

BRIDGING FAITH AND TECHNOLOGY: DIGITAL MINDSET AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN ISLAMIC ECONOMIES

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Abstract. The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the entrepreneurial landscape, creating new opportunities for women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and improve competitiveness. However, the extent to which the digital mindset influences entrepreneurial outcomes within Islamic economies remains underexplored. In particular, the interaction between technological adoption and faith-based values presents a unique context that may shape entrepreneurial behaviour and business performance. This study aims to examine the role of digital mindset among women entrepreneurs in Islamic economies and how it contributes to business performance while aligning with Islamic values. Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Islamic ethical principles, this study proposes that a digital mindset enables women entrepreneurs to leverage digital technologies, enhance digital capabilities, and improve firm performance. Data were collected from women-owned SMEs operating in Islamic economies through a structured survey. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyse the relationships between digital mindset, digital capability, and business performance. This study also contributes to the global sustainability agenda by supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By strengthening women entrepreneurs' digital capabilities and promoting inclusive entrepreneurial opportunities, digital transformation can enhance women's economic participation and foster sustainable business growth within Islamic economies. The findings contribute to the literature on digital entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship while offering practical implications for policymakers and entrepreneurship development agencies seeking to empower women-led businesses through digitalization.

Keywords: *digital mindset, women entrepreneurs, Islamic economies, digital entrepreneurship, business performance, SMEs*

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the global business landscape, reshaping how firms create value, engage customers, and compete in dynamic markets. Technologies such as e-commerce platforms, social media marketing, cloud computing, and digital payment systems have enabled businesses, particularly SMEs, to enhance operational efficiency, expand market reach, and develop innovative business models. As a result, digital transformation has become a key driver of entrepreneurial competitiveness and firm performance in the digital economy (Vial, 2021; Bharadwaj et al., 2013). In this context, entrepreneurs play a crucial role in leveraging technology to improve business outcomes. A digital mindset, characterized by openness to technological change and innovation, has emerged as an important catalyst for digital transformation (Kane et al., 2017). However, the impact of a digital mindset is often realized through the development of digital capability, which refers to a firm's ability to effectively integrate and utilize digital technologies in its operations and

decision-making processes (Warner and Wäger, 2019). Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV), digital capability can be viewed as a valuable strategic resource that enables firms to build competitive advantage and achieve superior business performance (Barney, 1991).

This relationship is particularly relevant for women entrepreneurs, who contribute significantly to economic development yet often face challenges related to limited resources, networks, and access to technology. Digital technologies can help address these barriers by expanding market opportunities and enabling more flexible business models. In Islamic economies, entrepreneurial activities are further shaped by Islamic entrepreneurial values, such as honesty (ṣīdq), trustworthiness (amānah), justice (‘adl), responsibility, and excellence (ihsan), which guide ethical business conduct and decision-making (Ali and Al-Owaihan, 2008; Beekun, 1997). Unlike religiosity, which reflects broader religious beliefs and practices, Islamic entrepreneurial values specifically emphasize ethical behaviours in business and entrepreneurship. In the context of digital entrepreneurship, these values may influence how entrepreneurs adopt and utilize digital technologies, encouraging continuous learning, innovation, and responsible technology use. Consequently, Islamic entrepreneurial values may strengthen the relationship between digital mindset and digital capability, enhancing the effectiveness of digital transformation and supporting improved business outcomes among women entrepreneurs.

Despite growing interest in digital entrepreneurship, several research gaps remain. Existing studies have primarily focused on technology adoption and digital infrastructure, with limited attention to entrepreneurial cognitive factors such as digital mindset and its role in developing digital capability. Moreover, research has largely examined the direct effects of digital technologies on firm performance, providing limited understanding of the mechanisms linking digital mindset, digital capability, and business outcomes. In addition, most studies have been conducted in Western contexts, leaving the influence of faith-based values on digital transformation underexplored. Consequently, empirical evidence on the role of Islamic entrepreneurial values in shaping the relationship between digital mindset, digital capability, and business performance among women entrepreneurs in Islamic economies remains limited.

Addressing these gaps, this study proposes an integrated framework that examines the relationships among digital mindset, digital capability, and business performance among women entrepreneurs and investigates the moderating role of Islamic entrepreneurial values. By bridging the domains of faith and digital transformation, this study contributes to the emerging literature on digital entrepreneurship in Islamic economies. It provides new insights into how technology and religious values jointly shape entrepreneurial success.

Literature review

Digital mindset

Digital mindset is framed as the “human side” of digitalization, fostering supportive ways of thinking and complementing digital skills and competencies (Hildebrandt, 2024; Hildebrandt and Beimborn, 2021). A digital mindset plays an important role in improving entrepreneurs' capacity to develop strong digital capabilities. Digital mindset plays a crucial role in supporting digital adoption and transformation within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), leading to improved growth, operational efficiency,

adaptability, and more effective strategic decision-making (Annisa et al., 2023; Li et al., 2018). Furthermore, it enhances innovation and promotes sustainable performance, as the combination of digital literacy and an entrepreneurial attitude encourages innovative work behavior and strengthens SME sustainability (Rathee et al., 2025). In addition, a strong digital mindset contributes to better performance in digital markets, where an entrepreneurial orientation combined with digital marketing innovation significantly improves overall SME outcomes (Abdullah et al., 2024).

Digital mindset and digital capability

Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Studies show that entrepreneurs with a strong digital mindset are more likely to adopt and effectively utilize digital technologies, enhancing their digital capabilities and business performance. For example, technology adoption tends to increase as ventures grow, reflecting the close link between digital capabilities and business development (Shatila and Hernandez-Lara, 2026). Similarly, Sangosanya et al. (2025) found that a Digital Entrepreneurship Mindset significantly influences digital platform adoption by translating digital knowledge into practice. Audretsch et al. (2022) further highlighted that engagement with digital tools and skills training enhances startup innovation, while Purnawan et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital entrepreneurial orientation strengthens digital innovation competence. Taken together, these findings suggest that a strong digital mindset promotes technology adoption, capability development, innovation, and business growth.

Digital capability and business performance

Prior research highlights the critical role of digital business capability (DBC) in enhancing organizational performance by enabling firms to effectively leverage digital technologies for improved operational efficiency and strategic outcomes. As an organizational resource, DBC positively influences both business and customer performance, although its effectiveness may vary depending on internal and external environmental conditions, requiring firms to remain adaptable in dynamic markets (Wielgos et al., 2021). Further evidence demonstrates that DBC encompasses multiple dimensions, including human, technical, innovation, and collaboration capabilities, all of which contribute to financial performance through greater efficiency, cost reduction, and enhanced customer engagement, with human and innovation capabilities exerting the strongest effects (Mandre and Nannono, 2026). Similarly, Ullah et al. (2025) found that digitalization improves SME performance both directly and indirectly through stronger customer engagement. Collectively, these findings suggest that firms with strong digital business capabilities are better positioned to drive innovation, strengthen customer relationships, and achieve superior performance in competitive environments.

Digital mindset and business performance

Entrepreneurs with a strong digital mindset are more likely to adopt innovative strategies, utilize digital technologies, and respond proactively to market changes, ultimately enhancing business performance. Research shows that digital entrepreneurial orientation drives digital innovation, which subsequently improves both financial and technological performance (Díaz-Pelaez et al., 2026). Similarly, Joesoep and Daihani (2023) found that digital orientation positively affects organizational performance, with

employee-driven digital innovation partially mediating this relationship. The effective use of digital tools further strengthens firm outcomes; for example, e-commerce and digital marketing have been shown to enhance revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and market visibility among startups (Baawain et al., 2025). Additionally, Escobarragan and Becker (2025) reported a positive association between digital orientation and firm profitability. Collectively, these studies suggest that a strong digital mindset improves business performance both directly and indirectly through digital innovation, strategic technology adoption, and enhanced customer engagement, enabling firms to achieve superior outcomes in increasingly competitive digital environments.

Mediating role of digital capability

Empirical evidence further supports the performance benefits of digital capability. Hamid et.al (2025) found that digital capability significantly enhances both employee performance and firm profitability, highlighting its value as a strategic organizational resource. Similarly, Singh et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital leadership and mindset strengthen IT and digital capabilities, which subsequently improve firm performance and employees' digital competencies. These findings suggest that digital capability extends beyond technical expertise to include adaptive attitudes and skills essential for success in digital environments. Supporting this view, Abed Alhameed and Emeagwali (2026) concluded that the development of a digital mindset and the enhancement of digital capabilities are consistent drivers of improved financial performance. Collectively, the literature indicates that digital capability plays a critical role in improving organizational outcomes by fostering efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness in an increasingly digital business landscape.

Moderating role of Islamic entrepreneurial values

Within Islamic contexts, values such as honesty (ṣidq) and justice (ʿadl) can strengthen the relationship between individuals' intentions and their actual use of digital technologies, suggesting a moderating role of Islamic values in digital adoption. Empirical evidence supports this perspective. Abubakari et al. (2023), using a modified UTAUT model, found that religious perspective has a stronger influence on behavioral intention than other determinants and significantly affects both performance expectancy and ICT usage, highlighting the importance of religious values in shaping digital behavior. Similarly, Sarman et al. (2024) demonstrated that an Islamic lifestyle orientation moderates technology adoption outcomes, indicating that adherence to Islamic principles enhances the effective use of technology in practice. Although empirical evidence for values such as trustworthiness (amānah) and responsibility remains limited, existing studies suggest that Islamic business values provide an ethical foundation that facilitates the translation of digital intentions into capabilities. Overall, the literature indicates that Islamic values strengthen the relationship between digital mindset and digital capabilities by encouraging ethical technology use, fostering positive attitudes toward digital transformation, and aligning digital activities with religious and moral principles, thereby contributing to improved business outcomes.

Materials and Methods

Research design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among digital mindset, digital capability, Islamic entrepreneurial values, and business performance among women entrepreneurs in Islamic economies. A quantitative approach was appropriate because it enabled the empirical testing of theoretically derived hypotheses and facilitated the statistical examination of relationships among multiple constructs. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire survey, a widely adopted method in entrepreneurship and digital transformation research for measuring managerial attitudes and organizational capabilities. To analyze the proposed relationships, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was conducted using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was selected because the research model incorporated both mediating and moderating effects, which can be effectively estimated within complex models. Additionally, PLS-SEM is suitable for predictive research and theory development, particularly in emerging fields such as digital entrepreneurship, and can analyze multiple latent constructs and indicators while maintaining robustness with relatively small to medium sample sizes (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Population and sampling

The target population comprised women entrepreneurs operating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across various sectors, including retail, services, food and beverage, and online commerce. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who were female business owners or co-owners, actively involved in business operations, and had exposure to digital technologies in their business activities. Data were collected through online and offline surveys distributed via entrepreneurial networks, women entrepreneur associations, and social media platforms. Following the 10-times rule for PLS-SEM (Sarstedt et al., 2021), the minimum required sample size was 20 respondents based on the model structure. However, to ensure adequate statistical power and robust model estimation, this study targeted between 150 and 200 respondents.

Instrument development

The measurement instrument was developed based on validated scales from prior studies to ensure reliability and content validity. The questionnaire consisted of five sections measuring digital mindset, digital capability, business performance, Islamic entrepreneurial values, and demographic information.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items for digital mindset were adapted from digital transformation and digital orientation literature (Vial, 2019; Kane et al., 2017). Digital capability items were adapted from the digital capability framework proposed by Warner and Wäger (2019) as well as Bharadwaj et al. (2013). Business performance was measured using subjective performance indicators widely applied in entrepreneurship research (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986). Meanwhile, Islamic entrepreneurial values were operationalized based on Islamic work ethics and Islamic business ethics literature (Ali and Al-Owaidan, 2008; Beekun, 1997). Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire underwent expert review and pilot testing with a small group of entrepreneurs to ensure clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness of the measurement items.

Results and Discussion

Respondent profile

The demographic profile of respondents indicates a predominance of individuals within the 35–44 years age group (39.4%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (28.9%), suggesting that the sample is largely composed of economically active and experienced individuals. In terms of educational attainment, many respondents possessed a bachelor's degree (42.8%), with a substantial proportion holding Diploma qualifications (32.2%), reflecting a relatively well-educated cohort. Regarding business characteristics, respondents were primarily engaged in the services sector (31.1%), followed by retail (27.2%) and food and beverage (22.8%), indicating a diverse sectoral representation. Most businesses had been in operation for 6–10 years (33.9%) and 3–5 years (30.0%), highlighting a sample dominated by moderately established enterprises. In terms of firm size, nearly half of the businesses employed 1–5 employees (48.9%), confirming that the sample is largely comprised of micro and small enterprises.

Measurement model assessment

The measurement model assessment demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity for all constructs. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.786 to 0.876, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability. Internal consistency reliability was confirmed, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.892 to 0.918 and composite reliability (CR) values between 0.918 and 0.936, all above the recommended minimum of 0.70. Convergent validity was also established, as the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.651 to 0.710, exceeding the threshold of 0.50. In addition, discriminant validity was confirmed through both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The square roots of the AVE for Digital Mindset (0.823), Digital Capability (0.843), Business Performance (0.807), and Islamic Entrepreneurial Values (0.834) were greater than their corresponding inter-construct correlations, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Furthermore, HTMT values ranged from 0.553 to 0.781, well below the recommended threshold of 0.85. Collectively, these findings confirm that the constructs are reliable, valid, and empirically distinct, supporting the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural model analysis.

Structural model assessment

The structural model assessment indicates no multicollinearity issues, as the inner VIF values range from 1.214 to 1.697, which are below the threshold of 3.3. The model demonstrates moderate explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.468 for Digital Capability and 0.553 for Business Performance, indicating that the predictors explain 46.8% and 55.3% of the variance, respectively. In terms of effect size, Digital Mindset has a large effect on Digital Capability ($f^2 = 0.352$), while Digital Capability shows a medium effect on Business Performance ($f^2 = 0.287$); other effects, including the role of Islamic Entrepreneurial Values and the interaction term, are small but meaningful. Additionally, the Q^2 values (0.301 for Digital Capability and 0.347 for Business Performance) are greater than zero, confirming that the model has adequate predictive relevance.

Hypothesis testing

The structural model results show that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Digital Mindset has a significant positive effect on Digital Capability ($\beta = 0.541$, $t = 8.762$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that a stronger digital mindset enhances firms' digital capabilities. In turn, Digital Capability significantly influences Business Performance ($\beta = 0.487$, $t = 6.914$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that improved digital capabilities lead to better organizational outcomes. Additionally, Digital Mindset also has a direct positive effect on Business Performance ($\beta = 0.233$, $t = 3.121$, $p = 0.002$), confirming its direct contribution to performance. These findings indicate that both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs are significant, underscoring the importance of digital mindset and capability in driving business performance.

Table 1. Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Digital Mindset → Digital Capability	0.541	8.762	0.000	Supported
H2	Digital Capability → Business Performance	0.487	6.914	0.000	Supported
H3	Digital Mindset → Business Performance	0.233	3.121	0.002	Supported

Mediation analysis

The mediation analysis results indicate that Digital Capability significantly mediates the relationship between Digital Mindset and Business Performance. The indirect effect is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.263$, $t = 5.488$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. This finding suggests that a stronger digital mindset enhances business performance through the development of digital capabilities, highlighting the importance of capability building as a key mechanism linking mindset to organisational outcomes.

Table 2. Mediation analysis.

Hypo.	Indirect Relationship	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H4	Digital Mindset → Digital Capability → Business Performance	0.263	5.488	0.000	Supported

Moderation analysis

The moderation analysis indicates that Islamic Entrepreneurial Values significantly moderate the relationship between Digital Mindset and Digital Capability. The interaction effect is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.146$, $t = 2.437$, $p = 0.015$), supporting H5. This suggests that the positive influence of a digital mindset on digital capability is strengthened when Islamic entrepreneurial values are higher, highlighting their role in enhancing the effectiveness of digital orientation within firms.

Table 3. Moderation analysis.

Hypo	Interaction Effect	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H5	Digital Mindset × Islamic Entrepreneurial Values → Digital Capability	0.146	2.437	0.015	Supported

This study examined the relationships among digital mindset, digital capability, Islamic entrepreneurial values, and business performance among women entrepreneurs in Islamic economies. The findings support H1, H2, and H3, demonstrating that a digital mindset positively influences digital capability, digital capability enhances business performance, and digital mindset directly improves business performance. Consistent with the Resource-Based View (RBV), a digital mindset serves as an important intangible resource that enables entrepreneurs to adopt and utilize digital technologies

more effectively. Furthermore, the significant effect of digital capability on business performance highlights the importance of transforming digital awareness into practical competencies that improve operational efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness.

The results also support H4, confirming that digital capability mediates the relationship between digital mindset and business performance. This finding suggests that the positive influence of a digital mindset on business performance is largely realized through the development of digital competencies. While entrepreneurs with a strong digital mindset are more likely to achieve better performance, mindset alone is insufficient without the capability to effectively implement digital strategies. Therefore, strengthening digital skills and technological competencies is essential for improving entrepreneurial outcomes, particularly among women entrepreneurs operating in increasingly digital business environments.

In addition, H5 is supported, indicating that Islamic entrepreneurial values positively moderate the relationship between digital mindset and digital capability. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility strengthen entrepreneurs' ability to translate digital thinking into meaningful digital capabilities, demonstrating the complementary role of faith-based principles in digital transformation. Overall, the findings suggest that business performance is enhanced through the combined influence of digital mindset, digital capability, and Islamic entrepreneurial values. By integrating technological and religious perspectives, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of digital entrepreneurship within Islamic economies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a digital mindset enhances business performance among women entrepreneurs in Islamic economies, primarily through the development of digital capability, supporting the Resource-Based View (RBV) that capabilities are essential for transforming intangible resources into competitive advantage. The findings also show that Islamic entrepreneurial values strengthen the relationship between digital mindset and digital capability, highlighting the importance of faith-based principles in promoting ethical and effective digital adoption. By integrating digital entrepreneurship and Islamic values, this study contributes to the literature and provides practical insights for policymakers and practitioners to support women entrepreneurs through digital skill development and value-driven business strategies.

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