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Digital Transformation, Knowledge Management, and Entrepreneurial Growth in Digital Business Ecosystems

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has reshaped the way organizations create value, manage resources, and maintain competitiveness in increasingly dynamic business environments. This study aims to analyze the role of digital transformation and knowledge management in supporting entrepreneurial growth within digital business ecosystems. The research employs a literature review approach by examining scholarly articles published over the last five years and indexed in Google Scholar. The analysis is conducted through thematic synthesis of concepts related to digital transformation, knowledge management, digital business ecosystems, and entrepreneurial growth. The findings indicate that digital transformation contributes to entrepreneurial growth by enhancing innovation capabilities, organizational learning, and stakeholder collaboration. Knowledge management serves as a key mechanism linking digital capabilities with value creation and business opportunity development. Furthermore, digital business ecosystems provide access to external resources, technologies, and knowledge that strengthen organizational adaptability and innovation capacity. This study highlights the importance of integrating digital transformation, knowledge management, and ecosystem participation to foster sustainable entrepreneurial growth. The findings contribute to the growing literature on digital entrepreneurship and strategic knowledge management in the digital era.

Keywords: *Digital Business Ecosystem, Digital Transformation, Entrepreneurial Growth, Knowledge-Based View, Knowledge Management.*

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become one of the most influential developments affecting organizational growth and competitiveness in the contemporary business environment. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and digital platforms, has fundamentally altered how organizations create value, interact with stakeholders, and develop strategic capabilities. Digitalization is no longer limited to operational efficiency but has evolved into a strategic mechanism that enables organizations to identify new opportunities, enhance innovation, and sustain long-term growth. As a result, organizations are increasingly required to adapt their business processes and organizational structures to remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy (Audretsch et al., 2019; Somohano-Rodríguez et al., 2022).

The growing adoption of digital technologies has also encouraged the emergence of digital business ecosystems, in which organizations interact with various stakeholders through interconnected digital infrastructures. These ecosystems facilitate the exchange of information, resources, and knowledge among multiple actors, enabling organizations to strengthen innovation capabilities and improve organizational performance. Digital business ecosystems have transformed traditional organizational boundaries by promoting collaboration and co-creation among firms, customers, suppliers, and technology providers. Consequently, organizations that are capable of effectively utilizing digital ecosystems are more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantages and entrepreneurial growth (Senyo et al., 2019; Bejjani et al., 2023).

In addition to technological advancement, knowledge has become a critical organizational resource in the digital era. The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) argues that organizational knowledge represents a strategic asset that contributes to competitive advantage and long-term growth. Digital technologies enhance the ability of organizations to acquire, share, integrate, and utilize knowledge across internal and external networks. Through effective knowledge management practices, organizations can transform information into valuable insights that support innovation and opportunity recognition. Therefore, the integration of digital capabilities and knowledge management has become increasingly important in supporting entrepreneurial activities and organizational development (Audretsch et al., 2020; Belitski et al., 2021).

Previous studies have extensively investigated the relationship between digital technologies and organizational performance. Research has demonstrated that digital transformation can improve innovation capability, operational efficiency, and business performance. Furthermore, digital platforms and digital infrastructures have been recognized as important enablers of entrepreneurial activities and business growth. However, most existing studies primarily focus on digital startups, entrepreneurial

ventures, and platform-based organizations. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding how established organizations utilize digital capabilities and knowledge resources to stimulate entrepreneurial growth within broader digital business ecosystems (Ghezzi & Cavallo, 2020; Audretsch et al., 2022).

Another limitation of previous research concerns the fragmented treatment of digital transformation and knowledge management. While numerous studies examine digital capability and organizational performance, the mechanisms through which knowledge management facilitates entrepreneurial growth remain insufficiently explored. Similarly, studies on digital business ecosystems often emphasize platform owners and technology providers, whereas the experiences of non-platform organizations and their knowledge utilization processes receive limited scholarly attention. This situation indicates the existence of an important theoretical gap concerning the integration of digital business ecosystem perspectives and knowledge-based approaches in explaining entrepreneurial growth (Mariani & Nambisan, 2021; Chen et al., 2023).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the role of digital transformation and knowledge management in supporting entrepreneurial growth within digital business ecosystems. Specifically, this study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of how digital capabilities contribute to entrepreneurial growth through knowledge-related processes. By synthesizing previous studies published over the last five years, this research contributes to the literature by integrating the Digital Business Ecosystem perspective with the Knowledge-Based View framework. Furthermore, the study provides practical insights for organizations seeking to leverage digital technologies and knowledge resources to achieve sustainable entrepreneurial growth in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven environment.

2. | LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Business Ecosystem and Digital Transformation

The increasing adoption of digital technologies has accelerated the emergence of Digital Business Ecosystems (DBEs), which represent interconnected networks of organizations, customers, suppliers, and technology providers collaborating through digital infrastructures. Unlike traditional business environments, DBEs facilitate continuous interactions among multiple actors through digital platforms, enabling the efficient exchange of information, resources, and knowledge. Such ecosystems create opportunities for organizations to access complementary capabilities, strengthen innovation activities, and improve responsiveness to changing market conditions. As digital technologies continue to evolve, organizations are increasingly dependent on ecosystem relationships to support sustainable growth and competitiveness (Senyo et al., 2019).

Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technologies into organizational processes, structures, and strategic decision-making activities. This transformation extends beyond technological adoption and involves substantial changes in organizational culture, business models, and operational routines. Through digital transformation, organizations can enhance efficiency, improve customer engagement, and develop innovative products and services. Furthermore, digital technologies enable firms to generate and analyze large volumes of data, facilitating better decision-making and opportunity identification. Consequently, digital transformation has become an essential mechanism for organizations seeking to maintain competitiveness in rapidly changing business environments (Somohano-Rodríguez et al., 2022).

Recent studies emphasize that digital transformation is most effective when organizations actively participate in digital business ecosystems. Digital connections allow organizations to combine internal resources with external knowledge and technological capabilities. Such interactions contribute to organizational learning, innovation development, and value creation. As a result, digital ecosystems not only support technological advancement but also provide strategic pathways through which organizations can pursue entrepreneurial growth and long-term sustainability in increasingly digitalized markets (Chen et al., 2023).

Knowledge Management and Entrepreneurial Growth

Knowledge management has emerged as one of the most important organizational capabilities in the digital economy. According to the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), knowledge represents a strategic resource that enables organizations to create competitive advantages and sustain long-term growth. Effective knowledge management involves processes such as knowledge acquisition, sharing, integration, storage, and application. These processes allow organizations to transform information into actionable insights that support innovation, strategic decision-making, and organizational learning. In contemporary business environments, knowledge management has become increasingly important due to the rapid generation and dissemination of digital information (Audretsch et al., 2020).

Digital technologies significantly enhance knowledge management practices by facilitating communication, collaboration, and information exchange across organizational boundaries. Through digital platforms and ecosystem networks, organizations can access external expertise, integrate diverse sources of knowledge, and develop new capabilities. Such activities strengthen organizational learning and improve the ability to recognize and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. Furthermore, knowledge-sharing mechanisms contribute to innovation processes by enabling organizations to combine existing knowledge with newly acquired insights, resulting in the development of new products, services, and business models (Belitski et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurial growth refers to the process through which organizations expand their capabilities, innovate, and create new value opportunities. Previous studies

suggest that entrepreneurial growth is strongly influenced by the ability of organizations to manage knowledge resources effectively. Organizations that successfully integrate digital capabilities with knowledge management practices are more likely to identify emerging opportunities, respond to environmental changes, and achieve sustainable growth. Therefore, the interaction between knowledge management and digital capabilities plays a critical role in supporting entrepreneurial activities and enhancing organizational performance in digital business ecosystems (Audretsch et al., 2021).

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a literature review approach to examine the role of digital transformation and knowledge management in supporting entrepreneurial growth within digital business ecosystems. A literature review was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, synthesize, and interpret findings from previous studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of a particular research topic. Through this approach, the study aimed to integrate existing knowledge, identify theoretical developments, and explore research gaps related to digital transformation, knowledge management, digital business ecosystems, and entrepreneurial growth. The literature review method is particularly appropriate for investigating emerging topics that have attracted increasing scholarly attention but still require conceptual clarification and theoretical integration.

The data used in this study were secondary data obtained from scientific publications indexed in Google Scholar and published over the last five years. The selected time frame was intended to ensure the relevance and recency of the reviewed literature in capturing contemporary developments in digital technologies and entrepreneurial activities. The literature search process employed several keywords, including “digital transformation,” “digital business ecosystem,” “knowledge management,” “digital capability,” “entrepreneurial growth,” and “Knowledge-Based View.” These keywords were used individually and in combination to identify studies closely related to the objectives of this research.

The article selection process was conducted through several stages. First, relevant publications were identified based on title and abstract screening. Second, the full texts of potentially relevant studies were reviewed to assess their suitability with the research objectives. Third, studies were selected based on predetermined inclusion criteria, namely peer-reviewed journal articles, publications written in English, articles published over the last five years, and studies discussing at least one of the main concepts examined in this research. Articles that did not meet these criteria or lacked sufficient relevance to the research objectives were excluded from further analysis.

The collected literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This technique enabled the researcher to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings across the selected studies. The synthesis process focused on understanding how digital transformation contributes to entrepreneurial growth through knowledge management mechanisms within digital

business ecosystems. Furthermore, the analysis was used to identify unresolved issues and research gaps that could provide directions for future studies. Through this systematic review process, the study developed an integrated conceptual understanding of the relationships among digital transformation, knowledge management, and entrepreneurial growth in the contemporary digital economy.

4. | RESULTS

The literature review reveals that digital transformation has evolved from a technology adoption initiative into a strategic organizational capability that influences innovation, knowledge creation, and entrepreneurial growth. Across the reviewed studies, digital technologies are consistently recognized as important enablers of organizational competitiveness because they facilitate access to information, improve communication processes, and strengthen organizational learning. The findings indicate that digital transformation contributes to entrepreneurial growth not only through technological efficiency but also through the development of organizational capabilities that support opportunity recognition and value creation (Audretsch et al., 2022; Somohano-Rodríguez et al., 2022).

The reviewed literature further demonstrates that organizations increasingly operate within Digital Business Ecosystems (DBEs), where value creation depends on interactions among multiple stakeholders. Digital ecosystems provide access to complementary resources, technological infrastructures, and external knowledge sources that support innovation activities. Rather than relying solely on internal resources, organizations are able to leverage ecosystem relationships to improve their adaptability and responsiveness to market changes. This ecosystem-based approach enables organizations to strengthen their innovation capabilities and develop new entrepreneurial opportunities through collaboration and knowledge exchange (Senyo et al., 2019; Bejjani et al., 2023).

A recurring theme identified across the studies is the growing importance of knowledge as a strategic resource. Consistent with the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), organizational growth is strongly influenced by the ability to create, integrate, and utilize knowledge effectively. Digital technologies enhance these processes by facilitating information sharing and collaboration across organizational boundaries. Consequently, knowledge management emerges as a critical mechanism through which organizations transform technological investments into meaningful organizational outcomes. Organizations with strong knowledge management capabilities are better positioned to exploit emerging opportunities and respond to environmental uncertainties (Audretsch et al., 2020; Belitski et al., 2021).

The analysis also indicates that entrepreneurial growth is increasingly driven by the interaction between digital capabilities and organizational learning. Digital technologies allow firms to collect, process, and analyze large volumes of information, generating insights that support strategic decision-making. Such capabilities improve

an organization's ability to identify new market opportunities and develop innovative products and services. As a result, digital transformation contributes to entrepreneurial growth by enhancing both learning capacity and innovation performance (Mariani & Nambisan, 2021; Audretsch et al., 2021).

Several studies emphasize that digital ecosystems facilitate entrepreneurial growth through collaborative innovation processes. Organizations are no longer isolated entities but active participants in interconnected networks where knowledge and resources are continuously exchanged. This collaborative environment enables firms to access external expertise and technological capabilities that may not be available internally. Through partnerships with customers, suppliers, technology providers, and research institutions, organizations can accelerate innovation activities and reduce uncertainty associated with entrepreneurial initiatives (Kenney & Zysman, 2020; Gawer, 2022).

The reviewed literature also suggests that digital transformation strengthens organizational flexibility and adaptability. Digital technologies support faster communication, more efficient decision-making, and improved coordination across functional areas. These advantages allow organizations to respond more effectively to changing customer needs and competitive pressures. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools into organizational processes facilitates experimentation and continuous improvement, which are essential elements of entrepreneurial growth. Organizations that successfully develop digital capabilities tend to demonstrate greater resilience and long-term competitiveness (Klofsten et al., 2021).

Another important finding concerns the role of knowledge management as a mediating mechanism between digital transformation and entrepreneurial growth. While digital technologies provide access to information and resources, their value largely depends on how organizations manage and utilize acquired knowledge. Effective knowledge management enables firms to convert information into actionable insights, support organizational learning, and facilitate innovation processes. Therefore, knowledge management functions as a bridge connecting technological capabilities with entrepreneurial outcomes (Secundo et al., 2019; Audretsch et al., 2020).

The reviewed studies further reveal that entrepreneurial growth is closely associated with intrapreneurial activities within organizations. Digital technologies create opportunities for employees to contribute ideas, identify market opportunities, and participate in innovation processes. Organizations that encourage learning, experimentation, and knowledge sharing are more likely to cultivate entrepreneurial behavior among employees. Such organizational environments strengthen innovation capacity and facilitate the development of new business opportunities. Consequently, entrepreneurial growth should be viewed not only as an external market outcome but also as an internal organizational process supported by digital infrastructures and knowledge resources (Joshi et al., 2019; Soltanifar et al., 2023).

The analysis of the literature also highlights several unresolved issues that constitute important research gaps. First, most existing studies focus on startups and digital ventures, while relatively few investigate entrepreneurial growth within established organizations. Second, many studies examine the direct relationship between digital transformation and organizational performance without adequately exploring the mediating role of knowledge management. Third, digital ecosystem research often concentrates on platform owners and technology providers, leaving non-platform organizations underrepresented. Finally, limited research integrates the Knowledge-Based View and Digital Business Ecosystem perspectives within a single conceptual framework. These gaps suggest the need for more comprehensive studies that examine how knowledge processes facilitate entrepreneurial growth in digitally connected environments (Ghezzi & Cavallo, 2020; Chen et al., 2023).

The synthesis of the reviewed literature is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Main Findings from the Literature

Main Theme	Key Findings	Main References
Digital Transformation	Improves innovation, adaptability, and competitiveness	Audretsch et al. (2022); Somohano-Rodríguez et al. (2022)
Digital Business Ecosystem	Facilitates collaboration and resource sharing	Senyo et al. (2019); Bejjani et al. (2023)
Knowledge Management	Supports learning, innovation, and knowledge utilization	Audretsch et al. (2020); Belitski et al. (2021)
Digital Capability	Enhances opportunity recognition and strategic flexibility	Klofsten et al. (2021); Mariani & Nambisan (2021)
Entrepreneurial Growth	Driven by innovation, learning, and ecosystem participation	Secundo et al., 2019; Audretsch et al. (2021)
Corporate Entrepreneurship	Strengthened through digital support and knowledge sharing	Joshi et al. (2019); Soltanifar et al. (2023)
Ecosystem Collaboration	Encourages co-creation and innovation development	Gawer (2022); Kenney & Zysman (2020)

The reviewed studies consistently indicate that entrepreneurial growth in the digital era is shaped by the interaction among digital transformation, knowledge management, and ecosystem participation. Digital technologies provide organizations with access to valuable information and external resources, while knowledge management processes enable the effective utilization of those resources. At the same time, digital business ecosystems create collaborative environments that facilitate innovation and opportunity exploration. The integration of these elements allows organizations to strengthen their entrepreneurial capabilities and achieve sustainable growth. These findings support the argument that knowledge management serves as a central mechanism linking digital transformation to entrepreneurial growth and provide a foundation for future research seeking to integrate digital ecosystem perspectives with knowledge-based approaches.

5. | DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital transformation has become a critical driver of entrepreneurial growth through its ability to enhance knowledge creation, organizational learning, and ecosystem collaboration. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that the value of digital technologies extends beyond operational efficiency and technological modernization. Instead, digital transformation creates opportunities for organizations to develop strategic capabilities that support innovation, adaptability, and sustainable growth. This finding supports the argument that entrepreneurial growth in the digital era is increasingly dependent on an organization's capacity to integrate technological resources with knowledge-based capabilities (Audretsch et al., 2022).

The results further reveal that knowledge management functions as an essential mechanism connecting digital transformation and entrepreneurial growth. While digital technologies facilitate access to information and external resources, organizations can only generate value when they effectively acquire, share, integrate, and utilize knowledge. This finding is consistent with the Knowledge-Based View, which emphasizes knowledge as a primary source of competitive advantage and organizational performance. The reviewed studies suggest that organizations with stronger knowledge management capabilities are better equipped to recognize opportunities, support innovation activities, and respond to environmental changes. Consequently, digital transformation alone is insufficient to guarantee entrepreneurial success without effective knowledge management processes (Audretsch et al., 2020).

Another important finding concerns the role of Digital Business Ecosystems in facilitating entrepreneurial growth. The literature demonstrates that organizations increasingly rely on ecosystem relationships to access complementary resources, technologies, and expertise. Through interactions with customers, suppliers, technology providers, and research institutions, organizations can enhance innovation processes and reduce uncertainty associated with entrepreneurial initiatives. This observation supports previous research suggesting that entrepreneurial growth is increasingly shaped by collaborative and network-based forms of value creation rather than solely by internal organizational resources (Bejjani et al., 2023).

The findings also address several research gaps identified in previous studies. First, the results extend existing literature by emphasizing entrepreneurial growth within broader organizational and ecosystem contexts rather than focusing exclusively on startups and digital ventures. Second, the study highlights the mediating role of knowledge management in transforming digital capabilities into entrepreneurial outcomes. Third, the integration of Digital Business Ecosystem and Knowledge-Based View perspectives provides a more comprehensive explanation of how organizations generate value and sustain growth in digital environments. This integrated perspective contributes to the growing body of literature seeking to understand the relationship between technology, knowledge, and entrepreneurship (Chen et al., 2023).

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that organizations should not view digital transformation merely as a technological investment. Instead, managers should prioritize the development of knowledge-sharing mechanisms, organizational learning capabilities, and collaborative ecosystem relationships. By strengthening these capabilities, organizations can better leverage digital technologies to stimulate innovation, encourage entrepreneurial behavior, and achieve long-term growth. Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurial growth requires a strategic combination of digital capability development, effective knowledge management, and active participation in digital business ecosystems (Belitski et al., 2021).

6. | CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between digital transformation, knowledge management, and entrepreneurial growth within digital business ecosystems through a literature review of studies published over the last five years. The findings indicate that digital transformation has evolved into a strategic capability that enables organizations to enhance innovation, improve organizational learning, and strengthen competitiveness in dynamic business environments. However, the effectiveness of digital transformation in promoting entrepreneurial growth depends largely on an organization's ability to manage and utilize knowledge resources effectively.

The study highlights that knowledge management plays a central role in converting digital capabilities into entrepreneurial outcomes. Through knowledge acquisition, sharing, integration, and application, organizations are able to identify opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and respond more effectively to environmental changes. In addition, digital business ecosystems provide access to complementary resources, technologies, and expertise that support collaborative innovation and value creation. The interaction among these elements creates a foundation for sustainable entrepreneurial growth.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the integration of the Knowledge-Based View and Digital Business Ecosystem perspectives in explaining entrepreneurial growth. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that organizations should focus not only on adopting digital technologies but also on developing strong knowledge management practices and collaborative ecosystem relationships. Future studies are encouraged to conduct empirical investigations that examine the proposed relationships across different organizational contexts, industries, and levels of digital maturity to enrich understanding of entrepreneurial growth in the digital era.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement
Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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