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Entrepreneurial Competence and Digital Literacy in Enhancing Sales Performance: The Moderating Role of Digital Literacy

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of entrepreneurial competence on sales performance, the influence of digital literacy on sales performance, and the role of digital literacy as a moderation variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. The research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire to 113 sales supervisors at consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region. Respondents were selected because they had responsibilities in managing the sales team, monitoring sales performance, and utilizing digital-based sales and reporting systems. The measurement was carried out using a five-point Likert scale, while the data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS. The results of the study show that digital literacy has a positive but not significant influence on sales performance. These findings show that digital capabilities have not been directly able to improve sales performance. On the other hand, entrepreneurial competence has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on sales performance, which shows that the ability to recognize opportunities, think strategically, and build business relationships plays an important role in improving sales performance. This study also found that digital literacy plays a significant role as a moderation variable in strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. These findings confirm that entrepreneurial competence will result in higher sales performance if supported by an adequate level of digital literacy. This research provides the implication that companies need to develop entrepreneurial competencies and digital capabilities of salespeople simultaneously to improve the effectiveness of sales performance in an increasingly digitized business environment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Competence, Digital Literacy, Sales Performance, Sales Supervisor

1. Introduction

Increasingly intense business competition requires organizations to continuously improve sales performance as a key indicator of company success [1]. Sales performance is influenced not only by the company's marketing strategy, but also by the competencies of individuals directly involved in sales activities [2, 3]. One of the competencies that is getting more and more attention in the management and entrepreneurship literature is entrepreneurial competence. Entrepreneurial competence describes individual abilities that include knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the ability to identify opportunities and manage resources to achieve business goals [4, 5]. This competency allows salespeople to be more proactive in finding market opportunities, developing innovative sales strategies, and increasing the effectiveness of interactions with customers [6, 7].

The development of digital technology has also changed the way organizations carry out business activities, including in the field of sales and distribution. Digitalization allows companies to utilize information systems, sales applications, and digital platforms to monitor sales activities more accurately and efficiently. This condition makes digital literacy an increasingly important competency for salespeople. Digital literacy reflects an individual's ability to understand, use, and utilize digital technology to support work activities and decision-making [8]. In modern organizations, the combination of entrepreneurial competence and digital literacy is believed to improve the ability of salespeople to take advantage of market opportunities and improve the company's sales performance.

Entrepreneurial competence has an important role in improving individual and organizational performance. This competency reflects an individual's ability to recognize business opportunities, build networks, make strategic decisions, and develop innovations in business activities [9]. In the context of sales, entrepreneurial competence

allows salespeople to be more adaptive to market changes and customer needs. Previous research has shown that individuals with high levels of entrepreneurial competence tend to have better business performance because they are able to effectively utilize market opportunities and develop innovative marketing strategies [10]. This shows that entrepreneurial competence can be an important factor in improving sales performance in an organization.

In addition to entrepreneurial competence, digital literacy is also an increasingly important factor in improving sales performance in the era of digital transformation. Digital literacy allows individuals to understand the use of digital technology, manage technology-based information, and utilize various digital platforms to support business activities. Research shows that digital literacy can increase the effectiveness of the use of technology in marketing activities, customer communication, and sales data management [8]. Digital literacy also allows organizations to increase competitiveness through the use of digital technology in business processes. Thus, digital literacy not only improves operational efficiency but also contributes to improved sales performance in organizations [11].

Research on entrepreneurial competence has been widely conducted in various business contexts, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises. Most studies show that entrepreneurial competence has a positive influence on business performance and business growth [12]. Several studies also place entrepreneurial competence as a mediator between various factors such as entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, and networking on company performance [13]. The findings show that entrepreneurial competence has an important role in improving organizational performance, including in the sales aspect.

However, research that specifically examines the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance in the context of organizations that have adopted digital technology is still relatively limited. Most research places more emphasis on business performance in general without specifically analyzing sales performance [14-16]. In addition, previous research has not examined much of how an individual's digital skills can affect the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. This condition shows that there is a theoretical gap regarding the role of digital literacy in strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance in modern organizations that are increasingly digitized.

Entrepreneurial competence allows individuals to identify market opportunities, develop innovative sales strategies, and build strong relationships with customers. This competency includes the ability to think strategically, build networks, and make the right decisions in dealing with market dynamics [17]. Individuals who have high entrepreneurial competence tend to be more proactive in looking for business opportunities and are able to adjust sales strategies according to changing customer needs. Therefore, entrepreneurial competence is believed to have a positive influence on improving sales performance in the organization.

In an increasingly digitized business environment, the use of entrepreneurial competence is also greatly influenced by the level of individual digital literacy [18]. Digital literacy allows salespeople to utilize digital technologies such as application-based sales systems, digital communication platforms, and sales reporting systems effectively [19]. Individuals who have high digital literacy are able to optimize the use of digital technology to support sales activities and data-driven decision-making. Thus, digital literacy can strengthen the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance because digital skills help individuals to implement entrepreneurial competencies more effectively in sales activities.

This research was conducted on consumer goods distribution companies operating in the Sulawesi region. The company distributes a variety of packaged food and beverage products to various distribution channels such as traditional stores, convenience stores, and supermarkets. The company's distribution activities have utilized digital systems in the sales process and sales performance reporting. The digital system is used to monitor sales activities, manage customer data, and evaluate the achievement of sales targets in real-time. The respondents in this study are sales supervisors who work in consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region. Sales supervisors have responsibilities in managing the sales team, monitoring the achievement of sales targets, and ensuring the implementation of digital-based sales systems runs effectively. This position was chosen because sales supervisors have an important role in integrating entrepreneurial competencies and the use of digital technology in the company's sales activities.

This study aims to analyze the influence of entrepreneurial competence on sales performance, analyze the influence of digital literacy on sales performance, and test the role of digital literacy as a moderation variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. Thus, this study is expected to provide a

more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect sales performance in organizations that have adopted digital technology. The contribution of this research is expected to enrich the literature in the field of human resource management and marketing, especially related to the integration between entrepreneurial competencies and digital literacy in improving sales performance. In addition, this research also provides practical implications for distribution companies in developing the competence of salespeople and increasing the use of digital technology to support the achievement of organizational sales targets

2. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to test the influence of entrepreneurial competence on sales performance, the influence of digital literacy on sales performance, and the role of digital literacy as a moderation variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. The research data was collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed to respondents who met the research criteria. The respondents in this study were 113 sales supervisors who worked in consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region. The company distributes a wide range of packaged food and beverage products and uses a digital-based sales and reporting system in its distribution activities. Respondents were selected because they have responsibilities in managing sales teams, monitoring sales performance, and utilizing digital technology in the sales distribution and reporting process.

The data measurement in this study uses a five-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, to capture respondents' perceptions of the research variables. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software because this method is suitable for testing causal relationships between latent variables as well as predictive research models. The analysis process is carried out through the evaluation of measurement models (outer models) and structural models (inner models). To test the effect of moderation, this study builds an interaction construct between entrepreneurial competence and digital literacy in the PLS model to find out whether digital literacy can strengthen or weaken the influence of entrepreneurial competence on sales performance.

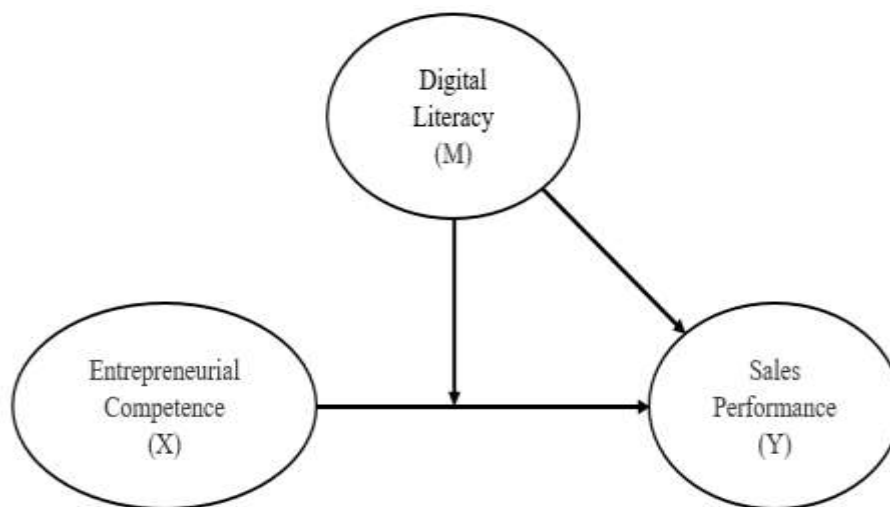


Figure. Conceptual framework

3. Results and Discussions

The characteristics of the respondents in this study consisted of 113 sales supervisors who worked in consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region. The distribution of respondents was explained based on several demographic categories such as gender, age, education level, work experience, and marital status. Most of the respondents were men as many as 78 people (69.03%), while women as many as 35 people (30.97%). Based on age group, the majority of respondents were in the age range of 30–40 years old as many as 56 people (49.56%),

followed by respondents under 30 years old as many as 31 people (27.43%), and respondents over 40 years old as many as 26 people (23.01%). Judging from the level of education, most of the respondents had a bachelor's degree (S1) of 72 people (63.72%), followed by a diploma of 21 people (18.58%), and high school as many as 20 people (17.70%). Based on work experience, the majority of respondents had 5-10 years of work experience as many as 64 people (56.64%), followed by respondents with less than 5 years of work experience as many as 28 people (24.78%), and respondents with more than 10 years of work experience as many as 21 people (18.58%). In addition, most of the respondents were married as many as 85 people (75.22%), while the other 28 people (24.78%) were unmarried. This characteristic shows that the respondent is a salesperson who has experience and an important role in managing sales activities and utilizing digital technology in the distribution process and sales reporting at consumer goods distribution companies.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Digital Literacy	M.1	0,929	0,938	0,944	0,843
	M.2	0,897			
	M.3	0,926			
	M.4	0,920			
Entrepreneurial Competence	X.1	0,945	0,946	0,947	0,861
	X.2	0,929			
	X.3	0,903			
	X.4	0,935			
Sales Performance	Y.1	0,937	0,962	0,962	0,867
	Y.2	0,925			
	Y.3	0,907			
	Y.4	0,945			
	Y.5	0,941			

Based on the results of the validity and reliability test in Table 1, all constructs in this study were declared to meet good measurement criteria. This can be seen from the loading factor value of each item which is entirely above 0.70, namely in the Digital Literacy variable ranging from 0.897 to 0.929, in the Entrepreneurial Competence variable ranging from 0.903 to 0.945, and in the Sales Performance variable ranging from 0.907 to 0.945. This value indicates that all indicators are able to reflect the measured construct strongly, so that it can be declared valid convergently. In terms of reliability, all variables also showed an excellent level of internal consistency, which was shown by Cronbach's alpha values of 0.938 for Digital Literacy, 0.946 for Entrepreneurial Competence, and 0.962 for Sales Performance, respectively, all of which had exceeded the minimum limit of 0.70. Similar results were also seen in the Composite Reliability values of 0.944, 0.947, and 0.962, respectively, thus confirming that the research instrument has very high reliability. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for the three variables was also above 0.50, namely 0.843 for Digital Literacy, 0.861 for Entrepreneurial Competence, and 0.867 for Sales Performance, which shows that each construct is able to explain the variant of the indicator very well. Thus, it can be concluded that all items in the Digital Literacy, Entrepreneurial Competence, and Sales Performance variables have met the requirements for validity and reliability, making them suitable for further analysis.

Table 2. Discriminant validity test

	1	2	3
Digital Literacy	0,918		
Entrepreneurial Competence	0,375	0,928	
Sales Performance	0,361	0,755	0,931

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell–Larcker criteria in Table 2, all constructs in this study show a good level of discriminant validity. This is shown by the square root value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) on each larger variable compared to the correlation value between other constructs. The Digital Literacy variable has a value of 0.918, which is higher than its correlation with the variables Entrepreneurial

Competence (0.375) and Sales Performance (0.361). Furthermore, the Entrepreneurial Competence variable has a value of 0.928, which is also higher than its correlation with the variables Digital Literacy (0.375) and Sales Performance (0.755). Similarly, in the Sales Performance variable, the root value of AVE was 0.931 higher than the correlation with the variables Digital Literacy (0.361) and Entrepreneurial Competence (0.755). These results show that each construct has a good ability to differentiate itself from other constructs in the research model. Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement model in this study has met the criteria of discriminant validity based on the Fornell–Larcker approach, so that the construct used in the study is declared valid and feasible to be used at the next stage of analysis.

Table 4. R-squared

	R-square
Sales Performance	0,704

Based on the results of the R-square test in Table 4, an R-square value of 0.704 was obtained on the Sales Performance variable. This value shows that the variables Entrepreneurial Competence and Digital Literacy, including the moderation effect tested in the model, are able to explain 70.4% variation in Sales Performance. Meanwhile, the remaining 29.6% were explained by factors outside the research model that were not analyzed in this study. The R-square value of 0.704 can be categorized as strong, which indicates that the research model has good explanatory ability in predicting sales performance. Thus, it can be concluded that the combination of entrepreneurial competence and digital literacy variables has a significant contribution in explaining the variation in sales performance in sales supervisors in consumer goods distribution companies.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

	Original sample	P values
Digital Literacy -> Sales Performance	0,095	0,072
Entrepreneurial Competence -> Sales Performance	0,293	0,012
Digital Literacy x Entrepreneurial Competence -> Sales Performance	0,146	0,004

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in Table 5, Digital Literacy has a positive effect on Sales Performance, as shown by the path coefficient value of 0.095. This coefficient indicates that the relationship between Digital Literacy and Sales Performance moves in a positive direction. In other words, an increase in Digital Literacy is followed by a tendency for Sales Performance to increase. However, the p-value obtained is 0.072, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This means that the effect of Digital Literacy on Sales Performance is not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Digital Literacy has a significant effect on Sales Performance is not supported in this study.

The result indicates that although Digital Literacy shows a positive direction, its direct contribution to Sales Performance is not strong enough to be considered significant. The coefficient value of 0.095 also shows that the effect is relatively low. Thus, in the context of this study, Digital Literacy cannot be concluded as a variable that directly determines Sales Performance. The finding only shows that there is a positive tendency between the two variables, but the relationship is not significant based on the p-value.

Furthermore, Entrepreneurial Competence has a positive and significant effect on Sales Performance. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.293 and a p-value of 0.012. The positive coefficient indicates that Entrepreneurial Competence has a positive relationship with Sales Performance. This means that the higher the Entrepreneurial Competence, the higher the Sales Performance tends to be. Since the p-value of 0.012 is lower than the significance level of 0.05, the effect is statistically significant.

Based on these results, the hypothesis stating that Entrepreneurial Competence has a significant effect on Sales Performance is supported. The coefficient value of 0.293 shows that Entrepreneurial Competence has a stronger direct effect on Sales Performance compared to Digital Literacy. Therefore, among the direct effects tested in this study, Entrepreneurial Competence is proven to have a more meaningful influence on Sales Performance. This finding confirms that Entrepreneurial Competence is an important variable in explaining changes in Sales Performance.

The results also show that Digital Literacy plays a significant role as a moderating variable in the relationship between Entrepreneurial Competence and Sales Performance. This can be seen from the interaction coefficient value of 0.146 with a p-value of 0.004. The positive coefficient indicates that Digital Literacy strengthens the relationship between Entrepreneurial Competence and Sales Performance. Meanwhile, the p-value of 0.004 is lower than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the moderating effect is statistically significant.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Digital Literacy moderates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Competence and Sales Performance is supported. This result means that the influence of Entrepreneurial Competence on Sales Performance becomes stronger when Digital Literacy is higher. In other words, Digital Literacy does not only function as an independent variable, but also acts as a variable that strengthens the effect of Entrepreneurial Competence on Sales Performance.

The interaction coefficient value of 0.146 indicates that the moderating effect of Digital Literacy is positive. This means that when sales supervisors have higher Digital Literacy, the positive effect of Entrepreneurial Competence on Sales Performance will increase. Conversely, when Digital Literacy is lower, the effect of Entrepreneurial Competence on Sales Performance may not be as strong. Therefore, Digital Literacy has an important role in enhancing the relationship between Entrepreneurial Competence and Sales Performance.

Overall, the hypothesis testing results show three main findings. First, Digital Literacy has a positive but insignificant direct effect on Sales Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.095 and a p-value of 0.072. Second, Entrepreneurial Competence has a positive and significant effect on Sales Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.293 and a p-value of 0.012. Third, Digital Literacy significantly moderates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Competence and Sales Performance, with an interaction coefficient of 0.146 and a p-value of 0.004.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that not all direct relationships tested in this study are significant. Digital Literacy does not have a significant direct effect on Sales Performance, while Entrepreneurial Competence has a significant direct effect. In addition, Digital Literacy is proven to have a significant role as a moderating variable. Thus, the results of this study support the hypotheses related to the effect of Entrepreneurial Competence on Sales Performance and the moderating role of Digital Literacy, but do not support the hypothesis related to the direct effect of Digital Literacy on Sales Performance..

Discussions

The results of the study show that digital literacy does not have a significant direct influence on sales performance. These findings suggest that an individual's ability to use and understand digital technology does not necessarily directly improve sales performance. In some organizational contexts, digital literacy plays more of a supporting role as a supporting ability that helps salespeople carry out work activities, but is not the main factor that determines sales achievement [11].

Previous research has also shown that digital literacy often plays a role through indirect mechanisms, such as through increasing the ability to access information, using digital platforms, and utilizing technology in marketing strategies [8]. Thus, while digital literacy is important in the modern business environment, its influence on sales performance often depends on other supporting factors, such as marketing strategy, product quality, customer relationship management, and salespeople's interpersonal abilities. Digital literacy enables individuals to access information, use digital tools, communicate through online platforms, and process sales-related data more effectively. However, these abilities may not directly improve sales performance when they are not supported by clear marketing strategies, competitive products, and strong communication skills in dealing with customers. In sales activities, performance is not only determined by the ability to use technology, but also by how salespeople apply that technology to support selling processes, understand customer needs, build trust, and create value for customers. Therefore, digital literacy can be seen as an important supporting capability rather than a single factor that directly determines sales performance.

Digital literacy can also be positioned as a supporting competency within a broader organizational capability. Its impact on sales performance tends to be stronger when it is supported by other abilities, such as marketing skills, financial capabilities, entrepreneurial competence, and product quality. Therefore, digital literacy may contribute more effectively to sales performance when it is integrated with other individual and organizational capabilities.

In this context, digital literacy supports and strengthens the sales process, while the final achievement of sales performance still depends on the interaction of several related factors [8]. This shows that digital literacy alone is not always enough to directly improve sales performance. In the context of consumer goods distribution companies, sales activities are still strongly influenced by direct interaction with customers, the experience of salespeople, and the ability to build and maintain business relationships. Although digital literacy can help employees use digital tools, access information, and carry out administrative or communication tasks more efficiently, these abilities may not automatically lead to higher sales outcomes. Sales performance is often more closely related to how salespeople communicate with customers, understand customer needs, respond to market conditions, and maintain long-term cooperation with business partners. Therefore, digital literacy can support the sales process, but its influence on sales performance may be limited when it is not accompanied by other relevant competencies. In other words, digital literacy may function more as a supporting factor that helps improve work efficiency rather than as the main factor that directly determines sales achievement.

In contrast to digital literacy, the results of the study show that entrepreneurial competence has a positive influence on sales performance. These findings indicate that the entrepreneurial competencies possessed by sales supervisors play an important role in improving sales performance. Entrepreneurial competence includes various abilities, such as the ability to recognize market opportunities, think strategically, build business networks, solve problems, and make appropriate decisions in dynamic situations. Sales supervisors with strong entrepreneurial competence tend to be more proactive in identifying potential customers, responding to changes in market demand, and developing strategies to achieve sales targets [17]. They are also more capable of seeing business opportunities, adjusting sales approaches, and guiding their teams to work more effectively. Therefore, entrepreneurial competence can provide a more direct contribution to sales performance because it is closely related to the ability to take initiative, manage opportunities, and make decisions that support sales growth. This result also shows that entrepreneurial competence is an important capability for sales supervisors in distribution companies. In a competitive market environment, sales supervisors are required not only to carry out routine sales activities, but also to think creatively and strategically in facing market challenges. The ability to identify customer needs, understand market trends, and create effective sales approaches can help improve sales performance. Entrepreneurial competence also supports supervisors in building stronger relationships with customers and business partners, which can contribute to better sales results. Thus, the positive influence of entrepreneurial competence on sales performance shows that supervisors who have stronger entrepreneurial abilities are more likely to achieve better sales outcomes [17]. These competencies allow salespeople to be more proactive in finding new market opportunities, developing innovative sales strategies, and increasing the effectiveness of interactions with customers.

These findings are in line with previous studies that show that entrepreneurial competence is an important factor in improving business performance and sales growth. Research conducted in various business sectors shows that individuals who have high entrepreneurial competence tend to be able to improve organizational performance, including in the sales aspect [13]. Entrepreneurial competence allows individuals to transform their knowledge and resources into effective business strategies that can result in increased sales performance. In addition, other research also shows that entrepreneurial competence can improve an organization's ability to respond to market changes and take advantage of emerging business opportunities [12].

The results of this study also show that digital literacy plays a role as a moderation variable that strengthens the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. These findings are supported by several studies that show that digital literacy can strengthen individuals' ability to take advantage of business opportunities in an increasingly digitized environment [20]. Digital literacy allows individuals to utilize various digital technologies such as e-commerce, online marketing platforms, and sales information systems to increase the effectiveness of business strategies [19]. Thus, the combination of entrepreneurial competence and digital literacy can create synergies that improve the ability of individuals to identify market opportunities and implement more effective sales strategies. This shows that in an increasingly digital business environment, the development of entrepreneurial competencies needs to be balanced with increasing digital literacy in order to be able to produce more optimal sales performance.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that entrepreneurial competence has an important role in improving sales performance in sales supervisors of consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region, while digital literacy has not been proven to have a significant direct influence on sales performance, but it has been proven to be able to strengthen the relationship between entrepreneurial competence and sales performance. These findings confirm that

entrepreneurial skills such as recognizing opportunities, thinking strategically, and making the right decisions are the main factors in encouraging improvement in sales performance, and the impact will be more optimal if supported by good digital literacy skills in utilizing digital-based sales and reporting systems. In practical terms, the results of this study emphasize the importance of companies not only improving the entrepreneurial competence of salespeople, but also strengthening their digital capabilities through continuous training so that sales strategies can be executed more effectively in an increasingly digitized business environment. However, this study still has limitations, especially because it uses data based on respondent perception, is conducted with a cross-sectional design, and only focuses on one context of consumer goods distribution companies in the Sulawesi region, so the results cannot be fully generalized to other sectors or regions. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a longitudinal approach, expand the scope of research objects in different sectors and regions, and add other relevant variables such as market orientation, leadership, innovation capability, or customer relationship management in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect sales performance in organizations that utilize digital technology.

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