

Readiness to Engage in Digital Platform-Based Business Among University Students: An Exploratory Study in Hanoi, Vietnam

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Received: July 9, 2026 Accepted: September 18, 2026 Published: October 12, 2026

doi:10.5296/ijssr.v14i2.24091

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v14i2.24091>

Abstract

This study examines how personal and educational enablement, family and peer support, community and social climate, technological facilitating conditions, perceived policy and legal support, and digital skills are associated with university students' self-reported readiness to engage in digital platform-based business in Hanoi, Vietnam. The supplied research report describes an exploratory cross-sectional survey of 358 students from 15 higher-education institutions in Hanoi. Measures were assessed using internal-consistency analysis and exploratory component analysis, followed by Pearson correlations and ordinary least-squares regression in SPSS 26. Additionally, a preliminary qualitative component involved interviews with 10 students. The regression model accounted for 60.8% of the variance in readiness (adjusted $R^2 = .601$; $F(6, 351) = 90.558$, $p < .001$). Personal and educational enablement showed the largest standardized association ($\beta = .339$), followed by technological facilitating conditions ($\beta = .188$), digital skills ($\beta = .154$), perceived policy and legal support ($\beta = .107$), family and peer support ($\beta = .104$), and community and social climate ($\beta = .084$). The study broadens the digital-entrepreneurship literature by examining readiness as a multi-layered, socio-technical phenomenon in an emerging-economy higher-education setting. It also shows why personal agency, institutional learning support, technological access, digital skills, and external support should be considered jointly. The findings remain associational and perception-based and are not interpreted as causal effects or as evidence of actual business participation.

Keywords: digital business readiness, digital entrepreneurship, digital skills, university students, technological facilitating conditions, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Digital technologies have altered how entrepreneurial opportunities are recognized, tested, financed, and scaled. Digital artefacts, infrastructures, and platforms reduce some entry barriers while creating new dependencies on data, algorithms, platform governance, and complementary capabilities (Nambisan, 2017; Sussan & Acs, 2017; Kraus et al., 2019; Elia et al., 2020). For university students, platform-based commerce, digital content creation, affiliate marketing, and online service provision can provide relatively accessible routes into market experimentation. Accessibility, however, should not be equated with preparedness. Participation still requires opportunity recognition, confidence, digital competence, access to reliable technology, social support, and an institutional environment that is perceived as understandable and supportive.

Recent studies have concentrated mainly on digital entrepreneurial intention. Evidence links such intention to individual characteristics, entrepreneurship education, digital literacy, perceived university support, social support, and regulatory conditions (Alferaih, 2022; Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Wibowo et al., 2023; Vu et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2024; Wardoyo et al., 2025; Liang et al., 2025). Research from Vietnam is expanding, including work on educational support, FinTech literacy, engineering students, and university entrepreneurial ecosystems (Nguyen & Duong, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024; Vu et al., 2024; Tran, 2026). Nevertheless, intention, readiness, and actual entrepreneurial behaviour are not interchangeable. A student may express a favourable intention yet lack the skills, tools, learning commitment, or perceived environmental support required to move toward action.

This study therefore focuses on self-reported readiness to engage in digital platform-based business. In the supplied instrument, readiness encompasses willingness to participate, create value, use digital business tools, join practice-oriented learning activities, and invest time and effort in a digital-business career. This is a broader construct than conventional start-up intention, but it remains a perceptual and proximal outcome rather than observed business behaviour. The distinction is important because causal and behavioural claims would exceed what a cross-sectional self-report design can support.

The empirical setting is Hanoi, a major higher-education and innovation centre in Vietnam. The study addresses two questions: (1) How ready do surveyed students report being to engage in digital platform-based business? and (2) How are personal and educational enablement, family and peer support, community and social climate, technological facilitating conditions, perceived policy and legal support, and digital skills associated with that readiness? By organizing these factors across individual, relational, technological, and institutional layers, the study offers an exploratory account of student readiness within a digital entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Digital Platform-Based Business and Student Readiness

After you have introduced the problem and have developed the background material, explain

your approach to solving the problem. In empirical studies, this usually involves stating your hypotheses or specific question and describing how these were derived from theory or are logically connected to previous data and argumentation. Clearly develop the rationale for each. Also, if you have some hypotheses or questions that are central to your purpose and others that are secondary or exploratory, state this prioritization. Explain how the research design permits the inferences needed to examine the hypothesis or provide estimates in answer to the question.

Digital entrepreneurship differs from simply using information technology in a conventional venture. Digital technologies can become part of the opportunity, product, organizing logic, or market infrastructure itself (Nambisan, 2017). A digital entrepreneurial ecosystem consequently combines entrepreneurial actors with digital users, platforms, infrastructure governance, and institutions (Sussan & Acs, 2017). Ecosystem perspectives stress that entrepreneurial action is enabled or constrained by interacting resources rather than by personal motivation alone (Elia et al., 2020).

For students, readiness is appropriately treated as a self-reported state of willingness and perceived preparedness. It precedes, but does not guarantee, market entry or sustained venture creation. This study therefore avoids using readiness, intention, participation, and behaviour as synonyms. The dependent measure captures stated readiness to engage, use tools, learn, create value, and invest effort; it does not verify whether respondents have launched or operated a digital venture.

2.2 A Multi-Layered Socio-Cognitive Framing

Social cognitive theory views agency as the product of reciprocal relations among personal capabilities, behaviour, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 2001). The theory of planned behaviour similarly highlights attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and social norms as proximal foundations of intention (Ajzen, 1991). Because the supplied scales do not directly operationalize all canonical constructs from either theory, this study uses these theories as orienting lenses rather than claiming a strict test. The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective adds technological and institutional conditions that are especially salient for platform-based activity.

Taken together, these perspectives frame readiness to engage in platform-based business as situated within three interconnected layers: individual assessments of capability and feasibility, social influences that shape the perceived legitimacy of participation, and ecosystem conditions that enable or constrain access to entrepreneurial opportunities. Within this framing, technological availability alone is insufficient to explain readiness, because individuals may interpret similar opportunities differently depending on their perceived capabilities and social context. This distinction also separates the existence of external support from its perceived accessibility and usefulness, providing a conceptual link between ecosystem conditions and individual evaluations of participation. Accordingly, the framework guides the interpretation of associations among the measured constructs without treating them as interchangeable proxies for canonical theoretical constructs or claiming to establish reciprocal or cross-level causal mechanisms.

2.3 Personal and Educational Enablement

Perceived opportunity, confidence, proactive learning, and risk awareness can strengthen an individual's willingness to engage with uncertain digital business tasks. Educational support can also enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy, perceived feasibility, and intention by providing knowledge, mentoring, practice opportunities, and legitimization (Nguyen & Duong, 2021; Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Pham et al., 2024). In the supplied questionnaire, four personal items and four university-support items load on one exploratory component. One plausible interpretation is that respondents perceive their capacity to engage in digital business as closely connected to the educational resources available to them, with university support potentially helping translate perceived opportunities into actionable confidence. However, their shared loading indicates empirical overlap within this sample rather than theoretical equivalence, and does not establish whether educational support precedes, reinforces, or merely accompanies personal readiness. Because this bundle crosses two conceptually distinct levels, it is labelled personal and educational enablement, and its interpretation should remain exploratory.

H1. Personal and educational enablement is positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

2.4 Family, Peers, and Community Climate

Family and peers can provide emotional encouragement, vicarious learning, advice, financing, and role models. In planned-behaviour and social-cognitive terms, close social referents can shape perceived norms and efficacy. Vietnamese evidence also suggests that educational and family contexts can be relevant to entrepreneurial intention (Nguyen & Duong, 2021). Broader community and media environments may normalize digital entrepreneurship and increase awareness of opportunities, although distal social cues may have weaker effects once more proximal resources are considered.

H2. Family and peer support is positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

H3. A supportive community and social climate is positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

2.5 Technological Facilitating Conditions and Digital Skills

Reliable connectivity, suitable devices, and access to digital tools reduce the practical effort required to experiment with platform-based business. Yet infrastructure alone is insufficient; individuals must also be able to locate and evaluate information, create content, operate digital tools, protect data, and solve problems. DigComp 2.2 organizes digital competence into information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, content creation, safety, and problem solving (Vuorikari et al., 2022). Empirical studies likewise associate digital literacy and more specialized digital or FinTech knowledge with digital entrepreneurial intentions and nascent behaviour (Ip, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024; Vu et al., 2024; Liang et al., 2025).

H4. Technological facilitating conditions are positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

H5. Digital skills are positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

2.6 Policy and Legal Support

Digital entrepreneurs face uncertainty concerning data protection, electronic transactions, platform rules, consumer rights, taxation, and cybersecurity. A transparent, accessible, and supportive regulatory environment can therefore improve perceived feasibility and reduce uncertainty. Ecosystem research treats policy and institutional arrangements as enabling conditions rather than as direct guarantees of entrepreneurial action (Sussan & Acs, 2017; Elia et al., 2020).

H6. Perceived policy and legal support is positively associated with readiness to engage in digital platform-based business.

3. Method

3.1 Design and Participants

The quantitative component used a cross-sectional online survey. The results tables contain 358 valid cases from 15 universities and colleges in Hanoi. The survey was conducted between January and February 2026, using a convenience random sampling method. Additionally, the supplied report states that 10 students from five institutions were interviewed for approximately 40-45 minutes about their understanding of digital business, motivations, barriers, and support needs. Direct observations were also reportedly made in learning spaces, start-up events, and student entrepreneurship clubs. The reported quotations suggest interest in online business alongside concerns about skills, financing, fraud, advertising, and the absence of practical guidance. However, these materials are used only to contextualize the survey and are not presented as a rigorously verified thematic analysis. The qualitative data are illustrative, not presented to all university students in Hanoi.

3.2 Measures and Data Analysis

All substantive items used a five-point agreement scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument contained eight items for personal and educational enablement, five for family and peer support, five for community and social climate, four for technological facilitating conditions, four for perceived policy and legal support, four for digital skills, and five for readiness. The data were analyzed using SPSS 26, including data screening, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, exploratory component analysis, Pearson correlations, and ordinary least-squares regression.

4. Results

4.1 Sample Profile and Descriptive Pattern

Table 1. Reliability and factor loading coefficients

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Women	241	67.3
Gender	Men	117	32.7
Year	First	53	14.8
Year	Second	160	44.7
Year	Third	91	25.4
Year	Fourth	54	15.1
Field	Economics, business, marketing, e-commerce, logistics	205	57.3

Source: The result of survey data analysis, 2026.

Table 1 shows that women represented 67.3% of the sample and men 32.7%. Second-year students formed the largest group (44.7%), followed by third-year (25.4%), fourth-year (15.1%), and first-year students (14.8%). The sample was concentrated in economics, business, marketing, e-commerce, and logistics programmes (57.3%). These characteristics indicate a non-representative, student-clustered sample. Readiness items had means between 3.96 and 4.03. The highest item mean concerned willingness to invest time and effort in a digital-business career ($M = 4.03$), while willingness to create value through online selling or promotion had the lowest mean ($M = 3.96$). Community and social-climate items were rated particularly highly ($M = 4.20$ - 4.31), but high mean levels should not be interpreted as strong regression effects.

4.2 Reliability and Exploratory Structure

Cronbach's alpha ranged from .816 to .917, and all reported corrected item-total correlations exceeded .30. The rotated component matrix reproduced the six proposed predictor groupings with salient loadings from .589 to .878. The readiness items loaded from .802 to .859 on one component. These results provide preliminary evidence of internal consistency and exploratory structure, but they do not establish convergent or discriminant validity (see Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability and factor loading coefficients

Construct	Items	Alpha	Loading range	Meaning
Personal and educational enablement	8	.917	.614-.759	Combines personal and university-support content
Family and peer support	5	.829	.653-.726	Support, role modelling, and financial access
Community and social climate	5	.843	.649-.878	Media, social trend, and entrepreneurial community
Technological facilitating conditions	4	.816	.605-.731	Connectivity, devices, and digital tools
Perceived policy and legal support	4	.849	.589-.704	A transparent, accessible, and supportive regulatory environment
Digital skills	4	.855	.642-.742	Information, tools, content, and security
Readiness	5	.885	.802-.859	Self-reported willingness and preparedness

Source: The results of data analysis on SPSS, 2026.

For the 30 predictor items, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic was reported as .915 and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2(435) = 7,597.328$, $p < .001$. Six components with eigenvalues above one were retained; the supplied table reports 66.038% cumulative explained variance. For the five readiness items, KMO was .865, Bartlett's $\chi^2(10) = 930.598$, $p < .001$, and a single component was reported to explain 69.761% of the variance. Because extraction and rotation are not fully documented, the component solution should be treated as provisional (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

4.3 Correlations and Regression

All six predictors were positively correlated with readiness, with Pearson correlations ranging from .385 for community and social climate to .697 for personal and educational enablement. Predictor intercorrelations ranged from .293 to .695. In the supplied regression output, VIF values ranged from 1.276 to 2.505. The model was statistically significant, $F(6, 351) = 90.558$, $p < .001$, with $R^2 = .608$ and adjusted $R^2 = .601$.

Table 3. Correlations and regression

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF	Decision
Personal and educational enablement	.329	.049	.339	6.767	<.001	2.251	H1 supported
Family and peer support	.112	.048	.104	2.355	.019	1.754	H2 supported
Community and social climate	.114	.051	.084	2.222	.027	1.276	H3 provisional
Technological facilitating conditions	.226	.055	.188	4.118	<.001	1.865	H4 supported
Digital skills	.150	.049	.154	3.065	.002	2.270	H5 supported
Perceived policy and legal support	.108	.053	.107	2.021	.044	2.505	H6 supported*

Source: The results of data analysis on SPSS, 2026.

The results show that personal and educational enablement had the largest standardized association with readiness. Technological facilitating conditions ranked second, followed by digital skills, policy and legal support, family and peer support, and community/social climate.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of the Findings

The dominant association of personal and educational enablement suggests that readiness is most closely related to a proximal bundle of opportunity recognition, confidence, proactive learning, risk awareness, and perceived university support. This pattern is consistent with social-cognitive accounts in which self-efficacy and supportive learning environments strengthen perceived feasibility and intention (Bandura, 2001; Nguyen & Duong, 2021). It also accords with evidence that individual innovativeness, education, and university support matter for digital entrepreneurial intention (Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Pham et al., 2024; Liang et al., 2025).

Technological facilitating conditions and digital skills emerged as the next strongest correlates. Their simultaneous inclusion is theoretically useful because access and competence are different resources. Reliable connectivity and suitable tools can lower implementation barriers, whereas digital skills determine whether students can search for information, create content, operate platforms, and manage security risks. The pattern aligns with DigComp 2.2 and with evidence linking digital literacy or specialized digital knowledge to entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour (Vuorikari et al., 2022; Ip, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024; Vu et al., 2024). Because the measures are self-assessments, the results concern perceived competence rather than demonstrated performance.

Family and peer support retained a positive but smaller association when other predictors were considered. Close referents may provide encouragement, examples, advice, and resources, yet these benefits appear less proximal than the respondent's own perceived enablement and access to technology. Community and social climate had the smallest coefficient. This is plausible if broad media visibility and social normalization raise awareness but do not by themselves provide the capabilities needed for action.

Perceived policy and legal support was also positively associated with readiness. Students may be more willing to engage when electronic transactions, data protection, cybersecurity, and public support are perceived as clear and credible.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes in three bounded ways. First, it distinguishes self-reported readiness from entrepreneurial intention and actual business behaviour. Second, it integrates individual, relational, technological, and institutional factors in one exploratory model, consistent with the multi-level logic of digital entrepreneurial ecosystems. Third, it provides evidence from a diverse but non-probability student sample in Hanoi, complementing Vietnamese research focused on narrower groups or specific knowledge domains. These contributions are exploratory and should not be represented as a validated universal readiness framework.

5.3 Practical Implications

Universities should combine conceptual teaching with guided market experiments. Short projects can require students to identify a customer problem, build a minimum viable digital offer, create lawful content, select a platform, estimate acquisition costs, manage basic data protection, and reflect on outcomes. Mentoring should address both opportunity recognition and risk management so that confidence is evidence-based rather than merely motivational.

Digital-skills development should extend beyond routine platform use. Curricula should assess information quality, digital content creation, analytics, cybersecurity, privacy, and problem solving, drawing on frameworks such as DigComp 2.2. Universities can also provide low-cost access to software, sandbox stores, laboratories, and responsible-use guidance. Partnerships with firms and platforms should include transparent learning objectives and safeguards against exploitative unpaid commercial work.

Policy communication should translate obligations concerning electronic transactions, consumer protection, taxation, cybersecurity, and personal data into accessible guidance for student micro-entrepreneurs. Incubators and student clubs can strengthen peer learning and connect students with mentors, but support programmes should be evaluated using observed capability gains and venture experiments rather than participation counts alone.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has substantial limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. All focal measures are self-reported and collected in the same questionnaire, creating possible common-method and social-desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The convenience-style sample is dominated by women and economics/ business students; it cannot represent all students in Vietnam. Respondents are nested within institutions, but the supplied analysis does not model clustering.

7. Conclusion

The supplied evidence indicates that students' self-reported readiness to engage in digital platform-based business is associated with resources across several layers. Personal and

educational enablement shows the strongest association, while technological facilitating conditions and digital skills also play prominent roles. Family and peer support, policy and legal support, and the wider social climate appear to contribute more modestly. The study's practical message is that readiness cannot be developed through motivational messaging alone, as students require credible learning experiences, technological access, applied digital skills, supportive relationships, and understandable institutional conditions.

Acknowledgments

We sincerely thank those who participated in the interviews for this study.

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