

EXPLORING THE PROSPECTS AND
CHALLENGES OF ACQUIRING DIGITAL
ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ON YOUTH
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPOWERMENT: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TWIN CITIES OF
PAKISTAN



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I **Fasiha Fatima** hereby state that my MPhil thesis titled **Exploring The Prospects and Challenges of Acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial Skills on Youth Empowerment and Youth Employability: A Qualitative Study of Twin Cities of Pakistan** is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Pakistan Institute of Development Studies or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation the university has right to withdraw my MPhil degree.

Date: 16-12-2021



FASIHA FATIMA

Dedication

This work is dedicated to

My beloved parents and my elder sister Samia Fatima

All I have and will accomplish is only possible due to their love and sacrifices.

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All the praises and thanks are to ‘**ALLAH**’ “the one universal Being” Who inspires entire humanity towards knowledge, truth and endless commendation, and blessed me with strength, patience and determination to overcome all the obstacles in the way of this research project and complete it in time. In utter gratitude, I bow my head before HIM. I offer my countless thanks and humblest prayers to the greatest social reformer **The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)**, who has taught us to seek knowledge from Cradle to grave.

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May Allah Blessed Them All.

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ABSTRACT

Pakistani youth face a significant challenge in finding jobs and avoiding long-term unemployment due to a lack of professional experience and qualifications as a result of poor educational quality and a lack of necessary skill training. For a country like Pakistan, youth is a very important and valuable asset therefore its engagement in productive and skillful employment is very crucial for it. Today, digital enterprise is recognized as a critical component in the creation of jobs and economic development as it generates new opportunities and is a key driver of innovative resourcefulness as well as value creation. This study investigated the prospects for young entrepreneurs to become active members of digital business platforms around the world, as well as the challenges that young entrepreneurs face as they learn such skills. It also examined the effects of digital enterprise skills empowerment on youth employability. Qualitative research was carried out through in-depth interviews from 30 young entrepreneurs via purposive sampling in the twin cities of Pakistan i.e. Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The study found that digital entrepreneurship can create opportunities for people to work in remote areas and also plays an important role in promoting gender equality and resolving socio-economic concerns for instance acquisition of these skills helped to increase employability and empowerment in society and business. Young entrepreneurs can also better play their part to improve the economy through digital literacy. Furthermore, the study also revealed that deficit in funding, shortage of digitally capable and experienced labor force, gap between educational curriculum and new global curriculum for business and nonexistence of policies and guidelines to protect and help e-commerce entrepreneurs were the key challenges that young entrepreneurs had faced while stepping into digitalization.

Keywords: Digital Entrepreneurship, Digital Entrepreneurial Skills, Digital Era, Digital Literacy, Prospects and Challenges, Youth Empowerment, Youth Employability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMMI	Capability Maturity Model Integration
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEM	Digital Entrepreneurship Monitor
HRD	Human Resource Development
HTTP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol
ICT	Internet and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
IoT	Internet of Things
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
STEM	Science, Technology, Education, Math
UDC	Units of Data Collection
XML	Extensible markup language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The issue of unemployment is one of the genuine challenges confronting most of the economic systems worldwide, as it is a major contributor to the collapse of the national, social and economic sector (Ibrahiem, Sameh, & Research, 2020). The ineffective use of assets to raise educated, trained and qualified people who are expected to enter the labor market is explained. In 2018, the unemployment rate was 41.6 percent of the total workforce of 5.7 billion people (15 and older) globally. A significant percentage of labor force is unemployed in underdeveloped and developing countries (Organization, 2019).

Internationally, youth development is regarded as a critical component of domestic growth and development. In the twenty-first century, many countries face the problem of related to young people such as youth unemployment. According to the National Human Development Report, Pakistan is listed among the youngest nations of the world, and ranked as 2nd youngest after Afghanistan in South Asia, with youth constituting the majority of the total population. According to the report, 64% and 29% of the total populace is below 30 years and between 15 to 29 years respectively. Even though the country is blessed with a large population of young people, yet unemployment is a serious issue. A significant and cost-effectively employed part of the population is critical for a nation's growth and sustainability. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can also help to solve the growing problem of unemployment by creating

jobs, allowing young people to enter the labor force (Azih, Inanga, & Journal, 2014; Mba & Cletus, 2014).

Unemployment affects the majority of Pakistan's youth and is a major contributor to the country's poverty. While many young people are employed in Pakistan, an alarming number of young people is unemployed. According to the Labor Force Survey 2017-18, there are 40.12 million young people (aged 15-24) and 16.57 million young people, 14.73 million of whom are employed and 1.84 million are unemployed. The youth unemployment rate increased from 10.35 percent in 2013-14 to 11.10 percent in 2017-18 (Federal Bureau Of Statistics, 2018) . For the past years, this issue has gained much importance that governments and people must work together to build a useful and reliable nation, and thus a better Pakistan. Every year, a significant number of young people graduate from higher education institutions but are unable to find work due to lack of public and private employment opportunities. Young people, who are thought to be a key factor in building nations and growing economies, can pose a serious threat to national security as well as socioeconomic and political stability if they are not properly engaged. Entrepreneurship has thus become an important concern in Pakistan's strategic policy for poverty eradication, reduction of unemployment rates, and the uplifting of country's national economy, as its main goal is to provide training to young people in starting their businesses to become creative and self-sustaining (Chen, Lai, & journal, 2010).

Business is a popular way to encourage young people to invest in the global economy (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). It promotes country's economic growth, prosperity, democracy, self-assurance, job creation, public welfare, political stability, and national security (Li & Rodríguez-Cohard, 2005). This ultimately can benefit youth, their families, and society in general; and the country's economy in particular (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). Many researchers attempt to define

entrepreneurship by linking this type of business to business innovation. This defines entrepreneurship as "the creation of new businesses" (Gartner & practice, 1989). "Entrepreneurship is the process of starting a new business or refurbishing, recovering, updating, and/or reforming an existing one" (Zaman, Vasile, Antonescu, & Popa, 2009). According to other studies, entrepreneurship is the practice of attempting to generate value through the use of market-based, creative resources. It is always an individual or group that creates and manages new businesses" (Ulijn, Brown, culture: The interaction between technology, & growth, 2004). Entrepreneurship, as defined by (Rwigema, 2004), is "a method by which a potential high-growth company in a dynamic, malfunctioning world is conceptualized, planned, launched, and cultivated creatively."

Youth entrepreneurship has the potential to help young people develop their identities, explore new ways of working, alleviate poverty, and change society. (Chigunta, 2002) defined youth entrepreneurship as "the practical application of entrepreneurial qualities, such as initiative, ingenuity, fantasy, and risk-taking, to the work environment (either through self-employment or work within small start-up companies) while applying the skills required for success in that environment and culture". For many unemployed young people, starting their own business is a viable way to return to school. Entrepreneurial activities are viewed as a potential solution to youth unemployment because they can reactivate and create opportunities (Surdej, 2017)

The Covid-19 pandemic has generated a great deal of insecurity, particularly in terms of economics. This comprises recovery rate, regulations and participation made by the government, alterations in customer purchasing habits and their influence on market sustainability, new enterprise development, research and development, human resource management and so on (Baker, 2020). Many countries have executed travel bans, social distancing measures, as well as

lawsuits to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The policy has been implemented to varying degrees in all South Asian nations, comprising Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Quarantine orders issued in several countries to stop the spread of coronavirus have been accompanied by psychological (Giones et al., 2020), as well as economic consequences (Karabag & Research, 2020) for the closing of retail stores and product delivery chains (Papadopoulos, Baltas, & Balta, 2020). International Labor Organization's (ILO) report on the influence of Covid-19 (2020) reflects the effect of the pandemic on young workforce globally who were already powerless in the pre-crisis period as a result of large job losses and growing job uncertainty. The economic crisis has aggravated with Covid-19, accompanied by a massive increase in the unemployment rate and a possible increase in digitalization, which could result in significant job losses for young workers for some time (Outlook., 2020)

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the global economy seriously, but the digital economy has played a leading role. The new wave in modern technology companies has all benefitted from finance, communications, commercials, operating systems, and numerous web-based transport real estate (Song, 2019; Stone, 2017). Digitalization has diverse consequences for swift and disturbing fluctuations (Kraus et al., 2018). Digitization has led current firms and businesses to switch from physical to online ventures, building a modern type of enterprise (Hull et al., 2007).

Transforming into digitalization opens up new possibilities and is a key driver of innovative and at times, disruptive inventions, as well as the creation of value. Entrepreneurs now fund inventions or develop new digital business models, services and products based on their digital skills (Fisch, 2019). Digital enterprises, also known as startups, are activities and new ventures that rely on digital technology to generate value (Berger, von Briel, Davidsson, & Kuckertz, 2021). These initiatives will affect innovation, finance, control, institutions, business practices,

and the entire ecosystem (Cram, Brohman, & Gallupe, 2016; S. J. E. t. Nambisan & practice, 2017; Veit et al., 2014). The invention's analysis and financial benefits have an extensive history in entrepreneurial research and information organizations (Yoo, Henfridsson, & Lyytinen, 2010). In the present world, digital entrepreneurship is a critical component of job creation and economic development in many countries. It also confronts traditional industries and forces them to address these innovative technologies, which have the potential to harm both society and the economy (Shen, Lindsay, & Xu, 2018).

Digital entrepreneurship is a trend that has emerged as a result of technological resources such as the Internet and communication technology (ICT) (Le Dinh, Vu, & Ayayi, 2018). Digital entrepreneurship is defined as any business practice that transforms a company's property, resources, or digital center. The usage of digital platforms and tools helps to create new jobs that are difficult to categorize as traditional self-employment, freelancing, or other growth-oriented entrepreneurial activities. As a result, digital entrepreneurship cannot be classified as a subclass of an enterprise (Hull et al., 2007), yet Digital Enterprise is a "conciliation between conventional entrepreneurship and new digital-age business creation and management techniques" (Le Dinh et al., 2018).

Digital networking is inextricably linked to the lives of SMEs, which are the main sectors in any developing economy as they are a primary source of occupation and contribute significantly to the country's GDP. In many cases, they are still a source of inspiration. As a result, many foreign actors have made the promotion of SMEs one of their primary economic policies (Razavi, Moschoyiannis, Krause, & Applications, 2009). SME promotion as part of the Covid-19 pandemic, including collaborative and mobile apps, the Internet of Things with Next-Generation Telecommunications Networks, broad data analysis, AI and block chain technology. According

to the literature, strategic use of efficient digital technology will increase competitiveness, efficiency and results (Chan, Teoh, Yeow, & Pan, 2019).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Pakistan is the world's fifth-most populous young country, with 28.45 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 29, the official youth bracket in Pakistan, and comprise a sizeable proportion of the working-age population. Such kind of structure of population gives both the possible benefits and risks. On the one hand, young people are more active, mobile, and adaptable, but they can also pose a significant threat to society if they do not have adequate economic opportunities (Ahmad & Azim, 2010). Pakistan's youth face a significant challenge in finding jobs and avoiding long-term unemployment due to a lack of professional experience and qualifications as a result of poor educational quality and a lack of necessary skill training (Bari, Nadeem Sarwar, Ali, & Musa Kaleem, 2021). For a country, youth is a very important and valuable asset therefore its engagement in productive and skillful employment is very crucial for it. Better policies, particularly in the current Covid-19 situation, should be made to help young people in the right way and prepare them for their rightful role in society through the empowerment of digital enterprise skills and abilities.

1.3 Problem Statement

This study aims to explore the effects of digital entrepreneurship on young people's empowerment and employability. It also examines the opportunities for developing digital entrepreneurial skills as well as the challenges that young entrepreneurs face as they enter the digital age.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the effects of Digital Entrepreneurial skills on youth empowerment and youth employability?
- What are the prospects of acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs?
- What challenges young entrepreneurs might face while stepping into digitalization?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are given as under:

- To analyze prospects of acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs.
- To analyze challenges young entrepreneurs might face while stepping into digitalization.
- To explore the effects of Digital Entrepreneurial skills on youth employability and youth empowerment.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be significant in a variety of ways.

- It contributes to the body of knowledge, which aids the government in developing comprehensive policies for increased employment.
- It assists the government in developing strategies to address young people's challenges in learning digital business skills.
- It assists the government in putting policies in place to empower young people.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The structure of this study is schematized in six chapters such as; Chapter 1 discussed the Introduction with the concept to the background of the study and knowhow of the problem under consideration. Review of related empirical research is demonstrated in the Chapter 2. Research gap and Theoretical/Conceptual frameworks are explained in Chapter 3. Data sources and methodology has been reported in Chapter 4. Findings and discussion has been stated in Chapter 5. However, conclusion and policy recommendations of this study are presented in chapter 6.

1.8 Definition of Important Terms

1.8.1 Digital Entrepreneurship

Digital business encompasses any new ventures and transitions that promote financial and/or social value by establishing and utilizing new digital technology for existing businesses. The high concentration of new digital technologies used to expand business procedures, improve business intelligence, discover new business models and involve clients and investors are termed digital enterprises.

1.8.2 Youth Empowerment

Individually, youth empowerment is defined as experimenting with the power of one's life by being able, critically conscious, and dynamic at the level of society and company. It is described as the implementation of a vision, culture and system that helps young people to be empowered individually. According to the United Nations Development Program, the activities of today's youth are expected to govern projections for long-term growth and peace (UNDP). Youth, who

make up the majority of the population, are involved as entrepreneurs, innovators, political actors and peace builders in many developing countries. Simultaneously, the young generation is unable to fully express its potential due to unequal social, political and economic barriers. It is up to the youth to empower themselves in politics, develop themselves and support their contributions at all levels to fully realize their potential as revolutionaries.

1.8.3 Youth Employability

Employing entails much more than just achieving your first job. It is capable of networking and marketing itself, of a career, and of remaining employable throughout the individual's life span. It takes the ability to inquire, learn new expertise, recognize and evaluate opportunities, understand working privileges, including the right to a healthy and safe working atmosphere, adapting to varying circumstances and have the courage to renovate. The ILO defines employability as "portable competency and skills that enhance an individual's ability to use educational and training opportunities to secure and retain decent work, to advance within and between jobs and to address changing technology and workplace conditions."

1.8.4 Prospects and Challenges

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, prospect is defined as the possibility or an opportunity for something to happen in the future. Prospecting is an important part in this enduring study as it focuses on finding the potential of acquiring digital entrepreneurial skills. Meanwhile, Challenges are defined as stimulating task or a problem as this study focuses on hurdles and problems that young entrepreneurs might face while stepping into digitalization (merriam-webster).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This research focuses on prospects of acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs and challenges they might face while stepping into Digitalization to fight against unemployment and build self-reliance. This chapter includes a review of previous studies' literature to conduct a broad discussion on the topic and also chapter explains the association of the proposed study with the already existing theories. Section 2.2 discusses the concept of entrepreneurship. Importance of skill acquisition and its effect on country's economy and development is described in section 2.3. Participation of youth in the economy and challenges it faces due to unemployment are presented in section 2.4. Section 2.5 explain the concept of digital transformation and digital entrepreneurship and also explicate the significance of digital platforms and digital entrepreneurial skills and their crucial need in the modern business curriculum. Section 2.6 explains the Digital Pakistan policy 2020, Section 2.7 describes theoretical framework and section 2.8 presents the research gap of the study.

According to (Yang, Lou, & Chen, 2008), the commercial sector helps to create more jobs in China, either directly by strengthening the finance sector and creating more jobs, or indirectly by creating new economic assets. (Signorelli, Choudhry, & Marelli, 2012) discussed how economic crises have a positive effect on female unemployment in all types of economies (High, low and medium-income). According to (Boeri, Garibaldi, & Moen, 2013; Branch, Petrosky-Nadeau, & Rocheteau, 2016), the effects of unemployment are detrimental to economic recessions and innovations in 11 South African developing countries (Olowu, Olaseinde-Williams, & Bein,

2019). (Raifu, 2019) focused on the negative correlation between economic development and unemployment in Nigeria. According to (Epstein, Shapiro, & Control, 2019), economic development is particularly harmful to precarious employment in emerging and developing economies. It is because the accumulation of wealth increases a company's flexibility, reducing its vulnerability to economic shocks and, as a result, job insecurity. Furthermore, digitalization is used as a whole digital ecosystem rather than just a technology (Li, Badr, & Biennier, 2012). Unfortunately, there is a literature-based environment in entrepreneurship too (Stam, 2015). As a result, a novel conceptual framework – the digital entrepreneurial system – is established to integrate these two forms, which will guide our perception of enterprise in a digital economy. The digital entrepreneurial system, as defined by (Schumpeter, 2013) is comprised of entrepreneurs who build digital enterprises, innovative products and services for a large number of international users and agents.

Other scholars, on the other hand, have studied the positive relationship between economic development and unemployment. (Dobronogov & Iqbal, 2007) described the positive effect of the availability of low private income for local investors. This could be due to two major factors: first, spillovers, insufficient output and infrastructure leading to a low return on investment; second, an incompetent tax framework and increased tax charges, along with limited access to the global economy. It may result in low capital returns. According to (Dromel, Kolakez, & Lehmann, 2010), the positive effects are due to the presence of loan restrictions. (Borsi, 2018; Shabbir, Anwar, Hussain, Imran, & Finance, 2012) found similar results for Pakistan and 20 other OECD countries. (Kim, Chen, & Lin, 2019) stated in their panels that the unemployment rate is rising as wealth is concentrated and economic growth in banks slows with development and developed countries' market positioning.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Over the last two decades, entrepreneurship has been recognized as a gateway to regional development for the creation of new companies, services, products and jobs for financial activities (Markatou & Sciences, 2015). (Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006) described the inclusion of any formal process to build new industries, as well as entrepreneurial capacity and attitudes, in training. Universities have played a crucial role in the evolution of enterprise programs and training of students and local residents (Finkle, Soper, Fox, Reece, & Messing, 2009). (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt, & Terra, 2000) discussed the transformation of educational institutions and how they began to participate more dynamically in the development of the area. According to the European Commission (Commision, 2001), CSR (corporate social responsibility) entails corporate integration into operations as well as voluntary cooperation with investors. The EU emphasizes entrepreneurship and creativity because they offer a chance to end the current recession, boost global productivity and ensure profitable long-term growth (Homolová et al., 2014). Furthermore, entrepreneurship is associated with personal achievement and is known as "the heart of creativity, product development, competition, economic growth and job training" (Grilo, Thurik, & Journal, 2005). The Europe 2020 strategy acknowledges the importance of enterprise and self-employment in achieving intelligent, sustainable and inclusive development. The European Commission's activities are focused on entrepreneurship and self-employment: unemployed and vulnerable individuals starting businesses; the viability and quality of work of independent and micro-enterprises; and support for social entrepreneurs (Commission, 2010)

According to (Omotayo & Administration, 2020) micro and small-scale entrepreneurship are critical in Nigeria to combat the rising rate of unemployment and its effect on the local and rural

economies. Entrepreneurship fosters self-confidence and empowers entrepreneurs to create and manage their individual businesses instead of simply working for someone else. (Kader, Mohamad, & Ibrahim, 2009) identified the key players in government development and promotion of enterprise. (Noor & Ramin, 2012) demonstrated the government's responsibility to provide a conducive and encouraging environment for the development and growth of new organizations and enterprises. (Harrison, Mason, Girling, & Development, 2004) proposed various forms of government action, such as legislation, current funding, tax reduction, incentive lifting and support infrastructure development.

2.3 Skills Acquisition

Skills and competencies have become an essential component of current societies, economies, education and occupation. A digital period has been referred to in various ways, including the digital culture (Ashcroft & Watts, 2005), knowledge-based economy and information revolution. In the scenario of globalization, expanding digital abilities are regarded as an initial step towards job security worldwide. Digital skills are expected to increase employment thereby alleviating poverty to some extent or at least provide a concrete step towards increasing pay in developing countries such as Pakistan (Pirzada, Khan, & Management, 2013). To expedite reflective economic shifts, a diverse range of skills and expertise will be required. Although cognition is still imperative, there are indications that non-cognitive skills are getting increased importance. Cognitive abilities are also associated with improved health, self-esteem, political effectiveness and active citizenship (OECD., 2019). Digital skills are the ability to communicate electronically and the tools that prepare a person for the twenty-first century and Increase Company's productivity. Many different trends have shown that digital skills are important in the academic

world of education and learning. E-world is the most significant outcome. The usage of electronic tools and amenities in many areas of the economy now places an emphasis on and generates individual and economic knowledge. Anyone who knows and understands how to use e-services is fully permitted and has long-term benefits such as regarding education, job enrichment, status and other long-term features (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008).

Globally, the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programs established at educational institutes were intended to deliver the extent of education or knowledge required to capitalize on commercial opportunities that might contribute to the economic growth of those nations (Emaikwu & Society, 2011; Isidore, Razak, Norsiah, & Studies, 2012). Because of its positive impression on financial growth, particularly at the ordinary masses level, the development of entrepreneurship is a critical link to a nation's global economic growth (Barringer, Hess, Goetz, & Ireland, 2012). Businesses contribute to the creation of capital and the reduction of joblessness, foster creativity and innovation, and increase a country's overall output (Shane, 2003). Indeed, innovative sciences, ideas and the utilization of unusual opportunities can enable technological progress or transformation in any country, and business is the best suitable way to support this. Public can get earning through education and mastering new skills (Ebong, Asodike, & Social Science, 2011).

The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is a procedure by which a person learns the specific skills or behavior required to develop a business opportunity for self-employment through training (binti Samian & Buntat, 2012). It also assists entrepreneurs in developing self-assurance, as well as in participating in domestic and communal decision-making (Kagara, Audu, & Abdulkadir, 2013b). Teaching and tertiary education may result in entrepreneurial prospects and influence (Brush et al., 2004). The use of entrepreneurship is also dependent on the

entrepreneur's degree of training, expertise or knowledge acquired from training, social network and work experience (Shastri & Sinha, 2010). Training results in previous experience, leads to entrepreneurial readiness (Shane, 2003). Because business owners can provide awareness of the need for the formation and support of business skills to stimulate entrepreneurship and reduce business failure has grown among industry, trade and government stakeholders in several countries (Abdullah, Osman, & Rahim, 2008). It also serves as an important source of human resources (Brana, 2008). However, (Dasmani, 2011; Kagara et al., 2013b) discovered that students graduated from the entrepreneurial field were unable to obtain a job due to lack of expertise and self-confidence essentially required by industry because they were not exposed to industry at school (Ekpe, Mat, & Razak, 2010). Training and skill acquirement has had a positive effect on Nigerian business activities (Ebong et al., 2011). In France, skill acquirement training has had a positive impression on entrepreneurship (Brana, 2008). Training for skill acquisition benefited German entrepreneurship (Stohmeyer, 2007). Qualification training has also been shown to have a positive effect on Malaysian entrepreneurship (binti Samian & Buntat, 2012).

According to (Karataş-Ozkan, Nicolopoulou, & Ozbilgin, 2014), companies are concerned not only about financial sustainability, but also contributing significantly in the development of their society. European businesses are progressively embracing Internet tools in order to modify value-chain accomplishments. According to (Geoffrion & Krishnan, 2003), the internet or electronic business is one of the most significant developments of the past decade. E-business, as illustrated by (Zhu, Kraemer, & Xu, 2006), is the use of an Internet Platform (e.g., XML, HTTP, TCP/IP) and an existing IT infrastructure to conduct value chain transactions (such as purchases from upstream traders and subsequently selling products and amenities to downstream clients). Moreover, half of European companies are expected to buy Internet technology by February

2005 (COMMISSION, 2005). There is however a considerable "post-adoption gap" in e-Business which reflects a much lower corporate utilization rate. For example, only 27% of European companies have used the Web platform to get more than 5% of total supplies (COMMISSION, 2005). According to (Freeman, 2010; Olander & economics, 2007), the implementation of training projects by internal stakeholders as well as external actors could have an effect on their success. Network theory based on business and entrepreneurial behavior may also apply to private, government or NGOs and everyone is connected to a channel that contributes an important part in the extension of their undertakings.

(Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008) demonstrated that recognised organisations invest in the research and development department to meet the competition created by an informal enterprise based on deceptive perceptions of organisational learning. According to (Birkinshaw, Probst, & Tushman, 2009) formal organisations adapt to environmental fluctuations, thus balancing ongoing research and innovation required to improve performance while remaining sustainable, in contrast to informal organisations. According to (Kleinknecht & Mohnen, 2001; Lall, 1992), new levels of organisation make significant financial contributions at the macro level. (Lundvall, Joseph, Chaminade, & Vang, 2011) explain how new capabilities of companies influence countries' transition to higher levels of financial growth. According to (Fu & Gong, 2011), appropriate institutions and policies are also required to guide, facilitate and channel incentives at this level of innovation. These policies must improve the ability to recognize the appropriate qualification and provide a mechanism for transferring it to the indigenous economy too. According to (Fu, Mohnen, Zanello, & Change, 2018), innovation increases work output because technological innovation has a greater influence on national financial growth than non-technological innovation.

2.4 Youth

Pakistan's youth make up a sizable proportion of the population. According to (Siyal et al., 2016), developing countries such as Pakistan have demographic dividends that can be used for economic development if effectively channeled through effective macroeconomic policies. Because Pakistan has a large and growing youth population, youth employment is a particular challenge. It is a valuable resource that can be used to boost productivity and economic growth if properly channeled (Bari et al., 2021). According to (Shaikh, Riaz, & Ahmad, 2020), the rate of unemployment rises as the proportion of a country's youth population grows. The harmful shocks are exacerbated more severely than others by a lack of required education and low educational quality, as young people lack the necessary skills and experience. When a country has a high proportion of young people in its population, unemployment is severe.

Since 1996, the overall population composition of some developed countries has changed dramatically, with an increasing proportion of the working-age population in most developing countries. This demographic transition process has paved the way for future demographic dividends. Developing countries can use the demographic dividend to help their economic development. This demographic dividend, however, can only be used for the country's benefit if efficient and timely policies are developed and implemented to make this working-age population productive (Bloom, Canning, & Sevilla, 2001). Youth in Pakistan face numerous challenges in the way they work; they begin working at a young age, are not in the labor market, and find it difficult to get around. Furthermore, one of the most significant challenges for young people entering the labor market is a lack of education, competence and experience. About 52.4 percent of young people are unemployed, and those who are working are having difficulty

finding work. The youth unemployment rate is 20.2 percent, which is significantly higher than Pakistan's adult unemployment rate (Ahmad & Azim, 2010).

Youth unemployment is referred to as a major socioeconomic dilemma because young people who are unemployed for an extended period of time face social and domestic problems (Ayhan & Bursa, 2019) propose a positive correlation between crime and unemployment rates. According to Nordstrom (2004), youth unemployment could result in a significant loss of income in the near future. According to (Hammarström, Janlert, Theorell, & medicine, 1988), prolonged unemployment can also cause psychiatric problems such as depression. (Scarpetta et al., 2012), for example, emphasized the importance of creating jobs for young people to join. (Hällsten, Edling, & Rydgren, 2017) identified some causes of youth unemployment. The main reason for this is that many employers require work experience, which reduces the chances of young people getting good jobs. Another reason, which is more prevalent in developing countries, is low starting wages, which cause stress and a lack of motivation in employees, ultimately reducing job opportunities. According to the ILO, 600 million new jobs will be created globally over the next decade. Given current growth and economic forecasts, as well as the absence of significant changes in the political environment, the challenge is formidable. As new entrants join the ranks of the already unemployed, it will almost certainly have serious consequences for young people. There are no longer just potential risks of social unrest, a schism between the labor market and society, or a loss of faith in social progress (Organization, 2012).

2.5 Digital Transformation (DT)

The term digital transformation (DT) is increasingly used to describe the main changes that organizations are making. Engineering digital technology, changing competitiveness and

increasing customer centricity drive DTs and involve organizations that change the way they do business in whole or in part. Furthermore, companies should draw on both domestic and foreign knowledge, involve managers and employees, develop dynamic capabilities and develop Information capabilities (Osmundsen, Iden, & Bygstad, 2018). (Hull et al., 2007) suggested categorization of digital entrepreneurship based on the digital nature of a company's products or services and its digital use of methods. Such practices could include digital sales and marketing, digital dissemination of goods or services, digital interaction with important external players in the value chain and simulated internal activities related to a company's operation. The disadvantage of this type is that, because it focuses too much on practices, a "low-tech" company that utilizes current all-around tools may now be labelled as a digital entrepreneur – even with the broader and more ambiguous definition of a higher-technology firm. (Fox & Stucker, 2009), who used digital skills in the production of physical goods, narrowly define "digipreneurs." The Digital Entrepreneurship Monitor (DEM) reduced the explanation of digital entrepreneurship further in the practice of entrepreneurship by the usage of mobile and cloud technology, social media, and big data (education., 2012).

According to (Yoo et al., 2010), overall digitization has extended the modular architecture by integrating network, service, device and content layers through the use of digital technology. Entrepreneurs' behavior will change in the future as a result of this in order to prepare for innovation. The creation, consumption and exchange of information thus has an effect on digital processes, new project creation and innovation. (S. J. E. t. Nambisan & practice, 2017) has flipped the concept of overwhelming digitalization and realized the need for new entrepreneurial theories and their components. He also advocated for research to include multiple cross-level

analyses, the incorporation of concepts from other disciplines, and the recognition of the role of digital technologies in organizational and cultural transformations.

2.5.1 Digital Entrepreneurship

To recognize entrepreneurship in the digital realm, we use the idea of an ecosystem (Drucker, 2014). A system comprises of a collection of interconnected and interacting organizations that work in harmony to achieve a goal. In general, ecosystem is a persistent network of vibrant systems that interact and devise constantly changing dependencies in a given context. External macro-ecosystems can be considered as part of Community efforts to support development, as can internal or valuable added micro ecosystems that support a company's platforms for discussion purposes (Moore, 1993). Digital ecosystems have emerged as a critical research priority for professionals and academics alike (Li et al., 2012). With the rapid advancement of digitization and influence of digitalization, definition of digital ecosystems is subjected to various perceptions – ecological, economic, technological (Li et al., 2012). Despite differences in perspective and the focus of the various definitions, the convergence of all the conception considerations is based upon two cornerstones of DE – digital technologies (mobile search) and humans (anybody using Google) which can be regarded as non-living and living components respectively. The interface of these two components, as well as the dynamic and constant changes caused by those interactions, constitute the behavior of an ecosystem. The following assumptions are inherent in the DE system: bottom-up, user and open source oriented (Dini, Iqani, Mansell, & critique, 2011). In digital technologies, a more multifarious network known as digital infrastructure has been established (Tilson, Lyytinen, & Sørensen, 2010). The discussion

of digital ecosystems with respect to entrepreneurship ecosystems is built on two pillars: digital infrastructure and users.

The digital business ecosystem concept was developed by combining the well-known digital and business ecosystem concepts (Mason & Brown, 2014). It presents a theoretical framework for assisting digital business practices, which is based on major structural components such as digital enterprise, digital citizenship, digital marketplace and management infrastructure (Sussan & Acs, 2017). Other studies investigated digital entrepreneurship in key digital technological revolutions such as mobile applications (Bresnahan, Davis, & Yin, 2015) or other digital platforms, where successful entrepreneurship in the digital entrepreneurship is linked to, among others (S. Nambisan, Siegel, & Kenney, 2018). (Davidson & Vaast, 2010) discussed how, in comparison to traditional enterprises, digital enterprise is no longer a businessman's role. Social connections in the digital environment have now become a focus on the digital technology's material environment. The digital ecosystem exists because of digital entrepreneurship. Digital enterprise activities are defined by shared changes to products, facilities and locations in the digital ecosystem (Kraus et al., 2018). This justification leads us to the idea of a digital ecosystem.

2.5.2 Digital Platforms

Digital technologies such as the internet, computers, digital platforms, machine learning, robots and other types of AI, as well as big-data expertise, have directed to a digital revolution in order to better meet industry or client requirements. This process creates long-term value as well as opportunities for productivity (Morandini, Thum-Thysen, & Vandeplas, 2020). The profits of a digital literacy incentive will not be realized until the general community recognizes the worth of digital media assets. Just like infrastructure cannot be fully utilized without literacy, digital

literacy programs cannot be fully utilized without community's awareness of their importance and effectiveness. To attain this level of apprehension, a general awareness movement must support the development of digital literacy courses. The challenge of creating a digitally knowledgeable society without technology is to change attitudes and behaviors by promoting medium marketing through a wide range of digital and analogue media, such as radio, television, blogs, news and entertainment websites and social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other flat screens (Pirzada et al., 2013).

The increasing use of digital media worldwide increases digital literacy. In educational activities also, the digital medium has emerged as an efficient and powerful way of delivering information via visual, audio, video, animation and simulation to the target groups effectively. E-content have been found very useful for better education and a great deal of attention has now been paid to develop e-content for several days now (Nayyar et al., 2019). We cannot view students as "empty vessels waiting to be filled," as (Driscoll, 1994)suggests, but rather as dynamic beings in search of connotation. (Tapscott, 1998) points out in his book *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* that we are entering a new digital learning age, transitioning from broadcasting to 'interactive' learning. The increased use of advanced digital technology has transformed business management, created organizational challenges and altered how people interact and function (Autio, Nambisan, Thomas, & Wright, 2018). The entire business world has changed digital paradigms, including a wide range of enabling technology (for example, the Internet, big data, AI, cloud computing and enhanced virtual reality) (Rippa, Secundo, & Change, 2019). Companies are increasingly utilizing digital platforms when success necessitates the placement of products and services in digital networks with complex consumer connections (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018).

2.5.3 Digital Entrepreneurial Skills

According to European Recommendation on Key Competencies (Commission, 2006), digital competence was recognized as one of the European Union's eight key competencies in lifelong learning. The broad definition of digital skills may include the critical, confident and innovative use of ICT to attain work, learning, leisure, employability, integration and social contribution objectives. Digital competence is cross-competence that allows the acquisition of other basic competencies (for example learning to learn, mathematics, language, cultural awareness). Many of the skills that all citizens should learn to contribute dynamically in society and economy are related to the Century (for example, problem-solving, communication, emotional intelligence, global citizenship, entrepreneurship, leadership and staffing) (Ferrari, 2012). Over the past decade, it has become progressively obvious that basic reading, writing and mathematics skills have not remained always sufficient, despite their importance. The significance of non-cognitive skills, which are commonly referred to as social interaction skills, cannot be overstated (Kay & Greenhill, 2011). Competencies related to the usage of ICT and technology in common have evolved into "life skills," as opposed to literacy and computerization, and thus "a requirement as well as a right" (OECD, 2001)

(Tseng, 1972) considered employability to be a link between work knowledge, skills and the job market. People with this transferable capacity are becoming more relevant for economic changes as they go along different work conditions. Employability skills are termed as "the fundamental abilities required for a job to be carried out, maintained and done well." Modern life expertise entails a creative scheme of knowledge, expertise and motivations that is needed to be developed accordingly. E-business, ICT professionals and users is the community in serious need of digital

literacy, while the digitally conscious level of individual contentment is entirely different from the people at work. As digital skills vary, the outcomes of digitally equipped employees take many different forms, as do their status and income (Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray, & Krause, 2008).

Because it emphasizes on millions of freelancers , small industries (Parker, 2018) and rapidly growing entrepreneurs, digitalization has helped create multi-faceted platforms and opportunities that create value, innovate and take ownership (Acs, 2011; Song, 2019). Several multi-sided forums are teeming with digital entrepreneurs creating millions of applications that influence smartphones, Facebook and a slew of other businesses (von Krogh, Haefliger, & Jäger, 2010). Digital literacy has the potential to increase female participation in socioeconomic life. It allows them to express themselves and promotes social change by providing them with access to global knowledge (Aqili & Nasiri, 2010). Women's lives are being effected by mobile Internet access. It is regarded as a core capability, and some consider it to be a digital age survival skill (Chase, Laufenberg, & Literacy, 2011). It has created spaces for women to be empowered socially, economically and politically. Given the importance of digital literature, it is regarded as a fundamental need of the time to interpret and rebuild knowledge. Greene discovered in his research (Greene, Brush, Hart, & Saporito, 2001) that jobs were insufficient to meet or reduce the need for women to become entrepreneurs. Kirkwood's study concluded that "non-wage work characteristics such as the need for health care, the presence of children, and the husband's employment status may have contributed to the rise of female self-employment" (Kirkwood, 2009). Women in Pakistan, as in other parts of the world, have a greater appreciation for the Internet and social media applications. Social networking in online forums allows many target groups to be reached at a low cost.

Digital platforms are also digital spaces that connect businesses and consumers on a professional level (Hsieh & Wu, 2019). Furthermore, skills have become an essential component of modern societies, education, economies and jobs. The time calls for a digital culture (Ashcroft & Watts, 2005), a knowledge-based economy and a data revolution. Digital skills are becoming increasingly common in the context of globalization and are regarded as a starting point for securing work all over the world.

2.6 Digital Pakistan Policy 2020

IT has played a critical part in the evolving dynamics of a knowledge based society and economy. It is an important economic growth driver. Pakistan's IT division is positioning itself as a preferred foundation for software development and independence. It was placed at fourth number in the world for independent development, and IT exports increased by 70% in the last three years. Numerous independent global institutes have confirmed and praised Pakistan's economic growth trends. Pakistan has a massive human and knowledge group, with roughly 60% of its 200 million population aged 15 to 29 years.

The Government of Pakistan continues to support the digital sector through several viable development and faster digital projects, research and invention, software technology parks, bandwidth subsidies, international marketers and certificates, internships and training. Incentives for growth include 100 percent justice, tax breaks for new businesses, and state-of-the-art, subsidized software technology parks. The government has taken a comprehensive strategic approach to putting the country on the international outsourcing map, including partaking in domestic conferences, international forums, scalable software parks and certification (ISO 27001 and CMMI) programs. In the light of increased need for digital platforms, a Digital Pakistan policy, responsible for the ever-changing role of its Digital Platforms within all areas of

socioeconomic development, as well as their rapid digitization and transformation into incorporated components of a complete knowledge-based economy, has now become a matter of necessity.

The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications developed this policy paper using a multi-stakeholder model. The requirements of Digital Pakistan's policy are also much interconnected, and must be addressed completely in order to quickly renovate IT and other economic divisions. This policy will also work as the basis for a comprehensive digital ecosystem comprising of cutting-edge ideas and components, allowing for the swift provision of next-generation digital facilities, applications and content. It will offer data for value-added services and applications for cutting-edge digital solutions. It allows indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses to gain fundamental skills, experience and integrity in order to compete and thrive more successfully on the global stage.

2.6.1 Some key Digital businesses in Pakistan during Covid-19 Pandemic

The World Bank has recognized Pakistan's remarkable progress in ease of doing business, with the government implementing several changes to speed up and streamline processes for acquiring construction licenses, paying taxes online, and registering property. Despite rising to 108th in the 2020 ranking (from 136th in 2019 and 147th in 2018), Pakistan still trails other middle-income economies such as Kazakhstan at 25, India at 63 and Indonesia at 73 (WB, 2019). Pakistan is ranked 110th out of 141 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2019 Global Competitiveness Report, with a good score for market size but a low score for several other measures (Schwab, 2019). This highlights the significance of a policy that encourages a digitally inclusive economy. During the Covid-19 situation, the economy of digital business experience a

bloom which led to rise in many new digital startups in Pakistan. Following are the few examples of those startups:

Table 2.1: Digital Business in Pakistan

Sr. No#	Business Name	Notable Project
1	<p>SUF DIGITAL</p> <p>SUF Digital is a digital agency founded in 2020 with a staff of approximately 50 people. They provide branding, market research and digital planning services from their base in Karachi, Pakistan. They have clients in the advertising, e-commerce and education industries.</p>	<p>For educational institutions, SUF Digital developed a web application. The organization intended to create a web platform for their services. The results have been well received by the institution.</p>
2	<p>SOCIAL HIPPOS</p> <p>Social Hippos was established in the year 2020 as a social media marketing firm. The small team handles social media marketing, graphic design and digital strategy. The headquarters of the agency is situated in Karachi, Pakistan.</p>	<p>A news and media platform hired Social Hippos to provide social media marketing services. The team is primarily in charge of designing and managing the company's social media accounts.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>CLIKUM</p> <p>Clikum is a digital marketing firm based in Pakistan. It was established in 2019 and currently employ approximately 5 people. They primarily serve enterprise and midmarket clients in the manufacturing, real estate and advertising sectors. Among the services provided are digital strategy, market research and SEO.</p>	<p>Clikum provided SEO and digital marketing services for a male fashion brand. PPC campaigns, marketing channels, and research were all in charge of the team. As a result of their efforts, the client's traffic and sales have increased.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>VIRRGOTECH</p> <p>VirrgoTech is a digital marketing agency based in Islamabad. The company, which was founded in 2019, provides branding, PPC, SEO, social media marketing and website design services. They specialize in Google AdWords, YouTube Advertising, Amazon Advertising and other pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns.</p>	<p>VirrgoTech created a website and marketing materials for a logistics company. They designed letterhead, business cards, web text and a brand marketing campaign. The team also offered PPC and social media marketing services. The client can approach easily and on time as a result of their expanded internet presence.</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>SEOHUB.PK</p> <p>SEOHub.pk is a search engine optimization firm based in Karachi, Pakistan, that assists clients with search engine optimization, digital strategy, social media marketing and content generation. Since 2019, the 50-person team has concentrated on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and content marketing.</p>	<p>SEOHub worked with a digital marketing firm to optimize the company's website and implement SEO best practices. As a result, the client's website trading and relevant lead generation increased.</p>
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2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Theory of dynamic capabilities

According to dynamic capabilities research, administrative abilities in a changing marketplace for constant innovation are hazardous to long-term competitive improvement (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The company's ability to rapidly integrate, build and reorder its internal and external capacity to enroll changing environments (D. J. Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), its organizational practices that alter existing customs (Winter, 2003), its ability to generate, increase, or modify its resource base decisively (Helfat et al., 2009), and the organizational undertakings that sense prospects, seize opportunities and invade opportunities (D. J. J. S. m. j. Teece, 2007). Skimming, manufacturing, learning and inferring activities are defined as the micro-foundations of the dynamic capacity to identify new opportunities, and acquire aptitude to solve the senseless new opportunities by financing new products, processes, and business representations (D. J. J. S. m. j. Teece, 2007). The ability to reconfigure resources and

management structures as the company grows; and markets and technology evolve, is critical to maintaining competitive leadership (Girod & Whittington, 2017). Digital technology plays an important role in dynamic capacity design (Dong & Wu, 2015).

2.7.2 Theory of Diffusion of Innovation

According to Rogers (Orr, 2003), innovation is defined as an idea, a new purpose, or a practice that a person, group, or organization perceives. Furthermore, dissemination is a societal change process in which invention is transmitted over period of time through specific networks such as interpersonal or mass media between social system members. A person decides whether to accept or reject innovation at various stages. It instills knowledge of innovation before forming an attitude towards it based upon its opinion of innovation. The next person resolves whether to approve or reject the invention, and then applies it and approves its judgment. The apparent features of an invention include its relative compatibility, advantage, difficulty, testing and compliance (Orr, 2003).

Rogers further described that perceived features are characteristics of an invention that enable it more or less alluring to a specific person. The perceived relative benefit of an innovation is that it is considered superior to the current idea or practice. The faster an innovation is adopted, the greater it's perceived relative advantage. Compatibility, on the other hand, refers to how responsive the innovation is to a person's current beliefs, values and needs. Difficulty or complexity refers to which degree the innovation is supposed as hard to understand or apply. The extent to which customers can modify or apply small-scale innovation is referred to as trial ability. The extent to which other people can see the outcomes of an innovation is referred to as observability. Innovations with easily detectable consequences are more likely to be embraced than those having more indirect output (Orr, 2003).

3.8 Research Gap

Researcher found a key gap to extend the idea of capacity of innovation, realizing the need to customize the organizational practices in order to capture the opportunities. As if a firm has to survive the competition than it has to adapt with the uncertain challenges and with the fast-growing technological advancement, the need to evolve with the pace is a must. Likewise, the organizations and economies also have to evolve and adapt with the technological advancements that lead to stepping into digital era where the high demand skills are the ones linked with digitalization. This study is youth based and explores the effects of acquiring digital skills that leads to enhancing the employability capabilities which leads to youth empowerment in the particular area.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research was carried out systemically according to the methodology (Sarantakos, 1993). Research strategy and research design are explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. Section 3.4 describes the units of data collection that is young entrepreneurs. Section 3.5 includes research methods which is unstructured interviews. Sections 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 describes the sampling methods, data collection and study locale respectively and section 3.9 explains the conceptual framework designed on the basis of research objectives.

3.2 Research Strategy: Qualitative and Quantitative

Because a variety of social research practices are available, it is critical to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Layder, 1993). Furthermore, research strategy is essential because it represents the overall focus of social research. Quantitative research incorporates quantifications and calculations that qualitative research does not, and is based on fundamental epistemological shifts. It is deductive in nature, which is one of the most important aspects of quantitative research. Its practices and standards, in particular, are positive, and objective reality plays an important role. While qualitative research is mainly based on word structure. Inductive research helps to perceive the world individualistically and, consequently, the truth does not stay the same. This means that time transforms the truth as individualistic opinions of people change. In most instances, the study's contours must be vivid, but both

strategies of research (i.e. mixed-method research) are used in a research concept. Due to the inductive nature of my research, qualitative research is the best method for this research.

3.3 Research Design

A research design creates a framework that lists the priorities of researchers. Each type of research design necessitates data analysis and collection. There are five types of research designs, as described in this section: longitudinal design, comparative design, experimental design, cross-cutting design and case design (Bryman, 2016). Researchers employ a longitudinal design most of the time because of the ethnographic nature of the research. The next type of research design is comparative design. As the name implies, it investigates two or more cases at the same time using the same instruments. This is due to the similarity of various social phenomena to the nature of a study. It is suitable for both qualitative and quantitative applications. Experimental design is significant and well-known because it is regarded as a reliable technology due to the objectivity of its results. The fourth type of research design is a cross-sectional design. It is also referred as the survey design because it covers the survey's characteristics, such as structured observations, official statistics and content analysis by dairy. Furthermore, by using a cross-sectional design, more than one variable is used in the research of each specific case. In other words, changes are made in the family, individuals and organizations. This is due to the fact that different variables are more easily distinguished. Furthermore, data collection is carried out concurrently.

However, for current research, the case-study design was used due to its ability to address the heterogeneity and complexity of the examined cases. Case studies are the most popular and well-known design method due to their detailed and in-depth analysis (Stake, 1995). It examines case studies that highlight the complexities and unique nature of the issues under consideration. It

looks into the individual community, school, family, organization, and so on. In general, the term "case" refers to a single location chosen for a thorough investigation. Although qualitative researchers commonly use case study design, quantitative scientists can benefit from it as well due to its observational techniques and unstructured interviews. The sample, not the researcher, serves as the test unit in the case-study design. It is also claimed that this design incorporates an 'ideographical approach,' as the researcher may highlight specific aspects of the study that it conducts. Other types of case studies exist in the case study design, such as case critical, in which the researcher has well-developed theories, but the idea of selecting a case is based more thoroughly and in greater depth on an understanding of a specific case. Second, a unique case is one in which an individual case is examined to see if the study involves a unique character. (Mead, Sieben, & Straub, 1973) conducted a special case study after observing that Samoans do not experience anxiety or stress during adolescence. The third point, whether representative or typical, is to investigate a specific situation or circumstance in greater depth and breadth in order to comprehend every aspect of that specific event. Fourth, there is the disclosure case; in this case, the researcher investigates a specific case that has not previously been reported due to a lack of scientific research. Finally, there is the longitudinal case, which records the particulars of a given situation multiple times.

3.4 Units of Data Collection (UDCs)

Young Digital Entrepreneurs

Since the prevalence and market value of digital enterprises are increasing, the role of entrepreneurs is rapidly changing in the current situation of Covid-19, companies whose offers are exclusively digital and have no physical presence. It is reasonable to wonder whether these

changes make it easier or harder for digital business entrepreneurs so that questions about the prospects of acquiring digital entrepreneurship and the challenges that young businesspeople face when venturing into digital ventures can be raised. This study looked into the effect of digital entrepreneurial skills on young people's empowerment and employment.

3.5 Research Methods

The research methods are the means by which information is collected. The techniques used are the following, given the qualitative research strategy and the design of case studies:

3.5.1 Interviews

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are part of qualitative interviews (Bryman, 2016). Such interviews are less structured than those used in surveys. The type of interview used for the current study is listed in the following text.

3.5.2 Unstructured Interviews

According to (Bryman, 2016), during unstructured interviews, the interviewee responds freely while the interviewer asks open-ended questions to extract qualitative data. Probes and prompts are used in this interview type to extract contextual and in-depth data. For these reasons, I extracted data from UDCs using unstructured interviews.

3.6 Sampling

For this study, I used non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling employs units which are purposefully selected to represent specific characteristics of a group or community. Non-probability sampling, in contrast to probability sampling, does not strive to be statistically representative, which means that the likelihood of selecting each unit is unknown. Instead, the characteristics of the population are used as selection criteria. During probability sampling, every sample unit has an equal chance of being chosen. An investigator's sample is representative, reliable and general to the sample's population (Sarantakos, 1993). In the following text, I discussed the type of non-probability sampling that was used in this study.

3.6.1 Purposive Sampling

When the sample is small and informative, this type of non- probability sample is typically used. A variety of factors influence the selection of respondents using this sampling technique. Study objectives, existing knowledge about areas of interest, hypotheses and the field in which the specific UDC is specialized, and knowledge that the specific UDC possesses in the field of research are among the selection criteria. For the reasons stated above, I used purposive sampling for UDCs.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The consistency of responses to different coders of data sets is referred to as reliability in qualitative research. It can be enhanced by taking detailed field notes, recording them, and transcribing the digital files (Orovitz, 2020). According to (Creswell & Poth, 2016), In qualitative research, validity is important because it attempts to determine the "correctness" of

the findings as best described by the researcher. This implies that the study is a representation by the author, and that validation is being used to emphasize a process rather than verification based on extensive field time, detailed descriptions, and a close relationship between the researcher and the participants. Following are the steps which proves validity and reliability of this enduring study.

3.7.1 Data Collection

The process was completed in two months, from 3 May 2021 to 3 July 2021. The collection process has been concluded. Respondent data was gathered through unstructured interviews. Qualitative interviews are sometimes used to refer to unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2016). The guide was used to make the interviews go more smoothly. Probing, on the other hand, was the key to the interviewees' extensive details and processing.

3.7.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide includes brief instructions on the topics to be covered. According to (Sarantakos, 1993), questions provide more than one response, one or more of which is chosen by the respondent. The interviewer has a list of questions and is completely free to answer them. The interviewer collects the interviewee's words and bases subsequent questions on them. Each interviewee received questions and suggestions that were similar (Bryman, 2016). The researcher used interview guides to ensure that no important areas of the study were overlooked.

3.7.3 Probing

Prompting encourages exploration and probing. The secondary issue is testing, which aids in explaining the primary issue. If you are hesitant to respond or remain silent, the interviewer will

give you cues (Sarantakos, 1993). Non-directive testing and synopsis testing are the two types of testing (Selltiz, Wrightsman, Cook, & Warrington, 1976). In addition to the main question, non-directive testing includes brief statements and neutral sentences. i.e., that's what I mean. The summary technique is useful for providing meaningful guidance during the interview. The interviewer summarizes the interviewee's previous statement so that he or she can elaborate on the subject. For UDCs, non-directive probing was used to keep the conversation on track.

3.7.4 Telephone Interviews

In comparison to face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews lose verbal evidence; however, given the current state of the Covid-19, phone interviews are necessary (L BERG, 2001). Until the end of the research project, telephone interviews were used to provide important information and data to respondents.

3.7.5 Recording

Interviews were recorded audio with the permission of the respondents (Bryman, 2016). To record the interviews, the researcher used mobile phones. The interview took place with the permission of the interviewees. Each respondent was interviewed individually in a separate room to avoid background noise. Consequently, all interviews have been carefully transcribed.

3.7.6 Transcription

According to (Horowitz & Gerson, 2002) , listening to all of the recordings before transcribing specific portions of the interview may be uninspiring. The recordings were carefully listened to after each interview. The transcription was initially recorded in the text. Except for a few people

who only spoke in one language, the wording was mostly bilingual (Urdu and English). Clean verbatim transcription was used to transcribe the recording.

3.7.7 Translation

The data was recorded in both Urdu and English. The original Urdu text has been translated into English. The transcribed information has been added to the chapter "Findings and Discussion," while the Urdu words have been italicized and translated into English. The English story of the respondents is also italicized. The italicized content appears distinct between paragraphs of discussion.

3.7.8 Thematic Chart

While the process of analyzing the collected data is ongoing, the data must be managed and sensed in two stages using descriptive or exploratory accounts. The methods and tools used by the analyst to collect data are critical to the stage being accessed. This is said to be the best way for analysts to frame the thematic framework. This framework organizes and categorizes data based on major themes, categories and concepts. In this research, I also used the thematic method. After finalizing all the data from interviews, themes are generated through manual coding and are further subdivided into main themes and sub themes (Lewis, 2014). Themes are not completely but a subset of all the expressions and all the statements that are provided by the interviewees.

3.8 Locale

This study was conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. I chose both cities because Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan and Rawalpindi is a major Punjab city adjacent to Islamabad.

The two cities have strong geographical, economic and social ties, earning them the title of twin cities. The cities are home to more than 50 digital start-ups and businesses.

3.9 Conceptual Framework

Digitalization has, in particular, resulted in two comprehensive conventions that take into account entrepreneurial advancements and effects. First, digital tools have less constrained business consequences and processes—they have transitioned from distinct, impermeable, and constant borders to gradually fluid and permeable borders. In terms of "outcomes," the operational limits of the service and product are linked. The term "processes" refers to the spatial and chronological constraints of entrepreneurial events (for instance, when and where activities are being carried out).

Digital entrepreneurship in specific areas can provide opportunities to work in remote areas, at various events, at home or outside. It has the potential to play a significant role, particularly if new development is linked to the availability of public knowledge, in promoting gender equality and social reflection, in stimulating improvement and contributing to true growth and expansion (Ngoasong & Development, 2018). Previous studies looked at the challenges and prospects of digital competencies, but this study is unique in that it looks specifically at the prospects of digital competencies for young people. This study is also distinct because the context is distinct, as it will explore effects on the youth belonging to twin cities of Pakistan.

Infrastructure, capabilities, and various corporate forms of measurement are the primary barriers to digital enterprise. There are also concerns that are particularly difficult for all digital thinkers and business people. Many digital entrepreneurs, for example, are "conceived on the planet" (on the Internet or in the cloud) or can progress and change rapidly across borders in every way (S. Nambisan et al., 2018). Admission to these abilities will become increasingly important as the

number of learning economies grows in tandem with the growing importance of vast information and the cloud. Having access to information and ability to exploit it is gradually becoming a source of violence and (market) control. Several countries expect financial growth and expansion as a result of ICT efforts. In all cases, the effects of ICT are determined by their application, which includes critical elements such as skills and the ability of the business community to enable individuals and businesses to access the majority of information and communication services (Ngoasong & Development, 2018). The previous researches have explored the challenges in acquiring the digital skills but this study is unique as it will explore the challenges in acquiring the digital skills specifically for the age bracket belonging to youth. This study is also different as the context is different as it will find the effects on the youth belonging to twin cities of Pakistan.

According to the literature, the main factor in the employment of self-employment ventures is the acquisition of talents. Globally, entrepreneurship courses advertised in educational organizations were designed to deliver the level of education or information required to take advantage of business opportunities to benefit economic growth in those countries (Emaikwu & Society, 2011; Shane, 2003). Previously, researches were performed to investigate the association between skill acquirement and entrepreneurial prospect or self-employment (Abdullah et al., 2008; Nwanaka & Amaehule, 2011; Onuoha, Inyama, Eze, Achi, & Research, 2013). But there is lack of study that factually examined relationship between digital entrepreneurial expertise acquirement and self-employment, particularly in a developing country like Pakistan.

Entrepreneurial skill acquirement is the process by which an individual gains a specific expertise or type of business method through workshop or education (Amadi & Sciences, 2012; IBRU,

2009) so that he can identify and operate entrepreneurial self-employment opportunities (binti Samian & Buntat, 2012; Stohmeyer, 2007). It also assists entrepreneurs in developing self-confidence and contributing to domestic and communal decision-making (Kagara, Audu, & Abdulkadir, 2013a). Higher education along with skills could pave the way for entrepreneurship and business opportunities (Emaikwu & Society, 2011). Entrepreneurs' use of entrepreneurial opportunities is also influenced by their level of training, skills, or awareness, their work, and their social circle (Shane, 2003; Shastri & Sinha, 2010). The previous researches have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial skill acquirement and employability so this study has a unique approach to evaluate the digital entrepreneurial skills acquisition, employability and empowerment on the youth. This enduring study is also exclusive as this study will specifically explore the youth employability with digital entrepreneurial skills acquisition and youth empowerment in the twin cities of Pakistan.

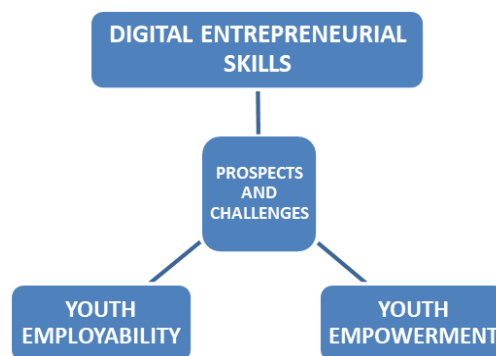


Figure 3.1 : Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The qualitative research was done through having 30 in-depth interviews from young digital entrepreneurs from the twin cities of Pakistan i.e. Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The analysis is divided into three parts: the first part of this qualitative analysis focuses on the prospects of acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs which include the creation of jobs and self-employment opportunities, social inclusion which helps in gender equality, concrete economic growth and sustainability of business. Whereas, the second part focus on the challenges that young entrepreneurs might face while stepping into digitalization which encompasses deficit in funding, shortage of digitally capable and experienced labor force, digital skills and digital divide, gap between educational curriculum and new global curriculum for business and nonexistence of policies and guidelines to protect and help e-commerce entrepreneurs. The final section of this analysis will be entirely focused on the effects of digital entrepreneurial skills on youth employability and empowerment and it will take into account effects of digital industry on job evolution, effects of digital literacy on youth empowerment and effects of digital technologies on business performance. Themes and sub-themes investigated in this study are given as under:

Table 4.1 Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Subthemes
Prospects of acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of jobs and self-employment opportunities• Social inclusion which helps in gender equality• Concrete economic growth• Sustainability of business
Challenges that young entrepreneurs might face while stepping into digitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deficit in funding• Lack of digitally competent and skilled workforce• Digital skills and digital divide• Gap between educational curriculum and new global curriculum for business• Nonexistence of policies and guidelines to protect and help e-commerce entrepreneurs
Effects of digital entrepreneurial skills on youth employability and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effects of digital industry on job evolution• Effects of digital literacy on youth empowerment• Effects of digital technologies on business performance

4.2 Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter includes analysis of data collected from the interviews of young entrepreneurs and important findings obtained from them. Section 4.2.1 elaborates prospects of acquiring digital entrepreneurial skills for young entrepreneurs. Challenges faced by young entrepreneurs while stepping into digitalization are discussed in section 4.2.2 and the effect of digital entrepreneurial skills on youth employability and empowerment is presented in section 4.2.3.

4.2.1 Prospects of Acquiring Digital Entrepreneurial Skills for Young Entrepreneurs

The term "digital capabilities" refers to the ability to access and manage data via digital tools and devices, communication networks and applications. They make people able to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems in order to learn, work and a broader social life in an effective and creative manner. Entry-level digital skills are widely regarded as an essential constituent of a modern digital literacy expertise alongside conventional reading, writing and arithmetic skills. They include fundamental abilities required to operate digital tools and devices and online applications. The cutting-edge spectrum of digital abilities includes higher-level capabilities that enable users to utilize digital technologies in the empowerment and transformation of ICT professions. Significant digital transformations include AI, big data analytics, machine learning, the need for skill change, and, as a result, the development of capacity and skills in the digital industry of the twenty-first century. To succeed in the associated economy and society, digital abilities must be combined with other abilities such as sound literacy and digital capabilities, critical thinking and advanced thought, complex problem solving, collaborative ability and socio-emotional skills.

4.2.1.1 Creation of jobs and self-employment opportunities

When interviewees were asked about either digital skills proved helpful for job creation and opportunities. Most of respondents replied that such skills play a positive role in creating jobs and opportunities for self-employment. As one interviewed person said:

“Job scarcity is the primary need to develop digital skills and, through these abilities, you can start your own digital business and earn money at lakes because digital enterprises have a high-profit ratio and less investment is needed.”

Respondents believed that acquiring digital entrepreneurship skills is an effective tool of employment generation in the current competitive world especially for those individuals that, have financial and investment constrains. This in return provides the basis for future profit generation and expansion of businesses.

The other interviewee said:

“Digital skills help a lot in my career as a digital entrepreneur and these skills not only support in the professional career but also in every walk of life at some stage. These skills play a major role in enhancing the productivity of the business.”

On contrary to this, a few of respondents were of the view that these skills might cause job losses hence, in return creating economic instability both on the individual and holistic level. At the same time, digital entrepreneurship relies more on technology than on physical presence of the employees which, further inflict threats of wide spread unemployment .

As one respondent said:

“In digital business less manpower is needed as compared to the physical or manual business so now one man is doing job of 4 on digital platform which results in job loss and ultimately in unemployment.”

4.2.1.2 Social inclusion which promotes gender equality

Moving forward, digital entrepreneurs were asked about whether and how digital skills helps in the social inclusion which promotes gender equality and also helps to work in the remote areas. All of the respondents said that yes, these skills create equal opportunities for women as they can work while staying at their homes. According to the respondents dynamics of digital entrepreneurship differs from the ordinary businesses and hence, does only requires and focuses on individual skills and not on their appearance.

An interviewee said:

“Females have many problems in the conventional job structure for instance, transportation or security problem and sometimes they have family responsibilities due to which they cannot go for work but there is no such limitation on these platforms and that’s why females are more active than males on digital platforms.”

Also, all of them agreed to that these skills help in promoting opportunities to work in the remote areas as physical presence of the employee is not required and one can operate from anywhere according to their feasibility.

According to one of the respondent:

“In this covid-19 situation, our employees are working from their homes for us because we are concerned with their operations not their physical presences.”

4.2.1.3 Concrete economic growth

Furthermore, while considering the economic aspect, question was asked about the concrete economic growth of their businesses with the help of digital skills. Interviewees responded that these skills increased their business productivity and the overall economic growth very efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, it provides opportunity for employment and profit generation, which, in return is extremely relevant for economic stability and growth.

As one interviewee said:

“Digital skills double business productivity as through digital skills I can pitch the international market too which creates more opportunities and spreads the business globally. This helps in attaining a concrete economic growth.”

Another responded said:

“During Covid-19, when everyone was facing the financial problems because of job losses or business closures I earned double because of my skills and strong grip on the digital platforms.”

At the same time, during the pandemic with countrywide lockdown and closure of offices and salary reduction. Individuals with digital skills were fortunate enough to carry on with their jobs and to sustain their standard of living.

4.2.1.4 Sustainability of business

In the view of the prevailing covid-19 situation, question was asked about how digital skills play an important role in sustaining the digital business under global emergencies like Covid-19 where all the physical businesses were closed. Interviewees responded that digital skills played a very important role in sustaining the businesses because these skills don't require any physical

platform to run the business so covid-19 didn't affect their performance. Also, many businesses which were working on ground also shifted to the online or digital ones in the covid-19 pandemic. One respondent said:

“During Covid-19, almost every business which had physical presence has now transformed into digital presence because that was the only way left to run the business in the pandemic situation.”

Other respondent said:

“Well, the fact that no business can make the most out of their business without having their online presence is enough to understand the role of digital skills in today's business curriculum. The future is based on digital system so those who are transforming their businesses to digital platforms will only excel and sustain in the future.”

4.2.2 Challenges That Young Entrepreneurs Might Face While Stepping into Digitalization

Pakistan has one of the highest rates of NEET among young and adolescent people in the world (not for education, employment, or training). Simultaneously, companies lack skills that ensure their competitiveness and growth capabilities, particularly in connection with the digital transformation of a commodities-based economy and society to a knowledge-based economy and society. This inequality is characterized by a lack of funding, digital and experienced labor capital, digital skills and the digital divide, a gap between educational curricula and the new global business curriculum, and, last but not least, the absence of e-commerce policies and regulations to support and protect e-commerce businesses. These factors are exacerbated by digital transformation and the associated acceleration in economic and innovation processes,

posing a challenge for entrepreneurs in digitalizing their businesses. All of this creates difficulties for the young entrepreneurs to acquire digital skills properly and hence, pose a threat on economy of youth unemployment and further hinders economic development.

4.2.2.1 Deficit in funding

Money deficit to meet the expenses are biggest challenges for young entrepreneurs in the digital marketing businesses.

When respondents were asked how money deficit effect their business, one respondent said:

“To run business on digital platform one needs high speed internet and some capable devices like laptops, soft wares etc. And sometimes it becomes hard for the entrepreneur meet all his business expenses due to money deficit.”

Other one stated:

“Business on digital platforms need some investments but there is no funding from the government for entrepreneurs operating their businesses here which is a major challenge. Government must focus on this sector too so that funding opportunities will be given to the entrepreneurs.”

Lack of investment opportunities along with inconsistent government policies and importantly difficulties of attaining loans from the banks for young individuals creates serious budgetary constraints for the new entrepreneurs. This restricts them to initiate a business venture and to create opportunities for others in future.

4.2.2.2 Lack of digitally competent and skilled workforce

The deficiency of digital skills amongst workers is a one of the major challenge entrepreneur might encounter. Respondents were asked how lack of digitally competent and skilled workforce becomes a challenge for them. All of them considered that this is a huge challenge which is effecting their business output as one respondent said:

“Because of a scarcity of qualified graduates to fill digital positions in growing technology industries, digital businesses have been severely hampered. Many large established businesses with highly skilled employees are unable to adopt digital technologies that would increase their efficiency.”

Working with or even developing digital products is a huge challenge for a well-trained workforce. Companies that do not respond to this challenge, on the other hand, are likely to be replaced by those that do. Another respondent said:

“Future jobs are not a problem of skill development – they are a problem of joblessness. How will we deal with a workforce that is no longer relevant?”

According to the respondents, Pakistan experiences a serious issue of unskilled youth who lack digital skills massively. This is further restricting the graduates to compete with the national and international labor market. At the same time, it is restricting business to acquire new digital technologies that the world has already adopted and restrict international business to recruit employees from Pakistan. Hence, restricting Pakistan to be the part of ongoing globalization throughout the world.

4.2.2.3 Digital skills and digital divide

The term digital divide generally referred to internet access. When respondents were asked about what type of challenges they face because of unavailability of internet access and how it effect their business performance, most of them responded that good quality internet access is very important of digital entrepreneur because he needs it 24/7 and if the internet is weak then it'll effect their working as one respondent stated:

“Quality internet accessibility is a big challenge for digital entrepreneurs because you cannot run business on this platform without internet as 90 to 95% of business affects due to bad connectivity of internet.”

Pakistan being a developing country lacks technological and infrastructural development. People despite having access to mobiles and laptops still, experiences lack of internet facility and proper connection. This possess huge threat on digital entrepreneurs as their jobs requires good internet quality and access and hence, further effect their performance and threat their employability.

Another respondent also highlighted some barriers to internet access:

“Although most digital entrepreneurs believe that the Internet is extremely relevant to their business, yet the main barriers to their internet adoption are the concerns about the cost and complexity, problems around lack of support and security while using the internet. For that reason, the government should give businesses more incentives to adopt and use the Internet so that they can compete in the global marketplace.”

4.2.2.4 Gap between educational curriculum and new global curriculum for business

One of the main challenges in embracing digital devices is the lack of digital literacy since our education system is not designed to cater the needs of today's job market. Despite changes and modification of curriculum worldwide Pakistan stills continues to provide its students with monotonous knowledge and education since its creation. Furthermore, education system of Pakistan lacks in skills enhancement of the students and makes them incompatible with the international and even national job market requirements. This further creates a burden on the economy through unemployed and unskilled youth.

When respondents were asked about how big the gap is between educational curriculum and new global curriculum for business after the pandemic one stated:

“Students are not taught to be digitally skilled. When they pass out and seek a job or go for a business idea, they have to learn digital skills on their own. Our education system doesn't support digital literacy. This also arouses “Technophobia” in many youngsters because they suffer nervousness when confronted with new technologies because they just feel out of touch.”

Another said:

“The gap is huge. The dearth of adequately skilled graduates to appoint at digital posts in today's abruptly expanding technological industries is all due to the incompetent education system.”

4.2.2.5 Nonexistence of policies and guidelines to protect and help e-commerce entrepreneurs

E-commerce is a sector which creates employability opportunities. When interviewees were asked about whether and how absences of policies and guidelines to protect and help e-commerce entrepreneurs effect their business performance, one respondent said:

“Logistics is backbone of e-commerce that’s why its handling is biggest challenge. Most of the time courier services didn’t deal seriously due to which our products might return or delayed which destroys our business reputation. Government should put some focus on this sector to formulate a policy framework for its protection too just same as government gives protection to banking sector.”

Another stated:

“Legalization has great effect on market as from product design to it sale legal advices are very necessary but there is no awareness about legal advice here which is a challenge in business performance too.”

One interviewee responded that now some policies for this sector are under process, he said:

“E-commerce sector needs a proper policy framework to avoid scams and frauds and currently a policy framework is under government’s consideration and it’s under process as this issue was highlighted in PM Imran khan’s meeting with the You Tubers, bloggers about digital platforms.”

According to the respondents’ lack of proper policies, interest and inconsistent polices impose a huge threat on e-commerce with delayed services and increase in fraudulent cases which effects business performance and reputation massively. Hence, it is the dire need of the time for

government to take serious holistic actions both on micro and macro level for smooth operation of digital business and economic development.

4.2.3 Effects of Digital Entrepreneurial Skills on Youth Employability and Empowerment

Digitalization transforms the workplace in various forms to ensure efficient tasks, optimization of business and field resources, competitiveness, increased interaction and integration among employees, quick and cost-effective response to clients, innovative services, and economic growth. The primary goal of the present study was to inspect the effects of digital entrepreneurial skills on the employability and empowerment of young people. In these interviews, the young digital entrepreneurs thus have been asked three main questions about how digital skills have empowered them and assisted young people in finding work.

4.2.3.1 Effects of digital industry on job evolution

Because of structural changes in the job market and the interaction between new technologies, jobs, and work organization, referred to as Job evolution, there are jobs that were unimaginable twenty years ago and some that have nearly vanished in the current day. Many businesses prefer to work remotely rather than in person, and jobs in the digital industry are rapidly changing as new types of labor emerge via digital platforms. Companies would rather concentrate on improving the quality of their operations and, as a result, their productivity. When asked how jobs in the digital industry are evolving, interviewees responded positively. Most of them see job growth as a positive for the digital industry, but a few see it as a negative as well.

One respondent stated:

“If we go 5 to 10 years back, entrepreneurs hesitated to step into digital businesses and didn't accept the idea of running their businesses remotely but now in the prevailing situation of the pandemic specially, this idea is widely spread and accepted by the society and now almost every business has transformed itself into digitalization.”

According to the respondents with rapid change in business structure, objectives and globalization, operation of businesses has been massively changed. This has further amplified from emergence of Covid-19, which shifted businesses to continue its operation from various digital platforms. This is not only helping the employees to acquire new digital skills but is also helping the business to reduce its costs, which was previously much enhanced with physical presence of the employees at the office. Hence further provides business to maximize their profits and to generate economic activity.

Another stated:

“Employers are enticed to outsource work, and people are able to work from anywhere thanks to digital platforms. Many young people and highly educated professionals in Pakistan are becoming involved in digital freelancing platforms (Fiver, UpWork) and other such types of employment opportunities. These platforms demonstrate how digital transformation can result in new job opportunities.”

However, some interviewees did consider that it has negative effect on job evolution and stated that:

“As many people still didn’t know how to use digital gadgets in this fast-changing work environment, it will be very difficult for them to compete with those who have digital skills therefore they will lose their jobs.”

Another one stated:

“As a result of digitization, millions of jobs, particularly those involving routine tasks, are at risk. To take advantage of new career opportunities, digital and non-cognitive skills (communication, planning, and teamwork) are required, as many jobs today require a combination of these abilities and are also better compensated than others. Employers seek team members who can adapt to change and are willing to learn through e-learning, as well as those with extensive social networks and above-average ICT skills.”

4.2.3.2 Effects of digital literacy on youth empowerment and youth employability

Youth requires access and utilization of digital technologies in ways that support their full inclusion in today’s job because market it has positive effects on youth socio-economic status, and on their independence and wellbeing at personal levels. When entrepreneurs were asked about how digital literacy effects youth empowerment and employability. According to the interviewee’s responses, digital literacy has a positive effect on youth empowerment and employability. As one respondent said:

“Digital literacy helps a lot in self-grooming and empowerment on personal level. While working on these digital platforms I get the opportunity to work at a global level which increases my communication skills, builds self-confidence and also makes me financially stable.”

Another one stated:

“Digital literacy alone can help us combat unemployment to a great deal since this is how today’s businesses are executed. You must acquire digital skills if you seek a job, up to a business startup, or going to provide freelance services.”

Digital skills and literacy is helping the youth in numerous ways. As stated by the respondents it leads to broadening of their horizon and further helps them in competing with the demand of the employees with rapid changes in technologies. At the same time, it further helps them in enhancing their wellbeing through higher chances of employability in the digital world and helps them to provide employment opportunities to other individuals while creating a positive role in country’s economic development.

4.2.3.3 Effects of digital technologies on business performance

Moving forward, respondents were also asked about whether and how has digital technologies effects overall business performance. All of the interviewees responded that digital technologies enhance their business performance and efficiency to almost double. An interviewee said:

“If you want to build and sustain a successful business, you must become digitally literate and use digital technologies. And as you level up the skills of yourself as well as your team members with changing needs, you are likely to take your business to a whole new level.”

In order to make a successful business idea, there must be an outstanding entrepreneur with the best digital skills. Transformation to digitalization helps in the development and growth of the business, creation of jobs, production of high-quality goods and services, and provision of business management skills. Another interviewee said:

“Digital advancement push the firms to reconsider their business practices as the business ecosystems are constantly evolving. Particularly in this highly competitive digital era and also

because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Businesses, are increasingly transforming their operations through advanced digital technology.”

Acquiring digital advancement is keenly beneficial for the businesses to compete with rapid changing demands of the market globally. Importantly it leads to better performance of the employees with acquiring up to date technology, which, enhances their efficiency. At the same time, it provides the basis of enhancement in employees’ productivity that, leads to better quality of services and products to the end consumer. Hence, leading to enormous performance of the employees while, increase in profitability of the business.

4.3 Discussions

Digital entrepreneurial skills can create everything impartial in specific areas, opening up opportunities to work in remote areas, at various events, at home, or outside the building. It has the potential to play a significant role in promoting gender equality and consideration of the economy and society, promoting improvement and contributing to specific growth and expansion. Entrepreneurs now have the ability to work from home and gain access to the online market with little to no initial investment thanks to digital spaces. They have acquired platforms to demonstrate their creativity and interact with their customers. They contribute to the country's economic development by promoting digital literacy. To address the opportunities presented by digitalization, government must first understand how jobs and the skills required in these jobs change. The ability to communicate effectively online and offline has been elevated from 'optional' to 'critical,' and should be supplemented by soft skills. Digital skills are in high demand and improve decent jobs all over the world, including Pakistan, because they are linked to increased profitability. Respondents also predicted an increase in job availability, not just new jobs for people with advanced digital skills.

The challenges highlighted in this study are mentioned above in the findings chapter, but the main challenge expressed by all participants was the difficulty of acquiring digital literacy skills through Pakistan's traditional education programs and formal educational institutions. The educational system must be modified in order to prepare individuals for a changing labor market. Respondents also stated that future workers should be taught how to cultivate and harness creativity, collaboration, intellectual and system thinking, multifaceted communication and the capability to grow in a variety of circumstances. Employers with a large number of courses, degrees and credentials, or large-scale training for their employees, will no longer need jobs in the future; instead they are in need of real education (despite employment), and prospects for individuals to pursue various professional and lifelong education pathways. Students should be taught to develop new ideas in a more innovative, creative and active manner. Writing, speaking and video skills are essential, but basic skills in community building, teamwork, critical thinking, deliberation and dialogue and conflict resolution are also important. Persistence and passion are also essential for success. Today and in future, the nature of work will require them to continue their education throughout their lives if they want to continue working in increasingly scarce well-paying jobs. The ability to acclimatize to changes is the most important meta-skill. As the level of technological innovation rises, the future labor force will be forced to become accustomed to new technologies and markets. People with most and quick adaptability will win. This implies that as innovations change, all skills in various fields of industry change quickly and become obsolete. As a result, the challenge is not only to teach skills, but also to acclimatize and acquire new ones. It will be interesting to see whether traditional programs or new programs improve adaptive learning.

The digital revolution has improved the social and economic lives of digital entrepreneurs by providing them with digital literacy skills for digital devices. If the Internet is used correctly as a means of profit, it will be viewed as a powerful tool for society in general and digital enterprises in particular. Digitalization provides a number of opportunities for enhancing the empowerment of digital enterprises in at least three ways. It gives them social standing. They strengthen their social circle and expand their social networking as a result of their digital literacy. It instils in them a sense of trust and motivation to pursue self-employment. They also gain self-empowerment by utilizing their skills as they become multi-tasking at one time. Increased digitization has the potential to significantly improve the economic opportunities for young people. Digital platforms such as Upwork can assist in the global gathering of young skilled workers. Platforms for economic sharing, such as Careem, help unqualified young people earn a living. Mobile payment platforms such as Easypaisa and JazzCash assist young entrepreneurs in making and receiving payments. However, the majority of young people looking for work in the digital economy are finding it difficult to compete with their highly qualified, well-funded counterparts in other parts of the world. While digital technology creates opportunities, it also raises competition. Furthermore, because of their ability to access broadband networks, develop their skills, and receive mentoring and support, some young people are far more capable than others to take advantage of those opportunities. Existing inequalities can be exacerbated by digital technology, which allows for interconnected cities, trained young people capable of navigating the digital jungle, and a privileged few who are entitled to networks between educated and wealthy families.

With digital transitions rapidly approaching and demographic changes necessitating increased labor productivity efforts, the role of skills as drivers of individual well-being and

macroeconomic performance is expected to grow even more. Young entrepreneurs' skills and competence are critical for successfully managing transitions brought about by technological changes, globalization, rising inequalities and last but not the least to counteract the novel covid-19 pandemic. Knowledge is essential not only for fostering urgently needed innovations, but also for enabling new knowledge and technologies to be adopted, disseminated, and developed further. Firms and businesses with a well-trained workforce are more shocking, and human capital is essential for economic and social convergence. High-quality education and training systems, which invest in lifelong learning from an early age, are critical for developing these skills. Because digital skills are becoming increasingly important in the workplace (and beyond), they require more attention at all levels of education.

The most pressing requirement for adequate financial resources is effective education and training policies. Investing in young people's education and training is one of the best investments the government can make. Education and training must be sufficient, efficient, and sustainable in order to provide high-quality, inclusive education and training and to ensure that no one graduates from primary to secondary school without the fundamental level of fundamental skills required to thrive in our economy and society. To ensure that young people acquire the qualifications required by the changing needs of the labor market, high-quality ups and downs should be an accessible and widely available element, accompanied by public and private support for those who need it the most but are less able to find it, such as under-skilled entrepreneurs or people without resources. Inequalities can be reduced by enabling and empowering graduates to develop skills, responding to changing labor-market opportunities, and making training and education systems more relevant to the labor market. Structured policies that encourage the creation of specialized jobs, such as an enterprise environment that encourages

digital innovation, investments, and rules that encourage the efficient allocation of resources, can also help to strengthen the link between skills and productivity. Furthermore, if ongoing economic transitions reinforce skill demand, existing inequalities between highly skilled and less qualified people may worsen.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a global effect, resulting in an unprecedented drop in economic activity, job and income loss, and a sharp increase in unemployment. Supply and demand disruptions have wreaked havoc on businesses and labor markets, resulting in significant income, productivity, and employment losses. It has not only exposed but also exacerbated the effect of the digital divide, including the digital skills divide, and highlighted pre-crisis issues such as lack of technological infrastructure and digital linkages, gaps in online teaching and learning skills, dearth of digital abilities and skilled workers, and unequal access to education and training. The crisis caused a significant reallocation of jobs across sectors, and policies are required to accompany the change in employment and to mitigate the negative effect on workers and businesses during the recovery phase. Businesses and labor markets may take many years to recover from this shock. Digital skills are critical for resolving or hastening pandemic problems. The development of digital skills is critical for adapting to a changing business model and labor market, as well as for equal opportunities and social cohesion. Other challenges imposed by global change drivers, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, globalization and other demographic changes, will require long-term skill development.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Digital skills development has been a priority policy in recent years, as technology in business sector and industry have rapidly changed. However, digital competencies go far beyond this contribution, and effective use of digital competencies has been shown to be a driver of resilience. The Covid-19 pandemic and its widespread effect have accelerated demand for digital competencies across all industries, particularly in retail and service sectors where product and service delivery is difficult. Digital competencies also enable young entrepreneurs to work remotely and create self-employment opportunities. The strengthening of digital skills is one of the government's priorities, but much work is needed to be done to close the digital gap between education curricula and the new global business curriculum. Furthermore, there still is a deficit in the funding of digital platforms for startups. E-commerce is without a doubt the most important economic opportunity for digitalization, so it is critical for the government to develop a policy framework to protect and support entrepreneurs in this sector, because public policies that promote digital technology in a variety of fields can speed up digital transformation while also empowering youth socio-economically and encouraging youth employment in Pakistan. Given that almost all businesses nowadays are technology related, the only way to adapt to today's technology is to massively educate young businessmen in STEM (Science, Technology, Education, Math), as they are Pakistan's future.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

5.2.1 Legislation

To promote the policy frameworks, legislation and regulations are required to create a sustainable digital environment, including data protection legislation:

- Protecting personal information and online privacy, enhanced transparency and the safety of sensitive and confidential data through proper data protection legislation.
- Develop a cloud-based services framework and guidelines which include a data sorting mechanism, access standards, data protection and transparency, proprietorship and security, and ownership of and access to cloud services in order to increase cloud service adoption and provide better and more agile end-user service delivery.
- Continue to collaborate with the Department of Commerce and relevant e-commerce stakeholders to develop an e-Commerce Framework/Political Guidance. Appropriate regulations, tax simplification and trade facilitation, ODR, consumer protection and privacy, and other measures are among them for instance, online dispute resolution.

5.2.2 Infrastructure Development

Developing software technologies and motivating engagement parks to promote digital technology, research and invention in new evolving technology in ICT and other socioeconomic areas will facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration with the Digital Ecosystem for maximum economic effect.

- Create National Incubation Technology Centers across the country. The 'Accelerator' and 'Incubation Center' Software Technology Parks will be housed alongside the annexed investment fund to assist entrepreneurs and evolving technology start-ups in finding constant support and access to resources.
- Access to funded workplaces, joint amenities, funding, marketing and accreditation organizations, R&D and professional education facilities, and promotion of open digital framework for shared services such as Cloud technology, to create public and private sector synergies and economies of scale.
- Establish telecentres throughout the country to promote the use of digital facilities, innovation, and the closing of the digital divide. Assist IT-related invention by designing smart cities and using technology to solve indigenous problems.

5.2.3 Human Resource Development

Utilize the power of digital platforms to improve education and quality at all levels through HRD courses across the country to improve the necessary digital skills of people linked with digital business. Launch programs that train professionals, freelancers and young graduates in market-intensive expertise through classroom and online training.

- Digital platforms also work with pertinent stakeholders, as well as international universities, to promote e-learning for education and other tactical sectors in order to expand our knowledge economics by bridging the gap between industry and academia.
- Custom programs focusing on girls and women should be designed and developed. This should ensure that a significant proportion of our demographics benefit from

socioeconomic advancement, particularly in rural and underdeveloped zones of Pakistan, with robust voices at the national, international, community, and local government levels.

- Work with industry tycoons to assure equal prospects for girls and women in this area, as well as to implement occupation policies that increase their active contribution by confiscating barriers to career development.

5.2.4 Entrepreneurship

- Digital incubators can help to foster a business culture. Investing in the development of ecosystem required for companies to compete successfully in the global knowledge economy, and support start-ups and MSMEs through skills training and use, sponsorship, national competitions, certifications, M&A facilitation, equity sales, and connecting these start-ups to their relevant funding organization.
- Promoting industry and entrepreneurship by creating cost-effective and viable next-generation application, services and content related to major commercial sectors for mass implementation and marketing.
- Promoting smart digital applications in health, education, energy, trade, agriculture, and entertainment.
- Creating inducements and initiatives for local businesspersons by supporting local industry in building on its success in traditional strength sectors such as banking, insurance, healthcare, and telecommunications applications.

5.2.5 Freelancing

- Launching digital skills training programs for freelancers and encourage financial institutions and major industry players to provide digital start-up funding.
- Internships should be run in accordance with industry demands so that young graduates can market advanced technology and increase our youth's employability and growth in the cutting-edge IT trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), AI, robotics, cyber security etc.

These recommendations above are proposed as policy solutions to allow the government to focus on the development of digital skills, which play an important role in the immediate response to the economic crisis and assist firms in getting back to business, creating new jobs in new sectors and professions and also building resilience and enacting long development plans.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

EXPLORING THE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF ACQUIRING DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

Name:	Age:
Gender:	Level of education:
Area of expertise (Current digital skill set):	Years of experience:

PROSPECTS

- 1) What is the need of acquiring digital skills?
- 2) How digital skills are critical for job creation and social inclusion?
- 3) How can digital skills help in your career?
- 4) What is the role of digital skills in the new global curriculum for business?

CHALLENGES

- 1) What are the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs to embrace digital devices?
- 2) How big is the gap between educational system and digital skills required for future jobs?
- 3) What type of barriers to internet access that young entrepreneurs face?

EFFECT ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

- 1) What is the effect of digital industry on job evolution?
- 2) How your level of digital literacy effect on your business performance?
- 3) What are the effects of digital technologies on youth employability and youth empowerment?

POLICY PERESPECTIVE

- 1) How important is the acquisition of digital skills after the year 2020 (post Covid-19 pandemic)?
- 2) What are the essential digital skills that are required for workers to participate in the emerging digital economy? (high demand skills)
- 3) In your opinion, how important is for government to finance training opportunities for such digital platforms?