E-ISSN: 3025-4922
DINASTI ACCOUNTING REVIEW
https://dinastirev.org/DAR dinasti.info@gmail.com +62 811 7404 455
DOI: https://doi.org/10.38035/dar.v4i2
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Received: 26 September 2026 | **Revised:** 04 October 2026 | **Accepted:** 15 October 2026

Social Accounting as Digital Accounting Adaptation in Enhancing Gen Z's Digital Literacy and Competence for SMEs in Kupang City

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Abstract: This study examines social accounting as a digital accounting adaptation to enhance Gen Z's digital literacy and competence in Kupang's SMEs. In the context of SDG 4, digital recordkeeping serves as both an administrative tool and an educational medium, driving technological skills, financial literacy, and social impact awareness (Tambunan, 2024). Social accounting enables SMEs to integrate transparency, accountability, and social value, while digitalization accelerates information processing for tech-savvy Gen Z Consequently, this research helps strengthen human resource capacity, improve business management quality, and foster a sustainable business ecosystem. Bank Indonesia launched the Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) in 2019 as a nationally standardized digital payment system. This innovation is crucial for SMEs facing limited financial recording systems and formal financial access. However, several operational barriers still hinder optimal QRIS utilization (Jumawan & Rahmawani, 2025). The study's urgency lies in the low digital and financial literacy among SME actors in regions with limited educational and technological access. The objective is to analyze QRIS adoption's effect on SME financial performance and identify factors influencing Gen Z's e-wallet usage. Data collection involved primary interviews, questionnaires, and observations systematically categorized for comprehensive analysis.

Keyword: SDGs 4, MSMEs, Digital, Technology, Finance.

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini mengkaji akuntansi sosial sebagai adaptasi akuntansi digital untuk meningkatkan literasi dan kompetensi digital Generasi Z di UMKM Kupang. Dalam konteks Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDG) 4, pencatatan digital berfungsi ganda sebagai alat administratif dan sarana pendidikan, yang mendorong pengembangan keterampilan teknologi, literasi keuangan, serta kesadaran akan dampak sosial (Tambunan, 2024). Akuntansi sosial memungkinkan UMKM untuk mengintegrasikan transparansi, akuntabilitas, dan nilai sosial, sementara digitalisasi mempercepat pemrosesan informasi bagi Generasi Z yang melek teknologi. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini membantu memperkuat kapasitas sumber daya manusia, meningkatkan kualitas manajemen bisnis, dan menumbuhkan ekosistem bisnis yang berkelanjutan. Bank Indonesia meluncurkan Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) pada tahun 2019 sebagai sistem pembayaran digital yang distandarisasi secara nasional. Inovasi ini sangat penting*

bagi UMKM yang menghadapi keterbatasan sistem pencatatan keuangan dan akses keuangan formal. Namun, beberapa hambatan operasional masih menghalangi pemanfaatan QRIS secara optimal (Jumawan & Rahmawani, 2025). Urgensi penelitian ini terletak pada rendahnya literasi digital dan keuangan di kalangan pelaku UMKM di wilayah-wilayah dengan akses pendidikan dan teknologi yang terbatas. Tujuannya adalah menganalisis dampak adopsi QRIS terhadap kinerja keuangan UMKM serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi penggunaan dompet digital oleh Generasi Z. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara langsung, kuesioner, dan observasi yang dikategorikan secara sistematis untuk analisis yang komprehensif.

Kata Kunci: *SDGs 4, MSMEs, Digital, Teknologi, Keuangan.*

INTRODUCTION

Social accounting currently forms part of an accounting paradigm capable of providing additional information regarding business activities and their impact on stakeholders, thereby serving as a bridge of values between interested parties (Af'idah, K., Sari, D. A., & Tasriastuti, 2025). In the rapidly evolving digital economy era, financial transparency becomes crucial to maintaining sustainability and enhancing the credibility of SMEs, including in Indonesia, which still faces structural challenges in financial recording practices. More than 80% of SMEs still rely on manual methods or have not even initiated financial recording, hindering the preparation of accurate financial statements, tax compliance, and access to formal financing. On the other hand, the increasing usage of smartphones and the internet, including the adoption of e-wallets by Generation Z, presents a major opportunity to drive digital transformation in financial recording. In the context of SDG 4, this situation underscores the importance of enhancing digital literacy and competence, particularly for SME actors and Generation Z, to enable them to adopt financial technology effectively. Consequently, the integration of social accounting and digital recordkeeping not only improves transparency and accountability but also serves as a learning medium supporting sustainable human resource capacity building (Ardianto & Ardiano, 2025).

In an increasingly advanced digital era, everyday human activities can be conducted digitally. For instance, payment transactions can now be processed online using e-wallets. An e-wallet (electronic wallet) is a form of fintech (financial technology) that utilizes the internet as an alternative payment method. E-wallets have emerged offering greater convenience through modern technology accessible to all segments of society (Salsabila & Rahmawati, 2025). Indonesia currently possesses a millennial generation mostly teenagers and young adults who have encountered and adopted technology, ensuring that internet access can now be enjoyed across almost all demographics throughout the country.

On the other hand, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs/SMEs) play a strategic role as pillars of the national economy. SMEs contribute significantly to job creation and local economic circulation. However, the primary challenges facing SMEs are limited digital knowledge, traditional financial management, and minimal technological access (Salsabila & Rahmawati, 2025). In the context of SDG 4, emphasis is placed on inclusive, equitable, and quality education, as well as the enhancement of digital literacy. When digital payments were introduced, some SME actors faced obstacles such as limited digital literacy and resistance to shifting transaction patterns. In fact, digital transformation represents a critical step toward boosting competitiveness, improving financial recordkeeping, and expanding market reach. The growth in the number of SMEs in Kupang City shows a positive trend; data indicates that the number of SMEs in Kupang City stood at 5,547 in 2022, rose to 6,837 in 2023, and increased to 8,054 in 2024.

These SMEs operate across six business sectors, including processing industries, trade, services, agriculture, fisheries, and livestock. With advances in financial technology (fintech) and

smartphone penetration, digital payment systems in Indonesia are expanding rapidly (Wahyuni, 2025). In urban areas, the use of digital wallets (e-wallets) and QR-based payment systems has become common; however, in rural/coastal regions like Kupang City characterized by small-scale SMEs, traditional markets, and limited mobility digital adoption does not automatically spread. Generation Z, being relatively more tech-savvy, has the potential to lead the transition to digital payments, representing a bridge between traditional cash market practices and the future of cashless transactions. This article examines how digital payment ecosystems can be activated through the role of Gen Z and modernization strategies for local SMEs. Against this background, this study aims to analyze how do MSMEs in Kupang City adapt their financial record-keeping and cash reconciliation processes after adopting QRIS, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors behind the successful utilization of QRIS by business actors and the theoretical relationship between digital wallets, Gen Z, and SMEs.

METHOD

The primary data collection technique in is in-depth interviews with research subjects. To obtain comprehensive interview results, the interviews must be recorded. Data completeness can be further deepened using other techniques, such as participant observation, document analysis, and others. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design (Supriyon & Fuji, 2022). This approach was chosen because the study aims to gain a deep understanding of the social phenomenon surrounding the use of digital wallets by Generation Z and its impact on SME transaction activities in Kupang City. Qualitative research enables the exploration of informants' perceptions, experiences, motivations, and behavioral patterns without manipulating variables or introducing specific interventions. The findings are expected to provide a factual and contextual overview of the adoption rate of digital wallets within the local economic ecosystem. The triangulation technique employed in this study is method triangulation, conducted by comparing interview results across various informants with documentation obtained by the researcher, as well as by comparing information derived from interviews with the accounting digitalization process.

Research Stages Data Processing: The collected data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, which include: Summarizing all qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews in the form of notes relevant to the research substance; Selecting core issues relevant to the focus of the study, then identifying trends or patterns within the collected data by categorizing them. Triangulating interview results in terms of both content and informants to reveal specific patterns. Additionally, document analysis of prior research findings and media coverage was conducted and subsequently triangulated to identify thematic trends (Mauli & Utami, 2022). At this stage, any collected data unrelated to the core substance of the study were excluded; Drawing conclusions regarding the overall trends identified across the processed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the empirical findings regarding the implementation of social accounting as a form of digital accounting adaptation aimed at enhancing the digital literacy and competence of Generation Z within MSMEs in Kupang City. Amidst the accelerating digital transformation across local micro, small, and medium enterprises, integrating modern financial recording with social responsibility serves as a practical educational medium(Fitri, 2026). These findings demonstrate that Generation Z's active engagement not only drives financial governance efficiency but also advances inclusive, quality informal education in digital financial literacy, directly aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDGs 4: Quality Education).

To obtain comprehensive and nuanced insights, primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with five key informants representing diverse stakeholder perspectives. The selection of these informants was designed to evaluate the extent to which digital accounting tools such as QRIS integration and digital bookkeeping are adopted by business operators, as well as their

subsequent impact on elevating the digital skill sets of Generation Z in Kupang City. The profiles of the research informants are presented below.

Table 1. Informant Profile

Informant Code	Informant Name	Position / Role	Business Sector	Business Scale
Informant 1	Mrs. Rina	Owner	Food Stall / Culinary	MSME (Micro)
Informant 2	Uncle Aji Walikota	Owner	Grocery Store	MSME (Micro)
Informant 3	Maya	Cashier	Modern Retail Supermarket	Corporate / Retail
Informant 4	Hendra	Accounting Staff	Distribution / Wholesale	Medium / Large
Informant 5	Putra	Owner	Coffee Shop	MSME (Small)

Source: Research Data (2026)

a. Informant 1: Mrs. Rina (MSME Food Stall Owner)

Many customers, especially young people and office workers, often ask if they can use QRIS because they rarely carry cash. So I set up QRIS to avoid losing customers. Incoming notifications are often delayed when the internet signal at my place is bad, or sometimes customers enter the wrong payment amount. Every night when closing the stall, I summarize the total cash sales in the cash book and then match it with the transaction history in the QRIS merchant app. Money from QRIS usually only enters the bank account the next day (D+1) so I record it as daily receivables first. The MDR fee deduction is immediately categorized as a monthly operational expense. It helps a lot. Counterfeit money is reduced, giving change is no longer confusing, and there is an automatic summary in the app that serves as a benchmark if my manual records have discrepancies.

b. Informant 2: Uncle Aji Walikota (Grocery Store Owner)

Initially, I was invited by the bank where I save. It turned out to be quite practical because I don't have to worry about preparing small change every morning. The main issue is when elderly customers shop, as they don't understand how to scan QR codes yet. So they need help, or they stick to cash. I use a physical daily cash book. Cash transactions go into the 'Cash' column, while QRIS transactions are recorded separately in the 'QRIS/Bank' column based on monthly transaction reports. Because the amounts are small, I usually wait a few days for the incoming funds to accumulate in the account before recording them as net cash. I accept the QRIS administrative fee deduction as a banking cost. It helps quite a bit in reducing physical cash calculation discrepancies in the store, but for detailed bookkeeping, I still need to learn how to create a neater system.

c. Informant 3: Maya (Modern Retail Supermarket Cashier)

The company requires QRIS as a standard cashless option to speed up checkout queues during peak hours. The obstacle is usually customer payment system errors or insufficient balances, which delay transactions and lengthen the queue. In our POS (Point of Sale) system, when a customer pays using QRIS, the system automatically prints a receipt under the 'Non-Cash/QRIS Payment' category. So at the end of the shift, it is calculated automatically. MDR deductions and fund settlements are handled automatically by the central finance team through merchant bank API integration. Very efficient. Recording at the cashier level is 100% accurate because payment figures are input/scanned directly from the system, minimizing the risk of human error.

d. Informant 4: Hendra (Distributor/Wholesale Accounting Staff)

To accommodate wholesale customers who want to pay directly on-site without needing manual interbank transfers that require transfer proof verification. Payment confirmation issues occur when the payment service provider's server is undergoing maintenance, causing the customer's balance to be deducted while not yet detected on our dashboard. Every morning, I

reconcile the QRIS merchant bank statement with the previous day's draft sales invoices in the accounting software. With every incoming fund settlement, the difference between total gross transactions and the net amount entering the bank is recorded under the 'QRIS Admin Fee/MDR' account as a revenue deduction. It greatly aids the internal audit process because every QRIS transaction has a unique Transaction ID that is easy to trace.

e. Informant 5: Putra (Coffee Shop Owner)

Nearly 80% of our customers are students and workers who are already used to the cashless ecosystem. Not offering QRIS could make the shop quiet. The café's Wi-Fi connection sometimes gets overloaded when it's crowded, making the dynamic QR code loading process on the cashier tablet a bit slow. Our café's POS system is directly integrated (dynamic QRIS). So when a customer pays, the order status in the POS automatically changes to 'Paid'. Settlement is done automatically to the business account every night. Our cashier system automatically calculates MDR fees so the monthly Income Statement directly shows net figures. Very efficient and neat. Cash flow recording becomes much more transparent and makes it easier for me to analyze daily revenue without counting paper money one by one.

This study concludes that QRIS adoption contributes to the transformation of financial transaction practices among MSMEs and other business entities by reducing dependence on cash and improving the efficiency, accuracy, and traceability of financial transactions. Based on direct interviews with five informants representing different business sectors, QRIS was found to provide practical benefits, including faster payment processing, reduced cash-handling risks, easier transaction monitoring, and the availability of digital transaction records(Hilnicputro, Reu & Rupa, 2025). The benefits were particularly evident in businesses using integrated Point of Sale (POS) or accounting systems, where QRIS transactions could be automatically recorded and reconciled, thereby reducing the potential for human error.

The findings further indicate that QRIS supports more transparent and systematic financial recording. Informants employed different accounting practices, ranging from manual cash books and separate QRIS records to fully integrated POS and accounting systems. QRIS transaction histories, bank statements, merchant applications, Transaction IDs, and automated settlement records function as supporting evidence for reconciliation between sales transactions and funds received. However, several challenges remain, including unstable internet connectivity, delayed payment notifications, customer payment errors, insufficient balances, limited digital literacy among some customers, and differences in the treatment of Merchant Discount Rate (MDR). These findings demonstrate that the benefits of digital payment adoption are closely related to the quality of accounting practices and the technological infrastructure supporting the business(Simanjuntak & Putri, 2025).

The credibility of these findings was strengthened through method triangulation involving direct interviews with five informants from different business contexts, allowing the researchers to identify similarities and differences in QRIS implementation and financial recording practices. The triangulated findings indicate that QRIS functions not only as a digital payment mechanism but also as a supporting instrument for digital accounting, financial control, and transaction transparency. Therefore, QRIS adoption can strengthen the digitalization of financial practices among MSMEs when accompanied by adequate digital literacy, reliable technological infrastructure, systematic transaction recording, and regular reconciliation between QRIS transaction data, bank settlements, and accounting records. The study highlights that digital payment adoption should consequently be viewed not merely as a change in payment methods but as part of a broader transformation toward more transparent and accountable digital financial management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings from the five informants show that QRIS has improved the efficiency and transparency of financial transactions across different business sectors. The food stall and grocery store owners highlighted easier cash management and transaction checking, while the supermarket cashier, distributor accounting staff, and coffee shop owner emphasized automated recording, faster reconciliation, and better transaction traceability. Although challenges such as unstable internet connections, payment errors, and delayed settlements remain, QRIS generally supports more practical and systematic financial management.

Through method triangulation using direct interviews with the five informants, the study confirms that QRIS functions not only as a digital payment method but also as a supporting tool for digital accounting and financial control. The consistency of the informants' experiences indicates that QRIS can strengthen transaction recording, reconciliation, and financial transparency when supported by adequate digital literacy, reliable technology, and proper accounting practices.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study involved only five informants from different types of businesses, so the findings may not fully represent the experiences of all MSMEs or business sectors. Second, the study primarily used direct interviews as the main source of information, meaning that the findings depend on the experiences and perceptions reported by the informants. Third, the study focused on the use of QRIS in relation to transaction efficiency, recording, reconciliation, and financial transparency and did not examine the long-term financial impact or compare QRIS users with businesses that still rely mainly on cash transactions. Therefore, the findings provide an initial understanding of the role of QRIS in digital financial management rather than a comprehensive measurement of its overall economic impact.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, business owners are encouraged to optimize the use of QRIS not only as a payment facility but also as part of their financial recording and control practices. Improving digital and financial literacy is important so that transaction records generated through QRIS can be properly checked, reconciled, and integrated with accounting records. Payment service providers and relevant stakeholders should also improve system reliability, particularly regarding internet connectivity, payment errors, and settlement delays. For future researchers, it is recommended to involve a larger number of informants and a wider range of business sectors, as well as to use additional methods such as observation, documentation analysis, and quantitative data analysis. Such approaches may provide a broader understanding of how QRIS contributes to digital accounting, financial transparency, and the financial performance of businesses.

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