innovation processes (Fernandes et al., 2025; Hernández-Perlines et al., 2026; Saeed et al., 2023). The results of this study align with previous research that explains that DMC are antecedents of IC (Koliby et al., 2024; S. Wang & Zhang, 2025).

The results show that DMC has a significant impact on business performance. This indicates that a company's ability to utilize digital technology for marketing activities can significantly improve business performance. The use of social media, marketplaces, and various digital platforms enables SMEs to increase product visibility, expand market reach, and strengthen relationships with customers (Hashim et al., 2023; Hat et al., 2025). In the context of batik SMEs, digital marketing is an important strategy to reach a wider consumer base and increase competitiveness in an increasingly digital market (Hidayati et al., 2025; Mulyana et al., 2024). From a RBV perspective, DMC can be viewed as an intangible strategic capability because it reflects a company's ability to utilize digital technology, market knowledge, and customer interactions to create value and increase competitive advantage (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026). Furthermore, from the perspective of DCT, DMC enable companies to perceive market opportunities through data analysis and digital interactions with customers (Fernandes et al., 2025; Tapanainen et al., 2022). The results of this study support previous studies which emphasized that company performance in the current digital era is highly dependent on the company's ability to utilize digital marketing (Buraiki & Nofal, 2026; Hat et al., 2025; Kim & Jin, 2024).

Moreover, IC has a significant effect on business performance. This indicates that a company's ability to develop new ideas, products, and processes is a crucial factor in improving business performance. In the batik industry, innovation plays a crucial role in maintaining product attractiveness amidst changing consumer preferences and increasing market competition. SMEs that are able to develop innovation sustainably tend to be more capable of creating added value for customers and improving overall performance (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023; Koliby et al., 2024; Shafik et al., 2024). From a RBV perspective, IC can be viewed as a strategic resource that enables companies to build sustainable competitive advantage (Hashim et al., 2023; Koliby et al., 2024). Furthermore, from the perspective of DCT, IC reflects a company's capacity to integrate, build, and reconfigure organizational resources in response to changes in the dynamic business environment (Antenozio et al., 2026; Phuong et al., 2022; Qiu et al., 2020). In the context of batik SMEs, this capability enables business actors to continuously adjust designs, production techniques, and marketing strategies to remain relevant to evolving market trends and consumer preferences. This research aligns with previous research stating that IC is fundamental in improving performance (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023; Nahar & Alam, 2026; Santos-Vijande et al., 2022; Wiwoho & Riptiono, 2025).

The Mediating Hypothesis Results captured in table 7, the mediation analysis reveals that EC influences BP both directly and indirectly through the proposed mediators. The mediation hypotheses were further evaluated using a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. Hypotheses of this study were tested by using the Bias-Corrected and Accelerated bootstrapping approach. Results in Table 7 indicate that all t-values are above then 1.96 and p-values are also less than 0.05. The indirect effects of EC on BP through DMC (H7) and IC (H8) are statistically significant because the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals do not include zero. Likewise, the sequential indirect effect through DMC and IC (H9) is also significant, providing empirical support for the proposed serial mediation model. The total effects further indicate that EC exerts a substantial overall influence on BP through the combined development of digital marketing and innovation capabilities.

Table 7. Serial Mediation Effects

Table 4: Path Coefficient Estimates												
Hypothesis and Path						95% confident interval		SE	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	P- value	Result
						Lower	Upper					
H.7	EC	→	DMC	→	BP	0.16	0.28	0.03	0.259	0.930	0.00	Accepted
H.8	EC	→	IC	→	BP	0.11	0.27	0.04	0.189	0.860	0.00	Accepted
H.9	EC	→	DMC	→	IC → BP	0.18	0.29	0.03	0.094	0.765	0.00	Accepted

EC = Entrepreneurial Capability; DMC = Digital Marketing Capability; IC = Innovation Capability; BP = Business Performance

Table 7 presents the results of the serial mediation analysis using a bias-corrected bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval. The findings indicate that all proposed indirect effects are statistically significant, as the 95% confidence intervals do not include zero. Specifically, DMC significantly mediated the relationship between EC and BP (H7; indirect effect = 0.259, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [0.16, 0.28], $p < 0.001$). Likewise, IC significantly mediated the relationship between EC and BP (H8; indirect effect = 0.189, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [0.11, 0.27], $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the sequential mediation through DMC and IC was also statistically significant (H9; indirect effect = 0.094, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [0.18, 0.29], $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that EC enhances BP not only through each mediator individually but also through the sequential mechanism in which EC strengthens DMC, which subsequently enhances IC and ultimately improves BP.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

This study demonstrates that EC enhances SME performance both directly and indirectly through DMC and IC. This highlights the importance of capability integration in achieving sustainable performance in the digital era. The results extend the Resource-Based View by positioning EC, DMC, and IC as key intangible resources, and support the DCT by evidencing a structured capability development process from opportunity recognition to value creation. Practically, batik SMEs should strengthen entrepreneurial competencies, adopt digital marketing strategies, and continuously innovate to remain competitive. Policymakers are also encouraged to support SMEs through digital training, innovation programs, and improved digital infrastructure.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. Its focus on batik SMEs in Central Java, Indonesia may limit generalizability, and the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture capability development over time. In addition, the model includes only three capabilities, while other factors such as organizational learning, market orientation, and digital readiness may also influence performance. Future research is encouraged to examine different contexts, incorporate additional variables, and employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of capability-driven SME performance.

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