

The Influence of E-Commerce and Digital Marketing on Startuppreneur Performance Using PLS-SEM

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ABSTRACT

Startuppreneurs increasingly rely on **technology** to manage their business, especially in using **e-commerce applications** and digital business marketing strategies. This research investigates the influence of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on **startup entrepreneur performance**. The research method used is an online survey of **150 startup entrepreneurs** in Indonesia who are active in various industries. Data was collected using a questionnaire that measures the level of use of e-commerce applications, digital business marketing practices, and startuppreneur performance based on factors such as revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and market visibility. The results of the analysis show that the use of e-commerce applications has a **significant influence** on startuppreneur performance. Startuppreneurs actively using e-commerce applications tend to experience higher revenue growth and improved **customer satisfaction**. Additionally, digital business marketing strategies were also found to positively affect startup business performance, especially in increasing market visibility and broader market penetration. This research makes an essential contribution to understanding how technology and **digital marketing** strategies can help improve startuppreneur performance. The practical implication of this research is the importance of integrating e-commerce applications and digital business marketing in startup business growth strategies. Steps to improve startuppreneur performance could involve investing in **digital technology** and improving skills in managing online marketing strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, it is important for startup entrepreneurs to optimize the use of technology and digital marketing strategies to improve their business performance. E-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies are the main keys in entering a competitive and dynamic market. The use of e-commerce applications enables startups to market products and services online more efficiently, while digital marketing strategies help them reach a wider audience and boost brand awareness [1].

In Indonesia, the startup ecosystem continues to develop rapidly with various technological inno-

variations on offer. However, this growth also brings challenges where startup entrepreneurs must be able to optimize technology and digital marketing strategies to improve their business performance [2]. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the influence of using e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on startup performance.

Previous research tends to focus on one aspect, but rarely investigates both simultaneously. Therefore, this research will fill this knowledge gap by investigating the influence of using e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on startup performance [3]. Condense this by merging it with the introduction, removing repetition, and making the statement more concise.

Specifically, this research will test hypotheses regarding the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies and their relationship with startup performance. The practical implication of this research is the importance of integrating e-commerce applications and digital business marketing in startup business growth strategies [4, 5]. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide guidance for startup entrepreneurs in optimizing the use of technology and digital marketing strategies to achieve better business performance.

The main objective of this research is to identify and analyze the influence of the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on the performance of startup entrepreneurs in Indonesia [6]. Specifically, this research will test the following hypothesis:

1. Hypothesis 1

More intense use of e-commerce applications will be positively related to increased startup performance. This means that the more abundant and effective use of e-commerce applications by startups, the higher their performance.

2. Hypothesis 2

Implementing a more innovative and effective digital business marketing strategy will be positively related to increasing startup entrepreneur performance. In other words, the better the digital marketing strategies implemented by startups, the higher their performance.

3. Hypothesis 3

Higher use of e-commerce applications will increase consumer confidence, which will further contribute to increasing startup performance. In other words, consumer trust will be a mediator between the use of e-commerce applications and startup performance.

The writing of this paper will be divided into several main parts, namely Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis Results and Discussion, and Conclusions and Suggestions. By digging deeper into the influence of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on startup business performance, it is hoped that this research can contribute to theoretical and practical understanding in the context of startup businesses in Indonesia [7].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the rapidly developing digital era, the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies has become the key to success for startup entrepreneurs. Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of these two factors on startup business performance [8]. The following is a literature review regarding the influence of using e-commerce applications and digital business marketing on startup entrepreneur performance:

2.1. Use of E-Commerce Applications

In the context of the rapidly evolving digital economy, the adoption of e-commerce applications has become a cornerstone for startups seeking to optimize their operations and access broader markets. E-commerce applications enable startups to automate various aspects of their business, including sales, marketing, and customer management, leading to increased operational efficiency. For example, platforms like Shopify, WooCommerce, and Amazon Marketplace allow startups to manage inventories, process payments, and connect with customers more seamlessly. This not only saves time but also reduces operational costs, providing startups with a competitive edge in the market [9].

2.2. Digital Business Marketing

Digital business marketing strategies are crucial for startups aiming to increase their brand visibility, reach target markets, and foster customer loyalty. In today's digital era, traditional marketing methods are often insufficient for startups due to limited budgets and the need for faster, more scalable marketing solutions. Digital marketing strategies, such as social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and email marketing, offer startups cost-effective ways to connect with a larger audience.

2.3. Consumer Confidence

Consumer confidence plays a crucial role in the success of e-commerce businesses, particularly startups that rely heavily on digital platforms to conduct their transactions. Research indicates that consumer trust in a brand is closely linked to purchasing behavior, especially in online environments where customers are often skeptical about the security of their personal information and the legitimacy of businesses. Trust-building measures, such as clear privacy policies, secure payment gateways, and positive customer reviews, are essential in establishing credibility and encouraging repeat purchases.

2.4. Startuppreneur Performance

The performance of startups is influenced by various factors, and the strategic use of digital technology and digital marketing is one of the most significant contributors to success. Research has identified that startups that integrate e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies into their operations tend to experience higher levels of growth, profitability, and customer satisfaction. In particular, digital technologies enable startups to streamline their operations, enhance decision-making, and improve their customer engagement [10].

By considering the findings from these studies, it can be concluded that the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies has a positive impact on startuppreneur performance. Therefore, this research will complement the existing literature by using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to investigate in more depth the relationship between these two factors and startuppreneur performance.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method has become a popular approach in data analysis in various scientific disciplines, including management science, economics, and information technology. PLS-SEM is a statistical technique used to test and elaborate the relationships between variables in a conceptual model [11, 12]. This method is very suitable for complex research involving latent variables or constructs.

In the context of this research, PLS-SEM is used to analyze the relationship between the use of e-commerce applications, digital business marketing strategies, consumer trust, and startuppreneur performance. This approach allows researchers to test the causal relationship between these variables as well as to evaluate the mediating role of consumer trust in the influence of technology use and digital marketing strategies on startup business performance [13].

The main advantage of PLS-SEM is its ability to handle complex models with a relatively small number of samples, as well as its ability to overcome non-normal data distribution assumptions. In addition, PLS-SEM also allows researchers to model latent variables or constructs that cannot be directly observed [14].

In its implementation, PLS-SEM involves a series of analysis steps, including the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument, path analysis to test the relationship between variables, and bootstrapping analysis to test the statistical significance of the results obtained. By using this approach, it is hoped that this research can provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence startuppreneur performance in the dynamic digital era.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Model Test

Measurement Model Testing (Outer Model) By using the PLS Algorithm method in the SmartPLS 4 application, the test value results obtained from each question item used can be seen in the image below:

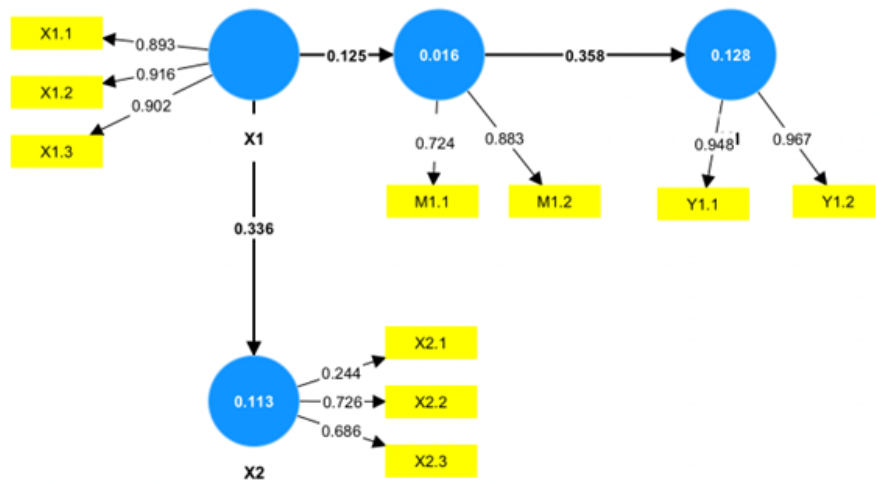


Figure 1. Outer Model Test Path Diagram

Figure 1 illustrates the outer model test path diagram, which represents the relationships between the key variables in this study: the use of e-commerce applications (X1), digital business marketing strategies (X2), consumer trust as a mediator (M1), and startuppreneur performance (Y1). This diagram visualizes the structural model tested using the PLS Algorithm in SmartPLS 4, showing the path coefficients that indicate the strength and direction of relationships among these variables. The model highlights the significant impact of e-commerce applications on both digital business marketing and startuppreneur performance, while also depicting the mediating role of consumer trust. By analyzing Figure 1, researchers can assess the overall reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study, providing a comprehensive understanding of how digital strategies influence startup business success [15].

4.2. Validity and Reliability

Table 1. Validity and Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Mediator	0.48	0.525	0.788	0.652
Use of E-Commerce Applications	0.888	0.889	0.93	0.817
Digital Business Marketing Strategy	-0.046	0.032	0.585	0.353
Startuppreneur Performance	0.911	0.945	0.957	0.917

Table 1 presents the validity and reliability results of the measurement model, evaluating the internal consistency and construct validity of the variables used in this study. The table includes key reliability indicators such as Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct: the mediator (M1), use of e-commerce applications (X1), digital business marketing strategy (X2), and startuppreneur performance (Y1). The results indicate that X1 and Y1 demonstrate high reliability and validity, confirming their robustness in measuring the intended constructs. However, the mediator (M1) and digital business marketing strategy (X2) exhibit lower reliability scores, suggesting a need for further refinement in measurement indicators. Table 1 serves as a critical reference for assessing the strength and reliability of the constructs, ensuring that the findings derived from the structural model are well-supported and meaningful [16, 17].

The results of reliability and validity analysis using SmartPLS show results that provide quite a varied picture for each variable that has been evaluated. First of all, variable M1 (Mediator) shows a low level of reliability, which indicates that there is an urgent need to re-evaluate the indicators used to measure this construct [18]. Increasing the reliability of the mediator variable is very important because the mediator plays a key role in linking the independent and dependent variables in the model. Thus, weak reliability in variable M1 can lead to inaccurate interpretation of its influence on other variables in the model.

On the other hand, variables X1 (Use of E-Commerce Applications) and Y1 (Startupreneur Performance) show a high level of reliability and validity. High scores for reliability and validity indicate that the measurements used for this variable are reliable and accurate in representing the construct in question. Therefore, the results of the reliability and validity analysis support the use of variables X1 and Y1 in the model, as well as the reliability of the interpretation of the relationship between these variables [19].

However, variable X2 (Digital Business Marketing Strategy) shows disappointing results, with low reliability values. This indicates that there is a need to re-evaluate the indicators used to measure these constructs, as well as reconsider the way these variables are positioned and measured in the model. By improving the measurement and interpretation of construct X2, it will increase the reliability and validity of the overall model. Therefore, the conclusions of this reliability and validity analysis highlight the importance of careful scrutiny of the constructs and measurement of variables in SEM analysis [20].

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, the findings can be concluded as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The use of E-Commerce Applications (X1) has a positive effect on Startupreneur Performance (Y1). The results of data analysis show that there is strong support for this hypothesis. Variable X1 (Use of E-Commerce Applications) significantly influences startupreneur performance, with high reliability and validity values. This shows that the greater the use of e-commerce applications in business operations, the higher the startupreneur's performance.

Hypothesis 2: Digital Business Marketing Strategy (X2) has a positive effect on Startupreneur Performance (Y1). Even though variable However, further evaluation of the measurement and interpretation of the X2 variable is needed to ensure the reliability of these findings.

Hypothesis 3: The use of E-Commerce Applications (X1) has a positive effect on Digital Business Marketing Strategy (X2). The results of data analysis also support this hypothesis. Variable X1 (Use of E-Commerce Applications) significantly influences digital business marketing strategies. This shows that the greater the use of e-commerce applications in business operations, the greater the tendency to adopt digital marketing strategies in an effort to improve startupreneur performance [21].

The results of this research provide empirical evidence that supports the importance of integrating e-commerce technology and digital marketing strategies in improving startupreneur performance [22, 23]. However, it is necessary to carry out further evaluation of the concept of consumer trust as a mediator to understand more deeply the relationship between independent and dependent variables in the context of startup businesses [24].

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Optimizing E-Commerce Integration

Startup entrepreneurs should actively adopt and optimize e-commerce applications to streamline business operations, expand market reach, and enhance customer engagement. Investing in user-friendly and scalable e-commerce platforms will improve transaction efficiency and customer experience. Additionally, integrating automation features such as AI chatbots and personalized recommendations can help businesses offer seamless services and maintain customer retention [25].

5.2. Enhancing Digital Marketing Strategies

Implementing innovative digital marketing techniques such as SEO, social media campaigns, and data-driven targeted advertising will increase brand awareness and customer acquisition [26]. Startups should leverage AI-driven marketing tools to personalize customer interactions and optimize conversion rates. Consistent content creation, influencer collaborations, and engagement through multiple digital channels will also play a crucial role in strengthening brand visibility [27].

5.3. Building Consumer Trust for Long-Term Growth

Establishing strong customer relationship management (CRM) practices will enhance consumer confidence and loyalty. Transparency in business operations, secure payment gateways, and customer data protection should be prioritized to foster trust in digital transactions [28]. Providing real-time customer support, clear refund policies, and social proof (e.g., customer testimonials and reviews) will further strengthen customer trust and encourage repeat purchases [29].

5.4. Strengthening Data-Driven Decision Making

Utilizing analytics from e-commerce platforms and digital marketing campaigns allows startups to make informed business decisions. Tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as conversion rates, customer acquisition costs, and revenue growth will help entrepreneurs identify trends and optimize their strategies. Implementing data visualization tools and predictive analytics can enable startups to anticipate market changes and adjust their approaches accordingly for sustainable growth [30].

5.5. Investing in Continuous Digital Skill Development

Startups should focus on upskilling their teams in digital marketing, e-commerce management, and data analytics to stay competitive in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Providing training programs on emerging technologies, such as AI-driven marketing, blockchain for secure transactions, and omnichannel retail strategies, can enhance business efficiency [31, 32]. Encouraging a culture of continuous learning will enable startups to adapt to technological advancements and maintain a competitive edge.

6. CONCLUSION

This research investigates the influence of the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies on startup business performance, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between digital technology and startup business success. By facing global challenges in the digital economy, a strong understanding of the factors that influence startup performance is becoming increasingly important. Within this framework, this research aims to provide valuable insight into how the use of e-commerce applications and digital marketing strategies can influence the growth and success of startup entrepreneurs. The PLS-SEM method is used as a strong analytical framework to test the relationship between the variables involved in this research.

The research findings confirm the importance of using e-commerce applications and digital business marketing strategies as significant factors in improving startup performance. The use of effective e-commerce applications and targeted digital marketing strategies can help startups achieve success and sustainability in an increasingly competitive market. In addition, the findings also highlight the important role of consumer trust as a mediator in the relationship between the variables studied. By increasing the level of consumer trust, startups can strengthen relationships with customers and create loyal and sustainable market share.

Although this research provides valuable insights, there are still several aspects that have not been fully covered and need further research. For example, research could be expanded to consider contextual factors that might moderate the relationships between the variables under study. In addition, further exploration of strategies for implementing and optimizing the use of e-commerce applications and digital business marketing can also provide a deeper understanding of how startups can improve their performance in the ever-evolving digital era. Thus, it is hoped that further research can expand our understanding of the dynamics of startup performance in the context of a dynamic digital economy.

7. DECLARATIONS

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7.2. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: LM; Methodology: AY; Software: PR; Validation: NL and RA; Formal Analysis: LM and AY; Investigation: PR; Resources: NL; Data Curation: RA; Writing Original Draft Preparation: LM and AY; Writing Review and Editing: PR and NL; Visualization: RA; All authors, LM, AY, PR, NL, and RA have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.3. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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7.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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