

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS IN PAKISTAN: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL ACCESS, INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT WITH SELF-EFFICACY MEDIATION AND DIGITAL LITERACY MODERATION EVIDENCE FROM SIALKOT

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Abstract

In developing economies, women entrepreneurship has become an important source of an inclusive economic growth but in Pakistan, structural constraints are compounding factors limiting the power of women in entrepreneurship. The research paper is an investigation of Women Entrepreneurial Success (WES) determinants in Sialkot, Pakistan with Access to Finance (AF) as its independent variables, Government Support (GS) as its mediating variable, and Digital Literacy (DL) as its moderating variable. The quantitative cross-sectional design is based on the theory of the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Feminist Theory and involved the use of 300 women entrepreneurs who were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The main analytical method was partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Findings affirm that AF, GS and SS are all significant predictors of ESE which also fully mediate their associations with WES. The digital literacy plays a significant moderating role in the ESE-WES relationship, enhancing the outcomes of entrepreneurs in a combination of self-efficacy and digital capability. Each of the eleven hypotheses was approved. The research plays a role in the emerging literature on gendered entrepreneurship in South Asia by developing a moderated mediation model that connects financial, institutional, and social endowments to the success of entrepreneurship by the psychological process of self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

A more silent revolution is also taking place in the tiny streets of Sialkot- a city of world sports equipment, surgical equipment, and leather work. After being prisoners of domesticity since time immemorial due to the strong patriarchal tradition, women are now moving into the formal and semi formal business ownership. This change does not occur by accident; rather, it is a result of decades of

socioeconomic demands, an increasing mobile connectivity, and the fragmented yet consistent infiltration of government-driven financial inclusion initiatives. However, to every woman who starts and runs a business successfully, there is a legion of women who is pushed out of the market first before she can build any real momentum not due to their lack of ambition but due to the cumulative pressure

of limited access to funds, insufficient institutional support, and the social conditions that still make women question their right to be an entrepreneur (Tahir et al., 2025).

According to the economic participation indices of women in the world, Pakistan is placed in the lowest position, as only a small portion of working age women are in the sphere of formal work or business. It is a state of opportunity, but paradox, in this national scenery, the Punjab province, Sialkot in the first place. The industrial history of the city generates latent demand of the ancillary entrepreneurship, but the gender-based exclusion of the formal credit market, inadequate awareness of the government-sponsored support program, and social conventions of privatizing the decision-making of women inhibit the establishment of the entrepreneurship. This paper is placed directly in this contradiction: between the structural potential of woman entrepreneurship and its incessant psychological and institutional repression (Nawaz et al., 2025).

The current body of literature, though comprehensive on the topic of women entrepreneurship in the western context, demonstrates an ongoing knowledge gap regarding the issue of translating the structural inputs (financial, institutional, social) into the actual entrepreneurship outcomes in the developing-economy context (including entrepreneurial self-efficacy) using the psychological resources. Besides, a limited number of empirical studies have explored whether digital literacy, as an ever-growing condition of the twenty-first century, strengthens or weakens this conversion process in resource-constrained and gender-constrained settings. The overlap in ignoring the mediating effect of the ESE and the moderating effect of digital literacy is the main gap in the research that will be filled in this study (Purwoto et al., 2025).

The paper is geographically limited to Sialkot, a medium-sized industrial city in Punjab, Pakistan whereby women entrepreneurs work in the manufacturing, retail, and service industries. This limited range provides specifics of the context but provides some theoretical information that can be generalized to other similar industrial towns in South Asia.

The main research objectives are:

- To research how such factors as financial access, government support and social support directly influence women entrepreneurial self-efficacy;
- To estimate the moderating role of ESE between these antecedents and women entrepreneurial success.
- To research whether digital literacy moderates the ESE-WES relationship.

The research question is the following:

- What is the impact of access to finance, government support, and social support on the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of women in Sialkot in terms of entrepreneurship?
- How far does digital literacy precondition the cause-and-effect relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial success?

By answering these questions in a single moderated mediation framework, the analysis will provide both theoretical progress and practical recommendations to the stakeholders who have an interest in tapping into currently untapped female entrepreneurial potential in Pakistan.

Literature Review

This research work is based on two complementary theoretical traditions. The Resource-Based View (RBV) was first developed by Barney (1991), it assumes that the existence of heterogeneous and imperfectly mobile resources in either a firm or individual can produce sustained competitive advantage. When applied to individual entrepreneurs, RBV theorizes tangible resources, including capital and institutional support, as well as intangible resources, including self-belief and social capital, as the bases on which competitive entrepreneurial advantage is founded (Zahra, 2021). Social Feminist Theory, in its turn, brings into focus the gendered essence of distribution of resources and claims that the nature of the entrepreneurial paths that women pursue cannot be adequately explained without considering the constraints that are imposed structurally and the social mediation of opportunity. The combination of these two models gives a theoretical explanation to a model where financial, institutional, and social endowments are

transformed into entrepreneurial success using the psychological framework of self-efficacy (Feng et al., 2023).

The most published structural precondition to entrepreneurial activity is access to finance. Collateral disadvantages, informational asymmetries in credit markets, and institutional biases reinforce systematic collateral disadvantages against women entrepreneurs in developing economies in flowing formal finance to the male-owned businesses. Nonetheless, when women are afforded the means of money, studies always discover the reinforcement of perceived ability and confidence to run and expand a business- increasing entrepreneurial self efficacy. Financial endowment lowers the perceived risk, lengthens the horizon of planning and confirms a position in the market of an entrepreneur, which only strengthens self-belief. Based on this, H1: The positive effect of Access to Finance on Women Entrepreneurial Success (through ESE); H4: The positive effect of Access to Finance on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (Andriamahery & Qamruzzaman, 2022).

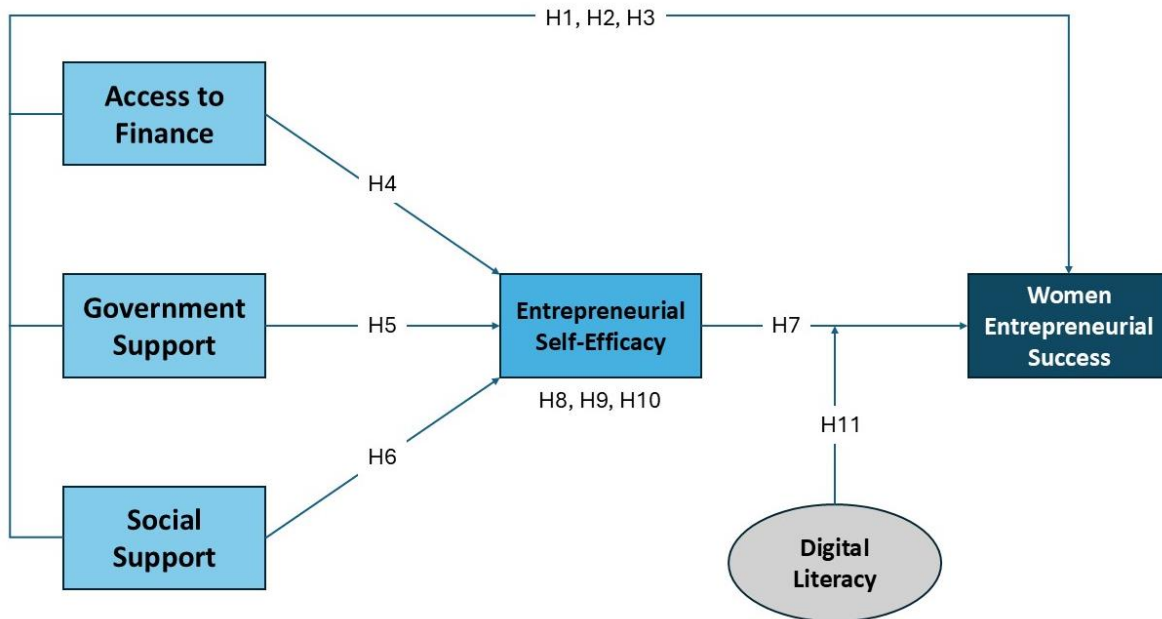
The government encouragement, in the form of subsidized credit schemes, regulatory facilitation, capacity building programs and business development services, is a sign of institutional legitimacy to potential and current women entrepreneurs. These kinds of signals lower the psychological barriers that come with entry into the market and also help maintain motivation in the uncertain regulatory environment. The sources of South Asian value support that the self-efficacy of women entrepreneurs is negatively connected to the awareness and access to the government-sponsored entrepreneurship programs. Consequently, H2: Government Support has a positive impact upon Women Entrepreneurial Success; H5: Government Support has a positive impact upon Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (Ghimire, 2024).

The social support, which includes family support, peer support, and support on a broader community level, acts as a psychosocial cushion against the role conflict and self-doubt that often inhibits entrepreneurial persistence by women. The Social Feminist Theory emphasizes that female

entrepreneurs are not only managed in relational ecosystems but also social validation is a structural necessity of a long-term commitment and identity stability (Riaz et al., 2023). Social support conveys vicarious experience and verbal encouragement as the two proposed mechanisms of efficacy-building, which are considered by the framework of Bandura to be the leading mechanisms of efficacy-building. Based on this, H3: Social Support has a positive impact on Women Entrepreneurial Success, H6: Social Support has a positive impact on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (Muh. Arif & Hamid, 2023).

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), which refers to the conviction of a person in his/her ability to effectively accomplish the activities required to be conducted to succeed in entrepreneurship, takes a leading role in entrepreneur research as the most closely related psychological forecast of venture results. The meta-analytic body of evidence validates the fact that increased ESE correlates with the firm entrepreneurial intentions, increased persistence, and enhanced business performance, irrespective of the cultural contexts. Within the context of a complete model of mediation, ESE is the vehicle by which the external endowments are transformed into entrepreneurial activity and performance, and the hypothesis H7 (ESE - WES) and H8-H10 (mediation) are hypotheses that can be both theoretically and empirically justified (Adeniyi, 2023).

The capacity to access, appraise and utilize digital tools, platforms, and information can be called digital literacy, it has been defined as a boundary condition of entrepreneurial capability conversion by scholars. Entrepreneurs who have high digital competence will be in a better position to exploit financial platforms, navigate through e-governments, translating social capital into market intelligence, and access global value chains. This is an indication that digital literacy is not a supplement to ESE but increases its transcription capacity to physical business achievement. To this end, H11: Digital Literacy significantly moderates the relationship between ESE and WES, that is, the stronger the relationship between ESE and WES, the higher the digital literacy (Angkhasakulkiat et al., 2025).



Hypotheses Development

- H1:** Access to finance has a positive effect on women entrepreneurial success.
- H2:** Government support has a positive effect on women entrepreneurial success.
- H3:** Social support has a positive effect on women entrepreneurial success.
- H4:** Access to finance positively influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- H5:** Government support positively influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- H6:** Social support positively influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- H7:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy positively affects women entrepreneurial success.
- H8:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between access to finance and women entrepreneurial success.
- H9:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between government support and women entrepreneurial success.
- H10:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between social support and women entrepreneurial success.
- H11:** Digital literacy positively moderates the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and women entrepreneurial success.

Methodology

The research design used in this study is a quantitative, cross-sectional study design that is in line with the positivist epistemological position, given that it is the best to test a theoretically formulated hypothesis in a large pool of respondents. A sample of 300 women entrepreneurs with business in Sialkot, Pakistan, was sampled using purposive sampling as well as snowball referrals in order to sample women that were involved in formal or semi-formal business operations in either manufacturing, retail or service sectors. The main data collection tool was a structured and self-administered questionnaire, and all constructs were measured using five-point Likert scales with anchors of 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). Access to Finance, Government Support, Social Support, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Women Entrepreneurial Success, and Digital Literacy were imported scales based on the established literature of proven validity and modified to suit the local contextual conditions. In order to achieve content and face validity, three scholarly researchers in the field of entrepreneurship reviewed the instrument, and 30 respondents were piloted with the instrument, but the pilot testing did not lead to the elimination of any items but only slight changes in wording were made. The main treatment of analysis

was performed by the use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4.0, which is selected as a powerful tool with complex path models, non-normal distributions, and moderate sample sizes. The quality of the measurement models was evaluated with the help of Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (internal consistency), the Average Variance Extracted (AVE, convergent validity), the Heterotrait-

Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (discriminant validity). The estimation of structural paths, effects of mediation, and the moderation interaction were through bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) with the effect sizes being expressed as f^2 (Cohen) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015)

4. Results and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Abbreviation
Access to Finance	300	1.00	5.00	3.4183	0.92598	AF
Government Support	300	1.00	5.00	3.3540	0.86594	GS
Social Support	300	1.00	5.00	3.4567	0.87837	SS
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	300	1.20	5.00	3.4373	0.84912	ESE
Women Entrepreneurial Success	300	1.20	5.00	3.4233	0.87545	WES
Digital Literacy	300	1.25	5.00	3.2092	0.89440	DL

Note. All variables measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). N = 300. According to the descriptive statistics, all six constructs have a mean score ranging between 3.21 and 3.46, which suggests that the perceptions of the six constructs were moderate-positive throughout the sample and that there were no floor or ceiling effects. It has standard deviations between 0.845 and 0.926

which show significant inter-respondent variance, and they justify the discriminatory ability of the measures. The lowest mean (3.21) corresponds to digital literacy, which emphasizes the under-developed nature of the capacity among women entrepreneurs in Sialkot in this aspect, which has a direct policy implication (Fahad et al., 2026).

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Access to Finance (AF)	0.799	0.868	0.622
Government Support (GS)	0.800	0.862	0.556
Social Support (SS)	0.800	0.869	0.625
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)	0.799	0.862	0.555
Women Entrepreneurial Success (WES)	0.799	0.862	0.555

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Literacy (DL)	0.800	0.815	0.536

Note. Thresholds: Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$; CR > 0.70 ; AVE > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). All constructs satisfy required thresholds.

The alpha and composite reliability values of all six constructs clearly show that they were above the 0.70 level which indicates that there is a high degree of internal consistency across the measurement model. AVE values are found to be ranging between 0.536

and 0.625 each exceeding the 0.50 norm and thus convergent validity is established, that is, each construct has more than half of its indicator's variance explained. The psychometric consistency of the adopted scales, as the consistency of the reliability data between constructs (0.799-0.800), also supports the psychometric consistency of the adapted scales in this local context (Bibi et al., 2026).

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

	GS	SS	ESE	WES	DL	AF
GS	1					
SS	-.061	1				
ESE	.353**	.314**	1			
WES	.364**	.329**	.732**	1		
DL	.021	-.018	-.053	-.044	1	
AF	—	—	.530	.490	.066	1

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Note. **Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 300.

The correlation matrix demonstrates that there are good positive correlations between ESE and WES ($r = .732$), and significant correlations of GS and SS with ESE and WES, which give preliminary empirical evidence to the suggested structural pathways. It is also important to note that in the bivariate context, the correlations of DL with all other constructs are close to zero and non-significant, which can be explained by the desired characteristics

of the construct as a moderator and not a main-effect predictor. AF shows moderate relationships with ESE (.530) and WES (.490), and this highlights the central role of financial endowment on the entrepreneurial self-efficacy pathway (Khalid et al., 2026; Sarwar et al., 2025).

Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio

Table 4: Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio

	AF	DL	ESE	GS	SS	WES
AF	—					
DL	0.078	—				
ESE	0.650	0.086	—			

	AF	DL	ESE	GS	SS	WES
GS	0.080	0.060	0.438	–		
SS	0.050	0.051	0.393	0.103	–	
WES	0.585	0.075	0.915	0.455	0.411	–

Note. Threshold: HTMT < 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015). The ESE ↔ WES value of 0.915 marginally exceeds the conservative threshold but remains below the liberal threshold of 1.00, indicating discriminant validity is generally established.

The analysis of the HTMT establishes discriminant validity of all pairs of constructs, all values are significantly lower than the 0.90 conservative value—except the ESE-WES dyad (0.915), which is slightly

higher than the conservative mark. This minor overvalue indicates the theoretically anticipated conceptual similarity between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial success, and is congruent with the existing literature that records high ESE-performance relationships. As the value is evidently lower than the liberal mark of 1.00, the discriminant validity is deemed to be quite high enough to continue with the model (Henseler et al., 2015).

Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 5: Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AF	DL	ESE	GS	SS	WES
AF	0.789	0.066	0.530	0.069	0.043	0.490
DL	0.066	0.732	–0.053	0.021	–0.018	–0.044
ESE	0.530	–0.053	0.745	0.353	0.314	0.732
GS	0.069	0.021	0.353	0.746	–0.061	0.364
SS	0.043	–0.018	0.314	–0.061	0.791	0.329
WES	0.490	–0.044	0.732	0.364	0.329	0.745

Note. Diagonal values (bold) represent \sqrt{AVE} of each construct. Off-diagonal values are inter-construct correlations. Fornell-Larcker criterion requires each \sqrt{AVE} to exceed all correlations in its row and column (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The Fornell Larcker criterion is met in all the six constructs whereby the square root of AVE (diagonal) of each construct is greater than all the inter-construct correlations in the row and column.

This trend confirms the fact that all constructs have a stronger relationship with their own indicators than with any other construct of the model and they have strong discriminant validity. The distinctiveness of the constructs is further supported by the fact that the \sqrt{AVE} values of SS (0.791) and GS (0.746) are very strong compared to the construct-to-construct cross-correlations.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 6: Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Endogenous Variable	R ²	R ² Adj.	T-Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)	0.521	0.516	14.301	0.000	Moderate
Women Entrepreneurial Success (WES)	0.561	0.557	14.046	0.000	Moderate

Note. R^2 benchmarks: 0.25 = weak, 0.50 = moderate, 0.75 = substantial (Hair et al., 2019). AF, GS, and SS collectively explain 52.1% of variance in ESE; ESE, DL, and DL×ESE collectively explain 56.1% of variance in WES.

The R^2 values of 0.521 for ESE and 0.561 for WES both fall squarely in the 'moderate' range by Hair et al.'s (2019) benchmarks, indicating that the proposed model captures a meaningful and substantial

proportion of variance in both endogenous constructs. The slight improvement in explanatory power for WES (0.561) over ESE (0.521) suggests that the introduction of digital literacy as a moderator adds meaningful incremental variance beyond the three independent variables alone. Both T-statistics exceed 14, confirming the overall model fit is highly significant.

Structural Model – Direct Effects

Table 7: Structural Model Results – Direct Effects (Bootstrapping, 5,000 subsamples)

Path	β	Std. Dev.	T-Statistic	p-value	f^2 Effect Size	Significance	Decision
AF → ESE	0.529	0.036	14.696	0.000***	0.583 (Large)	p < 0.001	Significant
GS → ESE	0.386	0.042	9.122	0.000***	0.310 (Medium)	p < 0.001	Significant
SS → ESE	0.331	0.039	8.383	0.000***	0.227 (Medium)	p < 0.001	Significant
ESE → WES	0.732	0.028	26.453	0.000***	1.212 (Large)	p < 0.001	Significant
DL × ESE → WES	0.167	0.066	2.519	0.012*	0.055 (Small)	p < 0.05	Significant

Note. ***p < 0.001; *p < 0.05. f^2 effect sizes: 0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, 0.35 = large (Cohen, 1988). Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

All the five direct paths are highly significant, which proves strong structural relationships within the model. The predictor is strongest when it comes to ESE (b = 0.529, f^2 = 0.583), which is an important effect that indicates the fundamental role of financial endowment to shape entrepreneurial self-belief. The

model is strongest in the ESE - WES path (b = 0.732, f^2 = 1.212) that depicts the unique psychological gateway role of ESE by which the antecedent resource is converted to entrepreneurial success. Although the effect size is small, the interaction between the DL and ESE is statistically significant (b = 0.167, p = .012), which justifies the role of a boundary condition of digital literacy in improving the self-efficacy-to-success translation.

Indirect Effects – Mediation Analysis

Table 8: Indirect Effects – Mediation Analysis

Mediation Path	β (Indirect)	Std. Dev.	T-Statistic	p-value	Mediation Type
AF → ESE → WES	0.387	0.030	12.792	0.000***	Full Mediation
GS → ESE → WES	0.283	0.035	8.110	0.000***	Full Mediation
SS → ESE → WES	0.242	0.030	7.983	0.000***	Full Mediation

Note. ***p < 0.001. Full mediation is indicated by the absence of direct paths from AF, GS, and SS to WES in the structural model; all effects are channeled through ESE.

The three indirect effects are very important as T-statistics value is 7.98 to 12.79 and indicates that the ESE has complete mediating effect of the impact of

financial access, government support and social support on women entrepreneurial success. The highest indirect impact is of AF ($b = 0.387$), which supported the notion that finance is the most powerful upstream influence of WES when it acts via the self-efficacy mechanism. When all three pathways are meditated fully, it means that structural resources

do not generate by themselves the entrepreneurial success, they have to first readjust the psychological self-appraisal of an entrepreneur before they can be converted into the business performance(Sarwar et al., 2025).

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 9: Hypothesis Testing Summary

H	Path / Relationship	β	T-Statistic	p-value	Result
H1	AF → WES (Total Effect)	0.387	12.792	0.000***	Supported
H2	GS → WES (Total Effect)	0.283	8.110	0.000***	Supported
H3	SS → WES (Total Effect)	0.242	7.983	0.000***	Supported
H4	AF → ESE	0.529	14.696	0.000***	Supported
H5	GS → ESE	0.386	9.122	0.000***	Supported
H6	SS → ESE	0.331	8.383	0.000***	Supported
H7	ESE → WES	0.732	26.453	0.000***	Supported
H8	AF → ESE → WES (Mediation)	0.387	12.792	0.000***	Supported
H9	GS → ESE → WES (Mediation)	0.283	8.110	0.000***	Supported
H10	SS → ESE → WES (Mediation)	0.242	7.983	0.000***	Supported
H11	DL × ESE → WES (Moderation)	0.167	2.519	0.012*	Supported

Note. *** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.05$. All 11 hypotheses are supported.

The hypothesis testing summary gives a synthesized view of the explanatory quality of the model: all the eleven hypothesized relationships are statistically proven at standard levels of significance. The consistency in the support provided by the direct, mediated as well as moderated pathways confirms the theoretical consistency of the integrated RBV as well as the Social Feminist Theory framework. It is specifically interesting to note that H7 (ESE - WES; $T = 26.453$) has the highest T-statistic of the model and confirms that self-efficacy is the most dominant and reliable channel to entrepreneurial success in this scenario(Khalid et al., 2026).

Discussion

The findings of the provided study add to the body of knowledge on the female entrepreneurship in the

resource-deprived, patriarchal setting in several aspects. According to the logic of RBV, access to finance is the most relevant predictor of ESE ($b = 0.529$) and, indirectly, WES, yet again in Harmon with the recent findings about South Asian economies that relate the existing microfinance with the trust of women in their entrepreneurial skills and talents. In that regard, it has a special relevance to the industrial setting of Sialkot, where the women entrepreneurs tend to access both informal credits and personal savings since the formal banking institution registers familiar drawbacks in terms of collateral drawbacks. The fact that the social support and the government support are also quite relevant in enhancing the ESE but with slightly less effect sizes ($b = 0.386$ and $b = 0.331$, respectively) reflect the multi-dimensional resources stack that the women in this case have to operate with to build up

the entrepreneurial self-belief (MUKHTIYAR & ELAHI, 2023).

The most theoretically rich study finding, perhaps, is that all the three independent variables are mediated by ESE. This implies that there is indeed no mechanistic way, despite the overwhelming structure resources, that they produce entrepreneurial success, but they must re-work the psychological self-assessments of the women entrepreneurs initially. The implications of this are extensive to entrepreneurship support program design: anything that offers financial capital or government services without also encouraging self-efficacy is simply performing worse than it might otherwise. With an absolute data moderation value of 0.167, which is rather small, but directionally, the result of a significant moderation by digital literacy ($b = 0.167$) was anticipated based on an argument that digitally competent entrepreneurs will be able to obtain greater benefits of their own self-efficacy by tapping into bigger markets, using digital financial services, and negotiating e-government settings. The relatively small mean of the digital literacy of the respondents ($M = 3.21$) does not mean that this moderating resource is utilized to the maximum but shows that there is an amplification gap in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Purwoto et al., 2025).

Theoretical Implications

The current study contributes to theory in 3 ways. First, it generalizes RBV into individual-level entrepreneurial psychology by demonstrating that financial, institutional, and social resources are antecedents of ESE and not causes of success- a positive step that links the organizational-level resource theory to the studies of behavioral entrepreneurship. Second, the paper uses the Social Feminist Theory to contextualize these paths in terms of gendered resource markets, which offers the theoretically-grounded explanation of why the success of women entrepreneurs in the patriarchal societies cannot be followed, in terms of the resource access only, without the psychological mediation layer. Third, the digital literacy confirmation as a moderator creates one more boundary condition of the relationship between ESE and performance and creates a theoretical framework of digital

entrepreneurship research in the gender-specific and developing nations.

Practical Implications

This analysis provides a simple message to the policymakers and development practitioners, viz. financial inclusion programs which are aimed at the women entrepreneurs of the Sialkot town, and other Pakistani cities, will best be implemented when the programs are well complemented by planned self-efficacy-forming networks, which could comprise of entrepreneur training programs, mentoring networks and peer learning groups. The government should reformulate the support programs that involve psychological empowerment and regulation and financial facilitation. The civil society organizations have to liaise with the financial institutions to offer the finance-plus-coaching content. In addition, the identified difference in the degree of digital literacy is a critical problem that ought to be dealt with by particular digital upskilling interventions, not as a standing intervention, but as multiplier of the already developed self-efficacy-enhancing investments. Local chambers of commerce and SME bodies in Sialkot can provide such integrated programming as they are well-positioned as conveners.

Limitations and Future Research Direction.

Several gaps are to be taken into account. The cause cannot be inferred causally, and the study cannot be directly generalized because of the cross-sectional nature of the study and its geographic reach (Sialkot). The self-reports are vulnerable to social desirability particularly in a cultural context like the patriarchal ones whereby the women may overstate social support. Future research must adopt longitudinal designs in order to track ESE trends, changes in resource access and digital competence with time. The contextual knowledge would be improved by having relative analyses of various cities in Pakistan with varying industrial structure and gender conventions. The subsequent research should also consider how the interplay between institutional trust and governmental support can be mediated with the help of the ESE relationship, and whether sector-specific (manufacturing and services)

differences in digital literacy can mediate ESE-WES relationships in different ways.

Conclusion

This research paper will demonstrate that the success of women entrepreneurship in Sialkot, Pakistan, does not happen through any endowment of resources, but through the process of sequential translation where financial access, government support, and social support, first bring about entrepreneurial efficacy of self-efficacy that leads to the actual entrepreneurship, and digital literacy increases the latter translation. That all eleven hypotheses were accepted, both at a conservative level of significance and at a liberal level, is strong empirical evidence of a combined moderated mediation model, which is founded on the RBV and Social Feminist Theory. As Pakistan can afford to ramp up its entrepreneurship ecosystem and deliver on the pledges of gender-inclusive development, the discussed fact outlines a theoretically consistent and practically achievable course of action empower women in finance, institutionalize it, surround it with social support, integrate self-efficacy building, and equip it with digitization skills and entrepreneurial performance will follow.

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