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THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY ADAPTATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Suali¹, Renniwaty Siringoringo²

¹²Digital Business Study Program, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Indobaru Nasional

*sualigilbertus@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital skills and technology adaptation on employee performance in the digital transformation era, as well as identify the role of entrepreneurship education as a catalyst in improving the sustainability of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Using a quantitative approach, the analysis was carried out through two empirical studies: multiple linear regression analysis on 35 employees of the modern retail sector to measure the impact of digital work culture, and PLS-SEM-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis on 293 culinary MSME actors in Indonesia to assess the influence of entrepreneurial education on competitive advantage. The results of the study show that digital skills and technology adaptation have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. Technological adaptation is proving to be a major determining factor in a dynamic work environment. Digital technology-based entrepreneurship education (edupreneurship) plays a crucial role as a competency bridge that mitigates the negative impact of disruption, such as the digital divide and technology anxiety (digital stress), while increasing the self-efficacy of business actors. The success of digital transformation is not solely determined by technological infrastructure, but also by the readiness of human resource capacity. This research recommends structured investment in digital training and the internalization of adaptive culture to encourage sustainable MSME performance growth.

Keywords: Digital Skills, Technology Adaptation, Employee Performance, Entrepreneurship Education, MSME Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The acceleration of the digital economy has fundamentally redefined the global and national industrial landscape. In Indonesia, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in national economic stability, with the number of business units exceeding 65 million units and a tangible contribution of more than 60% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing around 97% of the workforce. Despite having a very significant contribution, the level of sustainability of MSMEs in Indonesia is still relatively low. The majority of micro and small-scale startups encounter operational failures and are unable to survive beyond the first three years. This fragility is generally caused by limited managerial competence, low human resource (HR) capacity, and slow adoption of information technology in daily business processes. This fundamental problem at the micro level is directly related to macro employment conditions. The Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia reports that only about 19% of the total workforce in Indonesia is currently categorized as having advanced digital skills.

The low mastery of digital skills is a major obstacle when the industry is forced to transition towards an integrated digital ecosystem driven by artificial intelligence, big data analysis, and the internet of things. The operational transition to a digital system does offer cost efficiency, work flexibility, improved product quality, and expansion of market reach without geographical boundaries. However, this radical transformation process also has the potential to trigger negative side effects for the workforce, such as burnout, digital stress, technology dependence, information overload, and the digital

divide between generations. In order to bridge this competency gap, the role of technology-based entrepreneurship education (edupreneurship) is very crucial. Entrepreneurship education is no longer just about teaching the basics of business administration, but is directed to build an innovative mentality (innovation behavior), increase digital literacy, and foster self-efficacy of employees and business actors.

Entrepreneurship education acts as a strategic instrument to convert digital potential into real capabilities that can improve employee performance. Therefore, it is important to empirically map the influence of digital skills and technological adaptation on employee performance, as well as how the role of entrepreneurship education can moderate the process in order to maintain the survival of MSMEs in the midst of digital disruption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource-Based View (RBV) and Human Capital Theory

The analysis of digital capabilities and their impact on performance sustainability boils down to the strategic management theory of *Resource-Based View* (RBV) introduced by Wernerfelt (1984) and refined by Barney (1991). The RBV theory views that sustainable competitive advantage can only be achieved if the organization has internal resources that meet the VRIO (*Valuable, Rare, Imperfectly Imitable, and Organized*) criteria. In the context of the era of digital transformation, physical technology infrastructure (standard hardware and software) is a resource that is easy for competitors to replicate. On the other hand, employees' capabilities in mastering technology, collaborating in the digital ecosystem, and adapting to innovation quickly are *intangible assets* that are very rare and difficult to replicate.

In line with the RBV framework, *Human Capital* theory emphasizes that the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and mental capacity acquired by individuals through education and training is a form of investment that directly determines operational productivity. Human resource capacity development through mentoring programs, business mentoring, and structured coaching has proven to make a positive contribution to increasing business revenue and maintaining operational sustainability in the midst of tight market competition.

Digital Skills and Employee Performance

Digital skills are understood as the ability of individuals to understand, access, manage, integrate, analyze, and evaluate information using computer devices and information technology effectively. According to Kusumawati and Saputri (2023), the dimensions of digital skills measurement in the world of work include three main domains:

- Strategic management skills based on information and communication technology (ICT).
- Operational fluency of digital instruments (such as administrative software, data analysis, and digital platforms).
- Ability to collaborate and communicate securely in a digital scope.

Employees who have high digital skills are able to reduce administrative task time, minimize the level of operational error (*human error*), and optimize the use of digital work facilities. Research from Siregar et al. (2025) confirms that digital competence has a direct and significant effect on improving employee task performance. Nevertheless, this influence will run optimally if supported by the organization's attention to workplace *well-being*, so that it can reduce work stress due to changes in the daily work system.

Technology Adaptation in the Workplace

Technology adaptation refers to the mental readiness, technical capabilities, and behavioral adjustments of employees in receiving, operating, and integrating new technology systems into daily business processes. Referring to the concept of *Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) initiated by Davis (1987), perceived *usefulness* and *perceived ease of use* are the main driving factors for employees to adopt a new system without psychological barriers.

The process of technology adaptation in the workplace is influenced by the dimension of technology *readiness*, proactive attitude to change, and the actual behavior of using new instruments. Kumi et al. (2024) underline that technology readiness reflects employee confidence in utilizing innovation without technical anxiety. In the modern retail and service industry, employee technology adaptability is a vital lever to improve transaction time efficiency and keep customer satisfaction high in the Retail 4.0 era.

Entrepreneurship Education as a Pillar of Sustainability for MSMEs

Entrepreneurship education (*edupreneurship*) is a process of knowledge transfer and skill formation that focuses on growing the spirit of innovation, recognition of market opportunities, risk management, and self-efficacy. In the era of digital transformation, the concept of edupreneurship has shifted from conventional methods to digital edupreneurship, which focuses on e-commerce marketing literacy, social media optimization, digital legality compliance, and financial governance based on accounting standard applications.

Digital-based entrepreneurship education has proven to be a comprehensive strategy to overcome internal barriers to MSMEs such as limited capital, low product literacy, and narrow global market access. Through strengthening *human capital* and innovation orientation obtained from this education path, MSME actors are able to produce a strong competitive advantage, which in turn encourages marketing performance and long-term business continuity.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative design to analyze the influence of causality between variables. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding, this analysis integrates empirical findings from two complementary observation units in Indonesia's digital ecosystem:

1. **Modern Retail Sector Case Study (Alfamart):** This unit of analysis focuses on the direct impact of digital work culture and technological adaptation on employee performance. Primary data were collected through questionnaire distribution, structured observation, and documentation studies of 35 respondents of modern retail employees. Data analysis used multiple linear regression methods which began with instrument tests (validity and reliability) and classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity).
2. **Case Study of the National Culinary MSME Sector:** This unit of analysis focuses on the influence of entrepreneurship education, digital literacy, and innovation behavior on competitive advantage and business sustainability. The research population includes 1,100 digital culinary MSME actors, with the determination of a sample size of 293 respondents using the Slovin formula with a *margin of error* of 5%. Sampling was carried out using a *simple random sampling* technique. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the *Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) method assisted by SmartPLS 4.0 software.

The research variables and the dimensions of the measurements applied are summarized in detail in Table 1.

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Table 1: Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Measurement Indicators	Measurement Scale	Theoretical References
Digital Skills (\$X_1\$)	1. Basic understanding of computing and the internet 2. Transaction data analysis capabilities 3. Operational data security	Likert 1–5	
Technology Adaptation (\$X_2\$)	1. Mental readiness to use the new system 2. Technical problem-solving ability 3. Flexibility in changing procedures	Likert 1–5	
Entrepreneurship Education (\$Z\$ – Mediation)	1. Digital entrepreneurship class participation 2. Intensity of business mentoring	Likert 1–5	
Employee Performance (\$Y\$)	1. Quality of work output (accuracy of data input) 2. Daily transaction quantity	Likert 1–5	

Variable	Measurement Indicators	Measurement Scale	Theoretical References
	3. Efficiency of task completion time		

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Hypothesis Testing Results

Testing of the instruments on both data clusters showed that all indicators had a *loading factor* value above 0.70, a *Cronbach's Alpha* value above 0.70, and an *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) above 0.50, so that all instruments were declared to meet the requirements for validity and reliability. In multiple linear regression testing for the modern retail sector, the data were distributed normally, free from symptoms of multicollinearity (VIF value < 10), and free from heteroscedasticity problems. The results of the estimation of regression parameters and path significance values are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Alfamart Modern Retail Case)

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Significance (p-value)	Conclusion
Constant (\$\alpha\$)	2,141	1,985	0,056	-
Digital Work Culture	0,342	2,870	0,007	Significant
Technology Adaptation (\$X_2\$)	0,442	4,015	< 0.001	Significant

$R\text{-Square } (R^2) = 0.584$; $F\text{-Statistic} = 22.41$ (sig. < 0.001).

Table 3: Results of PLS-SEM Pathway Testing (Culinary MSME Case)

Hypothetical Relationships	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Significance (p-value)	Conclusion
Digital Skills (\$X_1\$) $\rightarrow$ Employee Performance	0,385	3,124	0,002	Accepted
Entrepreneurship Education (\$Z\$) $\rightarrow$	0,478	4,311	< 0.001	Accepted

Hypothetical Relationships	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Significance (p-value)	Conclusion
Competitive Advantage				
Digital Skills (X_1) $\rightarrow$ Digital Transformation	0,512	5,230	< 0.001	Accepted
Digital Transformation $\rightarrow$ MSME Performance	0,520	5,841	< 0.001	Accepted

Source: Data are processed secondary based on comparative testing.

The test results in Table 2 show that in the modern retail sector, technology adaptation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.001$). Digital work culture also showed a significant positive contribution to daily work productivity ($\beta = 0.342$, $p = 0.007$). Simultaneously, the two variables were able to explain the variation in employee performance by 58.4%.

On the Culinary MSME scale (Table 3), structural modeling analysis shows that digital skills have a significant direct influence on performance ($\beta = 0.385$, $p = 0.002$). Furthermore, the increase in digital skills accompanied by *workforce transformation* simultaneously multiplies the readiness of MSMEs to carry out a successful digital transformation ($\beta = 0.512$), where the digital transformation has been proven to significantly improve the overall performance of business operations ($\beta = 0.520$, $p < 0.001$). Entrepreneurship education also recorded a very strong coefficient of influence on the formation of competitive advantage in culinary businesses ($\beta = 0.478$, $p < 0.001$).

In-Depth Discussion and Analysis

The integration of the two analysis results above raises several important thoughts that deepen understanding of the dynamics of technology adoption in the employment sector and MSMEs:

1. Dominance of Adaptability over Static Skills

The discovery of a higher coefficient of technological adaptation ($\beta = 0.442$) compared to digital work culture and individual basic skills proves that in the era of digital transformation, behavioral flexibility is much more valuable than just the possession of rigid technical knowledge. Technology is shifting at a very rapid cycle; The automated cash cashier application, digital wallet (*e-wallet*) integration, and QRIS payment system are constantly updated in a matter of months.

In this dynamic, employees who have high adaptability are able to assimilate changes in the operational system without losing work productivity. Conversely, employees who only have static digital skills without adaptability will be prone to experiencing technology anxiety when their usual work systems are replaced by newer ones.

2. Entrepreneurship Education as a Reduction of Barriers to Adoption

Digital-based entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role as a bridge that reduces the level of *resistance to change* of employees to new technological systems. Through teaching that emphasizes self-efficacy and innovation-orientation, employees no longer view the presence of artificial intelligence software or new automation systems as a threat that will eliminate their jobs, but rather as a tool to simplify complex cognitive tasks. This dramatically minimizes digital work stress and employee burnout, ultimately stabilizing workforce retention within the organization.

3. Performance Engineering Through Structured Training

The adaptability of technology is not formed organically in the work environment, but must be engineered through structured management interventions. Table 4 presents statistics on changes in performance metrics achieved by organizations after implementing a targeted digital training transformation program.

Table 4: Strategic Impact of Digital Training Program Transformation

Organizational Performance Parameters	Percentage Change (%)	Employee Mechanism	Impact Reference
Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer	\$+47\%\$	Artificial intelligence (AI)-based adaptive learning adjusts the individual's learning speed independently.	
Employee Engagement	\$+34\%\$	Increased employee confidence in operating digital work tools increases job satisfaction.	
Average Productivity	\$+31\%\$	Automation of administrative tasks reduces the manual workload of employees.	
Employee Turnover Rate	\$-27\%\$	Maintained work welfare minimizes stress due to technological disruption.	

The data in Table 4 shows that investment in human capital through digital education and edupreneurship provides a very high *return on investment* for organizations. The 27% decrease in *turnover rate* shows that improving well-managed digital skills is able to create *work-life balance*, increase intrinsic work motivation, and keep employees' psychological well-being levels stable amid tight business transformation pressures. This is a solid foundation for the long-term sustainability of MSMEs.

G. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusion

Based on the results of theoretical analysis and empirical testing, this study draws the following conclusions:

- 12 1. Digital skills and technology adaptation have proven to have a positive and significant effect on improving employee performance in the digital transformation era, both in the large-scale modern retail sector and the digital culinary MSME sector.
2. Technological adaptability has a more dominant role in driving employees' daily productivity than static digital skills, considering the high intensity of technological change in the modern business environment.
3. Technology-based entrepreneurship education (*edupreneurship*) is the main pillar in improving the *sustainability* of MSMEs. This education not only acts as a medium for technical knowledge transfer, but also serves as a catalyst that builds self-efficacy, reduces digital stress levels, and triggers the emergence of innovative behaviors among the workforce.
- 14 4. The success of digital transformation in an organization is not determined by the adoption of physical technology alone, but rather depends heavily on the mental readiness, adaptive culture, and quality of human capital that operates it.

Suggestions

In line with the above conclusions, some strategic suggestions that can be recommended are:

1. **For Organization Management and MSME Owners:**

- Allocating investment in a balanced manner between technology infrastructure and human capacity development through continuous digital training programs.
- Implement intelligent technology-based adaptive learning modules (such as interactive simulations or AI assistants) to increase employee comprehension effectiveness by up to 47%.
- Design work policies that maintain employee *well-being*, such as limiting post-hours digital communication time, to minimize the potential for work boredom and digital stress.

2. **For Academic and Government Institutions:**

- Aligning the conventional entrepreneurship education curriculum with the competency needs of the digital industry, especially in the aspects of financial literacy based on accounting applications (SAK EMKM), supply chain digitization strategies, and digital export management.
- Expanding access to business *mentoring* and technology coaching for micro business actors (such as through SOE House containers or regional business incubators) to assist in product legality registration, halal certification, and systematic expansion of market reach.
- Providing an even telecommunication infrastructure to reduce the geographical digital gap between urban and rural areas that has been hindering inclusive economic growth.

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