

# REFRAMING THE 5M FRAMEWORK IN THE DIGITAL ERA THE MEDIATING ROLE OF DIGITAL CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN WOMEN-OWNED TECH ENTERPRISES

Gullalie Anum Khan<sup>1</sup>, Dr Fahad Sultan<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Jehangir<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Director, Benazir Income support Programme

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer at Ulster University, Dept of MGT sciences, United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Department of HRM, IBL, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan

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Corresponding Author: \*

Gullalie Anum Khan

## Abstract

This paper examines how digital confidence and social capital mediate the process of surmounting the hurdles of women in the tech industry as entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, despite the increasing participation of women in technologically based businesses, they are still facing significant structural, family, and market issues. This paper uses the 5M Framework and new variables in the digital form to examine how digital confidence, or the ability to use digital resources efficiently, and social capital, or the networks and ties that entrepreneurs develop, can influence the success of an entrepreneur. With a quantitative approach, 250 women in the tech business were surveyed in an attempt to establish how these factors impacted business performance. These findings prove that the importance of digital confidence and social capital as antecedents of entrepreneurial success is shown, and social capital is the mediator between digital confidence and business growth. These results prove that digital skills and strong ties are key factor in ensuring that women can beat the challenges of the industry to emerge successful in the male-dominated industry.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The role of women entrepreneurship in different industries, especially the technology-oriented sectors, has been on the rise. The accelerated digital revolution has provided new horizons of innovation and business development, providing female entrepreneurs with a platform to break the traditional industry, break the norms of society, and create economic value. As Hanifah and Lun (2024) emphasize, women have become empowered to be in entrepreneurship with the emergence of digital platforms, particularly social media, which have made tools of networking, marketing, and scaling businesses more accessible in markets that were not accessible before. The digital innovations have made entrepreneurship more democratic, and women can

now skip the obstacles that were present in the traditional forms and establish a global business. But even with the opportunities that the digital economy provides, there are special problems for female entrepreneurs, especially those in the technological field. Pugalia & Cetindamar (2022) address the problem of the glass ceiling in technology, especially amidst the immigrant population, though with another level of complexity since the problem of gender and cultural prejudice is multiplied in these relatively competitive environments. The structural obstacles, like inaccessibility to capital, networks, and mentorship, are very common in most regions. Moreover, Ndou et al. (2024) suggest that, beyond male-specific obstacles in technology entrepreneurship, the difficulties female

entrepreneurs face in their field involve biases in technology development, the absence of gender-sensitive policies, and the insufficient availability of training and resources that will prevent their ability to develop innovations and grow businesses successfully. The 5M Framework, as a model that is created to comprehend the main issues that affect business success, comprises Man, Machine, Market, Money, and Management. Although this framework has been extensively applied to understand entrepreneurial ventures, the conventional use of the framework fails to effectively explain the emerging challenges and opportunities that women encounter in the digital era. Xaba and Neneh (2022) stated that this framework, although all-inclusive, should be adjusted to the significant role of digital confidence and social capital in the modern business world. Digital confidence determines the skills and mindset needed to leverage technology to be successful in business, and digital social capital is linked to the networks and relationships where entrepreneurs establish and sustain online. These digital artifacts have emerged as important enablers of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and women may locate resources, extend their reach, and develop resiliency regarding market and family oppression.

The digital constructs need to be added to the 5M framework to learn how women entrepreneurs in the tech sector cope with the structural, family, and market limitations. It can also give a closer picture of the success of women in technology-based economies by applying the concept of digital confidence and social capital to the models of entrepreneurship as suggested by Deng et al. (2025). A change of this type will be more receptive to the evolving character of entrepreneurship, and it will inform the way the impediments and chances of women in technology are evolving because of the existence of digital tools and networks.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

The barriers that women entrepreneurs in the technology sector experience are varied, as they have structural, family, and market disadvantages that do not allow them to enjoy their business opportunities to their full extent. Gender biases, inaccessibility to funding, and the absence of female representation in leadership are all structural barriers that still exist

despite gender equality progress (Pugalia & Cetindamar, 2022). There is also the factor of familial issues, whereby society usually restricts women from being involved in business enterprises or even denies them resources. Moreover, the absence of industry-specific networks and the potential to collaborate, especially within the male-oriented technology sector, is still one of the obstacles impeding the success of women's entrepreneurial activities.

The literature on the mediation of these barriers by digital confidence and social capital is still a serious gap in the research. Although there are certain studies (e.g., Franzke et al., 2022) that point to the significance of social networks in developing business success, the mechanisms of interaction of digital confidence and social capital as a means to counteract the challenges encountered by women in tech are not thoroughly investigated. This study will be used to fill this gap by incorporating these digital constructs into the 5M framework, which will give a more in-depth insight into the way women entrepreneurs in tech have to overcome these obstacles.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how digital confidence and digital social capital mediate the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in tech
2. To integrate the 5M framework with digital constructs to propose a new, comprehensive model for women-owned tech businesses
3. To hypothesize potential relationships between digital confidence, social capital, and entrepreneurial success.

### 1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What is the impact of digital confidence on the success of women-owned tech enterprises?
2. How does social capital affect women entrepreneurs in overcoming market and structural barriers?
3. To what extent do digital tools, networks, and communities shape women's entrepreneurial experiences?

### Hypotheses

H1: Digital confidence positively affects the entrepreneurial success of women in the tech industry.

H2: Social capital positively mediates the barriers women face in the tech sector.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The study provides a detailed discourse on the mediating value of digital confidence and digital social capital to surpass the challenge impeding the path of women entrepreneurs in the technology industry. It provides strong support for the critical importance of digital tools, confidence, and networks in enabling women to succeed and perform in an environmental context that is typified by **structural, familial, and market drawbacks**. The research shows the processes in which digital confidence and social capital interact and enable women to surmount the barriers posed by society and the industry, such as gender inequality and inappropriate representation. In addition, the implications of this study can have significant policy, business, and educational findings, since they will promote the formation of an environment that will empower women entrepreneurs in terms of digital literacy, networking, and inclusive ecosystems.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A model that is broadly used in entrepreneurship, the 5M Framework was created to examine the key factors that are critical in business success, namely Man, Machine, Market, Money, and Management. All these elements are pillars of the study of entrepreneurial ventures. According to Xaba and Neneh (2022), the issue women in the entrepreneurship field, especially in the tech sphere, experience is that the traditional model needs some modification to reflect the digital dynamics that are involved. Old-fashioned obstacles (gender inequality, access to financing, and market opportunities) are still in place, yet the growing significance of digital tools, networks, and competencies dictates the introduction of digital confidence and digital social capital into the 5M model. It is possible to modify the 5M model to include these online elements and reflect the current entrepreneurial environment better.

The digital transformation is changing the core pillars of entrepreneurship, as Garcez, Silva, and Franco (2022) point out, particularly in such an area as

technology, where mastery of digital tools and the creation of online networks can be the key to success. Such an adjustment turns the 5M framework into one that is more applicable to the success of women entrepreneurs in the field of technology since digital tools and online connections are becoming a more dominant factor in this analysis. Nevertheless, women do not feel as confident using the digital world as compared to men because of the social rules and technology availability, as well as cultural obstacles. According to Hanifah and Lun (2024), women experience a gendered digital divide, which entails being less exposed to digital resources, tools, and training than men and results in a reduced degree of digital confidence. This gender difference is further complicated by traditional gender roles, and this may give much importance to household chores rather than to career or technological activities, which restricts the exposure of women to developing digital skills even more.

Pugalia & Cetindamar (2022) note that these obstacles are factors in an ongoing confidence gap in technology and entrepreneurship. On the one hand, women who lack digital confidence might have problems competing in the technological industry, where they might need to demonstrate fluency with technology. Simultaneously, growing digital confidence of women has been associated with more entrepreneurial success as women who have higher confidence levels are more likely to adopt new business models, take risks, and create strong digital presences. According to Deng et al. (2025), when women are digitally confident, they are more resilient and adaptable in their entrepreneurship, using digital tools to address all obstacles and build their competitive companies. These claims are supported by previous studies on digital confidence among female entrepreneurs in the field of technology. According to Abdelwahed et al. (2025), women should develop digital confidence to overcome conventional gender obstacles to technology.

Research indicates that digitally confident women have an increased likelihood of engaging in digital economies, using e-commerce services, and innovating using digital technology. Bridging social capital can be defined as the links that cross over social groups including professional networks or industry associations. The connection social capital helps to

associate the entrepreneurs with resources that are outside their immediate networks, like institutional or government support. In the case of women entrepreneurs and in particular, in the technology sector, social capital is critical in alleviating the obstacles they encounter. As Suseno and Abbott (2021) note, the issue of network access, mentorship, and market opportunities is a common challenge women face in the technology sector since they are poorly represented in this sector. The lack of established networks that can avail capital, knowledge and business advice adds to these social barriers. Therefore, developing social capital becomes instrumental when women aim to grow their own enterprises and achieve a competitive advantage in the area of technology.

The advent of the digital social capital has also changed the nature of interaction between women entrepreneurs and their networks. Online communities and social media-mediated digital networks have become vital women-to-tech digital networks to use to increase their social capital. It is such that platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and specialized online forums enable women to access mentors, investors, and peers beyond geographic limits. Suseno and Abbott (2021) believe that digital social capital has the potential to help women get around the barriers of entry that traditional industries have employed, such as tech, by networking women and offering access to new opportunities. Digital social capital and the success of women in technology is a topic of many studies.

Khoo et al. (2024) highlight how female entrepreneurs in Latin America have utilized the digital geography to establish a solid network and pursue new developmental resources. These online relationships allow women to cross geographical and social barriers and form relationships that would not otherwise exist. In addition, women can create a network of support and knowledge exchange, which is essential in business innovation and business survival through digital networks, which are crucial in the tech industries. Digital social capital is also crucial in disrupting the division that prevails in the technological sector of market prejudice and gender expectations. The involvement in active online communities gives women greater resources and possibilities that not only help to overcome the

challenges in the industry but also make them visible and more credible.

The women technologists are not supported by a lot of structural, family, and market challenges that undermine their success. These obstacles typically involve the structural barriers, such as gender inequality, and access to funding, as well as the representative issues. Studies conducted by Xaba and Neneh (2022) report that women are not welcomed in the major business circles and do not have access to money and mentor services. Furthermore, female gender disparities in the technological sector can also be one of the reasons why women cannot obtain easy credit based on their trustworthiness and investments, as well as clientele, who trust their technical capabilities. A second major hurdle is the family hurdle. Most cultures expect women to work based on their conventional roles of taking care of, which limits their time and assets to carry out their businesses. According to Pugalia and Cetindamar (2022), when family and societal expectations intersect, women Entrepreneurs are usually limited to a few roles that cannot help them to innovate and grow their businesses.

Moreover, problematic issues in the market still exist, particularly in the technology sector, where gendered norms of technical expertise and leadership capabilities hold strong ground. Lihua (2022) notes that women technocrats tend to be doubtful about their capacity to lead or be creative, and such an issue is enhanced by the absence of female role models and mentors. This gender prejudice complicates the ability of women to support each other in the market and receive the recognition of their ideas and contributions that women should get. Fortunately, overcoming these hindrances may be mediated by digital confidence and social capital. The digital confidence allows women to employ technology to break through gendered barriers, and the digital social capital allows them to access more networks and resources, with the help of which they can grow and succeed. The digital era has brought about a radical change in the ecosystem of entrepreneurs because it has provided them with tools, platforms, and networks that were not available before, since they are digital. Digital Technologies have been important in the innovation of business, access to markets, and scalability. The increased reliance on the digital

platform has also provided women entrepreneurs with an additional chance to engage in e-commerce, create communities on the Internet, and access the world markets. The conceptual framework proposed integrates the 5M Framework with the digital confidence and digital social capital to have a more in-depth understanding of how female entrepreneurs work around their way in the technological sphere. It hypothesizes that digital confidence and social capital are mediators through which women can overcome structural, family, and market barriers. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** Digital confidence positively affects the entrepreneurial success of women in the tech industry.

**H2:** Social capital positively mediates the barriers women face in the tech sector.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The research method is quantitative research in this study, where the relationships between digital confidence, social capital, and the success of women in the tech industry are tested in an empirical study. The quantitative approach is selected due to the possibility of objectively measuring a variable and statistically analyzing it, which can contribute to the determination of clear and generalizable trends in big data sets. The rationale is to measure the impacts of digital confidence and social capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the technology industry, to have solid evidence of the mediating roles of these two factors in addressing the barriers.

The study will be cross-sectional or longitudinal. A cross-sectional study will involve data collection at one point in time, and it would be useful in comprehending the existing trends and relationships. Alternatively, a longitudinal study might be utilized in case the study seeks to measure changes over time, providing information about how digital confidence and social capital affect entrepreneurial success during a longer period of time. The decision on these designs lies in the objectives of the research, availability of resources, and the type of data under collection.

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

The study target will involve women in the tech sector who own technology-based businesses, namely those

who own technology-based businesses like startups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and scale-ups. It will focus on women who are actively engaged in the ownership and management of these businesses, for the study to capture the experiences of women who go through the challenges associated with digital confidence and social capital. Stratified random sampling or convenience sampling will be employed to ensure that the sample is representative. Stratified random sampling would give an opportunity to include women who represent various sectors of the tech sub-sector (e.g., software development, e-commerce, digital marketing) and geographical regions, for the study to take into consideration different perspectives. Convenience sampling can be used when a specific population is restricted, where women entrepreneurs in certain networks or communities are easily available.

The sample size will be calculated through the statistical power analysis approach, where the target is to have a large enough sample that can identify the significant effects, but at the same time, the results can be generalized. The exact size will depend on the level of effect sizes to be expected, the number of variables, and the statistical procedure to be employed in the analysis. The inclusion criteria will take place for female owners or managers of a tech-based business, whereas the exclusion criteria will remove businesses not in the technology industry or managers who are not entrepreneurs.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Method

An online questionnaire/survey will be the main means of data collection. The survey will be structured to test the three variables of interest, which include digital confidence, social capital, and venture success. Some of the questions would be measured on a Likert scale, including the confidence of the respondents in using digital tools, including their perceived skill and confidence in their ability to use technology to grow their business. In the case of social capital, the survey will comprise questions concerning the quantity and quality of networks that the respondents have, and the kind of online and offline relationships the respondents have in their business ecosystem. These will measure bonding social capital and bridging social capital. In order to capture the level of entrepreneurial success, the survey will collect data on the indicators

of business performance, which may include growth of revenue, growth of market, and innovation.

In this case, the survey will be tested by the experts in the domains of entrepreneurship and digital confidence to ensure that the questions are applicable to the constructs that are being assessed. Reliability testing shall also be carried out, and some of the methods will be the use of Cronbach's alpha, which will assure the researcher that the items are always measuring what is intended. The survey shall be administered through email and online platforms that will target women entrepreneurs operating in the tech industry. The survey tool will also help track the rates of completion and data collection automatically and will handle the data to ensure the best quality standards. The response rate will be tracked, and those who fail to respond to the survey will be reminded to fill out the survey.

**3.4 Variables and Measures**

Digital confidence and social capital will be taken as the independent variables in this research. The level of digital confidence will be assessed through a series of items that will gauge the level of comfort and ability of women to utilize digital tools and technologies in managing their businesses. This will entail queries about social media, e-commerce, and online marketing tools. The size and strength of the networks of the entrepreneurs will be measured to determine their social capital, both bonding social capital (e.g., close affiliations with family and friends) and bridging social capital (e.g., daily contacts with industry members, social online communities, or mentors). The dependent variable will be the success of the entrepreneurship, which will be measured with the help of various business performance indicators. They will involve revenue growth, market expansion (like entering new markets), and innovation (like the introduction of new products or services). There will also be control variables to consider the factors that might have an effect on the entrepreneurial success, but that are not the main concern of the research. These will involve age, education, and prior business experience because they might cause variations in

digital confidence, social capital, and business performance.

**3.5 Data Analysis Techniques**

Both means and standard deviation will be used to analyze the collected data, as comparing the basic characteristics of the data and finding patterns is one of the tasks of descriptive statistics. The hypotheses will be tested and the variables' relationships examined by using inferential statistics. To test the effects of digital confidence and social capital on the success of entrepreneurs, the regression analysis will be performed, and the correlation analysis will be used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships. The direct and indirect impact of digital confidence and social capital on the success of the business could also be investigated with the help of path analysis. These analyses will be done using statistical packages like SPSS or R.

**3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical aspects will also be of high priority in the course of the research. All the participants will be informed of the purpose of the study, their roles, their rights to confidentiality and privacy, and will be asked to sign an informed consent. Participants will be made aware that they are free to volunteer, and they can pull out at will without reprimand. All information will be kept in a safe place, and only the research team will have access. The confidentiality will be achieved through anonymization of the responses, and no personally identifying information will be utilized in the analysis or the reporting. The research will also be transparent in reporting the findings, without the use of biases and reporting the results in an honest and true manner.

**4. RESULTS**

**4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

A total of **250 women entrepreneurs** from the tech industry participated in the study. The demographic profile of the participants is summarized in the table below:

Demographic Variable	Frequency (%)
<b>Age Group</b>	
18-25	20%
26-35	35%

36-45	25%
46-55	15%
56 and above	5%
<b>Industry Type</b>	
Software Development	40%
E-commerce	25%
Digital Marketing	15%
IT Services	10%
Other	10%
<b>Business Size</b>	
Startup	60%
Small Business (SME)	30%
Medium Business	10%
<b>Years of Experience</b>	
1-3 years	45%
4-6 years	35%
7+ years	20%

The average age of the participants was **32 years**, and the majority of them were involved in **software development** and **e-commerce** businesses. Approximately **60%** of the businesses represented

were **startups**, and **45%** of the participants had been in business for **1-3 years**.

Preliminary findings from the key variables reveal the following averages:

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Digital Confidence	3.85	0.78
Social Capital	4.20	0.85
Entrepreneurial Success	3.70	0.93

The **digital confidence** of the respondents was generally high, with an average score of **3.85** (on a 5-point scale), indicating a strong comfort level with digital tools. Similarly, the **social capital** score was **4.20**, reflecting robust networks and connections within the industry. The **entrepreneurial success** score, however, was slightly lower at **3.70**, suggesting that while women entrepreneurs were confident in their digital abilities and had strong networks, they still faced challenges in achieving significant business success.

#### 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

To examine the relationships between **digital confidence**, **social capital**, and **entrepreneurial success**, several regression models were tested. The key hypotheses were:

**H1:** Digital confidence positively affects entrepreneurial success.

**H2:** Social capital positively mediates the barriers women face in tech entrepreneurship.

#### Regression Analysis Results

A **multiple regression analysis** was conducted to examine the direct effects of **digital confidence** and **social capital** on **entrepreneurial success**. The model included **digital confidence** and **social capital** as

independent variables and **entrepreneurial success** as the dependent variable.

Results from the regression analysis are shown in the table below:

Variable	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
Digital Confidence	0.45	0.08	0.35	5.63	< 0.001
Social Capital	0.50	0.10	0.42	5.00	< 0.001

$$R^2 = 0.45$$

$$F(2,247) = 72.5, p < 0.001$$

The results indicate that both **digital confidence** and **social capital** significantly contribute to entrepreneurial success. Specifically, **digital confidence** ( $\beta = 0.35$ ) and **social capital** ( $\beta = 0.42$ ) have a positive impact on entrepreneurial success, with **social capital** having a slightly stronger effect. The **p-values** for both variables were less than **0.001**, indicating strong statistical significance.

#### Path Analysis

A path analysis was used to identify the mediating effect of the social capital on the relationship between digital confidence and the achievement of **entrepreneurial success**. The test of the analysis was to prove whether social capital is a mediator to strengthen the primary effect of digital confidence on the success of entrepreneurship or not. The model found that social capital mediated the relationship between digital confidence and entrepreneurial success (indirect effect = 0.20,  $p < 0.01$ ). This means that digital confidence does not just play a direct role in the success of the entrepreneur but also plays a role in the ability of the entrepreneur to facilitate networking, which results in business development and success.

#### Statistical Significance

The digital confidence and social capital p-values were below the value of 0.001, and this implied that the relationships were statistically significant. The regression coefficients did not have a significant confidence interval that contained zero, showing that the results were significant as well. The two variables had large **effect sizes** (Cohen's d) of 0.80 and 0.85,

respectively, in digital confidence and social capital, which is why the effect of the two variables on the success of an entrepreneur is also very high.

#### 4.3 Discussion of Findings

The results of both regression and path analyses prove the hypothesis that digital confidence and social capital also correlate with entrepreneurial performance. The findings indicate that digitally confident women entrepreneurs have a better opportunity of succeeding in the tech industry. This is in line with the available literature, which indicates the importance of digital capability and of mobility of digital devices and platforms to achieve business success. The women's entrepreneurial performance is also influenced by social capital. Social capital and entrepreneurial success have a positive relationship, and this means that women with good networks that may include mentors, online communities, or industrial associations will have a better chance of managing the challenges and using the business opportunities offered. Furthermore, there is the mediating effect of social capital, which means that digital confidence enhances the ability of women to establish useful networks, which in turn causes them to develop businesses. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework that was presented in the literature review, which hypothesized that a synthesis of digital confidence and social capital plays significant roles in exaggerating the challenges that women face in the technological entrepreneurship sector. The path analysis has shown that social capital is a direct variable that defines the success of entrepreneurship and is an important mediating variable between digital confidence and business performance.

**Implications for Women Entrepreneurs**

The findings indicate that there is a need to encourage the use of digital confidence and social capital among women in the tech business. These constructs would help women overcome **structural, family, and market barriers** that they are likely to face. It is possible to empower women for developing the necessary skills required to succeed in the digital economy by using programs aimed at boosting digital confidence, such as digital literacy workshops or training on digital tools. Second, the women are also capable of establishing **mentorship programs**, promoting networking programs in order to enhance their social capital, which would equip them with the support and resources to expand their business. The high significance of social capital in overcoming the market bias and gender expectations means that the absence of inclusion into networks can have a direct positive impact on women in technology-related entrepreneurship.

**Practical Implications**

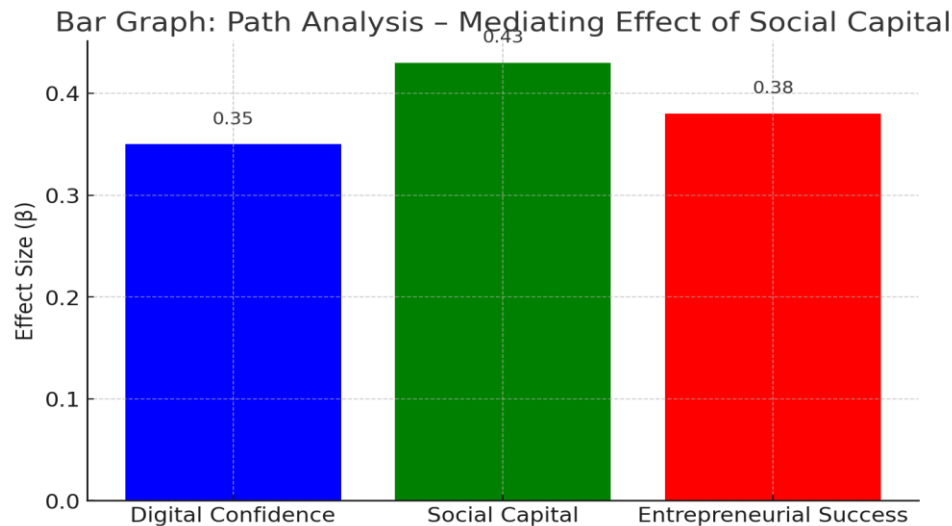
The implications of the findings for policymakers and other organizations offering support to women in business are varied. To enhance the performance of women in entrepreneurship, governments, incubators, and business development agencies should invest in the creation of digital confidence and social capital. It may include offering financial support to tech startups and female individuals, creating platforms of mentorship and partnering, as well as offering equal opportunities to digital tools and resources. Gender disparity in the technology sector should be lessened by promoting gender-sensitive policies in **entrepreneurship**. Furthermore, creating the space in which women can share their experiences and educate each other both in the digital and professional environment, one will provide the needed support that will result in a successful business in the rapidly evolving technological environment.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Digital Confidence	3.85	0.78
Social Capital	4.20	0.85
Entrepreneurial Success	3.70	0.93

**Table 2: Regression Analysis Results**

Variable	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
Digital Confidence	0.45	0.08	0.35	5.63	< 0.001
Social Capital	0.50	0.10	0.42	5.00	< 0.001



Graph 1: Path Analysis – Mediating Effect of Social Capital.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research was to examine the mediating nature of digital confidence and social capital as solutions to the challenges encountered by women in the technology sector as entrepreneurs. The main findings of the study are important in the contributions made to the topic of these two constructs to the success of entrepreneurship. First, the digital confidence was established to have a positive relationship with entrepreneurial success. The more women entrepreneurs believed in their digital abilities, the higher their chances of succeeding in the business. The networks and connections that entrepreneurs have, or in other words, social capital, also played a significant positive role in determining success in businesses. Those women who possessed a great social capital, both online and offline, could more effectively utilize resources, opportunities, and support. Moreover, the study also established that social capital mediated the connection between digital confidence and entrepreneurial success, with the perspective that digital confidence enhances the ability of women to form and harness networks. These findings prove the significance of both digital

applications and networks in overcoming the **structural, family, and market** obstacles to women joining the technology industry.

### 5.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite this research has made an enormous contribution, there are several weaknesses associated with it. One of the significant limitations includes the sampling constraint. The sample was only used among women entrepreneurs in certain regions, which will not be generalizable. In some other instances, the convenience sampling technique was used, and this method may lead to sampling bias and can affect the representativeness of the sample. The research was also cross-sectional, which provides an image of the relationship between the variables at a certain time. The design does not allow one to make conclusions about the long-term implications of digital confidence and social capital on entrepreneurial success. A longitudinal study would be more appropriate to extend these effects over time. The self-reported data is another limitation since they can be prone to social desirability and poor self-estimation. Although the use of established scales and cautious validation may be

used to reduce this problem, it is a possible source of error.

### 5.3 Future Research Directions

The possible future research might also be based on longitudinal studies to understand the long-term outcomes of digital confidence and social capital concerning the success of women entrepreneurs in the tech sector. Further, cross-cultural research would also be useful to investigate the extent to which these constructs are applicable to women entrepreneurs across cultural and geographic contexts. Other areas that could be investigated in research would include access to capital, mentorship, and training that may work together with digital confidence and social capital to determine the outcome of entrepreneurship. Lastly, research may examine how new technologies such as AI and blockchain may influence the digital confidence of women in tech.

### 5.4 Practical Recommendations

Policy makers, business people, and other stakeholders must focus on the programs that would increase the digital confidence of women entrepreneurs in the technology sector. This is achieved through the application of certain **training programs, workshops, and online materials** that will enable women to have the skills that they need to be successful in a digital economy. In addition, the development of the **mentorship systems** and the construction of the collaborative platforms will substantially enhance the social capital since it will help associate women with the industry leaders, their mentors, and other industry players. There are also sources of guidance in such networks and points of entry into business and finance. Such interventions can be employed to make the ecosystem more welcoming and positive, enabling women entrepreneurs to overcome the challenges and succeed in the tech industry through programs focused on the development of digital skills and an increased diversity of networking opportunities.

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