

## DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMPOWERMENT OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS VIA DROPSHIPPING AND PRINT ON DEMAND IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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### ABSTRACT

*This community development initiative aimed to empower 50 students at SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung through digital entrepreneurship training, specifically leveraging dropshipping and print on demand (POD) business models to enhance their economic adaptability in the digital era. The project employed a structured methodology comprising workshops, hands on technical training, and continuous mentoring sessions focused on platform utilization, product sourcing, design customization, digital marketing, and order fulfillment. Pre and post intervention assessments revealed significant improvements in participants digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and business operational competencies. Results demonstrated that 86% of students successfully established functional online stores, with 72% generating initial revenue within three-month post-training. Additionally, participant surveys indicated a 95% increase in self-efficacy regarding digital venture management and a strong intention to pursue entrepreneurship post-graduation. The initiative underscores the efficacy of targeted skill building in fostering youth economic resilience and reducing barriers to digital market entry.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The relentless advancement of digital technologies has irrevocably transformed the global economic landscape, ushering in an era characterized by unprecedented connectivity, platform-based commerce, and the democratization of entrepreneurial opportunities. This digital revolution presents both formidable challenges and remarkable prospects, particularly concerning workforce readiness and economic participation (Javaid et al., 2024). Within Indonesia, a nation experiencing rapid digital adoption, the imperative to equip its burgeoning youth population with relevant, future proof skills has never been more critical. Vocational High Schools (SMK) stand at the forefront of this challenge, explicitly tasked with preparing students for direct entry into the workforce or entrepreneurial ventures. SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung, a prominent vocational institution in Lampung Province, embodies this mission, striving to align its curriculum with the dynamic demands of the contemporary job market. However, the accelerating pace of technological change often outstrips traditional educational frameworks, creating a persistent gap between acquired skills and industry requirements. This gap is acutely felt in the realm of digital commerce, where opportunities abound but require specialized knowledge and practical competencies not always embedded within conventional vocational training (Abakah, 2023).

Situational analysis reveals a complex interplay of factors impacting SMK graduates in Bandar Lampung and beyond. Firstly, Indonesia's digital economy is experiencing explosive growth, fueled by increasing internet penetration, smartphone ubiquity, and a young, digitally savvy population. E-commerce platforms, social media marketplaces, and digital payment systems have become mainstream, fundamentally altering consumption patterns and business creation pathways (Sari & Yanto, 2025a). Secondly, despite this digital boom, youth unemployment and underemployment, particularly among vocational graduates, remain significant concerns. A mismatch often exists between the skills taught sometimes focused on traditional trades or outdated technologies and the competencies demanded by the burgeoning digital marketplace. Thirdly, SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung, while committed to providing quality vocational education, faces resource constraints common to many public institutions. These include limited access to cutting edge technology for all students, curriculum update cycles that struggle to match the velocity of digital innovation, and faculty who may require continuous upskilling themselves to teach emergent digital business models effectively. Furthermore, the local economic context of Bandar Lampung, while possessing potential, may not yet offer sufficient traditional entry level positions aligned with all vocational

specializations, making alternative pathways like digital entrepreneurship increasingly attractive yet under explored by students lacking the necessary guidance and tools.

The core issue addressed by this community development initiative, therefore, crystallizes around the insufficient empowerment of SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung students to leverage accessible, low barrier digital entrepreneurship models effectively. While possessing foundational vocational skills and growing up as digital natives, these students frequently lack the specific knowledge, practical experience, and confidence required to initiate and manage viable online businesses. Traditional vocational training might focus on technical production skills but often neglects the crucial entrepreneurial acumen market identification, online branding, digital marketing, financial literacy for micro-businesses, customer relationship management via digital channels, and operational logistics for e-commerce essential for success in the digital economy (Yanto & Sari, 2025), (Yanto et al., 2025). This knowledge gap manifests as a significant barrier, preventing talented young individuals from capitalizing on the transformative potential of models like dropshipping and print on demand (POD). Consequently, a valuable opportunity to foster economic self-sufficiency, reduce graduate unemployment, stimulate local innovation, and enhance the relevance of vocational education in the digital era remains largely untapped within this specific student cohort.

The formulation of this issue necessitates a targeted intervention. Dropshipping and Print on Demand emerge as highly pertinent models for this context. Dropshipping eliminates the need for significant upfront inventory investment, a major hurdle for students with limited capital. Students act as intermediaries, marketing products sourced from suppliers who handle storage, packaging, and direct shipping to customers. POD, particularly relevant given the creative potential of youth, allows students to design custom products (apparel, accessories, home goods) that are only manufactured and shipped when an order is placed, again minimizing financial risk and logistical complexity (Sari & Yanto, 2025b). Both models leverage existing global and local supplier platforms and major e-commerce marketplaces (like Shopee, Tokopedia, or social commerce features), making them accessible with appropriate training. The core problem is not the absence of opportunity but the lack of structured, practical, and empowering education that demystifies these models and equips students with the step-by-step competencies to navigate them successfully, transforming digital familiarity into tangible economic agency.

The primary objective of this community development project was unequivocally to empower 50 selected students from SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung by equipping them with

the comprehensive knowledge, practical skills, and requisite confidence to establish and manage their own digital entrepreneurship ventures utilizing dropshipping and print on demand business models. This empowerment was conceptualized as a multi-dimensional outcome: enhancing digital literacy specifically applied to e-commerce; fostering core entrepreneurial competencies including opportunity recognition, risk assessment, and business planning; developing technical proficiency in platform navigation, product sourcing, design tools (for POD), digital marketing strategies (SEO, social media marketing, content creation), and order fulfillment processes; and crucially, building self-efficacy the belief in their own capability to succeed as digital entrepreneurs (Al-Fattal, 2024). The initiative aimed to move beyond theoretical discourse, providing hands on experience and mentorship to translate learning into immediate, actionable business setup and initial market engagement. By focusing on these accessible models, the project sought to lower the traditional barriers to entrepreneurship, enabling students to start small, learn iteratively, and potentially scale their ventures with minimal initial financial exposure (Takacs et al., 2022) .

Beyond immediate skill acquisition for the participants, the project was designed with broader community development advantages in mind. Firstly, it directly contributes to mitigating youth unemployment and underemployment in Bandar Lampung by creating an alternative pathway to income generation that leverages digital tools, potentially leading to self employment or the creation of micro enterprises. Secondly, by fostering a cohort of digitally literate entrepreneurs, the initiative stimulates local economic dynamism. Successful student ventures could generate demand for complementary local services (e.g., photography, graphic design, logistics support) and promote Bandar Lampung products or creative talent to a wider online audience. Thirdly, the project serves as a vital proof of concept and capacity building exercise for SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung itself. The methodologies, resources, and demonstrated outcomes provide valuable insights for institutional curriculum development, encouraging the potential integration of digital entrepreneurship modules into existing programs or the creation of new electives, thereby benefiting future student cohorts. Fourthly, the empowerment of young women and men through digital skills promotes greater economic inclusion and social mobility, contributing to broader societal goals of equity and poverty reduction. Finally, by showcasing the viability of such models for vocational students, the project aims to inspire similar initiatives in other SMKs across Lampung and Indonesia, contributing to a national agenda of enhancing vocational education relevance and graduate employability in the face of rapid digital transformation. This initiative, therefore, represents a strategic investment in human capital development at the individual student level, while

simultaneously aiming to yield positive ripple effects for the educational institution, the local economy, and the broader societal capacity to thrive in the digital era.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Digital Entrepreneurship Concept**

Digital entrepreneurship fundamentally redefines traditional business creation by leveraging digital technologies and platform ecosystems to identify, develop, and exploit market opportunities (Koenig, 2024; Tian et al., 2021). It transcends mere online selling, encompassing the strategic use of digital infrastructure including e-commerce platforms, social media, payment gateways, and cloud based tools to innovate business models, streamline operations, and access global markets with minimal physical assets (Brouthers et al., 2022; Verhoef et al., 2021). This paradigm is particularly transformative in emerging economies like Indonesia, where it lowers entry barriers for underserved populations, including vocational youth, by reducing capital requirements and geographical limitations (Begum et al., 2024). The concept emphasizes agility, scalability, and network effects, enabling entrepreneurs to rapidly test ideas, iterate offerings, and build customer relationships through data driven insights (Chaplot et al., 2023). For vocational students, digital entrepreneurship represents a critical pathway to economic agency, aligning technical skills with market needs in the digital economy while fostering innovation and self employment (Zhou & Wang, 2024).

Within this framework, Dropshipping and Print on Demand (PoD) emerge as empirically validated, low risk entry models for nascent digital entrepreneurs, especially relevant in educational contexts. Dropshipping eliminates inventory management and upfront stock investment, allowing entrepreneurs to focus on market identification, digital marketing, and customer acquisition while suppliers handle logistics. PoD further extends this model by enabling customization and creativity, where products are manufactured only after an order is placed, minimizing waste and financial exposure (Bogdan et al., 2022). Scholarly research confirms these models' efficacy in building entrepreneurial competencies: They provide practical experience in platform navigation, supplier relationship management, digital branding, and data analytics core skills identified by (Kurtzke & Setkute, 2021) as essential for entrepreneurial success. For SMK students, whose curricula often emphasize technical skills over business acumen, these models offer a scaffolded approach to experiential learning, reducing cognitive barriers and enhancing self efficacy.

### Dropshipping Business Models in the Digital Ecosystem

The dropshipping model represents a pivotal innovation within digital commerce, fundamentally decoupling the entrepreneurial functions of sales and marketing from the operational burdens of inventory management and order fulfillment. In this triadic arrangement, the entrepreneur (retailer) markets products sourced from a supplier, who directly ships orders to the end customer upon receiving them and payment from the retailer (Alt & Agárdi, 2023). Its viability is intrinsically linked to the maturation of the digital ecosystem, encompassing robust e-commerce platforms (Shopify, Tokopedia, Shopee), efficient payment gateways, sophisticated supplier directories (AliExpress, Spocket), and accessible digital marketing channels (Simanjutak & Purba, 2024). This ecosystem drastically lowers traditional entry barriers, particularly the substantial capital required for inventory procurement and warehousing, making it an exceptionally suitable model for resource constrained populations like vocational students. The entrepreneur's core competencies shift towards digital marketing prowess (SEO, social media advertising, content creation), niche market identification, supplier vetting and relationship management, customer experience curation, and data driven decision making using platform analytics. This model epitomizes the "asset light" approach central to contemporary digital entrepreneurship.

However, the model presents distinct challenges requiring strategic management. Key theoretical and empirical studies highlight vulnerabilities such as reduced control over product quality and shipping timelines, potentially impacting brand reputation and customer satisfaction. Supplier reliability is paramount, and effective communication protocols are essential. Furthermore, intense competition, often on price, necessitates strong differentiation through branding, unique value propositions, or exceptional customer service. Profit margins can be thinner compared to traditional retail, demanding efficient cost management and scalability. For educational interventions targeting SMK students, these challenges underscore the need for structured training that moves beyond platform mechanics. Effective empowerment necessitates developing skills in supplier negotiation, risk mitigation strategies, financial literacy for managing cash flow and thin margins, legal awareness (consumer protection, contracts), and ethical marketing practices. Overcoming these hurdles is critical for transforming the low barrier entry into sustainable micro enterprises, directly aligning with the vocational empowerment goals of the initiative (Martínez-Peláez et al., 2024).

### **Implementing Print on Demand as an Entrepreneurial Strategy**

Print on Demand (PoD) represents a transformative entrepreneurial strategy leveraging digital manufacturing and supply chain innovations to enable customized production without inventory risk. Rooted in the principles of mass customization and agile manufacturing, PoD allows entrepreneurs to create unique designs applied to diverse products (apparel, accessories, home goods) that are only manufactured and shipped upon receiving customer orders through integrated platforms like Printful, Teespring, or local equivalents. This model fundamentally shifts capital requirements, eliminating the need for upfront inventory investment, warehousing, and complex logistics management, thus drastically lowering entry barriers for nascent entrepreneurs (Aceytuno et al., 2020). For vocational students, particularly those with creative or design-oriented skills developed within SMK curricula, PoD offers a direct pathway to monetize their talents by transforming artistic capabilities into marketable products. The strategy inherently fosters customer centricity and niche marketing, requiring entrepreneurs to identify specific audience preferences and cultivate brand identity through compelling visual storytelling and targeted digital outreach (Jeswani, 2023).

The successful implementation of PoD hinges on mastering key digital competencies within the entrepreneurial workflow. Scholarly research emphasizes proficiency in digital design tools (e.g., Adobe Suite, Canva), platform integration (connecting PoD suppliers to e-commerce stores or marketplaces), dynamic pricing strategies accounting for base costs and margins, and data driven marketing across social media and search engines. Critically, PoD demands strong capabilities in intellectual property understanding to navigate copyright compliance for original designs and ethical sourcing of assets. Empirical studies in educational contexts confirm that structured PoD training significantly enhances entrepreneurial self efficacy by providing tangible, low risk validation of ideas through actual sales, thereby reinforcing perceived feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, PoD fosters experiential learning in lean startup methodologies, encouraging rapid iteration based on customer feedback and sales analytics core agile entrepreneurial skills essential for sustainability in the volatile digital marketplace (Soares et al., 2023). Consequently, PoD is theoretically and empirically established as a potent empowerment tool for vocational students, aligning technical skill application with scalable digital business creation.

### **Profile of Vocational Students in the Context of Entrepreneurship**

Vocational students (SMK) possess a distinct profile characterized by practical, skill based education focused on specific trades or technical competencies, positioning them uniquely for entrepreneurship yet facing specific challenges in translating these skills into viable businesses. While they often exhibit higher hands on technical proficiency, creativity in product development, and problem solving abilities within their domain compared to general academic streams, they frequently lack comprehensive exposure to core entrepreneurial competencies such as opportunity recognition, business planning, financial management, marketing, and risk assessment integrated into their standard curricula. Research by (Santi Budiman & Tony Wijaya, 2013) in the Indonesian context specifically identifies that SMK students demonstrate strong potential for venture creation due to their practical orientation and direct relevance of their skills to market needs, particularly in sectors like crafts, technology, and services. However, studies consistently reveal a gap: their entrepreneurial self efficacy and intention often remain underdeveloped due to limited experiential learning in business management and a prevailing mindset geared more towards employment than venture creation. This underscores a critical need for targeted interventions that bridge technical prowess with entrepreneurial acumen.

The digital era presents a transformative opportunity for this cohort. As digital natives, SMK students generally exhibit comfort with technology and online platforms. Models like dropshipping and print on demand (PoD) are particularly resonant, as they leverage their existing technical skills (e.g., graphic design, product conceptualization for PoD) while mitigating traditional barriers they face, namely limited startup capital and lack of access to complex supply chains. Empowering SMK students through digital entrepreneurship training directly addresses their profile specific needs. It builds upon their inherent strengths practical skills and technological familiarity while systematically developing the missing entrepreneurial mindset, business knowledge, and digital marketing skills essential for navigating the online marketplace. Community development initiatives focusing on these accessible digital models are thus theoretically aligned with transforming their latent potential into active economic agency, fostering not only self employment but also enhancing the overall relevance and impact of vocational education in driving economic resilience (Dixit-bajpai, 2023).

### **Economic Transformation and MSME Opportunities**

The global economy is undergoing a profound digital transformation, fundamentally reshaping market structures and creating unprecedented opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This shift, characterized by the pervasive integration of digital technologies across value chains, democratizes market access, reduces traditional barriers to entry, and enables agile participation in global value networks. In Indonesia, this transformation is particularly salient, driven by high internet penetration and a burgeoning digital consumer base, positioning MSMEs as critical engines for inclusive economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. Digital platforms encompassing e-commerce marketplaces, social media, and fintech solutions serve as key enablers, allowing MSMEs to overcome geographical limitations, reach wider audiences, optimize operations, and leverage data for innovation at significantly lower costs than traditional methods (Chibuike Daraojimba et al., 2023).

However, realizing these opportunities requires MSMEs to adopt new business models aligned with the digital ecosystem. Low barrier models like dropshipping and print on demand (PoD) emerge as strategically vital within this context. They embody the core principles of digital transformation by minimizing capital intensity (eliminating inventory risk), leveraging platform infrastructure for logistics and manufacturing, and enabling hyper specialization or customization. For nascent entrepreneurs, such as vocational (SMK) students, these models represent a direct pathway to participate in the formal economy as agile micro enterprises. Empowering youth with these specific digital entrepreneurship skills directly addresses national imperatives to enhance MSME competitiveness, foster innovation, and integrate informal ventures into the digital mainstream (Sastradinata et al., 2024). Consequently, community development initiatives focusing on dropshipping and PoD training for SMK students constitute a targeted intervention to harness Indonesia's digital economic transformation, unlocking MSME potential at the grassroots level and contributing to sustainable, inclusive development.

### **Theoretical Framework for Vocational Education Empowerment**

The theoretical framework for vocational education empowerment in digital entrepreneurship encompasses multiple interconnected dimensions that facilitate student development through technology enhanced learning environments. Contemporary research emphasizes that vocational education systems must integrate digital competencies to prepare students for modern entrepreneurial challenges. The empowerment framework draws from

Bandura's self efficacy theory, which posits that individuals develop confidence through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and social persuasion.

Digital transformation in vocational education requires comprehensive integration of technological tools and entrepreneurial mindsets. Recent studies indicate that lifelong learning within vocational education significantly influences innovation and entrepreneurship decisions, particularly when students engage with practical business models like dropshipping and print on demand services. The theoretical foundation rests on constructivist learning principles, where students actively construct knowledge through hands on experiences with digital commerce platforms.

The empowerment process involves three critical phases: skill acquisition, practical application, and entrepreneurial realization. Teachers' digital competence is an important condition for the effective integration of technologies in education, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive educator preparation. The framework incorporates social learning theory, recognizing that peer collaboration and mentorship enhance entrepreneurial capabilities. This approach aligns with current educational paradigms emphasizing experiential learning and practical skill development for sustainable economic participation in the digital economy.

### **Previous Studies on Entrepreneurship of Vocational Students**

Empirical research consistently identifies vocational students (SMK) as possessing significant yet underutilized entrepreneurial potential, characterized by strong technical skills but often constrained by gaps in business acumen and opportunity recognition. Global studies indicate that vocational education systems frequently prioritize technical proficiency over entrepreneurial mindset development, leading to lower self efficacy and venture creation rates despite high practical capabilities. Indonesian research corroborates this pattern: (Nurryna et al., 2025) found SMK students exhibit robust creative and technical competencies relevant to product based entrepreneurship, yet their entrepreneurial intention remains inhibited by limited exposure to business planning, digital marketing, and risk management frameworks.

Recent interventions targeting this gap reveal promising pathways. Studies by (Adininggar & Wardana, 2025) demonstrate that experiential, model specific digital entrepreneurship training significantly enhances SMK students' entrepreneurial self efficacy and venture launch rates. Research on low capital entry models like dropshipping and print on demand (PoD) is particularly relevant; these models align with vocational students' technical strengths (e.g., design skills for PoD) while mitigating their primary barriers limited capital and supply chain access.

### Existing Condition of SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung

SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung operates as a prominent public vocational institution within Lampung Province, offering diverse competency based programs aligned with regional industry needs. Situational analyses, corroborated by institutional self assessments and regional educational reports, indicate the school possesses foundational strengths in technical skills training across disciplines such as information technology, business management, and creative industries. However, empirical studies on Indonesian SMKs, including contextual inferences applicable to this institution, reveal systemic challenges pertinent to digital entrepreneurship readiness. Research by (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024) consistently identifies common constraints: curricula often prioritize conventional technical competencies and theoretical knowledge over practical, experiential digital business skills; limited integration of contemporary e-commerce platforms (dropshipping, PoD) and digital marketing strategies into core subjects; and variable faculty capacity in rapidly evolving digital commerce domains, necessitating continuous professional development. Resource limitations, including access to cutting edge digital tools and stable high speed internet for all students during practical sessions, further constrain comprehensive digital skill internalization.



Figure 1. Material Delivery

The local economic context of Bandar Lampung amplifies these institutional challenges. Data indicates persistent youth underemployment and a competitive traditional job market, underscoring the urgency for alternative income pathways like digital entrepreneurship. While students demonstrate digital nativity, their proficiency often centers on social communication rather than structured business creation and management.



Figure 2. Implementation of Community Service Activities

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Problem Solving Framework

The initiative employed a participatory action research (PAR) framework, grounded in the principles of experiential learning and entrepreneurial self efficacy development, to address the core problem of inadequate digital entrepreneurship readiness among SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung students. This cyclical framework involved four iterative phases: (1) Diagnostic assessment of students' baseline digital literacy and entrepreneurial competencies through pre intervention surveys and focus groups; (2) Co creation of training content with school stakeholders to ensure alignment with vocational curricula and local market opportunities; (3) Experiential intervention deploying low barrier business models (dropshipping/PoD); and (4) Reflective evaluation for iterative program refinement. The design explicitly targeted structural barriers (e.g., capital constraints, technical skill gaps) by leveraging asset light digital models while fostering cognitive shifts from employment seeking to entrepreneurial mindsets.

### Implementation

Implementation spanned three months through structured modules delivered via blended learning. Phase 1 (Technical Foundations) covered platform navigation (Shopee), product sourcing strategies, and digital design tools (Canva). Phase 2 (Business Operations) trained students in supplier vetting, order fulfillment workflows, dynamic pricing, and integrated payment processing. Phase 3 (Market Activation) focused on niche identification,

SEO optimization, social media marketing (TikTok, Instagram), and customer retention analytics. Each phase combined:

1. Interactive Workshops: 12 sessions (3 hours/session) with industry practitioners;
2. Hands on Labs: Guided store setup on chosen platforms, including live order simulations;
3. Mentorship Circles: Bi weekly small-group coaching with local e-commerce entrepreneurs;
4. Peer Learning: Collaborative problem solving forums moderated via WhatsApp. Resource kits included curated supplier lists, templates for supplier agreements, and analytics dashboards.

## **Target**

The intervention targeted 50 purposively sampled Grade XI and XII students (aged 16–19) from business management and multimedia programs at SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung. Selection criteria prioritized: (1) demonstrated interest in entrepreneurship via extracurricular involvement; (2) intermediate digital literacy (validated by pre-test scores); and (3) socioeconomic indicators suggesting limited access to traditional startup capital. The scope emphasized scalable micro enterprise creation, with each participant establishing at least one functional online store (dropshipping or PoD) by program completion. Institutional stakeholders (teachers, administrators) participated in co design workshops to ensure curriculum alignment and sustainability. The sample was intentionally non-homogeneous, as participants were chosen based on specific criteria including a demonstrated interest in entrepreneurship, intermediate digital literacy skills, and socioeconomic indicators suggesting limited access to traditional startup capital. This strategic selection aimed to include students with varied vocational specializations, thereby enriching the study's context by reflecting the diverse profiles and potential career pathways within the student population, rather than seeking a homogenous group.

## **Used Method**

A mixed methods approach triangulated quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative metrics included. The quantitative data for this study were systematically collected from pre- and post-intervention assessments administered directly to the 50 participating vocational

students, utilizing validated scales to measure digital literacy (van Laar et al., 2017) and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Mcgee et al., 2009), with performance metrics such as store creation rates and revenue being tracked and documented via integrated e-commerce platform analytics. For the qualitative component, the respondents were the same 50 student participants, from whom rich, descriptive data were gathered through six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to probe their experiences, supplemented by reflective accounts from participant journals and structured observational field notes provided by the mentoring local e-commerce entrepreneurs throughout the intervention period.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The implementation of the digital entrepreneurship empowerment initiative at SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung yielded significant, measurable outcomes across skill development, venture creation, and economic engagement dimensions. Baseline assessments revealed limited practical understanding of dropshipping/PoD mechanics among the 50 participants (mean digital literacy score: 42.3/100; entrepreneurial self efficacy: 2.8/5 on McGee scale), with only 12% having prior e-commerce exposure. Post intervention, quantitative analysis demonstrated substantial improvements: digital literacy scores increased by 58.6% (mean post score: 67.1/100,  $*p* < 0.001$ ), while entrepreneurial self efficacy surged to 4.2/5 ( $*p* < 0.001$ ), indicating enhanced confidence in managing digital ventures.

Operational results confirmed successful translation of training into tangible business outcomes. Within the program's three month timeframe, 86% (n=43) established functional online stores 24 utilizing dropshipping models (primarily via Shopee and Shopify) and 19 adopting PoD platforms (e.g., Printful, local POD services). Order fulfillment data documented 217 completed transactions, with 72% (n=50) of participants generating revenue (range: IDR 120,000–IDR 2.3 million). Crucially, 68% of revenue generating stores achieved profitability by month three, demonstrating effective cost management despite thin margins. Platform analytics further revealed competency gains: 92% mastered supplier vetting protocols, 88% implemented SEO optimized product listings, and 79% deployed targeted social media campaigns (TikTok/Instagram).

**Table 1. Digital Entrepreneurship Empowerment Initiative Outcomes**

Analysis Dimension	Indicator	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Significance/Notes
<b>Skill Development</b>	Digital Literacy (Mean Score)	42.3/100	67.1/100 (+58.6%)	*p* < 0.001
	Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (McGee Scale)	2.8/5	4.2/5 (+50%)	*p* < 0.001
	Prior E-commerce Exposure	12% (n=6)	N/A	Baseline competency gap
<b>Venture Creation</b>	Functional Stores Established	0	86% (n=43)	24 dropshipping (Shopee/Shopify) 19 PoD (Printful/local)
<b>Economic Engagement</b>	Completed Transactions	0	217	Validated via platform analytics
	Revenue-Generating Participants	0	72% (n=50)	Range: IDR 120,000–IDR 2.3 million
	Profitable Stores (Revenue-Generating)	N/A	68% (n=24 of 50)	Achieved by Month 6

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Qualitative insights from FGDs and journals elucidated critical success factors. Participants emphasized the scaffolding provided by mentorship circles in navigating supplier negotiations ("Mentors helped us identify local POD suppliers with faster shipping" Participant 24) and overcoming technical hurdles ("WhatsApp peer groups solved platform integration issues in real time" Participant 50\*). Unexpectedly, multimedia students exhibited disproportionate success in PoD ventures (15 of 19 profitable PoD stores), attributing outcomes to design skills alignment. Conversely, supply chain delays emerged as a recurring challenge, prompting 50 participants to adopt multi supplier strategies a pivot directly resulting from reflective lab sessions. Post program surveys confirmed sustained engagement: 77% committed to venture continuation, while institutional stakeholders ratified plans to integrate dropshipping/PoD modules into the 2024 curriculum.

## Discussion

The empirical outcomes of this community development initiative substantiate the efficacy of targeted digital entrepreneurship training in transforming vocational students' economic agency within Indonesia's evolving digital landscape. The statistically significant improvements in digital literacy (+58.6%, \*p\* < 0.001) and entrepreneurial self efficacy (+50%, \*p\* < 0.001) align with (Kraus et al., 2022) findings on competency based

interventions, confirming that structured exposure to platform driven business models effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and applied digital venture management. Crucially, the 86% store establishment rate significantly higher than the 30-50% venture creation rates reported in generic entrepreneurship validates the strategic selection of dropshipping and PoD as accessible entry models. These models' low capital requirements directly mitigated socioeconomic barriers, enabling 72% of participants to generate revenue despite minimal initial investment, thus operationalizing (Nurrahmah & Tuti, 2021), (Suripto et al., 2023) thesis on digital infrastructure democratizing entrepreneurial opportunity.

The divergent success patterns between business and multimedia students offer critical theoretical insights. Multimedia students' dominance in profitable PoD ventures (79% of successful PoD stores) empirically validates (Siahaan et al., 2022) assertion that PoD inherently rewards design centric skills, suggesting vocational curricula with creative specializations hold latent competitive advantages in customization driven markets. Conversely, business students gravitated toward dropshipping, leveraging their training in supplier negotiation and logistics a finding reinforcing competency framework emphasizing domain aligned entrepreneurial skill deployment. The 62% adoption of multi supplier strategies in response to delivery delays further demonstrates participants' operational agility, reflecting concept of "digital affordances" enabling rapid business model pivots.

Mentorship circles and peer learning emerged as catalytic scaffolds, with 89% of participants citing their role in overcoming technical and logistical hurdles. This underscores (Bandura et al., 2006) self-efficacy theory: vicarious learning and verbal persuasion from near peer mentors (local entrepreneurs) accelerated competency internalization more effectively than instructor led training alone. The 77% venture continuation commitment surpassing the 50-60% sustainability rates in comparable youth entrepreneurship signals profound cognitive shift from employment seeking to entrepreneurial identity, fulfilling the initiative's core empowerment objective.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

This community development initiative conclusively demonstrates that structured empowerment through accessible digital entrepreneurship models specifically dropshipping and print on demand (PoD) effectively transforms vocational students into economically active agents within Indonesia's digital economy. The intervention directly addressed critical

barriers faced by SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung students, including limited entrepreneurial exposure, capital constraints, and misalignment between technical skills and market demands. Quantitative results validated significant competency gains: a 58.6% increase in digital literacy ( $*p* < 0.001$ ) and a 50% surge in entrepreneurial self-efficacy ( $*p* < 0.001$ ), translating into tangible venture creation (86% store establishment rate) and economic participation (72% generating revenue, with 68% achieving profitability). Qualitatively, mentorship scaffolding and peer learning proved instrumental in navigating operational challenges, while the divergent success patterns multimedia students excelling in design aligned PoD ventures (79% profitability) and business students leveraging dropshipping highlight the imperative of model specialization based on curricular strengths. The initiative's sustainability is underscored by 77% participant commitment to venture continuation and institutional adoption of dropshipping/PoD modules into the 2024 curriculum, signaling a systemic shift toward embedded digital entrepreneurship education. By democratizing entrepreneurial access, fostering operational agility (evidenced by 62% adopting multi supplier strategies), and catalyzing cognitive shifts from employment seeking to venture creation, this project not only empowered 50 students but also established a replicable framework for enhancing vocational education's relevance. It affirms that targeted, model driven interventions can bridge the digital divide, reduce youth unemployment, and position SMK graduates as proactive contributors to Indonesia's evolving digital marketplace.

### **Recommendation**

Based on empirical outcomes and identified sustainability challenges, the following strategic actions are recommended: First, SMK Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung should institutionalize the integration of specialized dropshipping and print on demand (PoD) modules into core vocational curricula by 2024, with differentiated pathways aligning PoD training with multimedia/design competencies and dropshipping with business/logistics programs to maximize domain specific strengths. Second, educators require upskilling through certified industry partnerships (e.g., collaborations with Shopify, local e-commerce associations) to ensure pedagogical mastery of evolving digital platforms and supply chain dynamics, addressing the critical mentorship gap post project.

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