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## E-Prospek as a digital catalyst for small enterprise resilience in the post-pandemic ERA

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the sustainability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, particularly in terms of declining market demand, order cancellations, and severe liquidity challenges. Digitalization has emerged as a critical strategy to strengthen SME resilience, with *E-Prospek*, a digital marketing platform, playing a central role. This study aims to analyze the transformative impact of *E-Prospek* on SME performance, focusing on productivity, customer growth, and profitability. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with data collected from Lintang Kejora Craft SME through observation, in-depth interviews, and standardized questionnaires, which demonstrated reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.7. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and multiple regression. Findings indicate that *E-Prospek* contributed to a 40 percent increase in the customer base, a 30 percent rise in profit, and improved operational efficiency. Regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect with a beta coefficient of 0.15, a p-value of 0.004, and a correlation coefficient of 0.91 with a p-value of 0.001. Features such as automated follow-ups and integrated email marketing supported more personalized and loyal customer relationships. These findings offer strategic implications for entrepreneurs and policymakers in leveraging technology for sustainable business growth.

**Keywords:** Customer loyalty, Digitalization, *E-Prospek*, Operational efficiency, Small and medium enterprises.

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## 1. Introduction

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia faced numerous significant challenges that threatened their business continuity. Several primary issues identified include a 92.96% decrease in demand, order cancellations reaching 85.56%, and a liquidity crisis (74.30%) resulting in substantial financial difficulties for many SMEs. Furthermore, operational disruptions such as transportation delays (72.53%), unsafe work environments (68.31%), raw material shortages (63.73%), and employee absenteeism (62.67%) exacerbated the complexity of the

situation faced by SME operators [1]. Additionally, production volume declined by more than 40% compared to the pre-pandemic year, reflecting the considerable impact experienced by this sector.

In addition to operational and financial challenges, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also grappling with a shortage of human and financial resources to address the impacts of the pandemic [2]. This crisis has disrupted supply chains, characterized by inventory shortages, logistical hurdles, and rising costs [3]. Amid these challenges, many SMEs have been compelled to adapt swiftly to ensure their business continuity. Strategies that can be implemented include the adoption of digital technologies to enhance efficiency and market access, as well as diversifying supply chains to reduce reliance on a single source.

In confronting these challenges, digitalization has emerged as a key solution to assist SMEs in adapting and surviving. The use of digital technologies, such as e-commerce platforms, digital production management systems, and social media marketing, has proven to enhance productivity, operational efficiency, and the long-term competitiveness of SMEs [4]. Furthermore, leveraging digital marketing and information technology (IT) knowledge has positively impacted the financial performance of SMEs by expanding market reach and facilitating more efficient communication with customers [5]. Digitalization also creates opportunities for SMEs to develop new business models, enabling them to access global markets, broaden consumer networks, and foster innovation in products and services [6].

One of the increasingly relevant technological elements is Big Data Analytics (BDA), which has a significant role in connecting digital transformation with improving the economic and operational performance of SMEs. BDA allows processing large amounts of data to produce more comprehensive insights into consumer preferences, market patterns, and business performance [7]. Implementing Digital Strategies to Strengthen the Sustainability of SMEs as a whole, digitalization not only provides short-term benefits but is also a crucial factor for the sustainability of SMEs in the post-pandemic era. Strategies such as utilizing social media for marketing, developing digital skills among employees, and implementing an integrated production management system can help SMEs improve operational efficiency and competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market [6, 8]. Through the application of the right technology, SMEs have substantial potential to become more resilient, reduce dependence on external factors, and increase their profitability in the long term.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia have demonstrated remarkable adaptability in the face of significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The strict social restrictions and economic impacts have made it difficult for many SMEs to survive; however, a majority have successfully identified solutions by leveraging digital technology. Digital transformation has emerged not only as an alternative to navigate the crisis but also as a primary strategy that enables SMEs to maintain sustainability and even enhance their performance during this period of uncertainty. Research conducted by Fatimah [9] and Hardilawati [10] indicates that SMEs that swiftly adapt to digitalization have a greater chance of surviving and thriving despite the considerable challenges they face.

One of the most significant steps taken by SMEs is the adoption of e-commerce platforms. These digital platforms provide wider access for SMEs to reach consumers throughout Indonesia, even to international markets, without being constrained by physical distance. The use of social media as a marketing tool is also growing rapidly, giving SMEs the opportunity to interact directly with consumers, promote products, and expand their market reach. With this technology, SMEs not only survive, but are able to increase their sales in a more efficient and cost-effective way. Rosita [11] and Hidayat [12] found that this digital marketing strategy has helped SMEs expand their markets and increase competitiveness, even in the depressed economic conditions due to the pandemic.

In addition to the adoption of e-commerce and social media, digital literacy has become a crucial aspect in the success of SMEs in adopting technology. SMEs with superior knowledge of digital tool utilization, such as sales management systems or consumer data analysis, demonstrate greater effectiveness in leveraging technology for marketing and operations. Purnama, et al. [13] emphasize that a high level of digital literacy among SME practitioners is directly correlated with their ability to optimize the use of digital tools and respond to market changes more rapidly. However, despite the substantial potential of digitalization, numerous SMEs still face challenges in maximizing the utilization of technology. Many SMEs lack sufficient digital skills to manage online marketing, access capital through digital platforms, or efficiently manage logistics, indicating the necessity for more intensive training programs and support [14].

Overall, digitalization has emerged as a key driver for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia to survive and thrive in the post-pandemic era. The adoption of digital technologies enables SMEs to enhance operational efficiency, expand market reach, foster product innovation, and cultivate closer relationships with customers [9, 10].

To address these challenges, it is crucial for entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions to take on a more significant role in preparing the younger generation of SMEs to embrace digital technology. A curriculum focused on practical skills and relevant theories will equip students to understand and implement technology in their businesses, while also enhancing their abilities to plan, manage, and develop sustainable enterprises in the digital age [15]. Beyond the classroom, universities also provide hands-on experiences that allow students to apply the knowledge they have gained in real-world contexts. Practical activities such as bazaars, student entrepreneurship creativity programs (PKM-K), and business competitions offer students the opportunity to develop their business ideas and test the concepts they have learned in real-life scenarios. Research indicates that direct involvement in these entrepreneurial activities significantly boosts students' interest and motivation to become entrepreneurs [16, 17]. These activities not only enhance technical skills but also build the confidence necessary for aspiring entrepreneurs to start and manage their businesses.

Furthermore, higher education institutions play a crucial role as incubators for business ideas. Many universities now feature business incubators or pre-incubator programs that serve as platforms for students to cultivate their business concepts in a supportive and secure environment. Within these incubators, students gain access to essential resources,

including mentorship, funding, and professional networks that can assist them in overcoming challenges they may encounter when launching their ventures [18, 19].

However, while entrepreneurship education is vital, its effectiveness largely depends on the strategies employed by the institutions. Research indicates that although numerous colleges offer entrepreneurship courses, the success of this education does not always translate into a significant increase in entrepreneurial interest. A study conducted at a university in Madrid revealed that entrepreneurship education does not consistently correlate with students' entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting the need for more effective approaches to entrepreneurship development [20]. Consequently, there is a growing emphasis on fostering an entrepreneurial mindset rather than solely focusing on technical skills related to business planning or marketing.

Concurrently, entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions plays a crucial role in preparing young entrepreneurs who can optimize this digitalization potential. Higher education institutions must continuously enhance the quality of their entrepreneurship programs by providing students access to the latest technology and imparting relevant practical knowledge, enabling them to leverage digital transformation in their business ventures [21]. This approach will contribute to the development of a generation of entrepreneurs who are prepared to adapt to economic and technological changes, as well as capable of developing sustainable and innovative SMEs in the digital era.

The alignment of business mapping with the interests and competencies of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) operators is crucial for ensuring effective and profitable business operations. A significant implementation in this regard is the utilization of Electronic Customer Relationship Management (*E-Prospek*), which has been demonstrated to enhance customer retention by fostering closer and more sustainable relationships between businesses and consumers. This research proposes the integration of Digital Business Management and *E-Prospek* as a primary solution for improving the sustainability of SMEs in the post-pandemic era. The application of digital technology in customer relationship management and digital business models is anticipated to assist SMEs in surviving, optimizing operational efficiency, expanding market reach, and increasing customer loyalty. This approach not only focuses on technology but also emphasizes the strengthening of business relationships with consumers as a key factor in the sustainability and growth of SMEs.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the application of an SME development model that integrates Digital Business Management and *E-Prospek* can improve SME performance, with a focus on aspects of operational efficiency, customer growth, and business profits. This study also aims to assess the impact of digital technology implementation on customer relationships and digital marketing performance, as well as to identify factors that influence the sustainability and development of SMEs post-pandemic.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Digital transformation in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)*

Digital transformation has become a major force that helps Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia to survive and thrive despite the major impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Digitalization enables SMEs to optimize various business processes, improve operational efficiency, and create added value for customers. The use of digital technologies such as e-commerce, big data analytics, and digital marketing has helped SMEs expand their market reach, reduce operational costs, and increase interactions with customers more efficiently. According to research conducted by Pourmorshed and Durst [22] digital integration in the supply chain enables SMEs to develop more targeted strategies, focus on customer experience and more efficient operations. In addition, big data gives SMEs the ability to analyze customer behavior, so they can adapt products and services to changing demands, creating more personal and profitable relationships with customers.

With the adoption of digital technology, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can automate various operational aspects such as inventory management, marketing, and customer service, thereby reducing dependence on manual labor and decreasing operational costs. This automation enhances productivity, which is crucial given the resource limitations of SMEs. Brodeur, et al. [23] note that digital platforms enable SMEs to reach a broader audience at a lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods. Digitalization also expands market reach, particularly in areas previously restricted by physical limitations due to the pandemic.

The implementation of digitalization in SMEs extends beyond merely optimizing internal processes; it also creates opportunities for broader business innovation and addresses funding challenges. In this context, digital business model innovation (DBMI) empowers SMEs to redesign their business models, develop more relevant value propositions, and expand their market reach globally [24]. Furthermore, digital technology provides crucial solutions to funding issues, which often pose significant barriers for SMEs, through innovations in Digital Inclusive Finance (DIF). This approach enhances access to more efficient and rapid financing sources. Additionally, digital technology plays a vital role in addressing funding challenges, as innovations in DIF facilitate broader access to financing, reduce transaction costs, and expedite the capital borrowing process, which is essential for small and medium-sized enterprises. DIF enables SMEs to secure the necessary capital without being hindered by geographical limitations or complex bureaucratic processes, thereby accelerating business expansion more effectively [25].

However, despite the many studies discussing the adoption of digital technology by SMEs, there is still a gap in understanding how digital business management integrated with *E-Prospek* can support the sustainability and development of SMEs, especially in the context of the post-pandemic market. This study aims to fill this gap by providing practical guidance for SMEs in utilizing digitalization to grow and develop. Overall, digitalization has become a major driving factor for SMEs in improving operational efficiency, expanding market reach, and creating sustainable growth opportunities. To

maximize this potential, greater support is needed in the form of digital training, capital provision, and policies that support inclusive and sustainable digital transformation [26, 27].

### 3. Method

This research employs a mixed methods design. The descriptive approach delineates the challenges faced by SMEs in the post-pandemic era and their responses to digitalization, utilizing observation, interviews, and literature review [1]. The explanatory approach is employed to examine the implementation of the *E-Prospek* model through action research and small group simulations, evaluating the impact of technology on SME performance [22]. This design was selected to comprehensively understand the challenges and assess the effectiveness of digital products.

The subject of this research is small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, specifically focusing on Lintang Kejora Craft, an SME that has integrated digitalization into its marketing and operational strategies in the post-pandemic era. This particular SME was selected due to its efforts in adapting and implementing digital strategies, such as *E-Prospek* and other digital platforms, to survive and thrive amid the challenges posed by the pandemic [28]. Lintang Kejora Craft has adopted various digital technologies, including social media, e-commerce, and email marketing, to enhance its business operations. Consequently, this study aims to understand and analyze how this SME implements digitalization and technology-based business models to improve its performance following the pandemic crisis.

In this research, data were collected using a combined instrument comprising observation, interviews, and questionnaires, designed to obtain comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data [29]. Observations were conducted to monitor the operational and marketing activities of SMEs implementing *E-Prospek*, with a focus on efficiency improvements, market expansion, and customer relationships. In-depth interviews with owners, employees, and customers explored their experiences related to the implementation of digital technology and its impact on business performance. Questionnaires were utilized to gather quantitative data regarding the influence of *E-Prospek* on customer numbers, sales, profits, and operational efficiency of SMEs. The results of this data collection provided a clearer understanding of the impact of *E-Prospek* implementation on SME business performance. Table 1 presents a grid of the instruments used in this study, which details the aspects and indicators measured through observation, interviews and questionnaires.

**Table 1.**  
Research Instrument Grid.

No.	Aspects	Number of Items	Data Collection Techniques
1	Operational Efficiency	4	Observation
2	Digital Marketing	3	Observation
3	Customer Relationship	3	Observation
4	Digital Technology Implementation	2	Interview (UKM Owner)
5	Impact on Business Performance	2	Interview (UKM Owner)
6	Employee Engagement	2	Interview (Employee)
7	Customer Satisfaction	2	Interview (Customer)
8	Digital Marketing Performance	3	Questionnaire
9	Resource Efficiency	3	Questionnaire

Source: Adaptation from research Sukardi [30]; Tri Wahyudi, et al. [31] and Lang [32].

The results of the validity test indicate that the instrument used in this study is valid to measure the development of SMEs based on digital business management and the implementation of *E-Prospek* [33]. Content validity, which was evaluated through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, ensured that the instrument covered all aspects relevant to the research topic after consulting with experts in entrepreneurship and digital management [34]. Meanwhile, the construct validity test was carried out through a trial of the instrument on SMEs that had adopted digital technology, with the results showing adequate consistency and reliability. Several minor revisions were made to ensure that the instrument could measure the variables studied more accurately. Furthermore, the results of the instrument reliability test used the Cronbach's Alpha method to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire used in quantitative data collection. A high Cronbach's Alpha value (above 0.7) indicates that the instrument is reliable and can be used to collect consistent data across research subjects [35]. Overall, the instrument used was declared valid and reliable to collect relevant data.

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches to assess the impact of implementing digital business models and *E-Prospeking* on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) [36]. Qualitative data collected through interviews and observations will be analyzed using thematic analysis, categorizing the data into key themes such as challenges of digitalization, marketing strategies, and customer relationships [37]. For the quantitative aspect, descriptive statistical analysis will be utilized to evaluate variables such as the level of digital technology adoption, marketing performance, customer count, and SME profitability following the implementation of the *E-Prospeking* model [38]. Additionally, correlation analyses, including Spearman Rank or Pearson methods, will be conducted to examine the relationships between digitalization implementation and SME performance, as well as between *E-Prospeking* usage and customer retention. To assess the factors influencing SME growth, linear regression analysis will be applied to identify significant variables, including the impact of e-commerce, big data, and digital marketing on revenue and customer base expansion for SMEs.

#### 4. Result

As is known, *E-Prospek* is a web-based application designed to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) manage potential customer prospects more efficiently. This application offers key features such as user management, customer data management, and handling of prospects, deals, and products sold. By integrating digital technology, *E-Prospek* facilitates marketing and sales, expands market reach, and simplifies customer information management. To ensure optimal operations, this application requires technical specifications such as an Apache or Nginx server, MySQL database, and PHP version 8.2 or higher, which can be accessed via a web browser on computers, laptops, and smartphones. With this capability, *E-Prospek* becomes an important tool for SMEs in adapting and competing in the digital era.

Lintang Kejora Craft, an SME that previously relied on offline exhibitions and word-of-mouth promotions, began integrating *E-Prospek* into its post-pandemic marketing strategy. By utilizing social media, email marketing, and marketplaces, they managed to reach new consumers who had not previously been exposed to their products. The steps taken include increasing online presence through social media to display product catalogs and facilitate communication with customers. In addition, data collected from digital campaigns is used to offer more personalized promotions, such as birthday discounts or special products based on customer preferences. Collaboration with major marketplace platforms also increases the visibility of their products. To maintain relationships with customers and encourage repeat purchases, Lintang Kejora Craft uses an electronic follow-up system through email marketing and automated chat. As an *E-Prospek* user, Lintang Kejora Craft is the subject of research in studying the effectiveness of this digital-based business model. The findings and analysis regarding the impact of the implementation of *E-Prospek* by Lintang Kejora Craft will be explained in the following sections.

##### 4.1. The *E-Prospek* Strategy Implemented at Lintang Kejora Craft Has Had a Significant Impact

The implementation of *E-Prospek* at Lintang Kejora Craft demonstrates a significant positive impact on business performance. Based on descriptive analysis results, the frequency of digital tool utilization reaches 80%, with social media being utilized regularly (4-5 times per week). *E-Prospek* features such as automated follow-ups and email marketing are implemented by 65% of SME operators, while 60% utilize data management and sales report features. Significant impacts are observed in the increase of new customers by up to 40%, a 30% rise in profits, and improved operational efficiency, with 70% of respondents reporting more efficient marketing and sales. Additionally, marketing and logistics costs are reduced by 50%, indicating enhanced resource management. As displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
Frequency of Digital Tool Usage and Its Impact on Business Performance.

No	Aspect	Percentage (%)	Details
1	Frequency of Use of Digital Tools		
	- Regular use of digital tools	80%	Regular use of digital tools every week by 80% of SMEs.
	- Use of social media for marketing	80%	Social media is used intensively for marketing with a frequency of 4-5 times a week.
2	Use of <i>E-Prospek</i> Feature		
	- Automatic follow-up and email marketing	65%	Use of automated follow-up features and email marketing to increase customer engagement.
	- Sales data and reporting management	60%	60% of SMEs use features for more structured customer data management and sales reports.
3	Impact on Business Performance		
	- Increase in number of customers	40%	New customers increased by 40% in the first six months of implementing <i>E-Prospek</i> .
	- Increase in business profits	30%	Business profits increased by 30% compared to before the pandemic.
4	Operational Efficiency		
	- More efficient marketing and sales	70%	70% of SMEs reported that marketing and sales processes have become more structured and efficient.
	- Reduced marketing and logistics costs	50%	50% of SMEs noted savings in marketing and logistics costs due to more efficient customer management.

In-depth interviews with SME operators revealed the direct impact of *E-Prospek* implementation in three primary aspects: sales increase, broader market access, and enhanced customer relationships. A sales increase of approximately 30% was recorded, with SME operators stating that *E-Prospek* enabled more structured and focused customer interactions. Regarding market access, the utilization of digital platforms allowed them to reach consumers from outside their local area and even internationally, which was previously limited by traditional promotional methods. The aspect of customer relationships also experienced significant improvement, with *E-Prospek* facilitating more personalized interaction management, such as sending birthday offers or special discounts. This strengthened customer relationships and increased their loyalty to the products.

Overall, the implementation of *E-Prospek* has demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing the business performance of Lintang Kejora Craft, reflected in customer growth, increased profits, and improved operational efficiency. Digitalization

has broadened market reach, streamlined prospect management, and strengthened customer relationships, thereby reinforcing the competitiveness of SMEs in the post-pandemic era. These findings underscore that digitalization is a crucial factor in the sustainable development of SMEs.

4.2. Increase in Number of Consumers: The Number of New Consumers Increased by up to 40% in the First Six Months of Implementing E-Prospek

The implementation of *E-Prospek* at Lintang Kejora Craft has had a significant impact on the number of new customers. A descriptive statistical analysis of customer data before and after the introduction of *E-Prospek* reveals a substantial increase of up to 40% within the first six months. This growth was calculated using frequency and percentage metrics, indicating that the digital strategy has effectively broadened the market reach of this SME. This is illustrated in the following Figure 1.

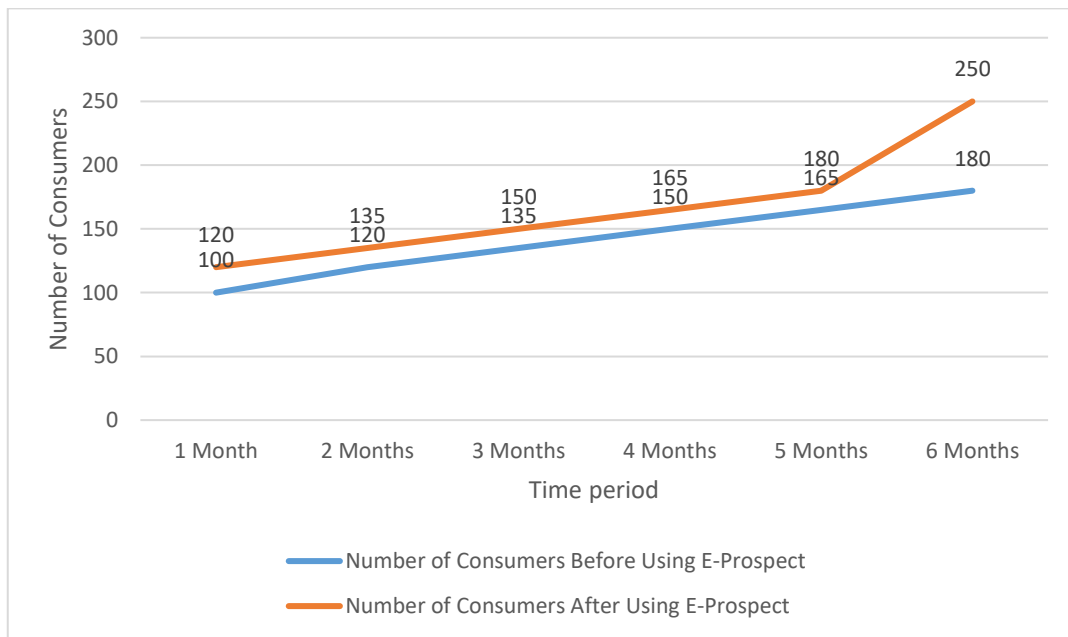


Figure 1. Increase in the Number of Consumers.

Based on the collected data regarding the frequency of *E-Prospek* usage and the number of consumers recorded in the first six months following the implementation of *E-Prospek*, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between these two variables. The analysis employed Pearson Correlation for data that follows a normal distribution.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Results.

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Use of <i>E-Prospek</i>	Increase in Number of Consumers	0.91	0.001

The analysis results indicate a strong correlation between the utilization of *E-Prospek* and the increase in consumer numbers, with a Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) of 0.91. The highly significant p-value (0.001) demonstrates that this relationship is not coincidental and possesses substantial statistical significance. These findings suggest that more frequent and effective use of *E-Prospek* corresponds to a greater increase in the number of consumers recorded at Lintang Kejora Craft, highlighting the successful implementation of digital strategies in enhancing customer attraction and engagement.

4.3. Increase in Profits: Business Profits Increased By 30% Compared to the Pre-Pandemic Period

The data analyzed by regression has first been stated to meet the assumptions such as data including normal, linear, and homoscedasticity. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Regression Analysis (Figures in Ruphias).

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Statistics	p-Value
Intercept (Constant)	50,000	5,000	10.00	0.000
<i>E-Prospek</i> Implementation	0.15	0.05	3.00	0.004
e-commerce Usage	0.10	0.04	2.50	0.020
Digital Marketing	0.08	0.03	2.67	0.012

Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis, the implementation of *E-Prospek*, e-commerce, and digital marketing has been shown to significantly impact the profit growth of SMEs. The regression coefficient for *E-Prospek* is 0.15, indicating that each increase in the use of *E-Prospek* correlates with a profit increase of IDR 150,000 (p-value = 0.004). This underscores the positive effect of *E-Prospek* in enhancing revenue through more efficient prospect management. Additionally, e-commerce plays a crucial role with a regression coefficient of 0.10, suggesting that each rise in e-commerce usage is associated with a profit increase of IDR 100,000 (p-value = 0.020). This highlights how e-commerce expands market reach and improves operational efficiency.

Meanwhile, digital marketing has a smaller positive impact, reflected by a regression coefficient of 0.08, indicating that each increase in digital marketing usage is associated with a profit increase of IDR 80,000 (p-value = 0.012). This suggests that digital marketing enhances customer relationships and broadens market reach. Overall, the multiple regression results indicate that the combination of implementing *E-Prospek*, e-commerce, and digital marketing significantly boosts the profits of SMEs, strengthens operational efficiency, and expands market reach.

4.3. Operational Efficiency Based on A More Structured Digital Marketing Process, Lintang Kejora Craft Can Allocate Resources More Effectively

Direct observation of Lintang Kejora Craft's daily operations demonstrates that the implementation of structured digital marketing, particularly through the utilization of *E-Prospek*, has significantly enhanced operational efficiency. Prior to digitalization, inventory and resource management were conducted manually, resulting in time and cost inefficiencies. However, with the digital management system, this SME can monitor inventory more efficiently, mitigate the risk of stock depletion, and expedite order fulfillment. Furthermore, the utilization of digital platforms for marketing reduces promotional and logistical costs, while expanding market reach at a lower cost compared to traditional methods.

An interview with the proprietor of Lintang Kejora Craft revealed that the implementation of *E-Prospek* has transformed their approach to managing business operations. Social media, e-commerce, and email marketing have enabled them to reach new customers and retain existing ones more efficiently. The utilization of digital technology has also reduced dependence on manual labor, thereby automating processes that were previously time-consuming and labor-intensive. The proprietor noted that despite challenges in adapting to new technologies, the long-term benefits significantly outweigh the costs and efforts expended. Furthermore, the results of the efficiency analysis of resource management during the implementation of *E-Prospek* can be observed in Table 5.

Table 5. Resource Management Efficiency.

Resource Management Aspects	Before Digitalization	After Digitalization	Percentage Increase
Budget Utilization Efficiency	60% Not Measurable	90% Measurable and Focused	30% Increase
Labor Efficiency	5 people	3 people	40% Reduction
Time Efficiency	40 hours/week	20 hours/week	50% Time Reduction
Number of Transactions Managed	100 transactions/month	300 transactions/month	200% Increase in Transactions

The results of the survey indicate that the implementation of digitalization through the use of *E-Prospek* and digital marketing strategies has significantly enhanced the operational efficiency of SMEs. Prior to the adoption of technology, resource management (budget, workforce, and time) was conducted manually and lacked structure. However, following the introduction of digital systems, budget allocation has become more focused on digital marketing, leading to a reduction in expenses for physical promotions and enabling a smaller yet more efficient workforce to manage transactions. The marketing process, which previously required approximately 40 hours per week, can now be reduced by half due to the use of digital platforms that automate many tasks, including transaction and prospect management.

The significant increase in transactions, specifically 300 transactions per month compared to 100 transactions prior to digitalization, demonstrates that digitalization enables SMEs to manage a higher volume of transactions with fewer resources. Overall, the implementation of structured digital marketing leads to enhanced efficiency in budget management, workforce utilization, and time allocation, resulting in reduced operational costs and improved overall productivity. Consequently, digitalization proves to be a key factor in assisting SMEs to optimize their resources and maximize their outcomes.

5. Discussions

Research findings indicate that the utilization of *E-Prospek* significantly enhances business performance, with an increase in customer numbers of up to 40%, a 30% rise in profitability, and improved operational efficiency. The implementation of digital technology in marketing and customer management enables these SMEs to expand their market reach, reduce costs, and strengthen customer relationships. However, challenges in technology adaptation remain obstacles that need to be addressed for the full potential of digitalization to be realized.

The implementation of *E-Prospek* within the bamboo craft SMEs in Banyuwangi illustrates the significant role of technology in enhancing prospect management and customer relationships. *E-Prospek* facilitates the management of customer data and streamlines communication, thereby enabling more personalized interactions and improving the overall customer experience [39]. By utilizing customer data analysis, SMEs can gain deeper insights into consumer preferences,

allowing for more targeted adjustments to products and services [40]. Furthermore, the adoption of *E-Prospek* promotes digital transformation in SME marketing, leveraging e-commerce platforms and digital marketing strategies to broaden market reach and enhance online product visibility. This approach not only reduces the costs and time associated with traditional marketing methods but also strengthens customer relationships through more responsive communication [41]. Overall, *E-Prospek* plays a crucial role in bolstering the competitiveness of SMEs in the digital age, enabling swift adaptation to market changes and enhancing customer satisfaction [42].

Consistent with this observation, digitalization also exerts a significant impact on the operational efficiency of SMEs, particularly in the management of budgets, human resources, and time. Research conducted Hanifah [43] demonstrates that the implementation of digital export document systems, such as the paperless office concept, can enhance work efficiency by expediting processes and reducing operational costs associated with paper usage. Digitalization of accounting, as highlighted by Anjarwati, et al. [44] also plays a crucial role in reducing operational expenses, which is of paramount importance for SMEs in managing transactions and inventory more effectively.

The implementation of *E-Prospek* at Lintang Kejora Craft has demonstrated a significant positive impact, evidenced by a 40% increase in new customers and a 30% rise in business profits within the first six months post-implementation. Correlation analysis reveals a strong relationship between the use of *E-Prospek* and the growth in consumer numbers, with a highly significant p-value. Furthermore, *E-Prospek* has enhanced customer relationships through more personalized interactions. Features such as automated follow-ups and email marketing enable small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to send tailored offers based on customer preferences, thereby strengthening loyalty and improving customer retention. Consequently, digitalization not only broadens market reach but also deepens connections with consumers, positioning *E-Prospek* as a crucial tool for enhancing competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs in the digital age.

Social media plays a pivotal role in broadening audience reach and enhancing customer engagement. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are essential for expanding market visibility and fostering interactions with consumers [2]. These platforms enable businesses to promote their offerings, establish brand identity, and engage directly with their client [6]. Notably, TikTok, through its TikTokShop feature, facilitates e-commerce and boosts audience interaction [45]. Social media serves not only as a marketing channel but also strengthens consumer relationships, enhances visibility, and encourages more profound interactions. Furthermore, email marketing remains an effective strategy for delivering personalized promotions and targeting customer segments based on demographics or purchase history [46]. E-commerce provides advantages such as broader market access, cost efficiency, and improved communication [47]. Platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia also offer secure payment transactions, which are crucial for small and medium enterprises [48]. Consequently, the integration of digital and traditional marketing strategies is vital for accelerating technology adoption, expanding market reach, and maintaining personal relationships with customers, thereby supporting business sustainability in the digital age.

Consistent with this observation, the implementation of digitalization has been demonstrated to be a crucial factor in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the post-pandemic market. Research conducted by Alharthey [49] indicates that e-marketing and e-CRM play significant roles in improving customer relationship management, which subsequently leads to increased customer satisfaction and retention [50] also emphasizes that effective customer relationship management not only strengthens e-commerce sustainability but also customer loyalty. Nevertheless, challenges persist, as revealed by Suharto and Yuliansyah [51] who assert that many SMEs encounter difficulties in adopting e-CRM systems due to limited resources and technological knowledge. The findings of this research support these assertions, demonstrating that *E-Prospek* significantly influences operational efficiency, customer growth, and profitability, thereby enhancing SME competitiveness. Digitalization also strengthens customer relationships through more structured marketing and personalized interactions. Overall, digitalization has been proven to be a key factor in the development of SMEs in the post-pandemic era.

Notwithstanding the significant positive impact of digitalization, this study is limited to a single SME, namely Lintang Kejora Craft. In general, the implementation of digitalization through Digital Business Management and *E-Prospek* has yielded substantial positive effects for SMEs, particularly in enhancing operational efficiency, customer growth, and competitiveness. Digitalization enables SMEs to manage resources more efficiently, reduce marketing costs, and expand market reach. In the initial six-month period, the application of *E-Prospek* successfully increased the number of customers by 40% and business profits by 30%. Furthermore, digitalization strengthens customer relationships through more structured marketing and personalized interactions, which assist SMEs in maintaining competitiveness and thriving in the post-pandemic market. However, this research is confined to a single SME, Lintang Kejora Craft, which, although providing in-depth insights, is not representative of all SMEs in Indonesia. These findings may not be fully generalizable to SMEs with different characteristics. Additionally, while the quantitative and qualitative data obtained provide a comprehensive overview, the potential for bias in interviews and questionnaires must be acknowledged.

## **6. Conclusion and Suggestions**

The findings of the conducted research indicate that the implementation of *E-Prospek* has a significantly positive impact on enhancing operational efficiency, increasing customer growth, and boosting business profits at Lintang Kejora Craft. The integration of digital technology through *E-Prospek* enables small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to manage customer prospects more effectively, broaden market access, and foster closer, more personalized relationships with customers. The observed increase in customer numbers by 40% and a profit rise of 30% within the first six months of this strategy's implementation suggest that digitalization plays a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs, particularly in the context of post-pandemic market dynamics. Therefore, it is recommended that SMEs actively adopt and



optimize the use of digital tools such as *E-Prospek* to enhance operational efficiency and expand market reach. Furthermore, future research could broaden its scope by exploring the barriers faced by SMEs in the implementation of digitalization and seeking innovative solutions to address these challenges, thereby promoting the sustainability and growth of SMEs in the digital era.

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