

Human Factors In Digital Entrepreneurship: A Review Of Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, And Innovation

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of human factors in shaping digital entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation. Through a structured synthesis of recent literature, the study identifies key conceptual developments and persistent theoretical gaps within the evolving digital entrepreneurial landscape. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence functions as a foundational individual capability that enhances adaptability, resilience, and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. Leadership is conceptualised as a critical organisational mechanism that translates individual competencies into collective performance by fostering collaboration, trust, and strategic alignment. Innovation is positioned as a human-driven process that emerges from the interaction between cognitive capabilities, creativity, and digitally enabled environments. The study further highlights that existing research remains fragmented, with limited integrative frameworks that capture the interdependence among individual, organisational, and innovation dimensions. In response, the paper proposes a unified conceptual framework that emphasises the dynamic, cyclical relationship among emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation within digital ecosystems. The analysis underscores the importance of aligning human capabilities with technological advancements to achieve sustainable entrepreneurial performance and digital entrepreneurship and identifying key directions for future research, including multi-level analysis, cross-cultural validation, and the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Digital Entrepreneurship; Emotional Intelligence; Digital Leadership; Innovation; Entrepreneurial Ecosystems; Human Factors

Entrepreneurial firms are central to the creation and spread of digital innovation, and digitalisation itself increases the entrepreneurial opportunities. Nevertheless, the current research is conceptually disjointed, in part because there are no cohesive frameworks and common terms of reference between innovation and entrepreneurship. The current research paper is a synthesis of the intellectual space at the intersection of these two themes, including collaborative networks, business model innovation, digital platforms, digital ventures, entrepreneurial profiles, and innovation ecosystems. The results highlight the importance of integrating theoretical views to resolve discrepancies in previous studies. It identifies key gaps, especially the absence of multi-level and interdisciplinary approaches, and demands the creation of specific theories to explain more effectively digital innovation in the context of entrepreneurship (Felicetti et al., 2024). The results point to business model innovation enabled by technology as one of the key conceptual pillars that fuel scholarly discussion. The rising scholarly interest indicates the rising importance of digital transformation in entrepreneurial practices, especially in reaction to the recent disruptions in the world. In spite of these developments, there are still significant gaps in theory, such as the lack of integrative and inclusive frameworks. The paper highlights the necessity of future research on sustainability-oriented digital entrepreneurship, cross-cultural views, and the implication of new technologies in the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems (Rana et al., 2026). The essence of digitalisation is transforming products, services, processes and business models and thus leading to the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship in digital settings. This paper summarizes the theoretical connection between digital innovation and digital entrepreneurship, and how the two concepts interrelate in the creation of dynamic

I. Introduction

digital ecosystems. The results show that the previous literature has mostly considered innovation and entrepreneurship as different fields, which has led to a paucity of integrative knowledge. The study indicates the role of digital innovation as a driver of entrepreneurial change by bringing together prior knowledge. It finds serious gaps in theory, mainly the absence of specific research on how they relate to each other, and requests more unified models to describe how they interact and how they influence the changing digital business landscapes (Arora & Singh, 2025). This paper summarizes the conceptual connections between digital innovation and entrepreneurship, focusing on the mutual impact on the economic and organisational performance. The results indicate that digital innovation improves entrepreneurial performance by increasing efficiency, expanding the market, and improving stakeholder interactions. It is found that there is a dynamic feedback relationship, where digitalization drives entrepreneurial development, which subsequently gives rise to additional innovation. The analysis also reveals the importance of institutional support to sustain entrepreneurial activity, which can be critical and not necessarily technological preparedness. Moreover, it is demonstrated that digital technologies can lead to the growth of productivity in industries. Regardless of these insights, the literature does not have any integrative frameworks that would capture the interaction between technological, institutional, and contextual factors that shape digital entrepreneurship (Kreiterling, 2023). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is considered to be a key factor that determines the performance of firms in financial, non-financial, and sustainability aspects. This paper summarizes the conceptual linkage between EO and organisational performance, and its contribution to innovation, growth, brand building, customer relationship, and sustainability performance. The results show that the success of EO depends on the contextual factors, including industry characteristics, the degree of digital maturity, and alignment with sustainability goals. It is also noted in the review that there are major discrepancies in the conceptualization and measurement of EO, which highlights the importance of standardized and context-specific frameworks. It requires integrative strategies to balance EO with digital change and responsible governments in evolving business conditions (Pathinettampadiyan & Thavaraj, 2025a). Digital business model innovation has emerged as a vital channel through which start-ups can improve their performance and competitiveness in the digital economy. This paper builds a combined theoretical framework to elaborate on how digital leadership

contributes to the digital business model innovation. The results indicate that the ability of digital platforms is one of the mediating factors through which leadership can affect the outcomes of innovations, and that the importance of more detailed theoretical frameworks to elaborate on the interaction between personal and organisational conditions to facilitate long-term digital innovation (Ding, 2026).

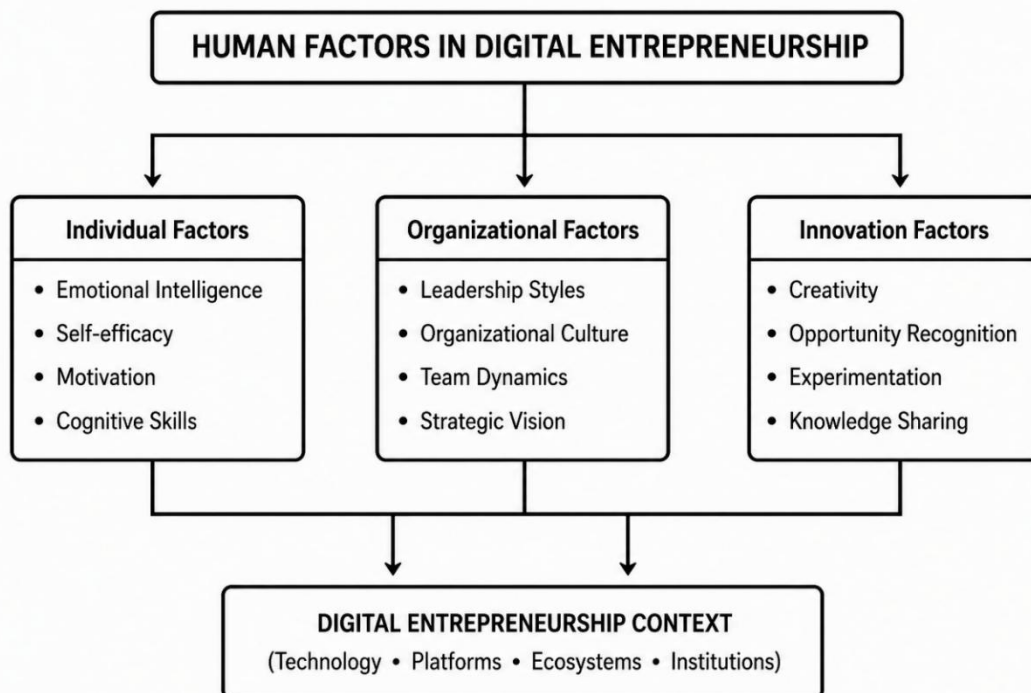
II. Conceptual Foundations of Human Factors in Digital Entrepreneurship

The study of entrepreneurial ecosystems is still conceptually disjointed, and no universally agreed-upon definition exists as a result of differences in sources of data and perspectives of analysis. This paper is a synthesis of the intellectual architecture of the discipline, with its focus on the interdependence of higher education institutions in entrepreneurial ecosystems. The results reveal several thematic areas, such as the role of educational settings in the development of ecosystems. It puts emphasis on the increasing awareness of universities as key participants in the development of entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer. In spite of these developments, the literature has not been integrative to bring educational institutions to the larger ecosystem processes, and there is a need for more context-sensitive and holistic theoretical approaches (Correia et al., 2024). In the face of increasing digitalisation and rising societal demands, companies are being forced to combine innovation and sustainability to remain competitive. This paper builds a conceptual framework between dynamic capabilities, responsible innovation, and competitive advantage. The results suggest that digital orientation, digital capability, and adaptability are enabling factors of innovation, and that responsible innovation serves as an intermediate that transforms digital initiatives into sustainable competitive advantage (Ngayabaseka et al., 2025). The growing customer awareness and expectations in a growing competitive service environment have increased the focus on service quality and delivery. The results indicate that the increased competition and continuous sectoral reforms have increased the pressure on the organisation to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of its services. It highlights the need to match service delivery mechanisms with the changing customer expectations as a way of maintaining loyalty and trust (Thavaraj, 2012). Digital transformation is also becoming a strategic priority of small and medium-sized enterprises, but the current body of research has focused more on technological adoption and less

on internal organisational processes. This paper formulates an integrative model that connects transformational leadership, organisational culture, and dynamic capabilities to the results of digital transformation. The results indicate that strategic vision and adaptive change are supported by leadership and innovative cultures, and are less resistant to supportive organisational cultures. The literature does not provide coherent, multi-theoretical models that fully capture the interaction of leadership, culture, and capabilities in the process of creating sustainable digital transformation (Gustiawan et al., 2025). This paper combines the results of the determinants of entrepreneurial performance in digitally enabled and hybrid workplaces with a focus on the relative significance of individual, organisational, and environmental factors. The research contributes the performance results in the online environment (Pathinettampadiyan et al., 2026). Digital leadership needs the ability to solve complex problems that come with a fast change in technology like the increasing levels of technostress among the workers. This paper summarizes the connection between emotional intelligence and digital leadership, focusing on how emotional awareness can be used to address the well-being of workforce in the digital transformation. The results indicate that emotional

intelligence can help leaders alleviate technostress through effective communication, transparency, and trust. Although these contributions have been made, the current literature is still inadequate in its systematic associations of emotional intelligence with the management of technostress, which suggests the necessity of more systematic and theoretically-based models to inform the leadership practice in the digital world (Ertiö et al., 2024). Policy and entrepreneurship education programs are designed to spur entrepreneurship by providing individuals with the resources and skills that are required. Nonetheless, the current literature indicates that there are considerable emotional issues that are faced during the process of entrepreneurship that are not adequately considered in existing models. It promotes a translational methodology, which incorporates emotional skills, resilience-focused strategies, and supportive resources into the process of entrepreneurship development. The results highlight the importance of more holistic models that would entail the inclusion of emotional aspects in addition to technical and strategic competencies to equip entrepreneurs with the complexities and uncertainties involved in the entrepreneurial processes (Aly et al., 2021).

Figure 1. Conceptual Structure of Human Factors in Digital Entrepreneurship



Source: Author's compilation based on literature review

The figure above presents the conceptual structure of human factors in digital entrepreneurship, categorising key dimensions into individual, organisational, and innovation-related components within a broader digital context.

III. Emotional Intelligence in Digital Entrepreneurship

Emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership style have become two constructs that are closely related in the study of entrepreneurship. This paper conceptualises EI as a key antecedent of transformational leadership, with emotion appraisal and emotion regulation playing essential roles in the development of leadership effectiveness. The results show that entrepreneurs with greater emotional competencies are better positioned to demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours that promote motivation and innovation. It also mentions gender and generational differences as significant contextual factors that impact the display of EI and leadership. Although these are some of the insights, the literature does not provide detailed frameworks that systematically combine demographic contingencies with emotional and leadership constructs, and thus more detailed and inclusive theoretical frameworks are needed (Esteves et al., 2024). The performance of an entrepreneur depends on the combination of individual, psychological, and environmental factors, highlighting the impact of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills on decision-making, leadership qualities, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial success. The results reveal that an entrepreneur's performance increases with greater emotional intelligence. Further, this paper highlights the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on this relationship (Pathinettampadiyan & Thavaraj, 2025b). Emotional intelligence (EI) has attracted considerable interdisciplinary interest, especially in business and management research. This paper summarises the theoretical framework and conceptual development of EI, and its close relationship with other constructs, including transformational leadership, organisational behaviour, team performance, and employee creativity, as demonstrated in previous studies. A shift toward themes such as social intelligence, job satisfaction, holistic views, and entrepreneurial intention characterises a more recent body of literature. The results also reveal new areas of connection among EI, mindfulness, crisis scenarios, and artificial intelligence, suggesting a broadening of its conceptual range. Despite this development, the literature remains incomplete, with no integrative frameworks to systematically connect the

traditional and emerging themes, and thus requires more integrative, theory-based methods (Sharma & Tiwari, 2024). Entrepreneurship education and policy initiatives are designed to stimulate entrepreneurial activity by developing skills, resources, and competencies. However, existing research underscores the significant emotional challenges encountered throughout the entrepreneurial journey, which remain insufficiently integrated into these frameworks. This study highlights a critical disconnect between theoretical insights on entrepreneurial emotions and their practical application in education and policy design (Aly et al., 2021; Pathinettampadiyan et al., n.d.). The results indicate that the dimensions have a strong impact on decision-making processes, but self-awareness has a relatively weak impact. The research adds to the literature by incorporating emotional capabilities into a behavioural intention model, providing insights into the role of affective variables in motivating socially oriented entrepreneurial behaviour (Gazi et al., 2024). The connection between emotional intelligence (EI) and creativity is conceptually vague, and a framework for studying both facilitating and inhibiting processes has been developed. This paper theorises that EI affects emotionally based variables, including task conflict, role stressors, and self-efficacy, which, when combined, determine creative outcomes. The results suggest that EI has no direct impact on creativity, but that its effect is mediated by a complex, even contradictory, process. Although self-efficacy promotes creative expression, it can also be suppressed by role-related stressors. The research paper indicates that more integrative and subtle models are necessary to incorporate these dynamics and describe the complex association between emotional intelligence and creativity (dos Santos et al., 2025). With growing competition and increasing stress in organisational settings, the interaction between emotional intelligence and spirituality in the workplace is becoming a key determinant of leadership effectiveness. This paper constructs a conceptual model that links these constructs to career success and emphasises emotional intelligence as a major driver of self-awareness, motivation, and interpersonal effectiveness. Workplace spirituality is reported as a direct cause of career success and as a moderator that enhances the strength of emotional intelligence's influence on leadership outcomes. The results highlight the significance of considering emotional and spiritual aspects to improve leadership performance. Nevertheless, the existing literature remains insufficient to develop more detailed models of the dynamic interplay among

these factors, indicating that more integrative and context-sensitive models are required to explain entrepreneurial performance in digital settings (Rohali & Hardiansyah, 2026; Wu, 2024). The current research is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour to analyse the relationship between emotional intelligence and social entrepreneurial intentions. Emotional intelligence is viewed as a multivariate concept, in which the importance of relationship management, social awareness, and self-management skills for the formation of individual intentions in relation to entrepreneurial endeavours aimed at creating social value becomes apparent. Self-awareness is found to be less important than the other three constructs analysed in the study. From a theoretical perspective, the current paper contributes to developing the theory by linking emotional capabilities to behavioural intentions to engage in socially oriented activities. However, there are insufficient integrated theories (Pathinettampadiyan, n.d.). Digital entrepreneurship has been a major source of innovation, financial growth and job creation, and technology has been a revolution in determining the success of start-ups with technological developments and the fundamental entrepreneurial processes, and thus, more holistic and theory-informed approaches are required to account for start-up success in the digital environment (Oyeyemi et al., 2024).

IV. Leadership in Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Success for women entrepreneurs comes from how skills, support, environment and available tools fit together. Digital understanding shapes how leadership works alongside fresh ideas in real situations. Money choices gain importance when tied closely to strong ecosystem backing. Funding boosts results most when information moves freely across networks. Leading well matters less without reliable data flowing through teams. New thinking thrives mainly if digital access balances with trust. Social norms sometimes block even clear opportunities despite readiness. Progress now depends more on smart use of connected insights than old formulas. Future theories must include both tech habits and community patterns equally (Indrawati et al., 2026). Looking closer at how big systems grow, this work explores what happens when institutions help shape digital startup environments. Not just single companies matter - what unfolds across entire networks plays a key role too. Change often begins where old players team up with new ones, rules shift slowly, and connections form across borders. Both individual organisations and wider structures add pieces to the puzzle over

time. By tying shifts in rules and norms to real-world tech ventures, insight deepens on how things actually evolve. Still missing are models that fully weave together actions from different levels into one clear picture of lasting growth (Stein et al., 2026). Within the framework of rapid digital change and sustainability demands, open innovation and strategic collaboration are becoming central to entrepreneurial ecosystems to attain resilient growth. In this study, a multi-level conceptual framework is created to connect results indicate that transformational and ethical leadership help to build trust, share knowledge, and create value collaboratively, whereas strategic alliances can promote agility and innovation by co-creating and using digital platforms. A mutual connection is established whereby leadership enhances the effectiveness of alliances, and alliance participation enhances leadership abilities (Lobo et al., 2025). This paper will examine the nature of the sharing economy in the context of digital entrepreneurial ecosystems (DEEs). It models DEEs as interrelated systems, in which businesses, technologies, and markets co-evolve to facilitate entrepreneurial activity. The paper presents integrative frameworks that encompass governance structures, user participation, and dynamics of digital marketplaces, noting their joint contribution to facilitating collaboration and value creation (Hajli et al., 2025). The ecosystem, as a structural basis that facilitates the creation of opportunities, and decent work, improves the quality and sustainability of entrepreneurial results. The results indicate that more comprehensive economic circumstances and socioeconomic inequalities are decisive moderating variables that determine the efficiency of ecosystem support mechanisms. The research contributes to the theoretical knowledge by connecting the processes in the ecosystem with social and economic aspects of entrepreneurship (Alzamel, 2024). Entrepreneurial ecosystems are commonly studied in terms of geographical location, but very little has been done in terms of comparisons between ecosystems. The research highlights the importance of industry characteristics in determining ecosystem dynamics and entrepreneurial performance. Regardless of these insights, the literature does not have integrative frameworks that systematically compare ecosystem typologies, and therefore more comprehensive models are needed that encompass their various configurations and effects (Lado et al., 2024). Increased demand in sustainable creation of value has been brought about by technological progress and innovation, and digital start-ups have become the main drivers of sustainable economic development. This paper focuses on the connection

between the elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and productive entrepreneurship in the digital environment. It theorizes the networking, leadership, financial resources, human capital, and knowledge as important enablers that jointly influence the outcomes of entrepreneurship (Lubis et al., 2023).

V. Innovation as a Human-Driven Process

This paper looks at how entrepreneurial leadership facilitates the creation of opportunities in uncertain conditions. It theorizes leadership as a process that promotes group cognition, joint problem solving and co-creation in small firms. The results reveal that entrepreneurial leadership can support the process of opportunity recognition and development through the articulation of a common vision, team-level decision-making, and action coordination. This practice improves resilience and adaptability of organisations to dynamic environments. The research is significant as it expands the entrepreneurial leadership theory to highlight its group- and process-based aspects (Bagheri & Karami, 2026). Entrepreneurial performance in dynamic and uncertain business conditions is influenced by complex behavioral and psychological processes. This paper is a synthesis of the relationships between learning orientation, risk-taking propensity, emotional intelligence, and psychological capabilities. The results show learning orientation as a background process that allows acquisition of knowledge, flexibility and innovation, and risk-taking as a process that allows conversion of learning to performance outcomes (K & Haorei, 2026). The digital transformation makes incumbent companies seek innovation cooperating with start-ups, but the motivation behind these partnerships is under-researched. This paper summarizes the determinants of inter-organisational cooperation towards digital innovation and frames them in terms of intra-individual and interactional levels. The results underscore the relevance of trust, common goals, complementary abilities, and communication in enabling collaborative innovation processes (Islam et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial creativity is a vital element of entrepreneurial capability, but the antecedents of entrepreneurial creativity at the individual level are not well studied. This paper constructs a conceptual framework that connects cognitive flexibility with entrepreneurial creativity mediated by entrepreneurial alertness and self-efficacy. The results have revealed that cognitive flexibility positively influences creativity directly and indirectly in these psychological processes, and alertness and self-efficacy are complementary mechanisms. Their chronological interplay further

enhances the transfer of cognitive flexibility to creative performance. The research contributes to the theoretical knowledge by incorporating cognitive and motivational constructs into a single framework (Yu et al., 2023). This paper looks at how cooperative credit institutions can promote inclusive rural development by aligning with the goals of sustainable development. It imagines these institutions as the major facilitators of financial inclusion, livelihood improvement, and social equity through enhancing access to credit and community-based programs. The paper highlights the significance of grassroots financial systems in enhancing sustainable development (Ravichandran, n.d.). This paper focuses on the importance of digital technologies for strategic adaptation and decision-making among entrepreneurs. Specifically, digital technologies can be viewed as an important means for entrepreneurs to benefit from advanced analysis and experimentation, thereby promoting innovative processes. Moreover, this research demonstrates the importance of digital tools in enabling organisations to learn and adapt in unpredictable conditions (Utomo et al., 2025).

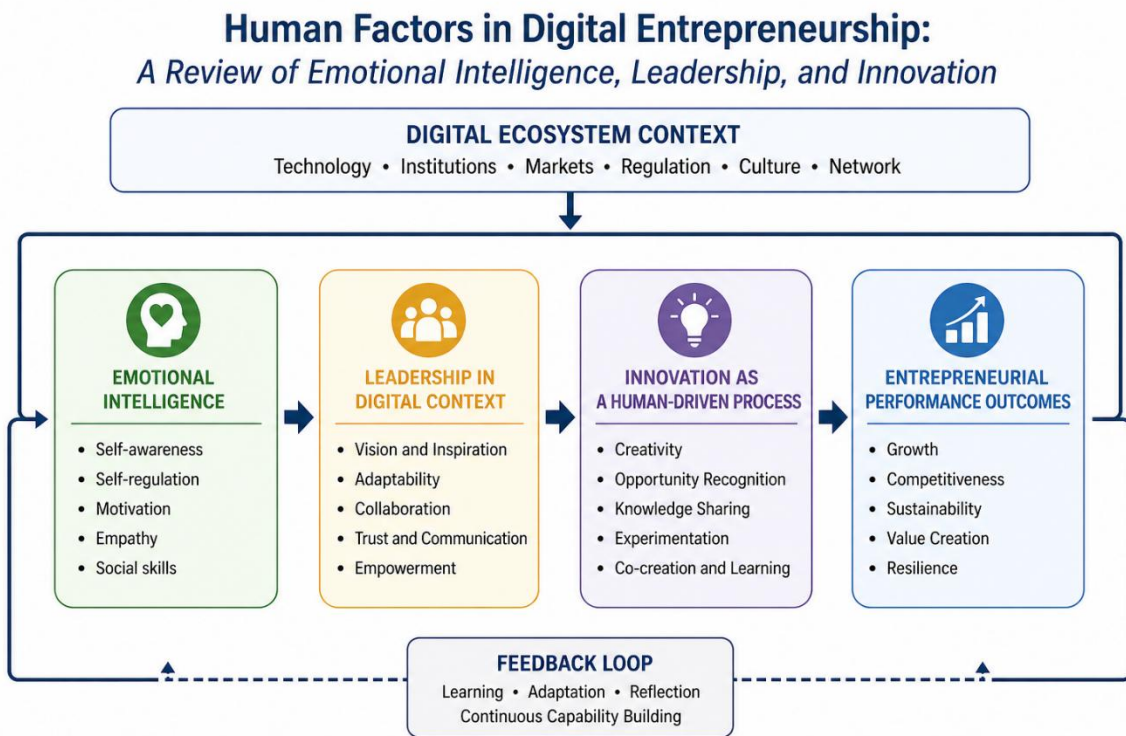
VI. Integrated Framework and Future Research Directions

The synthesis above suggests that the inherent nature of digital entrepreneurship is that human capabilities, leadership processes, and innovation outcomes interact in technologically driven environments. Although the literature has already explored the impact of emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation in detail in separate studies, little is known about their combined effect on the success of entrepreneurs in the digital environment. The impact is not unilateral, but it serves as a facilitating factor that determines the effectiveness of leadership in the context of entrepreneurship. From an organisational perspective, the capabilities of individuals become an organisational phenomenon. As a result of high emotional intelligence, leaders are more efficient in creating trust-based relationships, encouraging cooperation, and forming a culture of organisation that will allow innovation to occur. Leadership is a significant factor that contributes to resource alignment with environmental opportunities, increasing agility of organisations. Finally, as a final outcome of all previous processes, innovation should be considered as the most important element in our model. It can be viewed as a human-related phenomenon, which results from the interplay of different elements, such as human creativity, cognitive abilities, and collaboration inside firms. The use of new technologies makes innovation

possible but does not contribute to its achievement unless human competencies like learning, flexibility, and problem-solving abilities are used. Thus, it appears that all components under consideration are closely interconnected in a cyclical fashion. The effect of emotional intelligence is to improve leadership efficiency. Leadership creates conditions favourable for innovation to happen. Innovation leads to learning and development of human and organisational capabilities. Despite these findings, some key limitations exist within the existing body of knowledge. First, the literature lacks

comprehensive frameworks that capture the connections among emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation. Second, there is a lack of studies that consider the multi-level dynamics between individuals, organisations, and ecosystems. Third, the contribution of cutting-edge innovations such as artificial intelligence to human-centred entrepreneurial activities requires additional investigation. These limitations imply that further inquiry should focus on integrating a framework and adopting interdisciplinary methods.

Figure 2. Integrated Framework of Human Factors in Digital Entrepreneurship



Source: Developed by the authors based on the synthesised literature

The proposed integrated framework illustrates the dynamic interaction between emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation, highlighting their synergistic influence on digital entrepreneurial performance and sustainability.

VII. Conclusion

The impact of human factors on digital entrepreneurship, examining their relevance to key concepts such as emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation. Based on this review, it can be stated that digital entrepreneurship relies not only on technological progress but also on human skills.

Thus, emotional intelligence is an important human competency that enhances adaptability and helps people make effective decisions. As for leadership, it plays a crucial role in translating individual competencies into organisational results. In turn, innovation is discussed as a human factor that incorporates creative thinking and collaboration alongside digital tools. Considering all aspects mentioned above, this paper makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge by presenting a coherent view of the phenomenon under analysis. It is necessary to focus on the alignment between human emotional, behavioural, and strategic skills and technological development

processes. Moreover, it is worth noting that digital entrepreneurship is a continuously evolving process in which the interaction between human skills and technology is essential. To overcome these problems, future research in the field should include interdisciplinary studies and use a longitudinal approach to better understand the complex interactions between the individual, organisational, and technological dimensions. It is important to emphasise the need for further investigation into issues related to human–technology interaction, the well-being of entrepreneurs, and the capabilities of firms and people. To conclude, this study confirms that the human factor is critical for success in digital entrepreneurship. With the evolution of digital ecosystems, the ability of entrepreneurs and organisations to harness the power of emotional intelligence, leadership, and innovation becomes crucial in creating value and competing.

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