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## Entrepreneurship Processes: Digital Self-Efficacy, Technostress, and Entrepreneurial Behaviour in South Africa: A Critical Review

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### ABSTRACT

*This study provides a critical review of the research by Simba, Rambe, and Jones (2025) concerning the interplay between digital self-efficacy, technostress, and entrepreneurial intention among early-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the study examines how digital tools influence entrepreneurial processes within a non-Western context. The methodology utilizes a critical review design to systematically evaluate the conceptual frameworks and empirical findings of the original work. Results indicate several strengths, including a novel theoretical interface and a robust sample of 643 respondents. However, significant limitations were identified, most notably the non-significant effect of technostress on entrepreneurial intention and a heavy reliance on university student samples, which may conflate education with actual practice. The review concludes that while the original study offers valuable indigenous theorization, its practical utility is constrained by inconclusive primary findings and limited generalizability beyond South Africa. Future research should employ longitudinal mixed-methods and broader African samples to better capture the temporal dynamics of technology-driven entrepreneurship.*

**Keywords:** *Critical Review; Digital Self-Efficacy; Entrepreneurial Intention; Technostress*

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## INTRODUCTION

Centered on the South African entrepreneurial ecosystem, the research (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025) explores the nexus between digital tools and technostress. It contributes to the field by advancing theoretical explanations for how people engage with technology in non-Western settings. Although prior studies emphasize digital self-efficacy as a driver of technology adoption (Ulfert-Blank & Schmidt, 2022) and affirm the proficiency of ICT users in Africa (Asongu et al., 2018), there is an emergent concern regarding the physical and mental health implications of these platforms. The absence of frameworks for moderate technology use has been linked to heightened levels of frustration and stress (Chaturvedi et al., 2021). Consequently, this study addresses the phenomenon of technostress as a critical factor influencing the entrepreneurial experience.

This study by Simba, Rambe, and Jones (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025) examines the interplay between digital self-efficacy, technostress, and entrepreneurial intention among early-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa. While the research addresses an important gap in non-Western entrepreneurship literature, there are several strengths and notable limitations worth examining. The purpose of the study is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the work of Simba et al. (2025). This involves checking if the author's claims are supported by credible evidence and if the logic used to reach conclusions is sound.

## THEORETICAL

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Yu & Zhang, 2026), serves as a robust framework for analyzing human social dynamics and behavioral patterns (Guerin, 2025). Due to its efficacy in elucidating how individual intentions correlate with a conscious commitment to specific actions, TPB has been extensively applied within entrepreneurship research to investigate entrepreneurial tendencies (Nkwei et al., 2023). While this perspective has significantly advanced the identification of individual determinants in entrepreneurial decision-making, scholarly understanding regarding the multidimensional relationship between digital technology, technostress, and entrepreneurial behavior remains underdeveloped from a developing world perspective (Simba, Tajeddin, et al., 2025). Given the ubiquitous adoption of digital tools across global regions (D'Angelo et al., 2024), examining their impact on entrepreneurial intention and social conduct has become a critical research priority (Simba, Tajeddin, et al., 2025).

Extant scholarly research suggests that technology acceptance is intrinsically linked to an individual's decision to adopt digitalization in support of their entrepreneurial endeavors. Investigations into the determinants of technological efficacy (Persson & Andersen, 2026) identify two primary drivers of acceptance: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Kamel, 2025). While these constructs provide valuable heuristics for deciphering the cognitive processes underlying technology adoption, the role of digital self-efficacy remains a critical, yet often overlooked, factor. Consequently, to develop a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between digital self-efficacy, technostress, and entrepreneurial action, particularly within the African context, prioritizing research at the intersection of technology adoption and entrepreneurship is essential.

## METHODS OF RESEARCH

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*Entrepreneurship Processes: Digital Self-Efficacy, Technostress, and Entrepreneurial Behaviour in South Africa:  
A Critical Review*  
**(Sari, et al.**

This study employs a critical review design to systematically evaluate and synthesize existing literature on entrepreneurship process in South Africa. Unlike a traditional literature review, this approach goes beyond summarization by critically analyzing the conceptual frameworks, methodological rigor, and empirical findings of prior research to identify inconsistencies and knowledge gaps (Anh, 2024; Franzke et al., 2022).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Strengths of the study are:

#### 1. Novel Theoretical Framework

The authors construct an innovative digital technology-technostress-entrepreneurial intention interface that extends traditional planned behavior theory (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). This contextualized approach is valuable, particularly for advancing understanding of African entrepreneurship where Western models may not fully apply.

#### 2. Contextually Grounded Research

The focus on South Africa is well-justified given its unique digital infrastructure paradox, simultaneously having sophisticated technology systems yet uneven diffusion across populations (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). This context-sensitive approach addresses calls for indigenous theorization in entrepreneurship research.

#### 3. Robust Sample Size and Design

The study collected data from 643 usable questionnaires with a 93% response rate, exceeding the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM analysis (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). The cross-sectional design with two data collection points was designed to capture temporal dynamics in entrepreneurial intentions.

#### 4. Comprehensive Measurement

The operationalization of variables was systematic, with constructs measured using validated scales from existing literature. The reliability tests demonstrated Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.812 to 0.892, indicating strong internal consistency (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025).

Significant limitations of the study are:

#### 1. Inconclusive Primary Findings on Technostress

A critical weakness is that technostress had a non-significant effect on entrepreneurial intention ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). This undermines a core proposition of the study, and while the authors acknowledge this limitation, they provide insufficient explanation for why this relationship failed to materialize. The theoretical rationale for including technostress becomes questionable if it doesn't influence the primary outcome variable.

#### 2. Cross-Sectional Design Constraints

Despite the authors' justification, the two-wave design significantly limits causal inference (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). Entrepreneurship is inherently temporal and dynamic, yet the researchers only captured data at two points within a three-month period. This narrow time window may miss important fluctuations in entrepreneurial intentions and commitment.

### 3. Limited Generalizability

The heavy concentration in Gauteng province (76.8% of respondents) raises concerns about geographic representation within South Africa (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). Furthermore, the authors explicitly acknowledge that results may not generalize beyond South Africa, which itself is relatively developed compared to other African nations, limiting applicability across the continent.

### 4. Sample Composition Ambiguity

While the study targets "early-stage entrepreneurs," the actual sample consists of university students enrolled in entrepreneurship programs. This conflates entrepreneurship education with actual entrepreneurial practice. Students with intentions may differ substantially from those actively engaged in ventures, potentially confounding the interpretation of "early-stage entrepreneurship."

### 5. Non-Significant Direct Effects

Digital self-efficacy showed no significant direct effect on entrepreneurial intention ( $p > 0.05$ ), and the benefits of digital technology also had no direct effect on intention (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025). This suggests the model's practical utility may be limited, raising questions about whether digital factors are truly as influential as theorized.

Methodological concerns limitations of the study are:

#### 1. Missing Mediation Analysis

While the authors discuss how digital self-efficacy influences the perceived behavioral control-technostress link, the statistical testing of these indirect pathways is not explicitly detailed in the provided excerpts. The conditional indirect effects and 95% confidence intervals are not clearly presented.

#### 2. Over-Reliance on Student Samples

The reliance on university-based samples in entrepreneurship research is well-documented as problematic. Students may overstate entrepreneurial intentions without corresponding action, limiting the predictive validity of the findings (Simba, Rambe, et al., 2025).

#### 3. Limited Theoretical Integration

While the study draws from planned behavior theory, it doesn't adequately address why traditional TPB components (attitudes, subjective norms) were excluded from the model. This selective application needs better justification.

The study confirms several expected relationships. They are: (1) Perceived behavioral control positively affects entrepreneurial intention ( $\beta = 0.443$ , medium effect); (2) Entrepreneurial passion positively affects intention ( $\beta = 0.208$ , small effect); (3) Digital self-efficacy is positively influenced by perceived benefits of technology ( $\beta = 0.589$ ). However, the weak effect sizes for passion and the non-significant effects for technostress and digital self-efficacy on intention suggest that the proposed digital technology interface may have limited practical importance compared to traditional motivational factors.

Data quality and analysis have some strengths and concerns. The strengths are: (1) Proper validity testing (discriminant and convergent validity established); (2) Appropriate use of PLS-SEM for complex multivariate relationships. The concerns are: (1) No discussion of common method bias despite single-source self-report data; (2) Limited detail on how missing data was handled; and (3) No sensitivity analyses reported to test robustness of findings.

## Discussion

The authors claim originality in revealing how "ambivalence towards technology differentially influences various relationships". However, this claim appears overstated given that technostress's influence on entrepreneurial intention remains statistically unconfirmed. The ambivalence concept is interesting but underdeveloped in the empirical results. The recommendation for universities to implement technology-free hours and reduce technology-mediated information is practical, but it somewhat contradicts the finding that digital technology benefits are important for self-efficacy.

The authors correctly identify that longitudinal studies with yearly intervals would better capture entrepreneurship's temporal nature. Additionally: (1) Replicate across African contexts to test generalizability beyond South Africa; (2) Include actual entrepreneurs in addition to students to validate findings; (3) Investigate moderating factors that might explain why technostress doesn't affect intention; (4) Expand the model to include traditional TPB components for comparison; and (5) Use mixed methods to understand qualitatively why tech ambivalence exists.

## CONCLUSION

This study makes a valuable contribution to non-Western entrepreneurship research by introducing a novel conceptual framework and grounding it in the South African context. The methodology is generally sound, and the sample size is adequate. However, the inconclusive findings regarding technostress, non-significant effects of key digital variables, and reliance on student entrepreneurs significantly limit the impact and practical utility of this work. The research reads more as an exploratory study that raises important questions rather than a definitive account of digital technology's role in African entrepreneurship.

The paper would be strengthened by deeper investigation into why technostress and digital self-efficacy don't directly predict intention, as this finding contradicts the theoretical rationale. Without this explanation, the contribution remains somewhat incomplete.

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