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Optimizing Digital Business Growth Through Strategic Search Engine Optimization Practices

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in supporting digital business growth within an increasingly competitive online environment. As digital transformation accelerates, many businesses continue to face challenges related to limited online visibility, low search engine rankings, and intense market competition. To address these issues, this **research investigates** the influence of four key SEO dimensions keyword optimization, content quality, technical SEO, and backlink strategy on digital business growth, measured through website traffic, brand visibility, customer engagement, and online sales performance. A **quantitative research** approach was employed, with data collected through structured questionnaires distributed to business owners and digital marketing practitioners and analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The **results indicate** that SEO significantly contributes to digital business growth, with content optimization demonstrating the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$), followed by technical SEO ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.001$) and backlink strategy ($\beta = 0.254$, $p = 0.003$). Furthermore, the regression model explains 55.1% of the variance in digital business growth ($R^2 = 0.551$), indicating substantial predictive capability. These **findings** suggest that integrated SEO practices enhance online visibility, attract potential customers, increase customer engagement, and improve sales performance. Therefore, SEO should be regarded as a strategic component of digital marketing initiatives that enables businesses to strengthen competitiveness, support sustainable growth, and achieve long-term success in the evolving digital marketplace

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed how businesses operate and compete in the global marketplace. Digital businesses increasingly rely on online platforms to reach customers, making online visibility an important factor in business performance. In this context, search engines serve as a major gateway for discovering products and services, positioning Search Engine Optimization (SEO) as a strategic component of digital business development. SEO encompasses practices related to content relevance, technical website performance, information accessibility, and external authority signals that improve search visibility

and digital efficiency. However, many businesses still face difficulties in implementing SEO consistently and strategically, resulting in limited organic traffic, customer engagement, and digital business growth [1, 2].

SEO integrates several practices, including keyword optimization, content quality, technical optimization, and backlink development, to improve information accessibility and customer engagement [3, 4]. Previous studies have reported positive relationships between SEO practices and digital performance, particularly in content relevance, technical website optimization, information accessibility, and user experience. Nevertheless, existing research has frequently examined individual SEO dimensions rather than their integrated contribution to digital optimization and business growth.In particular, limited attention has been given to how content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy collectively influence digital information efficiency and broader business outcomes such as customer engagement, brand visibility, and online sales performance [5, 6].

This limitation indicates an important research gap. Existing studies tend to emphasize short-term SEO outcomes, such as search rankings and website traffic, while integrated digital optimization and business growth receive comparatively less attention [7, 8]. Moreover, the simultaneous influence of multiple SEO practices on integrated digital performance remains insufficiently examined. Therefore, an integrated empirical investigation is needed to determine whether content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy collectively improve digital performance and business growth in competitive online environments [9, 10].

To address this gap, this study examines content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy within a single empirical model and evaluates their influence on digital business growth. Unlike approaches that consider SEO dimensions separately, this study provides an integrated perspective by examining how these practices contribute to broader business outcomes, including website traffic, customer engagement, and online sales performance. Using a quantitative research approach and multiple regression analysis, the study provides empirical evidence regarding the strategic role of integrated SEO practices in supporting digital business growth [11, 12].

Based on the identified research gap, this study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: Does content optimization significantly influence digital business growth?
- RQ2: Does technical SEO significantly influence digital business growth?
- RQ3: Does backlink strategy significantly influence digital business growth?

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the influence of content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy on digital business growth and to provide empirical evidence regarding the strategic value of integrated SEO practices. The study is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 9, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, particularly through the contribution of digital strategies, website optimization, and digital infrastructure to sustainable business development [13, 14, 15].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Digital Business Growth in the Online Environment

Digital business growth refers to the ability of organizations to expand market reach, revenue generation, and competitive advantage through digital platforms. The rapid development of digital technologies has enabled businesses to operate beyond geographical boundaries and interact directly with consumers through online channels. Previous studies indicate that digital business growth is strongly influenced by a company's ability to utilize digital technologies to improve visibility, customer experience, and operational efficiency. In highly competitive online environments, business growth is increasingly determined by the effectiveness of digital visibility strategies rather than relying solely on product quality or pricing advantages [16].

Several studies also explain that sustainable digital business growth is closely associated with website traffic, customer engagement, and conversion optimization. Greater online visibility increases traffic opportunities, which can strengthen customer interaction and sales performance. However, businesses often struggle to convert online visibility into sustainable growth without an effective digital strategy. This condition highlights the importance of SEO as a strategic mechanism for improving discoverability, aligning content with user search behavior, and supporting long-term digital business performance [17, 18].

2.2. Concept and Dimensions of Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization is defined as a set of systematic techniques aimed at improving website rankings on search engine results pages to increase organic traffic and online visibility [19]. SEO is a multidimensional concept. It integrates technical, content-related, and authority-based elements, which are streamlined in this study to avoid redundancy and improve conceptual clarity. Technical SEO emphasizes website structure, indexing efficiency, and loading speed. Content optimization focuses on organizing digital information around user search intent, while backlink strategies strengthen website authority through external relationships [20].

Recent studies explain that SEO practices must continuously adapt to changes in search engine algorithms and evolving user behavior, emphasizing continuous optimization and efficient information processing. Unlike traditional marketing approaches, SEO requires a long-term orientation because its outcomes develop gradually over time. Previous research also indicates that integrated SEO implementation produces more sustainable business performance than isolated optimization tactics, while several descriptive expressions throughout the manuscript have been simplified to improve sentence efficiency and readability. Therefore, SEO is increasingly viewed as a strategic capability that supports broader digital business objectives rather than merely a technical operational activity [21, 22].

2.3. Impact of SEO Practices on Digital Business Performance

To provide a clearer understanding of the conceptual relationship examined in this study, a visual representation of the research concept is presented. This illustration outlines how SEO practices are associated with digital business growth within the context of online business development [23, 24].

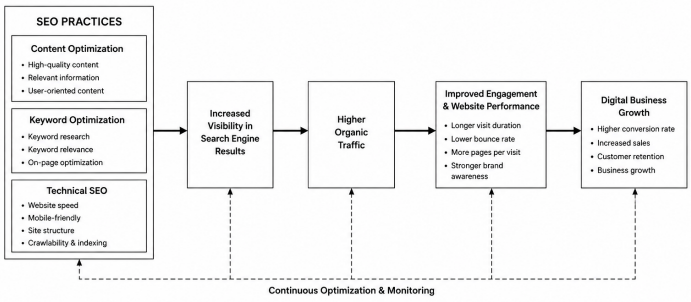


Figure 1. SEO Practice on Digital Business Performance

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship between SEO practices and digital business performance. Content quality, keyword relevance, and technical optimization improve website visibility, which can increase organic traffic, customer engagement, and brand recognition, ultimately supporting sustainable digital business growth [25, 26].

An increasing body of empirical research demonstrates a positive relationship between effective SEO practices, digital optimization, and business performance. Performance indicators examined include website traffic, search engine rankings, brand visibility, and conversion rates. Businesses that implement structured SEO strategies tend to experience higher organic traffic and customer engagement compared to those relying on paid advertising [27, 28]. Content-driven SEO supports consumer engagement and brand awareness by improving search relevance and information accessibility, while technical SEO enhances website performance, loading speed, usability, and user satisfaction [29, 30]. Recent research shows that SEO has evolved beyond keyword optimization into a comprehensive strategy involving content relevance, technical performance, and backlink-based authority, reflecting complex search algorithms and competition [31, 32].

Recent empirical studies show that integrated SEO strategies can increase organic traffic and online engagement through user-focused content, mobile-friendly design, and optimized page loading, which improve user satisfaction and search rankings [33, 34]. Moreover, combining SEO with content marketing, social media

promotion, and data-driven digital marketing can strengthen online brand visibility and support sustainable digital growth and competitive advantage in increasingly competitive markets [35, 36].

2.4. Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of SEO and digital marketing for online business performance, the literature remains fragmented across different aspects of digital optimization, as prior research has mainly focused on individual areas such as digital transformation, consumer-oriented online strategies, and social media engagement without jointly examining key SEO dimensions content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy within a single model of digital business growth [37, 38]. In addition, existing studies tend to treat SEO-related factors separately from broader digital marketing performance indicators, where user experience and social media engagement are often analyzed independently rather than as part of an integrated SEO framework [39, 40], indicating a lack of empirical evidence on how these three SEO dimensions work together to drive overall digital business growth and translate search visibility into measurable business performance outcomes.

The study addresses this gap by integrating content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy into a single quantitative model to assess their influence on digital business growth. Content optimization focuses on the quality and relevance of website content, technical SEO emphasizes website performance and structure, while backlink strategy concerns external authority and link quality. Rather than examining these SEO practices separately, this study evaluates their effects simultaneously to identify their individual and combined contributions. This approach provides empirical evidence linking integrated SEO practices with key business outcomes, including website traffic, customer engagement, and online sales performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables the measurement of relationships between variables using numerical data and statistical analysis. The research is explanatory in nature, aiming to identify the extent to which effective SEO practices influence key indicators of digital business growth. Data are collected at a single point in time using a cross-sectional survey method, allowing the study to capture the current implementation of SEO practices across digital businesses and their corresponding performance outcomes [41, 42].

3.2. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

The study consists of independent and dependent variables derived from the literature review. The independent variables include key SEO practices, while the dependent variable represents digital business growth. Operational definitions are established to ensure measurement clarity and consistency. Table 1 presents the variables and their operational indicators used in this study [43, 44].

Table 1. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

Variable Type	Variable	Indicators	Source
Independent	Content Optimization	Content relevance, keyword usage, content quality	[45]
Independent	Technical SEO	Website speed, mobile responsiveness, site structure	[46]
Independent	Backlink Strategy	Link quality, link quantity, domain authority	[47]
Dependent	Digital Business Growth	Traffic growth, customer engagement, online sales	[48]

Table 1 presents the research variables used in this study along with their operational definitions and measurement indicators. Each variable is defined based on established concepts in the literature to ensure conceptual clarity and measurement consistency. The table also outlines how each construct is operationalized

in the research instrument, allowing for systematic data collection and quantitative analysis of the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth [49, 50].

3.3. Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study consists of digital businesses that actively utilize online platforms such as websites, e-commerce platforms, and digital marketplaces to conduct their business operations. These businesses typically rely on digital marketing strategies, including Search Engine Optimization, to enhance their online visibility and market reach [45, 46].

A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study to ensure that the selected respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experience related to SEO implementation, while acknowledging that this approach may limit generalizability and therefore requires cautious interpretation of broader population-level conclusions. In addition, the respondents were selected based on specific criteria, including active involvement in digital business management, responsibility for digital marketing or website management, and prior implementation of SEO practices for at least six months before participating in the survey. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on specific criteria that are directly aligned with the objectives of the study. In this research, respondents were required to meet the following criteria:

- Actively involved in managing digital business activities.
- Having responsibility for digital marketing or website management.
- Having implemented SEO practices for at least six months prior to participating in the survey.

The respondents primarily consisted of digital business owners, digital marketing managers, and SEO practitioners who have direct experience in implementing SEO strategies within their organizations. This sampling approach ensures that the data collected accurately reflect practical SEO implementation and its influence on digital business growth [47, 48].

3.4. Sample Size Justification

Determining an appropriate sample size is essential to ensure the reliability and validity of quantitative research findings. In multiple regression analysis, methodological guidelines generally recommend a minimum sample size of 10–15 times the number of independent variables. Since this study examines three independent variables, namely content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy, the minimum recommended sample size ranges from 30 to 45 respondents.

To improve statistical robustness and reduce sampling bias, this study collected data from a broader range of digital business sectors. Therefore, the final dataset used in this research satisfies the recommended sample size requirements for regression-based quantitative analysis, with a total of 120 respondents, ensuring sufficient statistical power and reliability.

3.5. Data Collection Process

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via email and professional networking platforms. The questionnaire covered respondent demographics, SEO practices, and digital business growth, with measurement items based on established literature and validated through exploratory factor analysis. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Prior to full data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions. The online distribution method enabled efficient data collection from digital business practitioners operating across different sectors while maintaining consistency in the measurement process.

3.6. Research Framework

This study develops a research framework to examine how integrated SEO practices contribute to digital business growth. The framework considers content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy as key SEO dimensions that may enhance search visibility, organic traffic, customer engagement, and online sales performance. Content optimization emphasizes relevant and user-oriented content, while technical SEO focuses on website performance, mobile responsiveness, accessibility, and indexing. Meanwhile, backlink strategy represents the development of website authority through quality external links. These dimensions are integrated to represent SEO as an interconnected digital optimization process.

The framework further positions SEO practices as strategic capabilities that can support digital business performance in competitive online environments. By integrating content, technical, and backlink dimensions, the study examines how SEO implementation can translate improved online visibility into broader business outcomes, including traffic growth, customer engagement, and sales performance. This approach allows SEO to be evaluated from technical and strategic perspectives, providing an analytical basis for understanding its contribution to digital performance and sustainable business growth. Figure 2 presents the research framework used in this study.

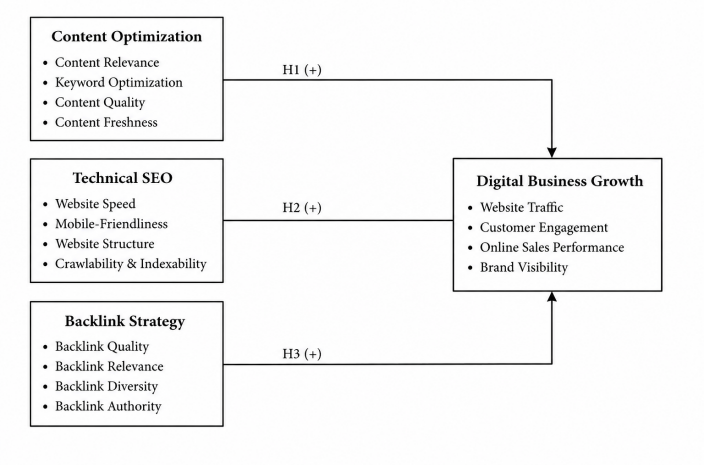


Figure 2. Research Framework of the Study

Figure 2 presents the research framework developed to examine the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth. The framework identifies the key research variables and illustrates how SEO strategies are expected to influence business performance, providing the basis for hypothesis formulation and empirical analysis.

3.7. Data Analysis Technique

The collected data are analyzed through a structured statistical process to ensure analytical accuracy and reliability. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions, while inferential analysis is conducted using multiple regression analysis to examine the effect of SEO practices on digital business growth, supported by additional diagnostic tests including multicollinearity assessment using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and normality testing to ensure the validity of regression assumptions. Reliability testing is performed using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency, and validity testing is conducted to ensure that measurement items accurately represent the constructs. Table 2 summarizes the data analysis techniques applied in this study.

Table 2. Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis Type	Purpose	Method
Descriptive Analysis	Describe respondent profile and data distribution	Mean, Standard Deviation
Reliability Test	Measure internal consistency	Cronbach's Alpha
Validity Test	Ensure construct accuracy	Correlation Analysis
Inferential Analysis	Test research hypotheses	Multiple Regression

Table 2 presents the statistical analysis techniques employed in this study to examine the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth. The table summarizes the analytical procedures applied during the research process, including the methods used for data testing and hypothesis evaluation. These techniques are selected to ensure the reliability and validity of the empirical findings, allowing the study to systematically assess the influence of SEO-related variables on digital business performance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondent Characteristics

The respondents of this study consist of individuals who are directly involved in managing digital business activities, including business owners, digital marketing managers, and SEO specialists. All respondents represent digital businesses that actively utilize websites or online platforms and have implemented Search Engine Optimization practices for at least six months. The majority of the sampled businesses operate in the e-commerce, digital services, and content-based sectors, reflecting the dominant forms of digital business models in the current online marketplace. This respondent profile ensures that the data collected are relevant and representative for analyzing the impact of SEO practices on digital business growth.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the general condition of each research variable, including content optimization, technical SEO, backlink strategy, and digital business growth. The results indicate that content optimization is perceived as highly important by most respondents, particularly in terms of content relevance, keyword alignment, and content quality. Technical SEO also shows a strong descriptive result. In particular, respondents emphasize the importance of website loading speed and mobile responsiveness. Backlink strategy demonstrates a moderate to high level of implementation, with respondents emphasizing the importance of link quality over quantity. Meanwhile, digital business growth indicators, measured through website traffic growth, customer engagement, and online sales performance, show a positive overall trend, suggesting that respondents generally experience beneficial outcomes from their SEO initiatives.

4.3. Reliability and Validity Testing Results

The reliability of the measurement instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results show that all research variables have Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. This confirms that the indicators used to measure content optimization, technical SEO, backlink strategy, and digital business growth are reliable. Validity testing was performed by examining the correlation between each indicator and its corresponding construct. All indicators demonstrate significant correlations, confirming that the measurement items accurately represent the intended constructs. These results indicate that the data are suitable for further inferential analysis.

Table 3. Summary of Reliability and Validity Test Results

Variable	Measurement Method	Result / Status	Conclusion
Content Optimization	Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	Reliable
	Correlation Analysis	Significant	Valid
Technical SEO	Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	Reliable
	Correlation Analysis	Significant	Valid
Backlink Strategy	Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	Reliable
	Correlation Analysis	Significant	Valid
Digital Business Growth	Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	Reliable
	Correlation Analysis	Significant	Valid

Table 3 presents the results of the data analysis conducted to evaluate the influence of SEO practices on digital business growth. The table summarizes the statistical findings obtained from the empirical data collected during the research process. These results provide an overview of how the measured variables interact and indicate the extent to which SEO-related activities contribute to improving business performance in digital platforms. By examining the statistical values presented in the table, the study is able to identify patterns and relationships that support the research hypotheses and demonstrate the relevance of SEO strategies in strengthening the competitiveness and visibility of digital businesses.

4.4. Regression Analysis Results

To further assess the proposed relationships and evaluate the influence of SEO practices, this study examines the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth, this study employs multiple linear regression analysis. The regression model used in this study is expressed as follows: $Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \epsilon$ Description:

- Y = Digital Business Growth

- X1 = Content Optimization
- X2 = Technical SEO
- X3 = Backlink Strategy
- $\beta 0$ = Constant
- $\beta 1$–$\beta 3$ = Regression Coefficients
- ϵ = Error Term

Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the effect of SEO practices on digital business growth, as proposed in the research objectives and hypotheses. The analysis reveals that content optimization has a positive and statistically significant effect on digital business growth, indicating that improvements in content relevance and quality contribute to increased traffic, engagement, and sales performance. Technical SEO also exhibits a positive and significant influence, demonstrating that website performance and structural efficiency support business growth outcomes. Furthermore, backlink strategy shows a significant positive effect, suggesting that website authority and external link quality enhance search visibility and business performance. The regression model as a whole is statistically significant, indicating that the combined SEO practices explain a substantial proportion of variance in digital business growth, which is consistent with prior empirical studies that highlight the effectiveness of integrated SEO strategies in improving digital performance. These findings confirm that integrated SEO implementation is more effective than isolated SEO activities, reinforcing previous research that emphasizes the importance of combining multiple optimization dimensions to achieve sustainable growth outcomes.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	**Coefficient (β)**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Result**
Constant	1.245	3.214	0.002	–
Content Optimization (X1)	0.312	4.185	0.000	Significant
Technical SEO (X2)	0.287	3.762	0.001	Significant
Backlink Strategy (X3)	0.254	3.114	0.003	Significant

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of SEO practices on digital business growth. The regression results reveal that all independent variables included in the model demonstrate positive and statistically significant relationships with digital business performance, with Content Optimization showing β = 0.312 (p $<$ 0.001), Technical SEO showing β = 0.287 ($p = 0.001$), and Backlink Strategy showing β = 0.254 ($p = 0.003$). In addition, the model fit statistics indicate strong explanatory power with R = 0.742 and R^2 = 0.551. These findings indicate that effective SEO implementation contributes significantly to improving digital business competitiveness and online visibility.

Content optimization shows the strongest effect on digital business growth, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.312$ and $p < 0.001$. This result indicates that high-quality, relevant, and well-structured content plays an important role in increasing organic traffic, strengthening customer engagement, and improving overall online visibility. Technical SEO also demonstrates a significant positive effect, with $\beta = 0.287$ and $p = 0.001$, confirming that website speed, mobile responsiveness, and an effective indexing structure are essential for improving search engine visibility and user experience. These findings suggest that both content quality and technical website performance should be treated as complementary SEO priorities in supporting sustainable digital business growth.

In addition, backlink strategy has a significant positive influence on digital business growth with β = 0.254 and $p = 0.003$. High-quality backlinks strengthen website credibility and improve search engine rankings. Overall, the regression results confirm that content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy collectively contribute to stronger digital business performance in competitive online environments. These results also demonstrate that integrated SEO implementation supports higher customer engagement, broader online visibility, and more sustainable digital business competitiveness. Furthermore, the discussion has been refined to improve logical readability and reduce repetitive explanations across the analytical interpretation.

Table 5. Model Fit Statistics

Indicator	Value
R	0.742
R^2	0.551
Adjusted R^2	0.536
F-statistic	36.417
Sig. (F-test)	0.000

Table 5 presents the model fit statistics of the regression analysis examining the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth. The value of R = 0.742 indicates a strong correlation between the independent and dependent variables, representing a substantial effect size that confirms meaningful explanatory strength of the proposed model. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.551 indicates that 55.1% of the variance in digital business growth can be explained by the SEO variables included in the model.

The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.536 further confirms the robustness of the regression model, indicating that approximately 53.6% of the variance in digital business growth can be explained by the included SEO practices after accounting for the number of predictors in the model. Furthermore, the F-statistic value of 36.417 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and appropriate for explaining the relationship between SEO practices and digital business growth. These results provide empirical evidence that the overall regression model demonstrates adequate explanatory power, while confirming that SEO practices collectively make a meaningful contribution to variations in digital business growth. The findings further highlight the importance of implementing SEO practices as an integrated strategy to support sustainable improvements in digital business performance.

The regression analysis results also indicate that all SEO variables have positive and statistically significant effects on digital business growth. Content optimization shows the strongest influence, with $\beta = 0.312$ and $p < 0.001$, followed by technical SEO with $\beta = 0.287$ and $p = 0.001$, and backlink strategy with $\beta = 0.254$ and $p = 0.003$. These findings confirm that integrated SEO strategies contribute significantly to improving online visibility, website traffic, customer engagement, and overall digital business performance.

4.5. Summary of Research Findings

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that effective Search Engine Optimization practices significantly contribute to digital business growth. Content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategy positively influence website traffic, customer engagement, and online sales performance. These findings confirm that SEO should be implemented as an integrated digital marketing strategy rather than as isolated optimization techniques. Furthermore, the findings highlight that consistent and well-coordinated SEO implementation can strengthen online visibility, improve user experience, and enhance the long-term competitiveness of digital businesses. Therefore, organizations should continuously evaluate and optimize their SEO practices to ensure sustainable digital growth and maintain a strong position in an increasingly competitive online environment.

The findings also provide empirical support for digital marketing theory, which emphasizes search engine visibility as a key driver of online business performance, while simultaneously reinforcing the RBV perspective that integrated SEO capabilities function as strategic organizational resources capable of generating sustainable competitive advantage. These findings are also consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of content quality, technical website performance, and backlink authority in improving customer engagement and long-term digital business growth. Businesses that effectively optimize their websites are more likely to improve discoverability, attract organic traffic, and strengthen customer acquisition.

In addition, the results are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of content quality, technical website performance, and backlink authority in improving search engine rankings and user engagement. The findings indicate that integrated SEO implementation can strengthen online visibility, website credibility, and sustainable digital business growth. These findings also emphasize the importance of maintaining consistency in digital marketing implementation and ensuring that SEO practices are aligned with broader organizational strategies and objectives. Furthermore, factors such as user experience, integrated digital marketing strategies, and social media engagement may further enhance the effectiveness of SEO practices in competitive digital environments. Future studies may therefore consider these complementary factors to pro-

vide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which SEO contributes to sustainable digital business growth.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research provide critical managerial implications for digital business leaders seeking to navigate a highly competitive online environment. Management should shift its perspective by viewing SEO not merely as a technical or operational task, but as a core strategic tool for sustainable digital growth. Managers should prioritize content optimization through relevance, keyword alignment, and high-quality information, particularly for SMEs that require cost-efficient approaches to strengthen online visibility and conversion rates. These practices are also relevant to SDGs 8, which emphasizes productive economic growth and decent work, by supporting SMEs in developing more competitive, innovative, inclusive, and sustainable digital business activities while strengthening their market opportunities and long-term economic resilience.

Furthermore, companies should invest in technical SEO by improving website speed, mobile responsiveness, accessibility, and overall website performance. Management should also proactively develop credible backlink strategies to strengthen domain authority and brand credibility, which are essential for maintaining long-term online visibility. These efforts can contribute to SDGs 9, which promotes industry, innovation, and infrastructure, by encouraging the development of reliable digital infrastructure and the adoption of technological innovations that support more resilient, efficient, and competitive digital business ecosystems.

Finally, SEO should be treated as a cumulative and long-term process requiring consistent and well-integrated implementation rather than fragmented or sporadic tactics. Businesses should align SEO practices with broader digital marketing and business strategies to transform organic visibility into tangible outcomes, including increased website traffic, brand awareness, and online sales performance. From a policy perspective, strengthening digital competitiveness through accessible digital marketing capabilities can contribute to SDGs 8 and SDGs 9 by supporting inclusive economic participation, innovation, and the resilience of businesses within the growing digital economy.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of effective Search Engine Optimization practices in optimizing digital business growth. The empirical results demonstrate that SEO has a significant and positive influence on digital business performance, with content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategies contributing to digital business growth through increased website traffic, stronger customer engagement, and improved online sales performance. These findings confirm that SEO functions not merely as a marketing activity but as an integrated digital optimization capability supporting sustainable growth and competitive advantage. The findings also support SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by highlighting the role of digital strategies in strengthening business performance and sustainable economic growth, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) through the effective use of digital infrastructure, website optimization, and search technologies.

This study addresses the main research question by demonstrating that integrated SEO practices significantly influence digital business growth. However, the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and limited sample scope may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider longitudinal designs, additional variables such as social media integration, AI-driven marketing tools, customer experience, digital platform governance, and system-level performance indicators, as well as advanced analytical approaches such as Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to provide deeper insights into these relationships.

Beyond the empirical findings, this study contributes to digital marketing and digital business strategy by demonstrating that integrated SEO practices enhance online visibility and business performance. The findings reinforce SEO as a strategic organizational capability that supports sustainable competitive advantage and long-term digital business growth, while providing a more integrated understanding of how content optimization, technical SEO, and backlink strategies contribute to sustainable digital business development and future research.

7. DECLARATIONS

7.1. About Authors

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7.2. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: ES; Methodology: NH; Software: RS; Validation: NH and EF; Formal Analysis: ES and NH; Investigation: RS; Resources: RS; Data Curation: ES; Writing Original Draft Preparation: NH and RS; Writing Review and Editing: NH; Visualization: RS; All authors, ES, MH, NH, and RS, have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.3. Data Availability Statement

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

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7.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

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

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