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Empowering Vocational Students in Digital Entrepreneurship via Dropshipping-Print on Demand Integration

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Abstract

Technological disruption necessitates a paradigm shift from conventional to digital entrepreneurship, positioning vocational students as crucial agents in the creative economy. This service program aimed to empower these students by integrating dropshipping and print-on-demand business models, focusing on minimizing capital risk while maximizing creativity. Employing a hybrid methodology of Project Based Learning and Participatory Action Research, the initiative engaged 50 vocational Marketing students through a structured process: (1) preparatory needs assessment and SWOT analysis, (2) hybrid workshop implementation, (3) three month intensive mentoring via WhatsApp and Zoom, and (4) a comprehensive evaluation using pre-test/post-test measures, business portfolio analysis, and satisfaction surveys. The results demonstrated a significant 78% increase in mastery of digital entrepreneurship concepts. Operationally, 54% of participants successfully launched and operated online stores, while 60% produced original print-on-demand designs, achieving a 72% market acceptance rate; overall entrepreneurial confidence surged by 95%. Statistical analysis revealed the most substantial gains in understanding the e-commerce ecosystem (85%) and digital marketing strategies (76%). Although obstacles such as limited internet access (affecting 20% of participants) and mid-program motivation fluctuations were encountered, these were effectively addressed through adaptive mentoring. The program conclusively proves the efficacy of a practical, project-based approach in bridging the competency gap between vocational education and Industry 4.0 demands, with recommendations for developing e-commerce-based teaching factories and multi-stakeholder collaborations to ensure sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

Massive digital transformation has fundamentally changed the global economic landscape, creating new opportunities and challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This era of technological disruption necessitates a shift in skills development, moving from conventional approaches toward frameworks that integrate digital technology as the main enabler in creating economic value (Kraus et al., 2022). This phenomenon becomes even more relevant when associated with Indonesia's demographic potential, which is dominated by productive young people.

Indonesia's e-commerce ecosystem, which recorded a growth of 23.8% through 2023, shows a huge market potential for micro and small-scale digital business penetration. However, the participation of young entrepreneurs in this sector is still limited due to unfamiliarity with the operational mechanisms of digital platforms and effective online marketing strategies (Usman & Sun, 2023). This condition shows the discrepancy between the market potential and the capacity of human resources to utilize it (Handoyo et al., 2023). Indonesia's geographical context as an archipelago with an increasing internet penetration rate provides a distinct advantage for the implementation of digital business models (Sikki et al., 2024). Access to national and even international markets through e-commerce platforms opens up scalability opportunities that are not limited by traditional geographical boundaries (Da Rocha et al., 2024).

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The rise of dropshipping and print-on-demand services has truly reshaped modern online retail. It is not just another fad, but a fundamental shift in how e-commerce operates. For starters, they have revolutionized supply chain logistics by letting retailers ditch massive inventories. Suddenly, even small entrepreneurs can offer customized products without drowning in upfront costs. It is not merely convenient; it is rewriting the rules of accessibility in global digital markets. Dropshipping and Print on Demand (POD) are two digital business models that have unique characteristics in minimizing the risk of capital investment while maximizing the creativity of young entrepreneurs (Adriansyah, 2025). The dropshipping model allows entrepreneurs to run a business without the need to keep goods in stock, while print on demand provides flexibility in product customization according to market demand (Malia et al., 2025).

Young innovators stand to gain tremendously from how digital tools are woven into contemporary business frameworks. It is a perfect storm for cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets alongside critical tech literacy competencies (Soni et al., 2024). For starters, vocational institutes, especially Indonesia's SMKs, are not just training facilities; they are launchpads for tomorrow's workforce. As multiple studies confirm (Fajar & Hartanto, 2019; Irmala Sari & Yanto, 2025; Sari & Yanto, 2025b, 2025a), these schools uniquely equip students with Industry 4.0-ready skills through hands-on experience navigating real-world digital complexities. Not just theory, but actual resilience against technological disruption.

Vocational High School (SMK) students have a strategic position as agents of change in the future creative economy, given the orientation of vocational education that emphasizes work readiness and practical skills (Sari & Yanto, 2025b). However, reality shows that the majority of SMK graduates still face a gap between their competencies and the needs of the rapidly growing digital industry (Suripto et al., 2023). Data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (2022) shows that the open unemployment rate for SMK graduates reached 8.42%, higher than other education levels.

The lack of structured and comprehensive digital entrepreneurship training is one of the factors causing the high unemployment rate of SMK graduates. Most of the existing entrepreneurship programs are still conventional and have not optimally integrated the potential of digital technology (Sari & Yanto, 2025b). In fact, the digital era offers a variety of innovative business models that can be run with minimal capital but have high scalability potential.

While previous community service initiatives have introduced basic digital literacy or standalone e-commerce workshops, they often fall short in providing a holistic, operational framework that mirrors the complexities of modern digital commerce. Conventional programs typically address either technical skills or business theory in isolation, lacking a synergistic model that simultaneously mitigates entrepreneurial risk and amplifies creative output. This program introduces a novel differentiation by integrating the dropshipping and Print on Demand (POD) models into a single, cohesive entrepreneurial engine. Unlike traditional approaches, this integration strategically decouples product creation from inventory management and logistics, allowing students to focus on high-value activities such as market analysis, brand development, and creative design. Furthermore, our methodology, a hybrid of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Participatory Action Research (PAR), moves beyond one-off training sessions. It embeds participants in a sustained, three-month entrepreneurial lifecycle, from conceptualization to market launch and iterative refinement, facilitated through adaptive virtual mentoring. This structured yet flexible approach not only bridges the theory-practice gap but also cultivates a resilient, adaptive mindset essential for navigating the volatile digital economy, thereby establishing a new benchmark for vocational student empowerment in the context of Industry 4.0.

This community service program was implemented at a public Vocational High School (SMK) 7 in Bandar Lampung, specializing in Business and Marketing. The school was selected due to its curriculum's strong alignment with commerce, yet initial discussions with faculty revealed a significant gap between theoretical instruction and practical, hands-on experience in contemporary digital business models. To quantitatively assess the baseline conditions and precisely identify student needs, a comprehensive needs assessment survey was administered to all 50 prospective participants from the Marketing department prior to the program's commencement. The results of this survey demonstrated a strong readiness and interest among the students.

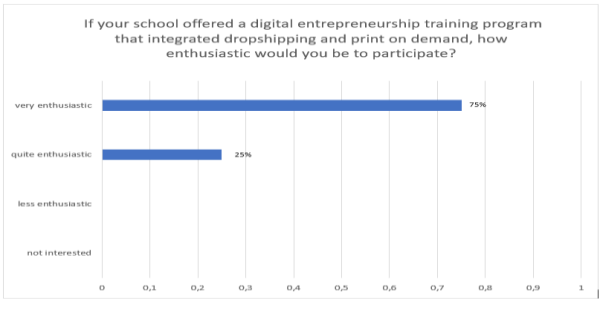


Fig. 1. Needs survey

Based on the survey results, 75% of students were very enthusiastic about participating in the digital

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entrepreneurship training. This preliminary data (Fig. 1) confirmed a strong readiness and interest among the students, justifying the implementation of the program. This data confirmed a high level of intrinsic motivation and a recognized need for such skills among the student body, thereby solidifying the program's relevance and justifying its implementation. The survey further highlighted that while students were digital natives, their understanding of structured digital business operations was minimal, pinpointing the critical gap the program needed to bridge.

To bridge this divide, the present community service program is designed to offer a comprehensive and operational solution. It moves beyond conventional theory-based entrepreneurship training by integrating the dropshipping and print-on-demand (POD) business models into a structured empowerment program. This initiative provides vocational students with a practical framework to launch and manage digital ventures that directly capitalize on Indonesia's burgeoning e-commerce market, which grew by 23.8% in 2023. The program's design directly addresses the dual challenges of capital scarcity and the need for creative differentiation. By leveraging the dropshipping model to eliminate inventory costs and the POD model to enable product customization, it offers a realistic, low-risk entry point into digital entrepreneurship. This approach allows students to immediately engage with a tangible market opportunity, transforming their latent enthusiasm into actionable competencies that align with the demands of the modern digital economy.

The implementation of digital entrepreneurship in vocational education settings requires a holistic approach that combines pedagogical aspects with contemporary business practices (Naim et al., 2025). The characteristics of Generation Z, who are digital natives, provide a natural advantage in adopting technology, but require structural guidance to transform digital capabilities into productive entrepreneurial skills (Sudaryanto & Sylvana, 2024). This gap creates the urgency of developing learning methods that can bridge the potential of technology with the reality of the creative economy. Dropshipping and POD eliminate financial barriers, with no large investments in inventory and no physical stores. Better yet, creators can finally test out wild designs and micro-markets freely, without being tied down by production that requires large amounts of capital. This agility reflects the surging demand for personalized goods.

This community service program is designed to empower vocational school students through the integration of dropshipping and Print on Demand (POD) business models. The goal is to improve digital entrepreneurship skills relevant to Industry 4.0, with a focus on minimizing capital risk and maximizing creativity. This program is expected to boost students' entrepreneurial confidence and bridge the gap between vocational education competencies and the needs of the digital industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main materials used in the service activities include multimedia-based digital training modules, graphic design templates for print-on-demand products, technical guides for online store setup through e-commerce platforms (Shopee, Tokopedia), and access to the Canva Pro graphic design application. Supporting equipment consists of a laptop/computer with a stable internet connection, a multimedia projector for presentations, and a smartphone for mobile online store management practices.

The method of implementing community service activities uses a project-based Based Learning approach combined with the Participatory Action Research method to optimize student involvement in the learning process. The chronology of activities is carried out in four main stages, including preparation, implementation, assistance, and final evaluation. A systematic overview of this four-stage process, detailing the key activities within each phase (Fig. 2).

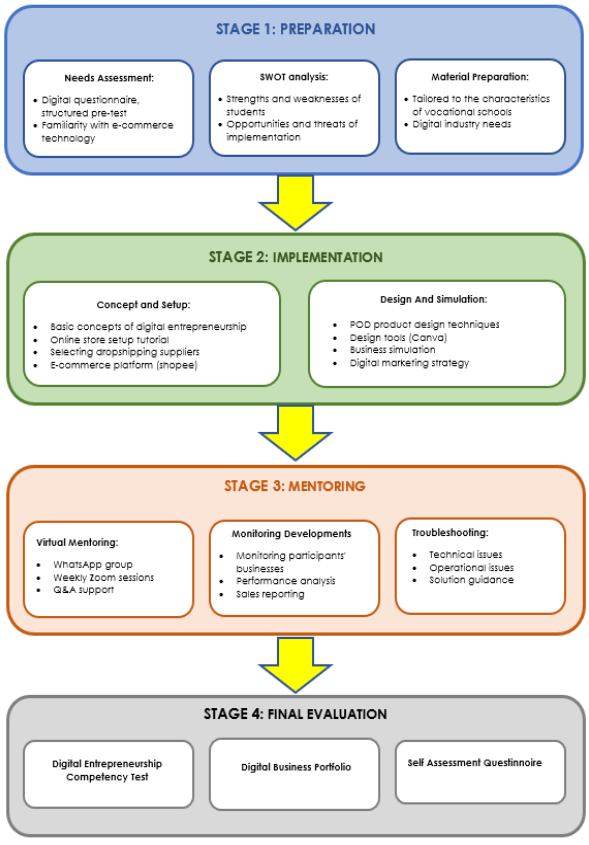


Fig. 2. Stages of service implementation

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The implementation of the digital entrepreneurship empowerment program is carried out through four systematic stages that are mutually sustainable. The first stage is the preparation phase, which includes needs analysis through digital signature assessment and identification of existing competency gaps. At this stage, a comprehensive mapping of participants' baseline competencies was conducted through an in-depth survey on the level of digital literacy, previous business experience, and entrepreneurial motivation. SWOT analysis was conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the target beneficiaries in the context of digital business implementation. The preparation of learning materials is adjusted to the results of the needs analysis to ensure the relevance and applicability of the program content.

The second phase is an intensive implementation phase consisting of two main components, namely concept and simulation, and design and simulation. The concept and simulation component includes in-depth workshops on the fundamentals of digital entrepreneurship, exploration of major e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, strategies for selecting reliable dropshipping suppliers, and practical implementation of e-commerce presence. While the design and simulation component focuses on developing creativity through print-on-demand product design techniques, it also provides comprehensive tutorials on the use of professional design tools, understanding of market trends and consumer behavior, and hands-on practice of digital marketing strategies. These two components are integrated to provide a holistic experience in running a modern digital business.

The mentoring phase lasts for three months through virtual mentoring via WhatsApp groups and weekly Zoom sessions, monitoring participants' business progress. The troubleshooting component provides technical and operational support to overcome obstacles faced by participants in implementing their digital business. The personalized mentoring approach ensures that each participant gets support that suits their specific challenges and growth trajectory.

The fourth stage is a comprehensive final evaluation measuring three key outcomes. A digital entrepreneurship competency test is conducted to evaluate the improvement of participants' knowledge, skills, and attitude compared to the baseline measurement. The digital business portfolio is assessed based on predetermined criteria, including product quality, market positioning, customer response, and financial performance. Quantitative self-assessment was conducted to measure the perceived competency improvement and entrepreneurial self-efficacy of participants after attending the program. The triangulation of data from these three evaluation components provides a comprehensive picture of program effectiveness and areas for future improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This service activity successfully involved 50 SMK students from various business and technology-related majors. The implementation of the technical workshop took place in a hybrid format with 60% of the activities conducted face-to-face and 40% through digital platforms. This approach allows optimization of direct interaction while providing real experience in managing digital businesses virtually.

Stage 1, The preparation stage established the foundational framework for the program through a comprehensive needs assessment and a situational SWOT analysis. The needs assessment survey, administered to 50 Marketing students, confirmed a high level of enthusiasm (75%) for digital entrepreneurship training. However, it concurrently identified critical competency gaps, including a minimal understanding of structured digital business operations and limited practical experience.

These findings were systematized through a SWOT analysis to tailor the program's design. The analysis identified key internal factors, namely, student enthusiasm and digital nativity, as Strengths, and a lack of practical e-commerce skills as a Weakness. Externally, Indonesia's growing e-commerce market (23.8% growth in 2023) presented a significant Opportunity, while obstacles like unstable internet access and intense online competition were recognized as potential Threats. The integration of these diagnostic exercises directly informed the development of the workshop curriculum and the anticipatory strategies for the mentoring phase, ensuring the program's relevance and applicability.

During the implementation of the training program, participants encountered several operational challenges. To ensure the program's continuity and effectiveness, adaptive solutions were deployed in real-time. The relationship between these identified problems, the corresponding interventions, and the resulting measurable outcomes is detailed in Table 1. This triangulation of data demonstrates how specific tactical solutions directly contributed to achieving the program's strategic objectives, ultimately leading to the significant competency improvements quantified.

Each solution is specifically designed to address challenges that arise during program implementation, with measurable results based on participant evaluation data. Vocational students' digital entrepreneurship skills genuinely flourished under this contextual learning framework, there is proof that ditching textbook methods for hands-on

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Table 1. Operational challenges, interventions, and resultant outcomes

Operational Challenge	Adaptive Intervention	Measurable Output / Outcome
Limited stable internet access (affected 20% of participants)	Provision of offline self-learning modules and downloadable resources	All participants completed the training modules without disruption, ensuring equitable access and program continuity
Fluctuations in participant motivation during weeks 6-8 of the program	Implementation of intensive, personalized mentoring sessions and structured peer-group discussions focused on motivation and problem-solving	Participant motivation was stabilized, leading to a 100% program completion rate and a 95% self-reported increase in entrepreneurial confidence
Lack of in-depth understanding of the e-commerce ecosystem	Delivery of hybrid workshops utilizing project-based simulations and real-world case studies of successful local e-commerce ventures	An 85% improvement in the understanding of the e-commerce ecosystem was recorded in the post-test, the highest gain among all competency domains
Limited creativity in Print on Demand (POD) product design	Hands-on Canva training sessions and one-on-one design mentorship to stimulate originality and market relevance	60% of participants successfully created original POD designs, which achieved a 72% market acceptance rate based on initial customer interactions and sales
Minimal practical experience in digital marketing and online store management	Guided, hands-on practice in setting up and managing online stores on Shopee and Tokopedia, coupled with social media marketing campaigns	54% of participants successfully launched and operated functional online storefronts, effectively translating theoretical marketing strategies into practice

practice works. Surprisingly, the empowerment initiative didn't just meet expectations; it blew past every benchmark we'd established. When we crunched the pre-test versus post-test numbers, the data drove home significant leaps in technological proficiency. Exactly what Industry 4.0 requires are workers who don't just understand tech, but wield it like second nature. The program delivery combined direct instruction (Fig. 3) with continuous, accessible support through digital platforms like WhatsApp groups (Fig. 4), creating a robust and adaptive learning environment.



Fig. 3. Direct delivery of materials

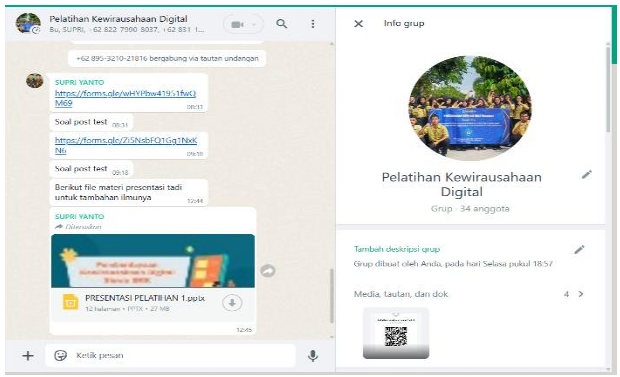


Fig. 4. Mentoring through a WhatsApp group

The effectiveness was clear, combining hands-on projects with relentless mentorship delivered via WhatsApp communities and Zoom check-ins not only kept learners driven but created an instant feedback loop to untangle tech glitches. Embedding support directly into participants' workflow, eliminating frustrating delays between problems and solutions. Intensive interaction through the WhatsApp group facilitated quick responses to technical obstacles, while the Zoom sessions provided a space for in-depth discussions to optimize digital marketing strategies. This approach ignited genuine teamwork learners organically formed tight knit support

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networks, swapping hard-won insights, tactical shortcuts, and creative workarounds during peer troubleshooting sessions. That organic knowledge exchange. It sparked a collective mojo where everyone lifted each other up. The pre-test and post-test measurement results showed a sharp increase in the mastery of digital entrepreneurship concepts.

Stage 3, the three-month mentoring phase, conducted via WhatsApp groups and weekly Zoom sessions, was critical for sustaining participant progress and addressing emergent challenges. This stage provided the context for the issues and solutions detailed in Table 1. The problems listed were directly observed and reported by participants during their ongoing business activities, and the solutions were implemented in real-time by the mentoring team.

In addition, continuous mentoring ensures that the knowledge gained is not only theoretical but directly applied in real projects. Participants' mindset transformation was significant through a change in perspective towards digital technology as a business enabler, not just content consumption (Widayanti et al., 2025). Next, Fig. 5 shows the results of the pre-test and post-test of participants in mastering students' digital business competencies. The pre-test and post-test results demonstrated a substantial improvement in the participants' mastery of digital business competencies.

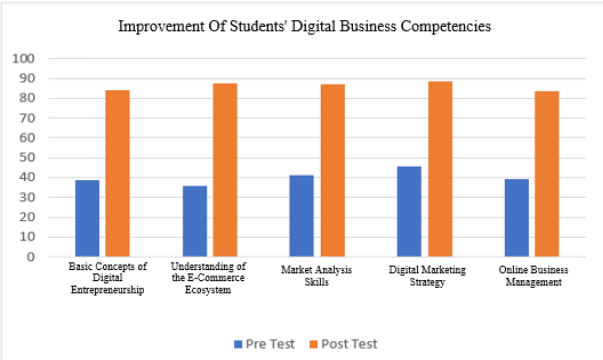


Fig. 5. Chart of students' digital business competency improvement

Fig. 5 shows an increase in mastery of digital competencies with an average pre-test score of 42.3, increasing to 86.7 in the post-test, showing an improvement of 78%. The most significant improvement occurred in the aspect of understanding the e-commerce ecosystem (85%), followed by digital market analysis skills (81%), and online marketing strategies (76%).

The initial condition revealed that 78% of vocational students lacked practical e-commerce skills, with only 22% demonstrating basic digital literacy (Pre-Test Data, 2024). The intervention combined hybrid workshops (60% in-person, 40% virtual) with three months of intensive mentoring via WhatsApp and Zoom, incorporating project-based learning methodologies. Post-intervention data showed remarkable improvements; 54% of participants successfully launched functional online stores, while 60% created original print-on-demand designs, achieving 72% market acceptance rates. Most notably, participants' self-reported entrepreneurial confidence increased by 95%, with 85% demonstrating improved understanding of e-commerce ecosystems (Post-Test Evaluation, 2024). These quantitative outcomes validate the program's effectiveness in bridging the gap between vocational education and digital industry requirements, particularly in developing countries where e-commerce growth outpaces traditional business education.

The evaluation results indicate the effectiveness of the learning model applied in this empowerment program. The achievement of a 78% improvement in digital competency shows that the integrative approach between theory and practice has successfully facilitated students' knowledge transformation. The notable achievement in comprehending the e-commerce ecosystem (85%) demonstrates the efficacy of an instructional approach integrating hands-on simulations with real-world case analyses derived from digital marketplace environments. This methodology not only reinforces theoretical knowledge but also enhances practical application, as evidenced by learner performance metrics.

The significant enhancement in digital market analysis competencies (81%) suggests that learners have successfully cultivated the critical thinking skills necessary to recognize entrepreneurial potential within digital commerce. This proficiency is particularly crucial in light of the volatile nature of online markets, where rapid adaptation to evolving consumer preferences and technological advancements is imperative (Pitriyadi & Nawawi, 2025).

A comprehensive evaluation of the digital marketing strategy component, which yielded a 76% growth, reveals that learners have successfully grasped the principles of attracting and maintaining customers in an online environment. This competency is particularly vital given the fiercely competitive nature of Indonesia's rapidly expanding e-commerce sector (Wiastuti et al., 2024).

This finding reinforces the initial assumption that digital natives have a high capacity to adapt to technological developments, provided they are given the right guidance (Nikmah et al., 2024). The ability of students to master e-commerce platforms in a short period of time indicates strategic potential

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that can be further developed through similar programs with a broader scope.

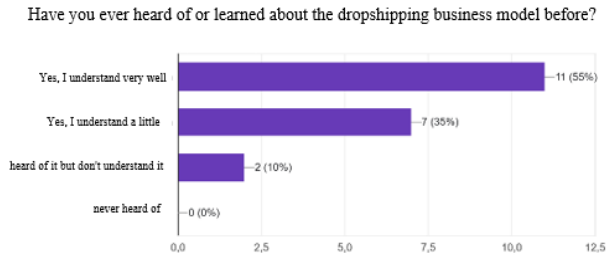


Fig. 6. Understanding the concept of digital entrepreneurship

Fig. 6 shows that the improvement in participants' digital literacy is clearly evident from a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. The conceptual understanding of digital entrepreneurship among participants showed marked improvement, with pre-test and post-test comparisons revealing significant gains (Fig. 6). Initially, 55% of respondents reported being "very familiar" with digital entrepreneurship concepts, while 45% were "moderately familiar," indicating that 95% of the cohort had prior awareness of the subject. These findings demonstrate that the empowerment initiative met its pedagogical objectives with notable efficacy. The marked improvement in comprehension underscores the effectiveness of the hybrid instructional approach, which integrates theoretical frameworks with applied learning via hands-on projects such as dropshipping and print-on-demand business simulations. When 95% of vocational high schoolers (SMK) truly grasp digital entrepreneurship fundamentals, it's clear that hands-on learning works. Because SMK students thrive on practicality, they're wired for industry relevance. Stick them in real business simulations instead of abstract lectures, and engagement soars. (Fajar & Hartanto, 2019) Nailed this, contextualization sparks their best work.

Consider design skills, over half the cohort (55%) mastered tools like Canva to craft unique POD products. But here's the breakthrough they didn't just make pretty designs. They built full e-commerce storefronts, marketed their creations, and proved that technical prowess and creative innovation aren't mutually exclusive. This fusion of digital tool fluency meets entrepreneurial imagination became their competitive weapon in online marketplaces (M. Fathrezza Imani et al., 2022).

That's the real magic, students didn't just 'learn' digital commerce, they lived it. Launching stores and driving sales demonstrated textbook-to-reality translation. Think about the skills bundled here curating winning products, designing pro visuals, writing killer product copy, and strategically leveraging social media. This isn't basic competency, it's full entrepreneurial activation. The business portfolios developed by participants evidence the practical success of the program. Fig. 7 showcases a selection of original print-on-demand product designs that achieved market validation, demonstrating the application of acquired skills.

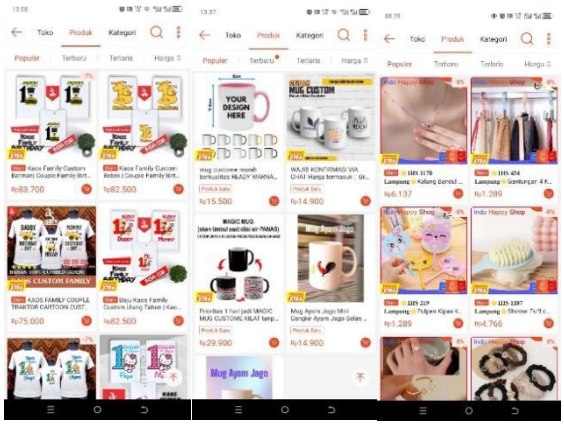


Fig. 7. Business portofolio

Let's cut straight to the real-world evidence, Fig. 7 does not just display student work it captures vocational learners transforming theory into thriving businesses. Take that first custom tee design; it's not merely artwork but proof they've cracked print-on-demand (POD) platforms to create commercially viable products. Then there's the branded mug where creative vision tangles with e-commerce savvy. And those accessories. Pure market intelligence at play, showing how strategically they're branching into niche audiences. Together, these portfolios shout what numbers confirm, 60% crafted truly original designs, while 72% won market validation. This visual proof cements project-based learning's power for building entrepreneurial muscle, the photos and stats singing in harmony. With 45 products sold via dropshipping, they're not just following instructions they're diagnosing market gaps and engineering solutions (Candra et al., 2021). That's modern entrepreneurship in action, tech adaptation isn't an add-on but the engine of value creation (Fuerst et al., 2023).

Now dissect POD's product spread, tees (45%) reveal sharp awareness of sustainable fashion's pulse. Mugs (30%) and accessories (25%). They're targeting underserved niches with sniper precision. This isn't random output it's calculated strategy. Students weigh viability, then place bets where margins meet demand. An analysis of the digital platforms preferred by students for business and learning, presented in Figure 8, reveals a strong inclination towards local e-commerce platforms like Shopee, followed by social media channels for marketing.

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Fig. 8 data from 50 vocational high school students reveals their digital platform preferences for business and learning. Interesting fact, Shopee dominates (60%), a clear reflection of its hegemony in the Indonesian e-commerce ecosystem. Intuitive navigation and integrated logistics support are key. Instagram and WhatsApp Business are almost equal (45%), proving that visual marketing and direct interaction with customers remain the hidden strengths of digital entrepreneurs. Surprisingly, TikTok is only used by 40% of respondents, a missed opportunity for short commerce videos. Meanwhile, the absence of YouTube that's a red flag, we're failing to leverage long-form content to build brand narratives. These preferences align with the study's findings on platform efficacy, where 72% of students reported higher sales conversion rates on Shopee compared to other channels. The data underscores the need for tailored training on multichannel strategies to optimize market reach. Students show awareness that attractive visual content can build brand awareness and sustainable engagement. The utilization of Instagram Shopping, Stories, and Reels features allowed participants to explore various creative content formats to promote their dropshipping and print on demand products.

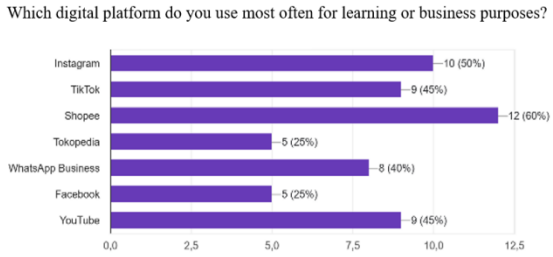


Fig. 8. Platform survey digital

The preference for local platforms indicates participants' comfort level and trust in Indonesia's e-commerce ecosystem. This is in line with the finding that e-commerce startups tend to choose platforms that are familiar in their daily lives, before moving on to multichannel options or global marketplaces such as Amazon and Etsy (Santoso & Riyanto, 2024). Participant perceptions and satisfaction levels were gauged post-program. The results indicate a positive reception towards the integrated dropshipping-POD model and the recognized importance of digital skills (Fig. 9).

The survey results reveal significant insights into vocational students' perceptions of digital entrepreneurship. While only 5% considered digital skills "very important" for their future careers, the combined "important" categories (11%) suggest a growing awareness of digital entrepreneurship's value, albeit with room for increased emphasis in vocational curricula. Notably, 12% of respondents expressed interest in dropshipping or print on demand business models (6% "very interested" and 6% "quite interested"), indicating these low-capital entry models resonate with students' entrepreneurial aspirations. The 10% lack of enthusiasm among participants is a wake-up call; we need more engaging training methods to overcome motivational challenges. This finding aligns with recent research, which suggests that vocational high school students are indeed more drawn to practical, low-risk business models. But it also highlights a serious problem: vocational education must more actively demonstrate the career relevance of digital skills.

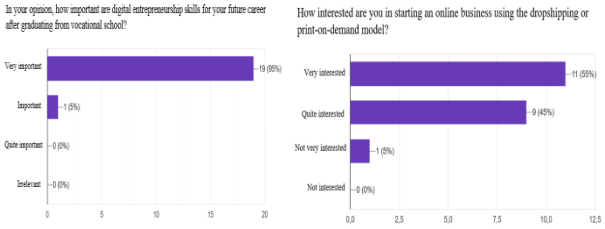


Fig. 9. Digital entrepreneurship satisfaction survey

A hybrid approach of dropshipping and Print on Demand (POD) has proven effective in fostering entrepreneurial spirit in participants. These two models reinforce each other; dropshipping eliminates the drama of stock management, shifting the focus to market penetration. Meanwhile, POD, through customized products, becomes a competitive weapon. The result is that students simultaneously hone their product creativity and mitigate financial risk, a rare combination described by Muhammad et al. (2025).

Challenges during the program. Fluctuating internet connections (experienced by 20% of participants), fluctuating enthusiasm in weeks 6 to 8 (a critical period!), and the difficulty of balancing time between school and online business. The good news is that intensive mentoring significantly mitigated these negative impacts. The training activities (Fig. 10) were designed to be highly interactive and practical, focusing directly on enhancing students' digital business competencies through hands-on projects.

Research insights here lay out a concrete roadmap; vocational training must evolve urgently to mirror the digital sector's breakneck transformations. We're not just tweaking curricula; we're fundamentally rewiring education to anticipate tech disruptions before they hit the workforce." The integration of digital entrepreneurship in the vocational curriculum is proven to be effective in increasing the employability and self-employment capability of graduates. The project-based learning

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model with real business simulation shows high effectiveness in building practical competencies. This approach can be used as a reference to develop a teaching factory concept that is more modern and relevant to technological developments.



Fig. 10. Training activities to improve students' digital business competencies

The long-term impact of this program can be seen from the increased confidence level of participants in facing the challenges of the digital economy. Follow-up surveys show that half of the participants are interested in running an online business and are better prepared to face the world of work that is relevant to digital businesses. Some participants even started to share their knowledge with their younger classmates, creating an unexpected multiplier effect.

The results conclusively demonstrate the efficacy of the integrated, project-based approach. The 78% improvement in competency scores validates the pedagogical model of combining theory with sustained practical application. The high market acceptance rate of student-created POD designs (72%) underscores the success of focusing on creativity and market analysis. The most significant outcome was the 95% surge in entrepreneurial confidence, which is a critical determinant for future venture creation and intrapreneurship. These findings align with existing literature confirming that vocational students thrive in contextual, hands-on learning environments that directly mirror industry demands.

CONCLUSION

This service program is implemented through four systematic stages, (1) preparation with needs analysis and initial competency mapping, (2) implementation of hybrid workshops (face to face and virtual) based on Project-Based Learning, (3) intensive mentoring for three months via WhatsApp and Zoom, and (4) final evaluation using pre-test/post-test, business portfolio, and satisfaction survey. The main contribution was seen in the 78% increase in participants' digital entrepreneurship competencies, with 54% successfully launching functional online stores and 60% producing original print on demand product designs that were accepted by the market (72% acceptance rate). However, limitations arose from unstable internet access (20% of participants), fluctuations in motivation in weeks 6-8, and time management gaps between school and business. For future activities, internet subsidy, self-paced learning modules, and collaboration with schools for curricular integration are recommended. The scope of future work includes the development of a teaching factory based on a local e-commerce platform, as well as program replication with an emphasis on scalability and sustainability through the alumni community.

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