ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

Background: The growing importance of the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem (DEE) for business competitiveness, particularly among women digital entrepreneurs, was increasingly recognized. Research suggested that supportive ecosystems offered vital resources and networks. This study investigated this relationship specifically among women digital entrepreneurs in West Java.
Purpose: To explain the influence of the DEE on the competitive advantages of women digital entrepreneurs in West Java.
Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative method using regression analysis with Smart PLS 4 was applied to data from 135 women digital entrepreneurs in West Java.
Findings/Result: The DEE positively and significantly influences the competitive advantages of women digital entrepreneurs in West Java. The relationship is strong and stable, indicating a reliable impact of the digital ecosystem on competitiveness.
Conclusion: The DEE is a key driver of competitive advantages for women digital entrepreneurs in West Java, providing essential resources and opportunities. This study offers empirical evidence supporting the relevance of the DEE in fostering competitiveness and contributes to the theoretical understanding.
Originality/value (State of the art): This study provides specific empirical evidence on the DEE's influence on the competitive advantages of women digital entrepreneurs in West Java. It offers a theoretical framework and practical insights for leveraging digital network. Future research should explore the role of entrepreneurial communities in this dynamic.

Keywords: women digital entrepreneur, digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, competitive advantage, digital entrepreneur

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of digital technologies had created a potential business environment for women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to expand their reach and enhance their competitiveness (Pergelova et al. 2019). This shift toward digitalization enabled women digital entrepreneurs to initiate businesses with minimal capital investment, thereby fostering economic growth within their communities (Ojarikre et al. 2024). Key characteristics that supported the success of women entrepreneurs included competence and enthusiasm, including aspects, such as motivation, personality, individual abilities, self-concept, knowledge, and skills, all of which contribute to achieving optimal performance in running business (Dalimunthe et al. 2024). Women digital entrepreneurs contributed 40% to the global workforce and were recognized as one of the most significant groups of digital entrepreneurs (Rosca et al. 2020). However, limited digital literacy skills and support systems remained common challenges for some women digital entrepreneurs (Kusumawardhani et al. 2022). This underscored the need for targeted training and resources to enhance the technical skills of women digital entrepreneurs (Feranita et al. 2023). If these challenges were ignored, they could adversely affect the sustainability and competitive advantage of their businesses (Morales, 2023; Swati & Dua, 2024).

Competitive advantage referred to the unique attributes or capabilities that allowed businesses to outperform their competitors (Bendell et al. 2020). Competitive advantage was the ability of an organization to provide added value compared to the competitors, secure a superior market position, and address challenges in maintaining this advantage sustainably (Saputra et al. 2024). This term was directly related to customer-expected value, where the consistency between an organization service and customer expectations showed competitive edge (Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Mehri & Hosseini, 2005; Purbasari et al. 2020). This concept was critical for digital entrepreneurs, including women digital entrepreneurs, as it enabled them to establish a strong market position, improve profitability, and sustain growth over time (Stefan et al. 2021). In the context of digital entrepreneurship, competitive advantage could be achieved through various factors such as the use of innovative technologies, effective digital marketing strategies, and the ability to leverage digital platforms for broader market access (Hazudin et al. 2021). Moreover, digital marketing had been shown to have a strong positive correlation with digital entrepreneurship among women entrepreneurs, indicating that effective online strategies could generate substantial competitive advantages (Morales, 2023). To navigate these challenges, women digital entrepreneurs should develop digital literacy and continuously adapt to emerging technologies, as these skills were essential for maintaining competitiveness in the digital era (Gardašević et al. 2021; Widiawati et al. 2022).

The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem played a crucial role in supporting women digital entrepreneurs by providing the necessary resources, networks, and mentorship opportunities (Alam et al. 2022; Grandy et al. 2020; Olsson & Bernhard, 2021), and represented the complex interactions of various elements that facilitated the creation, growth, and sustainability of digital ventures (Nambisan, 2017; Purbasari et al. 2018). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem was characterized by its reliance on digital technology, which enhanced operational efficiency and created new market opportunities and business models (Bakri et al. 2024; Nambisan, 2017). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem also promoted knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, which were crucial for innovation and competitive positioning (Etemad, 2023; Nambisan et al. 2018). This ecosystem facilitated access to digital tools and training, vital for building a competitive advantage (Molina-López et al. 2021; Pergelova et al. 2019). The ecosystem comprises digital entrepreneurs, customers, suppliers, and complementary entities, such as governments, other firms, universities, investors, banking institutions, and business communities that collaborate and compete for survival and dominance (Beliaeva et al. 2019; Beltagui et al. 2020; Chae, 2019). Beliaeva et al. (2019) reported that interactions among actors were key factors driving transformation and success in digital entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the synergy among business actors, governments, and communities was essential in building an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supported innovation (Kakeesh, 2024; Stam & van de Ven, 2021). By fostering an environment where ideas and resources could be freely exchanged, women digital entrepreneurs could leverage collective intelligence and shared resources, significantly contributing to their competitive advantage (Etemad, 2023; Nambisan et al. 2018). Ultimately, the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem was recognized as a pivotal driver of competitive advantage in the modern economy by facilitating access to digital technology, encouraging collaboration, and

promoting innovation. Women digital entrepreneurs within the ecosystem could achieve sustainable growth and maintain competitive advantage in increasingly digital markets (Purbasari et al. 2018; Spigel & Harrison, 2018). This study expanded on the previous endeavors by addressing the women digital entrepreneurs and the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem (DEE), which remained underspecified in the literature on developing economies (Autio et al. 2018; Zahra, 2021). In contrast to most studies, which had examined DEE in the context of generic start-up ecosystems, this study demonstrated how women entrepreneurs, who were usually hampered by deficits such as digital illiteracy, resource scarcity, and institutional voids, strategically utilize system elements to gain and sustain competitive advantage. In addition to addressing the gaps in understanding DEE–CA relationships, this study added to the digital entrepreneurship literature by addressing the intersectional DEE–CA relationship more inclusively (McAdam et al. 2019; Kakeesh, 2024).

Research developments on women digital entrepreneurs, the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, and competitive advantage have gained significant traction in recent years (Gardašević et al. 2021). This growth can be attributed to the increasing recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in the digital economy (Mamun et al. 2018; Stefan et al. 2021). Women digital entrepreneurs are often regarded as critical drivers of economic growth, particularly in emerging markets, where their participation can lead to job creation and innovation (McAdam et al. 2019). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, encompassing the technological, social, and institutional frameworks supporting entrepreneurship, plays a vital role in shaping the experiences of women digital entrepreneurs (Bakri et al. 2024; Nambisan, 2017). Despite the growing body of literature, several gaps remain in research on women digital entrepreneurs and the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. One significant gap is the lack of discussion on women digital entrepreneurs in relation to competitive advantage (McAdam et al. 2019). Existing studies have focused on digital literacy (Molina-López et al. 2021) and access to financial services (Ojarikre et al. 2024) with little attention to the synergistic contribution of the elements of the ecosystem: the government, universities, investors, and business associations to the achievement of sustained competitive advantage. Moreover, the relevance of DEE to women digital entrepreneurs concerning competitive advantage is still underexplored (McAdam et al. 2019; Laily et al. 2022; Ojarikre et al. 2024). Furthermore, empirical evidence on the relevance of the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem to the competitive advantage of women digital entrepreneurs remains limited (Laily et al. 2022; Ojarikre et al. 2024). Addressing this gap, the present study offers new empirical data on the DEE–CA relationship in West Java's context of women digital entrepreneurs, with broader implications for other developing economies. Therefore, further research is essential to address these gaps and develop effective policies and support systems that empower women digital entrepreneurs, enhance their competitive advantage, and maximize their contributions to the economy.

This study focused on women digital entrepreneurs in West Java, considering that their ventures had gained momentum, driven by increasing digital technology accessibility and a supportive digital entrepreneurial ecosystem fostered by government policies and community networks (Stefan et al. 2021). Most women digital entrepreneurs in West Java had leveraged digital platforms to enhance business operations and reach broader markets, significantly improving their competitive advantage (Nurlatifah et al. 2024). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem in West Java, which included supportive government policies and access to funding, played a vital role in the growth of women digital entrepreneurs (Fkun et al. 2023). Despite these advancements, women digital entrepreneurs in West Java still faced challenges such as limited access to capital networks and digital literacy skills (Hayati & Arini, 2023). Additionally, a lack of training and mentorship opportunities to foster creativity might hinder their business growth (Sulandjari, 2023). A combination of available business capital, creativity, and digitalization capabilities to adapt to changing market conditions would significantly contribute to competitive advantage in the digital economy, which could be achieved within the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem (Bakri et al. 2024; Nambisan, 2017; Setyaningrum & Muafi, 2022). This study sought to answer the research question of whether the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem influenced the competitive advantage of women digital entrepreneurs in West Java by using a quantitative approach, utilizing regression models.

This study aims to explain the influence of the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem on the competitive advantage of women digital entrepreneurs in West Java. The research contributes to the development of theoretical frameworks while providing empirical evidence on the relevance of the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem and competitive advantage, serving as a reference for both practitioners and academics in similar industries.

METHODS

A total of 130 women digital entrepreneurs who completed the questionnaire correctly and thoroughly were included as respondents. The sample size comprised 130 respondents, which was determined through the rule-of-thumb for PLS-SEM, which stated that the minimum number of observations was 10 per indicator (Hair et al. 2022). Since the largest construct (DEE) had eight indicators, the sample of 130 was more than enough, since the minimum requirement was 80, which confirmed statistical reliability, respondents for this study were purposefully drawn from three active entrepreneurial associations: TDA, IWAPI, and ABDSI, to guarantee that participants had both formal recognition as entrepreneurs and demonstrable use of digital platforms in their business operations. This approach strengthens the representativeness of the sample within the West Java women digital entrepreneur population.

This study used primary and secondary data collection methods to achieve thorough and reliable results. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire, designed on Google Forms. The questionnaire was shared with respondents via WhatsApp and email to enhance reach and participation. Alongside primary data, secondary data sources were gathered through the extensive literature review, which included relevant academic journals, books, and official reports. This aided in hypothesis development while reinforcing the interpretation of empirical findings within the comprehensive context of prior research. The given time frame for the data collection was four months, starting in April and ending in July, in the year 2025.

The research methodology in this study was quantitative and involves calculating regression models and using Smart PLS 4 software. In this regard, these regression models enabled forecasting the value of the dependent variable based on one or more independent variables during dependence, and also permit examination of the intricate relationships among constructs (Steleżuk & Wolanin, 2023). The questionnaire was adapted from validated scales measuring the Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) (Beliaeva et al. 2019; Beltagui et al. 2020) and Competitive Advantage (Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Purbasari et al. 2020), with items assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Data cleaning was performed before analysis by removing incomplete responses (n = 7) and identifying outliers through Mahalanobis distance. Statistical regression analysis assumptions, including linearity, independence, and homoscedasticity, were verified to ensure data adequacy (Ghafar, 2023). Robustness checks were conducted by applying bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples in SmartPLS 4 to test the stability of path coefficients (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hair et al. 2022). Furthermore, multicollinearity was examined using VIF values, all below the recommended threshold of 3.3, indicating no collinearity concerns (Kock, 2015). These procedures collectively enhanced confidence in the reliability and validity of the regression results. Operationalization of variables in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization of variables

Variable	Dimension	Scale
Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) (X) (Beliaeva et al. 2019; Beltagui et al. 2020; Chae, 2019)	Digital Entrepreneur (DEE1); Customer (DEE2); Supplier (DEE3); Government (DEE4); University (DEE5); Finance (DEE6); Investor (DEE7); Business Community/Association (DEE8)	Ordinal
Competitive Advantage (CA) (Y) (Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Mehri & Hosseini, 2005; Purbasari et al. 2020)	Different Added Value (CA1); Uniqueness (CA2); Difficult To Imitate (CA3); Product Value – Market Fit (CA4)	Ordinal

The hypothesis to be tested in this study is related to the influence of the Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) on Competitive Advantage (CA). Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) significantly influences Competitive Advantage **(**CA) by driving innovation, enhancing operational efficiency, and facilitating market penetration through advanced technologies (Bakri et al. 2024). This result is consistent with the report of Diawati, who showed the necessity for digital women entrepreneurs to master digital strategies, such as digital marketing and consumer data analytics, to effectively navigate competitive challenges in online markets (Diawati, 2024). Furthermore, the concept of digital ecosystem, as discussed by Morande and Tewari, shows the interdependence of software, hardware, and digital services, which collectively enhance the capability of an organization to achieve its objectives and gain competitive edge (Martínez-Peláez et al. 2023; Morandé & Tewari, 2023). The development of DEE enables companies to transition core activities into digital field, a shift that supports operational efficiency and also fosters innovation. This is critical for maintaining CA in rapidly evolving markets (Ji & Zhuang, 2023; Lipovenko et al. 2022). Based on this explanation, the hypothesis in this study is formulated as follows:

H1: Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem has a Positive and Significant Impact on Competitive Advantage

The research framework illustrated the relevance between Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Competitive Advantage (Figure 1). The Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) was defined as a particular framework consisting of different components such as digital entrepreneurs (DEE1), customers (DEE2), suppliers (DEE3), government (DEE4), universities (DEE5), finance (DEE6), investors (DEE7), and business communities (DEE8) (Chae, 2019; Beltagui et al. 2020; Beliaeva et al. 2020). This specific ecosystem significantly enhanced a firm's Competitive Advantage (CA). DEE helped foster various added value (CA1), uniqueness (CA2), difficult-to-imitate capabilities (CA3), and strong product–market fit (CA4) through resource access, innovation, collaboration, and market insight (Mehri & Hosseini, 2005; Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Purbasari et al. 2020). This ecosystem helped emerging digital ventures strengthen their enduring competitive edge as they adapt to new challenges and transform.

RESULTS

The validity and reliability assessments of the CA and DEE variables reveal that, based on the rule of thumb, Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (ρ_c) values exceeding 0.7 are considered indicative of good reliability, while an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.5 demonstrates adequate convergent validity.

Table 2 shows that for the CA variable, the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.829, and the Composite Reliability (ρ_c) value is 0.898, both exceeding 0.7, indicating good reliability. Additionally, the AVE value of 0.745 signifies excellent convergent validity, as it is well above the threshold of 0.5. Similarly, for the DEE variable, the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.888, and the Composite Reliability (ρ_c) value is 0.911, both reflecting good reliability. The AVE value of 0.563 further demonstrates adequate convergent validity.

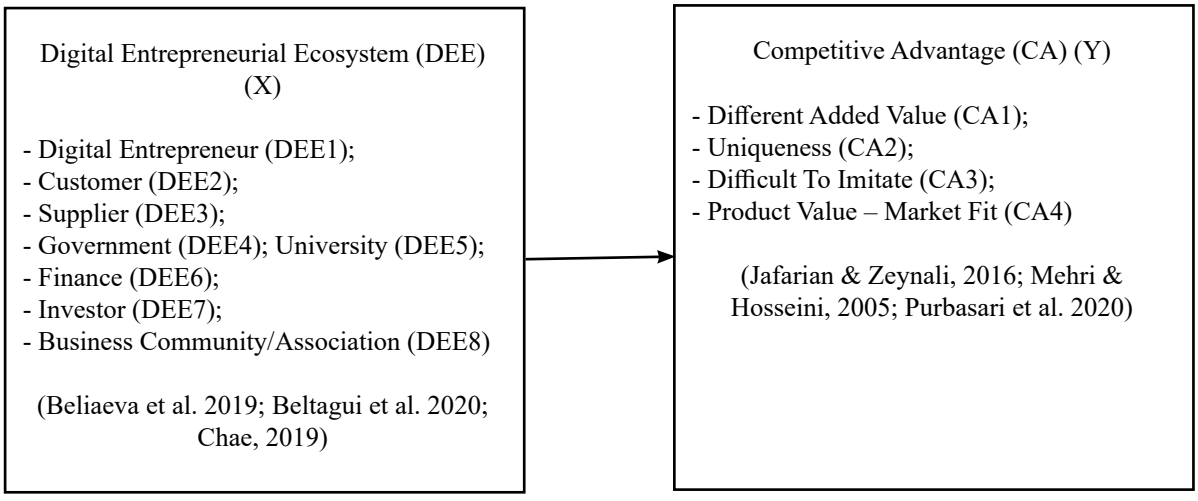

Figure 1. Research framework

Based on the results of the calculations and data analysis using Smart PLS 4 (Table 3), the relationship between DEE and CA shows that DEE has a significant positive impact on CA. The regression coefficient of 0.733 indicates that for each one-unit increase in DEE, CA will increase by 0.733 units. This demonstrates a strong and positive relationship, where improvements in the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem can significantly enhance a company's competitive advantage. This relationship highlights the importance of investment in the digital ecosystem to drive a company's competitiveness. Additionally, the intercept value in this model is 0.000, indicating that in the absence of DEE, other variables in the model do not contribute to CA. The model also shows that approximately 53.7% of the variability in CA can be explained by DEE, suggesting that the model has moderate predictive power. Therefore, although DEE significantly influences CA, there are likely other factors outside the model that may also play a role in determining a company's competitive advantage.

Analysis of the Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) indicates a pronounced and significant interaction with Competitive Advantage (CA). The regression results indicate that a one-unit increase in DEE is associated with a 0.172 increase in CA, holding other factors constant. This demonstrates the ecosystem's meaningful contribution to enhancing women entrepreneurs' competitiveness. The standardized coefficient, which is 0.733, reflects that the impact of DEE on CA, while strong, is also mitigated by the influence of other indicators in the model. The standard error (SE) of 0.016 suggests that the estimate is made with a high degree of precision. Moreover, the t-value of 10.712 surpasses the critical value of 1.96, affirming the coefficient's statistical significance at a 95% confidence level. The 0.000 p-value confirms this outcome, emphasizing that the result has a very low probability of being random ($p < 0.05$). Further, the 95% CI of DEE's impact on CA, from 0.140 to 0.204, strengthens the argument by not including zero.

The intercept reveals an unstandardized Competitive Advantage (CA) value of 4.186 in the context of a Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) value of zero. The t-value for the intercept is 4.875, greater than 1.96, indicating that it is significant at a 95 percent confidence level, which means the t-value is significant. Also supporting the finding, a p-value of 0.000 suggests that the intercept is statistically significantly different from zero. Moreover, the intercept's 95% confidence interval is from 2.482 to 5.890, which excludes zero, further strengthens the estimate, and highlights the model's intercept accuracy value.

Overall, these results indicate that DEE has a significant and positive impact on CA, with a relatively strong relationship and stable estimates.

Table 2. Results of validity and reliability measurement for variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Competitive Advantage (CA)	0.829	0.829	0.898	0.745
Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE)	0.888	0.899	0.911	0.563

Notes: Table 2 shows excellent validity and reliability for the three main variables (CA and DEE) with high Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE values, confirming the suitability for further analysis

Table 3. Regression calculation results

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	SE	T value	P value	2.5 %	97.5 %
Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE)	0.172	0.733	0.016	10.712	0.000	0.140	0.204
Intercept	4.186	0.000	0.859	4.875	0.000	2.482	5.890

Note: Based on Table 3, which presents the results of regression calculations using Smart PLS 4 software, the following is the analysis and interpretation

Based on Table 4, the regression analysis conducted using Smart PLS 4, the R-square value of 0.537 indicates that 53.7% of the variability in Competitive Advantage (CA) can be explained by the independent variable used in the model, which is the Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE). This suggests that the model has moderate predictive power. In the context of this research, this value indicates that DEE can predict more than half of the variability in CA. In contrast, the remaining variability is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

Table 4. R-square calculation results

	Competitive Advantage (CA)
R-square	0.537
R-square adjusted	0.532
Durbin-Watson test	1.363

The adjusted R-square value of 0.532 is slightly lower than the R-square value, indicating that an adjustment has been made for the number of predictors in the model. Adjusted R-square is a more accurate representation of the model's predictive capability, particularly when multiple predictors or the model uses a smaller sample size. This value suggests that after the adjustment, the model can still explain approximately 53.2% of the variability in CA.

Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson value of 1.363 is used to test for autocorrelation in the regression model's residuals. Durbin-Watson values range from 0 to 4, with a value around 2 indicating no autocorrelation. The value of 1.363 is close to 2 but slightly lower, suggesting a slight positive autocorrelation. However, this value is still within the acceptable range and is not considered a significant concern. If the Durbin-Watson value were closer to 0 or 4, it could indicate significant autocorrelation, undermining the model's validity.

Overall, these results suggest that the regression model used has moderate predictive ability and that autocorrelation in the residuals is not a major issue, although there is some indication of weak positive autocorrelation. The model performs well in explaining the variability of CA based on the independent variable, DEE.

The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem builds upon the inherently networked nature of digital entrepreneurs within an ecosystem (Beliaeva et al. 2019). The ecosystem comprises industry players, customers, suppliers, and complementary entities such as governments, other industrial firms, universities, investors, banking institutions, and business communities that collaborate and compete for survival and dominance (Beliaeva et al. 2019; Beltagui et al. 2020; Chae, 2019). Competitive advantage directly relates to customer-expected value, where an organization's offerings that better align with customer expectations indicate a competitive edge (Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Mehri & Hosseini, 2005; Purbasari et al. 2020). In this study, competitive advantage is analyzed through the following dimensions (Jafarian & Zeynali, 2016; Mehri & Hosseini, 2005; Purbasari et al. 2020), including Different Added Value, Uniqueness, Difficult to Imitate and Product Value – Market Fit.

The findings of the study underscore a strong and statistically significant influence of the Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (DEE) on Competitive Advantage (CA) among women digital entrepreneurs in West Java. A regression coefficient of 0.733 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicate that improvements in DEE substantially contribute to enhancing CA (Purbasari & Raharja, 2025). The model explains approximately 53.7% of the variability in CA, suggesting a moderate predictive strength, while emphasizing the role of digital infrastructure, stakeholder collaboration, and knowledge exchange in fostering competitiveness.

The analysis confirms that women entrepreneurs embedded in a well-developed DEE benefit from increased access to resources, technology, networks, and mentorship, which are critical components of sustainable business growth (Bakri et al. 2024; Nambisan, 2017). These elements contribute to distinct dimensions of CA such as uniqueness, product-market fit, and the difficulty of imitation (Purbasari et al. 2020). This relationship also aligns with ecosystem theories where digital readiness and institutional support significantly determine entrepreneurial outcomes (Spigel & Harrison, 2018). These findings align with Nahru's research, which highlights that a company's readiness to embrace digital change is critical to maintaining its competitiveness (Nahru & Lestari, 2023). Additionally, the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem enables entrepreneurs to connect with partners and build alliances, which are crucial for leveraging business scale and enhancing competitive advantage (Leão & da Silva, 2021). This interconnectedness fosters innovation and collaboration, both of which are essential for sustaining competitive

advantage in rapidly evolving markets (Haseeb et al. 2019). Therefore, it is understood that the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem significantly influences competitive advantage by fostering an environment that promotes digital transformation, innovation, and strategic collaboration, thereby enabling businesses to thrive in competitive markets. The interaction of various factors, including government support, technological readiness, and strategic capabilities, collectively enhances the potential for sustainable competitive advantage (Krasota et al. 2020).

Our findings contribute to ecosystem theory by confirming that women entrepreneurs' competitiveness derives from individual capabilities and institutional and relational supports embedded within the DEE. These findings provide an important theoretical addition, demonstrating that the DEE is an active enabler of strategic positioning rather than merely as contextual infrastructure (Autio et al. 2018; Nambisan, 2017). From a policy perspective, the results highlight the need for interventions at the ecosystem level, emphasizing institutional and network supports, rather than relying solely on individual entrepreneur training programs.

Managerial Implication

For practitioners, especially women digital entrepreneurs, the findings highlight the need to actively engage with digital ecosystems and build networks with other entrepreneurs, government programs, educational institutions and financial actors. Investing in digital tools, acquiring digital literacy, and joining entrepreneurial communities are essential strategies for gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage. Besides that, from the perspective of women digital entrepreneurs as managers, the actors supporting their ventures, such as incubators, accelerators, or non-profit networks, should integrate an ecosystem-based approach into their strategic agenda. They should focus on opening access, tracking the maturity of the surrounding ecosystems, and encouraging digital collaboration. Women digital entrepreneurs, as managers, can use this understanding to design integrated programs that align their ventures with broader support systems and innovation networks, thereby increasing their resilience and competitive position in an evolving market.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage. This result underscores the importance of the digital ecosystem in driving company competitiveness. This study contributes to the theoretical development of the digital entrepreneurship literature by empirically validating the connection between DEE and CA in the context of women entrepreneurs. It reinforces the idea that DEE is not only a contextual backdrop but an active enabler of strategic positioning and market competitiveness, particularly for underrepresented groups in digital markets

Recommendations

Women digital entrepreneurs can use the results of this study as a basis for designing strategies related to the development of networks and collaboration with business actors, communities, or other business associations that can help them gain support, share knowledge, and build mutually beneficial collaborations. Women digital entrepreneurs can also use the findings to identify the latest technologies and innovations in their products and services to maintain their competitiveness. For policymakers, the results of this study can assist in formulating programs to enhance the competitiveness of women digital entrepreneurs, particularly in West Java, by encouraging the formation of networks and communities of women digital entrepreneurs, which connect them with mentors, investors, and fellow entrepreneurs. Further research is encouraged to explore additional factors influencing competitive advantage beyond digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as digital leadership or innovation capabilities and the involvement of digital entrepreneurial communities or associations in influencing the growth and competitiveness of digital entrepreneurs. This highlights the social impact and provides new insights into collaborative networks and the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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