

Exploring the Implementation of Digitalization and Business Innovation on SME Performance of at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of digitalization and business innovation to improve the performance of MSMEs at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala, Denpasar, Bali. The background of this research is the need for digital transformation in the Industry 4.0 era in the dynamic food sector, where MSMEs, as the backbone of Indonesia's economy, must adapt to face globalization. This research uses an exploratory qualitative method with triangulation techniques, namely in-depth or semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation of the owner, manager, administrative staff, and social media staff at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala. The choice of qualitative method aims to understand in depth the processes, strategies, and challenges encountered in adopting digitalization and business innovation. The results show initial digitalization through social media, QRIS/bank transfer transactions, and digital record-keeping, but are constrained by human resources and infrastructure. Business innovation includes product diversification (fillet, marinades, hampers), production efficiency through modern tools, and digital marketing strategies that increase sales, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. This research contributes theoretically to MSME innovation management and practically as a reference for digital strategies for business actors and the government.

Keywords: Digitalization, Business Innovation, MSME Performance, Digital Transformation, Food Sector

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INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has highlighted the critical importance of digitalization and business innovation as key drivers of competitiveness, including for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). SMEs constitute the backbone of Indonesia's economy, playing a pivotal role in job creation and income distribution. In the context of digital disruption and fundamental market changes, SMEs are required to continuously adapt and innovate to maintain and improve their performance (Sudiarti et al., 2025). According to the Financial Services Authority (OJK, 2025), there are approximately 65.5 million SMEs operating across various productive sectors in Indonesia. These enterprises contribute 61.9% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ over 119 million people, accounting for around 97% of the national workforce.

Despite their domestic economic significance, the contribution of SMEs to national exports remains relatively low. Data from the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs as of January 30, 2025, shows that SMEs account for only 15.7% of Indonesia's total export value. This discrepancy underscores a substantial gap between the potential and actual export performance of SMEs. The limited contribution is attributed to several challenges, including restricted competitiveness, inadequate access to international markets, product quality and standardization issues, and underutilization of technology, innovation, and digitalization in supporting export activities.

In the era of digital disruption, the capacity of SMEs to adopt and leverage technology has become a critical determinant of business sustainability and operational performance. A report from

Bisnis.com (2025) indicates that the adoption of digital tools among SMEs in Bali remains relatively low, at approximately 34%, primarily limited to marketing and financial record-keeping applications. This highlights the necessity of enhancing digital integration to achieve greater operational efficiency, competitiveness, and overall business performance.

The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies has fundamentally reshaped the business landscape. Consumers are increasingly connected through digital platforms, actively seeking information, conducting transactions, and engaging with brands online (Kian et al., 2020). Digitalization is no longer a privilege of large enterprises; it has penetrated the SME sector as a means to expand market reach, streamline operations, and strengthen customer relationships. Consequently, SMEs' ability to embrace digital technologies is essential for maintaining competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market environment (Mendrofa et al., 2023).

Alongside digitalization, business innovation remains a key driver of sustainable growth. Innovation encompasses not only the development of new products but also the improvement of operational processes, the design of more efficient business models, and the implementation of more effective marketing strategies (Falentina et al., 2022). For SMEs, even small-scale innovations can differentiate the business, attract customers, and foster loyalty. In the absence of innovation, SMEs risk stagnation, limited growth, and difficulty competing in both conventional and modern markets.

Empirical evidence suggests a strong interrelationship between digitalization, innovation, and SME performance. Ratnawati et al., (2024) note that digitalization and entrepreneurial activity positively influence innovation and SME outcomes, with innovation serving as a mediating factor that amplifies the impact of digitalization on performance. Digital technologies enhance promotional effectiveness, accelerate transactions, and broaden distribution networks, while innovation allows SMEs to generate continuous added value for customers. The integration of digitalization and business innovation has therefore been shown to strengthen SME performance across productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction dimensions (Ikhlazul & Satria, 2023).

These findings confirm the strategic importance of SMEs in Indonesia's economic development. SMEs not only drive local economic activity but also serve as critical pillars for job creation, enhancing competitiveness, and reinforcing national economic resilience in the face of globalization and rapid digitalization. Consequently, understanding how digitalization and innovative business models can be leveraged to improve SME performance represents a highly relevant topic for both academic research and policy formulation.

The food processing and distribution sector constitutes one of the most dynamic and strategically important SME sectors, as it is directly linked to essential community needs, particularly within the poultry industry. Poultry processing enterprises require further investigation to understand how their inherent potential can be effectively harnessed to enhance SME performance. This sector remains critical, exhibiting steady growth supported by stable demand. Nevertheless, it faces several challenges, including fluctuations in raw material prices, intense market competition, stringent hygiene standards, and various operational constraints. In response to these challenges, the integration of digitalization and business innovation emerges as a viable strategy to improve operational performance and strengthen competitiveness across both conventional and modern markets.

Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala is one of the SMEs operating in the poultry processing and distribution sector, represents a highly relevant case study. Situated in Kelurahan Ubung, North Denpasar City, Bali Province, the business has been operational since 1998 and continues to expand. At the end of 2024, management transitioned to a younger generation (Gen Z), commonly recognized as "digital natives," who brought renewed energy to innovation and the adoption of digital technologies.

Despite this generational shift, until early 2025, the enterprise still primarily relied on conventional sales methods, including direct customer transactions and manual record-keeping. Under the new management, digitalization initiatives have begun to take shape, such as utilizing social media for promotion, implementing digital payment options (QRIS and bank transfers), and exploring more sophisticated digital marketing strategies. This transition is particularly significant as

it illustrates the ongoing shift from traditional operational systems to digitally-enabled business practices at the SME level.

Empirical evidence from sales data spanning 2022–2024 further highlights the development of SME performance at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala. These data provide valuable insights into the potential impact of digitalization and business innovation on operational outcomes, market reach, and overall business growth, underscoring the importance of strategic technology adoption in the poultry SME sector.

Table 1. Annual Sales Data from 2022–2024

Year	Average Price (per Kg)	Average Total Sales (Kg/Ton)	Total Sales (Gross)
2022	Rp. 40.000	9.600Kg (9,6 Ton)	Rp. 384.000.000
2023	Rp. 41.000	12.000Kg (12 Ton)	Rp. 492.000.000
2024	Rp. 42.000	12.504Kg (12,5 Ton)	Rp. 525.168000

Based on the data presented, it is apparent that the adoption of digitalization and business innovation at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala remains in its initial phase and requires further enhancement. Although sales have demonstrated steady growth between 2022 and 2024, the integration of digital technologies has not yet been fully realized across managerial operations, marketing activities, and customer service processes. Consequently, there is a critical need for research that provides an in-depth examination of the implementation of digitalization and business innovation, as well as their effects on SME performance, in order to generate insights that can guide effective strategies for operational improvement and sustainable growth.

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, strategies, and challenges encountered by business practitioners in implementing digital technologies to enhance SME performance within the food processing and distribution sector. By employing this approach, the research is able to thoroughly examine the ongoing transformation processes at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala and evaluate their impact on operational efficiency, market reach, and overall SME performance.

METHOD

This research was conducted at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala, located at Jalan Cokroaminoto Gang Katalia II No. 1, Kelurahan Ubung, North Denpasar City, Bali Province. As one of the SMEs operating in Bali, the study focuses on exploring the implementation of digitalization and business innovation within its operational and managerial processes to enhance overall SME performance.

The study employs qualitative data, which are descriptive and non-numerical, derived from observations, interviews, or documentation that provide information in the form of words, images, symbols, or narratives. Such data enable a deep, subjective, and holistic understanding of the phenomena without relying on statistical measurement of frequency or quantity (Sugiyono, 2023).

Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Primary data consist of original information collected directly from respondents or informants, ensuring high accuracy for the research objectives, such as through direct interviews and first-hand observations. Secondary data serve to support the analysis of primary data or provide comparative context, including census data from BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik) and scholarly articles from academic databases such as Google Scholar (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data collection was conducted through multiple techniques. Observation involved gathering information via field notes, photographs, or videos to document behaviors and contextual details. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on a guideline prepared by the researcher while allowing informants flexibility to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives (Sugiyono, 2023). Documentation included written, visual, or digital sources, such as archives, photos, letters, and recordings, used to complement primary data and provide historical context for triangulation.

Qualitative research instruments in this study are flexible tools employed by the researcher rather than standardized scales typical of quantitative studies. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary “human instrument,” supported by tools such as interview guides and observation sheets, which are adapted to the field setting to capture subjective and holistic data.

To ensure the validity of the qualitative data, triangulation was applied, examining information from multiple perspectives to reduce bias. According to Sugiyono (2023), three types of triangulation are commonly employed: source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation, each contributing to the credibility and reliability of the findings.

The qualitative data analysis follows an interpretive and inductive approach, focusing on identifying patterns and meanings rather than numerical measurement. The interactive analysis model involves three main stages: data reduction, which entails selecting and summarizing relevant information; data presentation, which organizes findings into matrices, graphs, or narratives; and conclusion drawing or verification, which tests preliminary hypotheses. This cyclical process continues from data collection through report preparation, ensuring comprehensive and accurate interpretation of the phenomena under investigation (Sugiyono, 2023).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala has a longstanding history as a family-run business, established in 1998. Over the years, it has evolved into a supplier of various chicken cuts, serving traditional markets, small eateries, and hotels throughout Badung and Denpasar. The management transition at the end of 2024 aimed to enhance operational efficiency, introducing early stages of digital integration. Ordering processes began to rely primarily on WhatsApp, digital scales were adopted for precise weighing, and payments through QRIS and bank transfers were implemented. These initiatives accelerated transaction processes, improved payment security, and reduced manual errors, marking an initial step toward full digitalization. Such efforts reflect the business's proactive adaptation to technological developments to support operational efficiency and customer service.

Interviews with management revealed that digitalization has been progressively incorporated into daily operations to streamline ordering, record-keeping, and stock management. Although certain processes remain manual, the integration of technology has facilitated more structured inventory control and improved monitoring of orders. The utilization of digital platforms has enhanced communication with customers and maintained service consistency. Management emphasized that digitalization also reduces administrative errors and enables faster responses to customer requests. These findings indicate that digitalization has become a strategic approach to enhance operational effectiveness, even though it is still in the early development phase and requires further refinement.

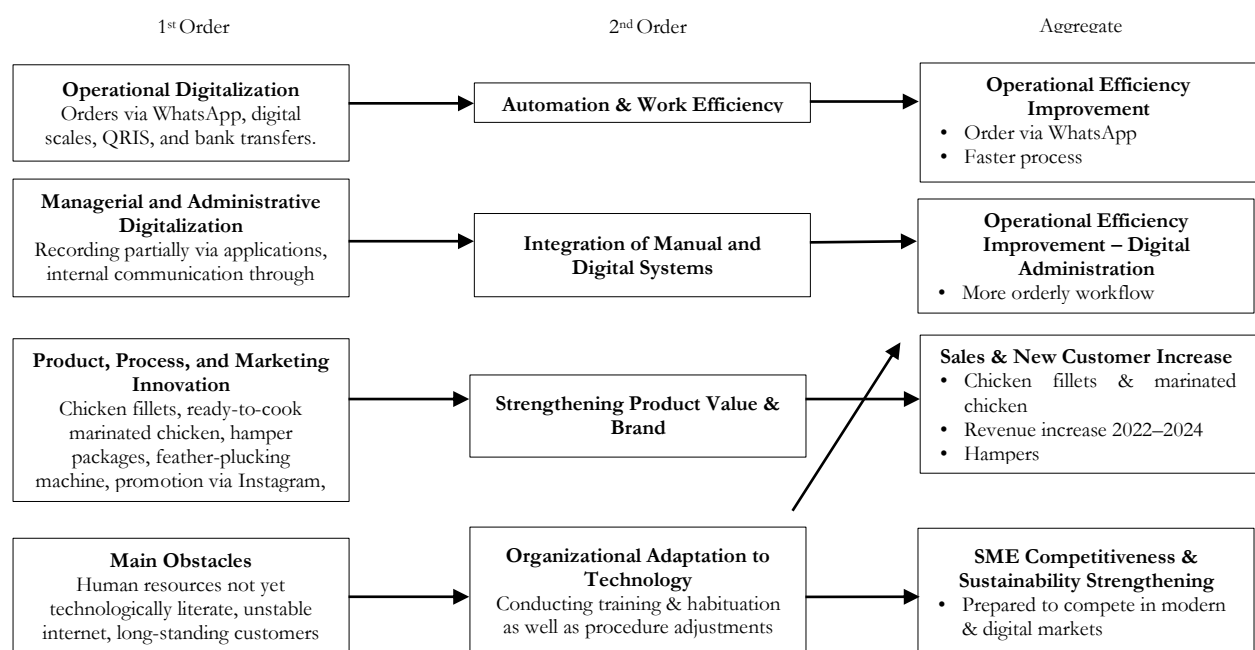


Figure 1. Map of Interview Results on the Exploration of Digitalization and Business Innovation Implementation on SME Performance at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala

Interviews with administrative staff further highlighted that digital technology simplify transaction recording and document management, resulting in more efficient workflows. Digital systems support stock and transaction monitoring, accelerating administrative processes and ensuring greater organization. Moreover, the adoption of these technologies reduces the likelihood of errors often associated with manual methods. Consequently, employees are able to allocate more time and effort to other operational tasks, such as preparing daily reports and managing inventory. These observations underscore that digitalization in administrative processes significantly contributes to internal efficiency and strengthens overall SME management.

Additionally, interviews with social media marketing personnel indicated that leveraging digital platforms and social media has enabled broader and more interactive product promotion. Marketing activities through Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have allowed the business to reach new customers while reinforcing relationships with existing ones. Digitalization in marketing facilitates the real-time dissemination of product information, promotional offers, and stock updates, enhancing business visibility and enabling rapid responses to customer inquiries or requests. While the implementation of digital marketing strategies has positively influenced business growth and promotional efficiency, further development is necessary to optimize reach and engagement.

Discussion

The Implementation of Digitalization and Business Innovation on SME Performance at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala

The implementation of digitalization at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala has generated significant changes in administrative and transactional processes. Sales records are no longer entirely manual but are now managed using simple applications and spreadsheets, enabling more organized and traceable transaction data. Digital payment systems, including QRIS and bank transfers, have been adopted, enhancing service speed and customer convenience. These developments have improved administrative efficiency while reducing the likelihood of recording errors. Nevertheless, the transition from manual to digital systems continues to face challenges, particularly regarding the adaptation of long-tenured employees accustomed to conventional workflows and the integration of offline and online sales data. These challenges have been mitigated through business innovation strategies, such as product diversification including marinated chicken, chicken fillets, and hamper packages and the adoption of digital tools like automatic scales. Collectively, these initiatives have proven effective in enhancing operational efficiency, expanding market reach, and improving customer convenience when using digital services.

The application of digital technology is also evident in marketing and promotional activities. Promotions are actively conducted via social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, allowing product information to reach consumers quickly and broadly. Online delivery services have been introduced to facilitate easier access to products. These digital marketing strategies contribute to heightened consumer interaction and strengthen the business's brand image amid market competition. Nonetheless, limitations persist, including a shortage of employees with adequate technological skills and unstable internet connectivity. Continuous business innovation remains a priority, focusing on expanding product variations, introducing marinated chicken and hamper packages, and planning the implementation of feather-plucking and automatic cutting machines to enhance operational efficiency. Prompt responses to market trends and customer feedback through social media have proven effective in maintaining business relevance, increasing purchase intention, and driving both sales growth and customer satisfaction.

Although digitalization at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala remains in its early stages, its impact on daily operational activities is already visible. Sales channels increasingly rely on WhatsApp for practical ordering, weighing processes utilize digital scales, and non-cash transactions have been implemented to facilitate smoother payments. These developments improve service delivery and contribute to better organization of transaction records. Challenges persist, particularly in employee and long-standing customer adaptation to new systems and limitations in technological infrastructure. Business innovation, through product diversification and process efficiency enhancements, aims to meet market demands. These efforts are considered capable of retaining

existing customers while attracting new ones. The continued development of digitalization and business innovation is expected to further improve operational efficiency and strengthen competitiveness in the long term.

The implementation of digitalization and business innovation has positively influenced daily operations and sales growth. Digital transactions have accelerated customer service, reducing waiting times, while product innovations such as chicken fillets and marinated chicken have attracted new customers, particularly through social media promotion, thereby expanding market reach. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including limited technological literacy among employees and the reluctance of some long-standing customers to adopt the new system. Enhancing employee capacity through training and developing a digital inventory management system are deemed effective strategies to address these challenges. These measures are expected to sustainably enhance operational efficiency and reinforce the business's competitive advantage.

In the context of SMEs, digitalization refers to the utilization of digital technologies to manage information, accelerate business processes, and enhance service quality (Li et al., 2021). Digitalization encompasses transaction recording applications, non-cash payment systems, social media platforms, and integrated sales data to support decision-making processes. Its implementation allows SMEs to reduce administrative errors and improve operational efficiency consistently (Soto-Acosta et al., 2023). Digital transformation drives changes in work patterns, organizational culture, and consumer interaction. By providing real-time access to data, businesses can better understand demand trends and customer behavior. Digitalization emphasizes structured and adaptive business processes, supporting organized stock management, faster service, and enhanced customer convenience. These capabilities strengthen SMEs' readiness to meet market competition and evolving consumer expectations (Nambisan et al., 2020).

Business innovation involves applying novel ideas that create added value for both the enterprise and its customers through improvements in products, processes, marketing, and organizational structures (Wibowo & Astuti, 2022). Product innovation is reflected in the development of market-oriented variants, process innovation focuses on improving operational efficiency, marketing innovation leverages creative digital strategies to broaden consumer reach (Ibrahim et al., 2024), and organizational innovation enhances internal workflows for more effective operations. SME performance is reflected in increased sales, profitability, and asset growth, serving as key indicators of business success (Haryono & Wati, 2020). The synergy between digitalization and business innovation drives performance improvements by enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, enabling SMEs to adapt to market changes and strengthen long-term competitiveness (Zahra & Covin, 2020).

The findings of this study indicate that digitalization through social media utilization, non-cash payments, and digital transaction recording contributes significantly to operational efficiency and customer convenience at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala. Technology adoption has accelerated transactions, improved administrative order, and enhanced the overall customer experience. These results align with previous studies demonstrating that digital market orientation, digital transformation, and the effective use of information technology improve efficiency, productivity, and SME performance across various business sectors (Li et al., 2021; Kian et al., 2020; Soto-Acosta et al., 2023; Ikhlaszul & Satria, 2023; Mendrofa et al., 2023).

This study's qualitative approach provides a deeper understanding of digitalization implementation at the daily operational level. Unlike previous research, which often relied on quantitative methods across broader regions or sectors, this exploratory qualitative study employs a single-case design within the food SME sector in Bali. This methodology allows for in-depth examination of adaptation processes, entrepreneurial experiences, and contextual challenges in digitalization, offering rich insights into the operational realities of SME transformation.

Business innovation implemented through product diversification, process innovation, and marketing innovation strategies has contributed significantly to enhancing product appeal and customer convenience. Product diversification, including chicken fillets, marinated chicken, and hamper packages, has expanded consumer choices, while process innovations such as the use of digital scales and the planned implementation of feather-plucking and automatic cutting machines

have improved operational efficiency. Marketing innovations leveraging social media content have broadened market reach and strengthened customer relationships. These findings align with previous studies, which concluded that product, process, and marketing strategy innovations positively influence competitive advantage and overall SME performance (Wibowo & Astuti, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Falentina et al., 2022; Haryono & Wati, 2020). This study, however, distinguishes itself by emphasizing the lived experiences of entrepreneurs and observable changes in business operations, thereby providing a clearer depiction of how innovations emerge and are applied within a family business context.

Improvements in SME performance were observed through increased sales volume, acquisition of new customers via social media channels, and perceived operational efficiency reported by owners, managers, and employees following the implementation of digitalization and business innovations. These results corroborate prior research indicating that digitalization, innovation, and entrepreneurial orientation positively influence business performance and SME growth. Nonetheless, performance enhancement occurred gradually, largely due to limited technological literacy among staff, resistance from long-standing customers to adopt new systems, and infrastructural constraints factors that have been underexplored in previous quantitative studies (Ratna et al., 2024; Haryono & Wari, 2020; Ikhlaszul & Satria, 2023).

The distinctiveness of this study lies in its qualitative exploratory approach to examining digitalization and business innovation. While prior research predominantly relied on quantitative methods, including questionnaires and statistical analyses to test the relationships among digitalization, innovation, and business performance (Li et al., 2021; Ratnawati et al., 2024; Haryono & Wati, 2020; Falentina et al., 2022; Mendrofa et al., 2023), this study employs observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to provide an in-depth understanding of entrepreneurial experiences, adaptation processes, and the operational dynamics of digitalization implementation in Bali's food SME sector. Collectively, the findings confirm that digitalization and business innovation play a pivotal role in enhancing SME performance. Furthermore, this research complements previous studies by offering qualitative insights into digital transformation and innovation processes in small-scale food processing and distribution enterprises. Successful implementation of digitalization and business innovation depends not only on technology availability but also on human resource readiness, owner support, and the capacity to manage changes in organizational culture and local customer preferences.

CONCLUSIONS

The Implementation of Digitalization and Business Innovation on SME Performance at Gudang Ayam Potong Bu Haji Mala indicates that the business transformation process has been steadily progressing through the adoption of technological solutions and the renewal of business strategies tailored to operational needs. Digitalization has been integrated through the utilization of social media as a promotional channel, non-cash payment systems such as bank transfers and QRIS, and digital-based transaction recording and internal communication. Meanwhile, business innovation has been applied across product, process, marketing, and organizational dimensions, including initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and establish a clearer division of roles between the owner and the younger generation. These combined efforts have positively influenced SME performance, both financially evidenced by increasing sales and revenue trends and non-financially, reflected in expanded market reach, improved operational efficiency, and more favorable customer perceptions. Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly regarding limited human and technological resources and the adaptation of long-standing customers to the new systems.

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