



**The inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital
entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students
in a South African
university**

By

Ezile Maphanga

Student number: 21551706

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Supervisor: Dr Smangele Pretty Moyane

Co-supervisor: Mr Ntando Nkomo

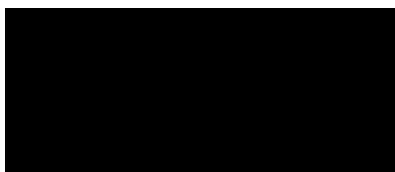
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I, the undersigned, certify that:

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- Where I have used work of others this has been correctly referenced in the study and again referenced in the reference list. Any research of similar nature that has been used in the development of my research project is also referenced.
- This project has not been submitted to any other educational institution for the purpose of qualification.
- All subsidy-earning output (artefacts and publications from postgraduate) studies will be in accordance with the intellectual property policy of the Durban University of Technology.
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Signed



Date...12/08/2024.....

DEDICATION

This research is intended for young individuals who wish to learn more about digital entrepreneurship, particularly in the fashion and beauty industries. This research is also dedicated to my family and close friends, who have always been there for me, and I want to make them proud. Above all, this study is intended to demonstrate how times have changed and how the concept of digital entrepreneurship came about.

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ABSTRACT

In the age of digital transformation, the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship has become rampant, bringing about a broader acceptance of the idea of conducting business online especially by young people. In that regard, entrepreneurs are seizing the opportunity through digital entrepreneurship, with the fashion and beauty industry being a prominent sector for online business. Despite the growth in online fashion and beauty trading, there is limited research and understanding with the discourse surrounding it. The aim of the study was to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university. The objectives of the study were: to establish the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students, to determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students, and to assess using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students. The study employed the Technology Acceptance Model to determine whether students intended to accept digital entrepreneurship. Methodologically, the study implemented the positivist research paradigm. The research approach chosen was quantitative. A survey research design was conducted through a questionnaire, as a data collection tool, from a census of the 29 final year students studying their Diploma in Fashion Design and 65 studying for their Diploma in Somatology. Instruments were pre-tested on 10 students, 5 in the Advanced Diploma in Fashion Design and 5 in the Advanced Diploma in Somatology at DUT. Findings showed a strong interest to pursue digital entrepreneurship in the fashion and beauty space.

However, hesitations related to 'customer satisfaction' and 'trust' negatively influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship. The findings also revealed that respondents were most likely to incorporate digital technologies in their businesses and saw the importance of administrative functions and advertising skills to have when venturing into digital entrepreneurship. The study recommends the youth to: be encouraged to consider entrepreneurship by South African universities; familiarize themselves with digital entrepreneurship and get education and knowledge in that regard; acquire the necessary skills in order to venture into digital entrepreneurship.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
DE	Digital Entrepreneurship
DUT	Durban University of Technology
E-commerce	Electronic commerce
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information Communications Technology
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This section introduces and provides the background to the study. The chapter starts off by discussing the conceptual and contextual backgrounds followed by the problem statement, aim, objectives of the study and research questions. The study proceeds to present the rationale, scope and the limitations of the study. The study then provides an indicative literature review with the inclusion of TAM as well as the research methodology that was adopted. The study chapter outline is provided and finishes off with the summary of the chapter.

1.2 Conceptualizing digital entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is recognized as a significant factor contributing to the growth of a country's economy (Cardella, Hernandez-Sanchez and Sanchez-Garcia 2020; Ndovela 2016). Entrepreneurship refers to a deliberate set of actions aimed at establishing a business or addressing the disparity between poverty and wealth (Sutter, Bruton and Chen 2019; Dy, Marlow, and Martin 2017). The concept of entrepreneurship has evolved into online operations known as digital entrepreneurship (Elia, Margherita and Passiante 2020). Digital entrepreneurship builds upon the traditional concept of entrepreneurship by involving a dynamic and diverse group of participants (Baig *et al.* 2022). Unlike the traditional model with fixed participants, digital entrepreneurship features an ever-changing assembly of individuals who bring their unique skills such as entrepreneurial skills, administrative functions, knowledge of running a website, advertising skills, goals, and purposes to the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Antonizzi and Smuts 2020).

To gain a better grasp of digital entrepreneurship, it's important to recognize that its core is rooted in e-commerce, where business transactions occur over the internet (Hong, Sawang and Yang 2023). Electronic commerce (e-commerce) has become an increasingly viable option for modern entrepreneurs putting them in control of the marketing procedures and customer reach (Thaslim 2019). This means that entrepreneurs get to use computers, online facilities, emails and the internet to execute sales/ transactions as well as to market online (Morabito 2022). E-commerce provides

entrepreneurs online facilities allowing them to conduct transactions online (Wirtz and Wirtz 2021).

Within digital entrepreneurship, numerous interconnected concepts exist. Some of these notions encompass the ability to run an office remotely, referred to as a virtual office (Stich 2020), engaging in virtual/online shopping, which involves purchasing goods online, digital marketing where entrepreneurs advertise their goods and services online (Moodley and Naidoo 2023). Information Communications Technology (ICTs) provide better access to information in terms of scale, scope, and speed to digital entrepreneurs, firms and government for the operations of the businesses or entities (Bahrini and Qaffas 2019). Furthermore, digital entrepreneurship might also encompass online financial transactions conducted by customers on these platforms: Airbnb (sharing economy), Amazon (e-commerce), Google (search business), and Facebook (social media) and more (Sahut, landoli and Teulon 2021).

There are several advantages associated with digital entrepreneurship including that: the online business starts to run quicker than a normal business at a lower cost, brand awareness increases, customer reach expands, more information is provided, serve niche markets and is accessible anywhere (Soni *et al.* 2020). On the other hand, challenges of digital entrepreneurs include facing higher failure risks caused by fast growth and forward leaps, lack of structure, trust, security, loyalty, customer satisfaction and transactional costs (Feyen *et al.* 2021).

E-commerce has been noted to have become popular in the fashion and beauty industry (Park and Lee 2021). In that regard, fashion stores provide online facilities where customers can purchase goods, with fashion products the most purchased goods (Kim *et al.* 2020). Customers use ICTs such as smartphones to access the online platforms (Mishna *et al.* 2020). Continued growth of online retail makes digital entrepreneurship a viable commercial and marketing strategy (Phonthanukitithaworn, Ketkaew and Naruetharadhol 2019) for the fashion and beauty industry.

As per statistics provided by the Department of Statistics South Africa (2019), it is observed that 55.2% of young individuals aged between 15 and 24 are without employment, with 31% of this group being graduates. It is also revealed that after the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the South African economy was devastated which led to unemployment, pay-cuts, and price hikes in food and other expenses resulting in

people opting for digital entrepreneurship (De Villiers, Cerbone and Van Zijl 2020). This high unemployment rate within South Africa has led to an increased interest among the youth in engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Dzomonda and Fatoki 2019). The higher education sector in South Africa maintains that to counteract elevated levels of unemployment, there should be a deliberate focus on nurturing entrepreneurship within teaching and learning environments in higher education institutions (Naidoo 2021; Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education Lekgotla 2018). The Durban University of Technology (DUT) stands as one such higher education institution that integrates the promotion of creativity and entrepreneurship through collaborative efforts into its mission and vision (Durban University of Technology 2020).

In considering the inclination to pursue and the meaning of digital entrepreneurship, as highlighted in the above arguments, and the commitments made by institutions of higher education, including DUT, in cultivating entrepreneurial skills, it is important to note a gap in prior research where the involvement of digital technology in entrepreneurship, particularly in the domains of fashion and beauty, has not been adequately explored (Ornati and Kalbaska 2022). Accordingly, it is important in this study to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university.

1.3 Context of the study

This study was conducted at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). DUT is one of the two universities of technology in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal with 7 campuses located in the cities of Durban (City, Brickfield, Steve Biko, Ritson, ML Sultan) and Pietermaritzburg (Midlands and Indumiso) altogether, housing 6 faculties namely Accounting and Informatics; Applied Sciences; Arts and Design; Engineering and the Built Environment; Health Sciences and Management Sciences (DUT 2020). The specific study sites were the Department of Fashion and Textiles in the Faculty of Arts and Design as well as Somatology Department in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The above-mentioned departments were chosen because of the potential for their students upon graduation to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty.

1.4 Problem statement

Digital entrepreneurship can be a vital avenue which students can opt for post studies. In recognising the crucial role of entrepreneurship, one of the focus areas of universities in South Africa, including DUT, is to breed entrepreneurs (Secundo, Rippa and Meoli 2020; Durban University of Technology 2020; Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education Lekgotla 2018). Given that there is low formal employment among the youth in South Africa, entrepreneurship has become a viable alternative (Sumberg *et al.* 2021). In today's digital economy entrepreneurship is evolving into digital entrepreneurship (Wibowo *et al.* 2023). One of the forerunners in digital entrepreneurship adoption is the fashion and beauty space, particularly online retail among young people (Ma and Kwon 2021). There is, however, very little research that has been done in the fashion and beauty industry specifically on young peoples' likelihood to pursue digital entrepreneurship in developing and underdeveloped countries (Modgil *et al.* 2022; Santiago and Castelo 2020). Scholars point to a dearth in digital entrepreneurship research leading to a gap in the understanding of entrepreneurship when it has migrated to the digital world (Modgil *et al.* 2022; Borges *et al.* 2021; Santiago and Castelo 2020). Jasrotia, Darda and Pandey (2023) claim that there is limited information regarding the students' intentions to become fashion and beauty entrepreneurs. For Sahut, landoli, and Teulon (2021) there is growing research in the field but shortage of understanding on how the digital entrepreneurs find opportunities and be able to utilize them. Muzanenhano and Rankhumise (2022) show that literature on digital entrepreneurship is very limited in a South African context and the studies identified were Chen (2023) who did a study on digital entrepreneurship in a resource-scarce context: a focus on entrepreneurial digital competencies. Available literature is mostly about developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, United States of America, and more (Borges *et al.* 2021; Geissinger, Laurell and Sandström 2020). Considering the arguments above it was vital in this study to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university.

1.5 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To establish the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students.
- To determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students.
- To assess using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students.

1.7 Research questions

From the objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- What is the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students?
- Which factors would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students?
- How can the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) be used to assess the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty of selected final year Diploma students?

1.8 Rationale of the study

The rise of digital entrepreneurship in the fashion and beauty industry has caught the attention of young people worldwide (Ma and Kwon 2021). In response, the South African government (2019) has emphasized the importance of preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which could see technology replacing traditional roles across various industries. This shift necessitates the adaptation of business functions like sales, advertising, hiring, operations, finance, research and development, and customer service to digital environments (Antonizzi and Smuts 2020). Education is crucial in this context, with advanced degree programs offering courses in areas such

as data analysis, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and digital entrepreneurship. Additionally, self-guided online learning, tutorials, and software resources play a significant role in acquiring relevant skills (Samara and Terzian 2021). Through entrepreneurship education, individuals can learn how to navigate the changing business landscape of the 4IR, leveraging their knowledge to avoid negative impacts.

This research not only benefits young people by providing them with insights into new business models but also creates opportunities for both self-employment and job creation within the digital economy.

As highlighted in the preceding problem statement, there exists a scarcity of research focused on the transition of fashion and beauty into the online domain, particularly concerning young individuals (Modgil *et al.* 2022; Santiago and Castelo 2020). Thus, this study deems it crucial to contribute to the existing body of research, thereby offering valuable insights to both scholars and the broader academic community.

1.9 Scope and limitations of the study

The scope of the study also referred to as delimiting the study focuses on setting the boundaries of the concept and population while the limitations of the study are issues that were experienced that affected the outcomes of the study (Theofanidis and Fountouki 2019).

With regards to the conceptual scope, this research examined the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university. It examined the concept from the standpoint of young people in this regard, 3rd year students in the Fashion and Textiles Department and Somatology Department at the Durban University of Technology.

Some of the identifiable limitations were that even though entrepreneurship is a viable option that can be pursued in several fields and by any student, this study was limited to fashion and beauty within two departments at third year level thus reducing the generalisability of the findings beyond the populations studied.

1.10 Literature review and theoretical framework

The detailed review of literature is provided in chapter two. The literature review consists of 5 themes. The first being the broader explanation of digital entrepreneurship, secondly the definitions and the other terms used in digital

entrepreneurship. These themes were included because the term digital entrepreneurship is not commonly used so the study had to provide conceptual definitions to better understand digital entrepreneurship. Literature revealed that digital entrepreneurship can be understood as a part of private enterprise whereby a portion or all the physical mechanisms of a traditional business have been digitalised (Kraus *et al.* 2019; Richter *et al.* 2017). The third theme addresses the level of interest in undertaking digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty a in line with the first objective of the study. In which the literature revealed that entrepreneurs are increasingly developing online presence to reach consumers who prefer to shop online (Wang *et al.* 2020). While the fourth theme which is ‘factors to take into consideration in undertaking digital entrepreneurship’, addresses the second objective of the study in which the literature exposed that there are various factors that affect the uptake of digital entrepreneurship. Lastly, the last theme addresses the third objective of the study which is the theoretical framework used in the study which was Davis’ Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of 1986. This model is designed to forecast the level of acceptance for a technological innovation and to identify strategies for adapting it to ensure user acceptability (Burgess and Worthington 2021). The sources of literature consulted included research journals, books, e-books, live conferences internet, government statistics and online articles.

1.11 Research methodology

The study adopted the positivist research paradigm. At the research approach level, it was largely quantitative. A survey research design was implemented. The study targeted all twenty-nine final year Fashion Design and sixty-five Somatology Diploma students from the Durban University of Technology through a census. Data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 students in the Advanced Diploma in their respective departments which are Fashion and Textiles and Somatology and were not included in the study. The quantitative analysis through descriptive statistics focused on frequencies and percentages and was presented in tables and graphs.

1.12 Outline of chapters

This study encompasses five chapters which are:

Chapter One: Introduction and background of the study

Introduces the study by providing the conceptual and contextual background of the study. It also provides insight to the problem statement, aims, objectives and research questions. The rationale, the scope and the limitations of the study were provided. The chapter also consisted of a brief explanation of the literature review, research methodology and the outline of the chapters.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Provides literature about the definition as well as the different concepts in understanding digital entrepreneurship. It contains literature that provides insight to the interests and factors to take into consideration in undertaking digital entrepreneurship. Limited research and theoretical framework were addressed.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

Offered the research methodology employed for the study. It also explains and justifies the methods used.

Chapter Four: Analysis and discussion of findings

Provides analysis and discusses findings.

Chapter Five: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

Summarizes, provides the study with conclusions and recommendations.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

Concluding this chapter, the study aimed to explore the interest in fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship among selected final year Diploma students in a South African university. The study conceptualized digital entrepreneurship, establishing that it consists of ecommerce and that entrepreneurs show interest in moving into digital space with regards to fashion and beauty. The context of the study established the research site of the study as the Durban University of Technology in the Fashion and Textiles and Somatology departments. The problem statement was then presented which indicated a gap in literature on digital entrepreneurship, followed by articulating the study's aim, objectives, and derived research questions. The rationale of the study is to contribute to the existing body of research to offer valuable perceptions to both

scholars and the broader academic community. Scope of the study focused of the students in 3rd level of their studies and the above-mentioned departments and limitations of the study led the study to not generalise beyond the selected departments. Additionally, a highlight of literature review, where there are 5 themes from which 3 of them were organised by the objectives of the study and two of them explained the concept of digital entrepreneurship. The research methodology highlighted the research paradigm, methods, targeted population and more. Lastly the study provided a chapter outline, and the chapter was summarised. The subsequent chapter will explore into a comprehensive review of the literature.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the study's introduction and background. This chapter explores a thorough examination of pertinent literature on digital entrepreneurship. The literature review aligns with the study's objectives and incorporates insights from various author past works. The chapter starts by explaining entrepreneurship and the global context of digital entrepreneurship. This is followed by exploring the multifaceted aspects and terminologies used in digital entrepreneurship, under the section titled 'Exploring the complex aspects and terminologies used in digital entrepreneurship'. The chapter continues to investigate the level of interest in undertaking digital entrepreneurship. Further on, the factors to take into consideration in undertaking digital entrepreneurship are elaborated. Thereafter, the chapter presents the theoretical framework. Lastly, the summary of the chapter is provided.

2.2 Entrepreneurship and the global context of digital entrepreneurship

The main concept of this study is digital entrepreneurship. In that regard, the study sought to provide understanding as to what digital entrepreneurship is. It becomes apparent that to conceptualize digital entrepreneurship one must understand the parent concept entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is vital in the national and global markets today (Zahra 2021). Individuals who practice entrepreneurship are called entrepreneurs (Filion 2021). Essentially, entrepreneurship is a planned-out behaviour to make a business or the key to fill the gap between poverty and riches (Sutter, Bruton and Chen 2019). Ultimately entrepreneurship is gradually being presented as the solution to the South African youth unemployment (Dawson 2021). Due to high unemployment rates, entrepreneurship may be a motivation for unemployed individuals to start their own business full time by a lack of employment options and individuals who want to make more money as other means of income (Laing, van Stel and Storey 2022).

E-commerce refers to the buying and selling of goods and services on the internet (Wadhawan and Arya 2020). Studies have found that e-commerce alongside continuous improvements in technology have been gradually utilized as it helps social

activities and economic transformation by allowing online shops to compete globally, giving rise to digital entrepreneurship (Berger, von Briel and Kuckertz 2021). Digital entrepreneurship can also be described as a facet of entrepreneurship in which some or all the conventional business's physical elements have been transformed into digital form (Kraus *et al.* 2019). Sohaib, Kang and Nurunnabi (2019) claim that the goal of an e-commerce business is to keep efficient interaction and communication between customer and an online seller to enhance trust. Alzoubi *et al.* (2022) add that the recent technological changes allow online businesses to offer safer payment procedures to their customers. Among other activities, entrepreneurs use ICT-enabled platforms such as cell phones and laptops to buy, sell and exchange products (Baumüller and Kah 2019).

Considering the growing acceptance of purchasing products through the ICT-enabled platforms, the fashion industry has been gradually moving into the digital space (Pereira and Fernandes-Marco 2021). Bacik *et al.* (2020) reveal that most young people prefer shopping online with their smartphones while others still prefer shopping in traditional stores to online shopping. A study by Jain, Khan, and Mishra (2017) reveal that most of the times people do buy fashion products online. Companies such as Amazon, Facebook, Google, for instance have enabled people to buy products including fashion and beauty products, inspiring the upcoming entrepreneurs to build their businesses online although there has not been a lot of success stories (Dwivedi *et al.* 2022). Among other things, fashion blogging has become popular in the fashion industry allowing designers to use bloggers as one of their marketing strategies (Choi 2020).

Online platforms are significant to e-commerce businesses especially in the fashion and beauty industry (Park and Lee 2021). Companies use YouTube vloggers and Instagram influencer/beauty gurus to market their products online (Elmi 2023; Wang 2021). Previous studies have shown the impact of social media, and the world of internet has on different organizations, customers, and society (Palalic *et al.* 2020; Park, Ciampaglia, and Ferrara 2016). A benefit of an e-commerce business is that entrepreneurs get a wide customer reach, however, fraud, delivery dates, fixing and postage costs and financial transaction may hinder the intentions of a customer to buy online (Hussein 2019).

It is apparent to this study that entrepreneurship, particularly in the digital space, is a critical driver of economic growth and job creation. E-commerce has emerged as a key enabler of entrepreneurship, providing businesses with a platform to reach global markets. In the fashion and beauty industry, the digital transformation is evident, with businesses leveraging social media and influencers to drive sales. Despite the challenges, entrepreneurship remains a viable path for individuals looking to create economic opportunities and drive innovation in the digital age.

2.3 Exploring the complex aspects and terminologies used in digital entrepreneurship

The complexity of digital entrepreneurship with its' various concepts relating to ecommerce bring about confusion in understanding the concept (Semerádová and Weinlich 2022). For instance, as entrepreneurs conduct business online, they could do so without having a specific office space (virtual office) and they telecommute (Mukherjee and Narang 2023; Walden 2019). In fashion and beauty, the inclusion of ICT-enabled technology by entrepreneurs would allow access to millions of products to be sold and purchased online (Shmidt 2023). Transactions that happen through ICT technology are deemed to be e-commerce (Semerádová and Weinlich 2022). Given the claims above, the study pursued to expand on some of the aspects and terminologies used in digital entrepreneurship.

The example of the contestations are the definitions in digital entrepreneurship for example, Bican and Brem (2020) define digital entrepreneurship by way of creating new projects and transforming existing businesses by introducing digital technologies to entrepreneurship. While Masenya (2021) contends that individuals engaged in digital entrepreneurship are essentially self-employed, utilizing digital platforms to operate and leveraging ICT and digital media tools for reaching prospective customers. These tools have empowered digital entrepreneurs to extend their business reach beyond their immediate geographic community. Canham (2023) reveals that the various concepts including products, services, administrative functions, entrepreneurial dispositions, etc. are described with a weakly defined term "high tech". Digital entrepreneurship may be understood as a part of entrepreneurship whereby part or all the physical components of a traditional business have been digitized (Kraus *et al.* 2019; Richter *et al.* 2017).

Entrepreneurship not only fosters economic growth and addresses employment challenges in developing nations (Yin *et al.* 2019), but there is a debate raised by Zhao and Collier (2016) regarding whether digital entrepreneurship is a subset of entrepreneurship linked with digital technologies or a facet of digital economics associated with entrepreneurship. The term digital economy is defined as the universal network of economic activities, commercial transactions, and professional interactions facilitated by ICT of which it can be succinctly described as an economy based on digital technologies (Afolabi 2023). However, the Marino and Pariso (2021) suggests that the definition of the digital economy evolves in tandem with technological progress, focusing on how digital technologies, services, products, techniques, and skills are integrated into economies through digitization. The advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as digital technologies and cloud computing has transformed the business landscape, sparking the rise of digital entrepreneurship (Zahra, Liu and Si 2022).

E-commerce, which is a group of technologies, applications and businesses that are linked to companies or individuals as clients who carry out electronic transactions, exchange of goods, information through a computer cyberspace network (Kedah 2023). With the advances of technology and telecommunications networks, numerous transactions can be carried out online (Purwanto 2022). Ecommerce offers online spending, distributing goods and information for the internet and other online resources from an online point of view (Taher 2021). Because of internet and network technology's popularity and quicker expansion, the electronic industry has developed a significant field for contemporary enterprises (Upe 2023). Big company operations are being carried out online currently where people sell and buy products and services online, and without internet substructure, certain purchases cannot be done (Jain, Malviya and Arya 2021).

There have been various changes in the routines of people with the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the generalization of the cyberspace and mobile phones (Park and Lee 2021). As online buying and selling became possible, a variation of purchase channels started to move away from former transaction methods towards direct online traffic and purchases (Pernot 2021). That is to say that ICT makes it possible for digital entrepreneurs to access internet and new technological advances (Gomes and Lopes 2022).

Given the arguments above, it is apparent to the study that digital entrepreneurship can be a section of entrepreneurship linked with digital technologies as well as a section in digital economics linked with entrepreneurship. The study also found that ecommerce and ICTs play a major role in helping digital entrepreneurs conduct their online businesses and are interlinked with digital entrepreneurship.

2.4 The level of interest in undertaking digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty

The study sought to delve into the interest to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship in the developing country context wherein South Africa is classified and contrasting with the developed country context. To better explain that, the study explored the interest in entrepreneurship in the developed, developing and under-developing countries because the interests differ.

In developed countries, entrepreneurs are increasingly developing online presence to reach consumers who prefer to shop online (Wang *et al.* 2020). Prior to that, a study by Dabija and Lung (2019) reveal that older generations still prefer shopping in brick-and-mortar stores to online shopping, while Gen Z mostly prefer online shopping with their smartphones. This is because developed countries have a seamless technology structure which is sophisticated and can reach its target audience with much more resources at its disposal for advertising, marketing and telesales (Koochang *et al.* 2023). Developed countries are typically characterized by democratic governments, stable capitalist economies, industrialization, high Human Development Index (HDI) and advanced technological structures (Andrews 2023). The rate of technological advancements is at an all-time, ever-increasing high, and digital entrepreneurs are mindful of the prospects that this growth is producing, to benefit from these opportunities, entrepreneurs are looking towards digital revolution (Antonizzi and Smuts 2020). Social media has changed the way fashion and beauty is accessible, described, consumed and the way it is designed (Hsiao *et al.* 2019). Dwivedi *et al.* (2021) contend that social media has changed how fashion is accessible and presented by claiming that big brands and companies want to be represented by popular models to gain popularity and one of the many avenues they chose to advertise their brands on online social media platforms. For an example, platforms such as Facebook and Instagram introduced marketing sites where online shopping takes place to capitalise on unofficial thriving businesses (Park *et al.* 2021). Majeed,

Owusu-Ansah and Ashmond (2021) claim that social media supports the interaction between patrons and fashion garments online and this is a key in influencing consumer behaviour, consciousness and attitudes. Ananda *et al.* (2019) claim that big brands do appreciate online and offline reviews of their products to determine the future of their product in the market. In the same breath, bloggers and vloggers to give out reviews about their products to their followers in their respective social media platforms which eventually leads the followers to gain trust to buy those products online (Ananda *et al.* 2019). Park *et al.* (2021) also reveal that as online consumers enjoy free offerings offered by the platforms and entrepreneurs exploit that opportunity by advertising. The existing literature suggests that social influencers play a pivotal role in shaping subjective norms, subsequently influencing consumer purchase intentions. Consumers draw inspiration from these fashion influencers, leading to an indirect desire to make purchases (Majeed, Owusu-Ansah and Ashmond 2021).

The use of 4IR technologies in the fashion industry is not causing significant disruptions in both the back and front ends of the value chain, leading to more innovative, quicker, smarter, and efficient processes, products, services, and business models (Interest in digital economy in fashion and beauty industries) (Casciani, Chkanikova and Pal 2022). Considering the points made, it becomes evident to this study that the growing enthusiasm in developed countries for online shopping is paralleled by the increasing emergence of entrepreneurs in the digital realm.

In developing countries, like South Africa, entrepreneurship is a continuous dynamic process of change that is pushed by new ideas and creative approaches towards social and economic solutions to maintain sustainability (Tunio *et al.* 2021). In this continuous process, people deploy their skills, abilities, efforts, and resources to establish a business venture (Galvão, Marques and Ferreira 2020). Entrepreneurship has a big influence on the developing countries' economies, where it plays an essential role over time in poverty mitigation and economic growth (Fatma *et al.* 2021). Developing countries are those with a less developed industrial base and lower HDI compared to developed countries (Andrews 2023). It is revealed that developing countries have limited access to resources, but the technological infrastructure is decent to get most of its essential marketing across, making your target audience in this segment a bit more fragmented as different parts could be more developed than

others making communication and marketing to other parts more delayed (Rafiq *et al.* 2021; Malesev and Cherry 2021).

In the realm of entrepreneurship, the rise of improved communication channels, market access, and low entry barriers is seen as pivotal in creating new digital opportunities for Africans (Steel 2021). This environment is increasingly motivating young individuals, including women, to embark on business ventures using digital technologies, such as smartphones and computers, and leveraging social media platforms to build digital communities and market products like cosmetics, garments, fashion accessories, and perfumes (Cabigiosu 2020). Thanks to the informative and communicative capabilities of these technologies, entrepreneurs now have access to resources and marketing strategies that were previously out of reach, enabling small-scale entrepreneurs in African cities to capitalize on this developmental shift (Gebremichael, Gebreslassie and Mezgebe 2023).

In South Africa, there has been a concerning increase in youth unemployment, as indicated by Statistics South Africa, which reported a 1,1% rise in the youth unemployment rate and the loss of 250 000 jobs among young people in the first quarter of 2023 (Ndlovu, 2023). This challenging economic situation has prompted many young individuals to consider entrepreneurship as an alternative, as highlighted by the University of Pretoria (2022). However, it is crucial to note that young entrepreneurs require support to prevent high failure rates in their businesses. Platforms such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) play a crucial role in providing this support to aspiring young entrepreneurs (Ndlovu, 2023). This underscores the importance of offering the right support to youth entrepreneurs, as there is a clear interest among young people in pursuing entrepreneurship given the right assistance especially financial assistance.

Developing economies are inclined to substitute financial markets with internal capital markets, usually founded on accumulated family wealth; therefore, limiting in part the development of businesses as family capital is considered as a finite source (LevyOrlik 2023). Financial resources play a serious role in digital entrepreneurship (Ughetto *et al.* 2020). Although online endeavours require lower entry fee than that of a brick-and-mortar business, the deficiency of financial resources show significant challenges, explicitly to those belonging to minor socioeconomic social class (Samara and Terzian

2021). Financial markets are the essential element of institutional schemes as they obtain and distribute capital (Chen, Kumara, Sivakumar 2021).

However, despite the challenges and limitations the developing countries face, digital transformation in entrepreneurship is rapidly growing (Abdulquadri *et al.* 2021).

In under-developing countries, the importance of entrepreneurship in the economic growth has increased over the years. Moreover, Small Medium Enterprises (SME) take over 40% to 80% of employment in such countries where economic growth is limited (Mugaahed and Manjunath 2022). Underdeveloped countries have the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development, often characterized by unstable governments or economies and the lowest HDI ratings (Andrews 2023). Underdeveloped countries have a hard time with essentials by issues like lack of network infrastructure, lack of mobile services and a rolling blackout/loadshedding issue may hinder consumer's ability to see televised advertisement which can be detrimental to an entrepreneur in a digital space (Nothias 2020).

There is a lack of information on the association between ICT and SMEs entrepreneur's productivity (Etim *et al.* 2023). Given the quick adoption of ICTs in Afghanistan throughout the last 20 years, and absence of data on ICTs in SMEs, it signifies a very thought-provoking case that has yet to be studied (Said 2020). Additionally, this has also affected the populace's human capital, as there has been a forfeiture and lack of skilled experts to maintain viable and consequential infrastructure, schooling, and maintenance for ICT (Sahib, Zad and Shah 2023). However, despite the challenges, fashion and beauty entrepreneurs in some underdeveloped countries have managed to showcase their work by networking and collaborating with each other; with the social media and e-commerce being on the rise has played a significant role in promoting fashion and beauty globally (Heamatzai and Rafiqzad 2023).

With the literature above, there is a gap in research towards underdeveloped countries showing interest in undertaking digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty. However, there are studies that show the interest in fashion and beauty being on the rise which are:

'Unleashing the Potential of Afghan Women: Strides, Challenges, and Pathways to Prosperity in Economic Development' by Sahib, Zad and Shah (2023); 'Nascent entrepreneurs and challenges in the digital market in developing countries' by Tunio, *et al.* (2023); 'Women, entrepreneurship, and economic development in Africa' by Nwakanma (2021); '6 Evolution, innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship in Africa's fashion industry' by Kalu *et al.* (2024).

With the arguments above, the study gathered that in developed countries, entrepreneurship is closely tied to the rise of online shopping, driven by the younger generation's preference for smartphone-based purchases over traditional stores. With advanced technology infrastructure and robust marketing, developed nations are well-suited to leverage this trend. The rapid advancement of technology has facilitated the growth of digital entrepreneurship, particularly in the fashion and beauty industries, where social media has revolutionized product accessibility and marketing strategies through influencers and bloggers. The adoption of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies further enhances efficiency and innovation, creating more agile businesses. This digital transformation is expected to continue shaping consumer behaviour and driving economic growth as technology evolves.

In analysing developing countries, it became clear as was argued above that entrepreneurship is a powerful driver of change, driven by innovation and creative problem-solving to tackle social and economic issues. This process involves individuals using their skills and resources to start businesses, which plays a vital role in reducing poverty and fostering economic growth. Despite resource constraints, these countries are using their technological infrastructure to access markets, albeit with some fragmentation. Improved communication and low entry barriers are creating new digital opportunities, particularly in Africa, where young people are using technology and social media to build businesses and communities. In South Africa, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as a solution to youth unemployment, but support systems are crucial to ensure success. While financial resources are essential for digital entrepreneurship, challenges arise from the reliance on internal capital markets in developing economies, emphasizing the need for financial support mechanisms. Despite these obstacles, the digital transformation of entrepreneurship is rapidly advancing in developing nations.

In under-developing countries, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in economic growth, with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) often accounting for a significant portion of employment. These countries face challenges such as unstable governments, limited infrastructure, and low Human Development Index (HDI) ratings, which can hinder entrepreneurial activities, especially in the digital space. Despite these challenges, some entrepreneurs in the fashion and beauty industries have successfully promoted their work through networking and collaboration, leveraging the rise of social media and e-commerce. However, there is a gap in research regarding digital entrepreneurship in these countries, particularly in the fashion and beauty sectors. The abovementioned studies indicate a growing interest in these industries, highlighting the need for further research and support for entrepreneurs in underdeveloped countries.

2.5 Factors influencing the uptake of digital entrepreneurship

There are several generic factors that influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship in any sector. The second objective of the study was to determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students. The study then put to itself to investigate the factors to take into consideration in the uptake of digital entrepreneurship. Every industry, however, has unique factors influencing its uptake. Hence, the study sought to first mention the factors that influence the uptake of entrepreneurship in general:

2.5.1. There are various factors that influence entrepreneurship which are:

Cognitive factors:

Cognitive factors play a vital role in shaping the opportunities and capabilities of entrepreneurs, thereby fostering entrepreneurship related to environmental quality (He *et al.* 2020). Research by Zhang, Bij and Song (2020) reveal that certain levels of cognitive biases can positively impact entrepreneurial behaviour and performance, often driving rather than hindering outcomes. In contrast, a lack of cognitive biases tends to have a negative effect, consistently impeding entrepreneurial behaviour and performance without stimulating it. Another study by Nwosu *et al.* (2022) expose that the unintended effect of experiential education in businesses on students' entrepreneurial purposes through entrepreneurial self-efficacy was important and

dependent on the level of students' entrepreneurial passion. However, the direct effect on students' entrepreneurial aims was contingent only on the level of entrepreneurial passion, specifically at average and high levels.

Demographic factors

Gender disparities are evident in entrepreneurial intentions, with women exhibiting lower intentions to start businesses compared to men; however, there is no gender disparity in entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Pelegrini and Moraes 2022). The association between gender and entrepreneurial intentions is influenced by factors such as perceived social support and barriers, as well as outcome expectations, rather than solely by self-efficacy (Vamvaka *et al.* 2020). Women are inclined towards selfemployment due to organizational skills and personal abilities, whereas men are driven by financial constraints, creativity, and a desire for advancement (Shah, Hashmi and Sadaf 2023). Although women are more likely to conform to normative role models than men, the impact of gender on entrepreneurial intentions is not mediated by social norms (Amofah and Saladrignes 2022).

Educational factors

Entrepreneurship education not only imparts foundational knowledge but also cultivates entrepreneurial thinking among students (Lv *et al.* 2021). In South Africa, initiatives like training secondary school students in problem-solving skills have shown positive outcomes for potential entrepreneurs with an innovative orientation (Botha and Taljaard 2021). Such education also enhances entrepreneurial attitudes, self-efficacy, and self-reliance, reducing the impact of social norms on entrepreneurial intentions (Shah, Amjed and Jabooob 2020). A study by Wu *et al.* (2022) reveal that although students' perceptions of formal learning do not directly affect entrepreneurial intentions, they do exert a strong indirect influence through a mediating factor—self efficacy—on an individual's decision to start a business. Furthermore, entrepreneurial teaching, participation in business plan competitions, and engagement in entrepreneurial activities positively impact entrepreneurial competence, which in turn intercedes the relationship between various factors and entrepreneurial intention (Mykolenko *et al.* 2022). However, incompetent business education programs in higher education limit the progress of entrepreneurial initiatives by graduate students (Guerrero, Liñán and Cáceres-Carrasco 2021).

Environmental factors

Environmental factors impact the operations and management of businesses specifically or generally, encompassing economic, technological, social, and other factors (Su *et al.* 2022). Economic factors, such as interest and inflation rates, are key considerations (Bauer and Rudebusch 2020). Social factors, including culture and demographics, also play a significant role (Méndez-Picazo, Galindo-Martín and Castaño-Martínez 2021). Political factors such as government regulations and policies, are crucial as well (Li *et al.* 2020). Technological factors, such as advances and changes in technology usage, are also influential (Jafari-Sadeghi *et al.* 2021).

Internal factors, like the value system, internal relationships, and objectives, directly impact businesses. Among these, the organizational value system is the most changeable (Akpa, Asikhia and Nneji 2021). External factors, including economic, technological, and competitive elements, affect businesses indirectly (Kumar and Bhatia 2021). Political factors which encompass formal structures and norms derived from regulations, government agencies, and cultural practices, are also influential (Chew *et al.* 2022). These factors are essential for fostering entrepreneurial activity (Sendra-Pons, Comeig and Mas-Tur 2022).

Environmental factors, whether positive or negative, can significantly impact businesses (Chege and Wang 2020). When these factors are unfavourable, managers must devise alternative revenue-generation strategies (Ahmad and Van Looy 2020). Hence, managers often prepare contingency plans to address unforeseen environmental challenges (Obrenovic *et al.* 2020). Various factors, such as the availability of natural resources, waste disposal practices, climate change, and adherence to the green agenda, can influence businesses (Ye *et al.* 2020). Climate change and the green agenda are considered external factors, while natural resource availability and waste disposal are internal factors (Ali, Anufriev and Amfo 2021).

Contextual (situational) factors:

Contextual or situational factors such as political, legal, economic, technological, environmental, social, and cultural elements play a crucial role in influencing the uptake of entrepreneurship (Appiah, Anderson-Akolaa, and Ayisi-Addo 2022). In developed countries, governmental programs often focus on identifying entrepreneurial opportunities, reinforcing the perception of entrepreneurship as a

professional career among adults, however, in developing countries, inefficient government interventions with emphasis on legal and tax regulations can create a hostile environment for potential entrepreneurs (Guerrero, Liñán and Cáceres-Carrasco 2021). Factors such as uncertainty in business taxation procedures, misalignment between policies and programs, and lack of precise regulations can negatively affect new entrepreneurs (Kayode-Ajala 2023; Monaldi, Hernández, and Reyes 2021; Zheng 2021). Additionally, aspects like insurance policies, government capital support packages, public administration, and the role of professional associations are important elements affecting enterprise development (Le *et al.* 2020).

Developing economies often face environmental conditions that limit nascent entrepreneurs without an innovative orientation (Amini-Sedeh, Pezeshkan and Caiazza, 2022). Limited diverse public/private funding sources and high interest rates for accessing private funds are significant barriers to nascent entrepreneurship (Toufaily, Zalan and Dhaou 2021). E-commerce has gained significant attention in Western and developed countries due to Internet availability as an ICT tool, but it has received less attention in emerging economies, making e-commerce adoption challenging for SMEs in these regions (Shehata and Montash 2020; Nazir and Roomi 2020).

Competitive intensity can positively influence the consolidation of small- and medium-sized ventures in environments like India, however, obstacles such as lack of financial sources, inappropriate policies/taxation, inadequate support programs, entry barriers to the market, and low-trust environments can hinder enterprise growth (Guerrero, Liñán and Cáceres-Carrasco 2021; Cantú, Aguiñaga and Scheel 2021; Omeihe *et al.* 2021; Couto and Barbosa 2020). Market barriers, including unfavourable societal perceptions of entrepreneurs and sociocultural norms, can hinder the entry of certain demographic groups, such as rural women, into entrepreneurship (Cullen 2020; Modarresi and Arasti 2021). The absence of institutions supporting the dynamism of rural markets represents a significant barrier for owner demographic entrepreneurs in countries such as Bangladesh (Rahman *et al.* 2023). Sociocultural elements such as corruption and an unfavourable reputation of entrepreneurship have also limited the gestation and success of new ventures in post-Soviet economies like Russia (Guerrero, Liñán and Cáceres-Carrasco 2021).

Personality factors

A personality trait is a constant individual reaction to outside conditions (Awwad and Al-Aseer 2021). Studies focusing on university students have found that only openness to experience is related with both entrepreneurial vigilance and entrepreneurial intention (Abaddi 2023; Bazkiaei *et al.* 2020). Openness to experience positively influences students' entrepreneurial intentions (Sahinidis *et al.* 2020). Awwad and Al-Aseer (2021) further observed that individuals who are curious, imaginative, open to attempting new things, and appreciate dealing with new encounters are more likely to start a new business. Conversely, traits such as extraversion, friendliness, and neuroticism were found not to significantly relate to either entrepreneurial alertness or intention among Jordanian university students (Abaddi 2023).

Furthermore, Bergner, Auburger and Paleczek (2023) found that persons with specific personality traits are inclined to start businesses because these traits help them recognize business opportunities, which in turn boosts their entrepreneurial intentions. This connection, known as the personality-risk-taking nexus, proposes that certain personality traits permit individuals to take more risks, making it easier for them to follow an entrepreneurial career despite the risks involved. Another mechanism, the trait-opportunity-risk nexus, combines the personality traits' influence on both opportunity recognition and risk-taking. It argues that individuals with these traits are more adept at identifying new opportunities and are willing to take higher risks to capitalize on them, ultimately driving their intention to become entrepreneurs. Comparing these mechanisms can reveal which one has the strongest explanatory power.

Digitalization epitomizes the basis of new challenges to the strength of socioeconomic systems and comes with new risks or unexpected circumstances; on the one hand, it comes with opportunities (Sataalkina and Steiner 2020). Some of them are: trust, security and customer loyalty, and are three of the most emphasized challenges that digital entrepreneurs face worldwide (Gupta *et al.* 2023). Other factors that influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship are but not limited to lack of structure, weak digital infrastructure and risk, lack of policies and regulations that protect and support ecommerce and digital entrepreneurs as well as deficiency in digitally competent and experienced labour capital etc (Palalic *et al.* 2020; Nawi *et al.* 2017). As established

that every industry has unique factors influencing its uptake. The study sought to investigate the factors to take into consideration when choosing digital entrepreneurship in that regard.

2.5.2 Factors that affect the uptake of digital entrepreneurship are as follows:

Trust

One of the emphasized factors that influence digital entrepreneurship is trust. The study sought to explain how trust can affect digital entrepreneurship.

Pop *et al.* (2022) claim that online businesses gained trust to their customers through social media presence with the help of social media influencers. Liu, Gupta and Patel (2023) claim that some customers tend to feel uneasy when using online platforms such as social media, mobile and cloud computing because they may have a lack of trust in using products they buy or see online. Alhassan and Ridwan (2023) have also found that in Ghana, people do not trust buying online due to the fraudulent activities that have been going on.

Security

Another factor that impacts digital entrepreneurship is security. The study pursued to explain the issues digital entrepreneurs face around security in digital entrepreneurship. Al-Turjman and Salama (2021) continue to add that customers may also feel uneasy putting their banking details on the web risking fraud and phishing. Blum (2020) adds that unskilled IT professionals and lack of IT governance may result to lack of security for the fashion and beauty business as well as its customers. Sharma and Bhatt (2023) reveal that online businesses in Saudi Arabia use cash on delivery services to build trust in customers and to make them secure in buying online without risking fraudulent activities. For digital entrepreneurship, organisations would mainly be used to share risk, or to offer funds for digital entrepreneurs, and for security or insurance (Samara and Terzian 2021). This involves the term cyber security which is the protection of ICT devices and services from malware by hackers, spammers, and cybercriminals (Perwej *et al.* 2021). Brands and their reputations may be in danger if clients' privacies are not adequately protected (Huzaizi *et al.* 2021). This is because customers are hesitant to purchase from a company that jeopardizes their sensitive information, and they are likely to share their negative experiences with others due to

security breaches, consequently, this can quickly tarnish a company's image, leading to a loss of trust from both existing and potential customers who may feel unsafe sharing personal data or transacting with the company (Huzaizi *et al.* 2021). Acquiring knowledge of cybersecurity fundamentals, such as understanding threats and their origins, is an essential skill for online entrepreneurs (Huzaizi *et al.* 2021). Technical, software and organizational means of cybersecurity may not generate net additional cash flows but subsidise to the full or partial save of flows in the context of cyber-attacks (Gontareva *et al.* 2020).

Customer loyalty

Customers are loyal to certain products and services they are satisfied with. Ibrahim *et al.* (2020) claim that modernisation skills are vital for Electronic Businesses (EBSs) in structuring well-recognised foreign customer loyalty, global branding, better supplying chain management, and encouraging clients' participation in the new product development procedure in the international markets. The relationship between products and digital supply chain is critical in upholding customer loyalty to Small Medium Enterprises (SME) products (Adam *et al.* 2020). Barbosa, Saura and Bennett (2022) found that online media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, twitter etc help digital entrepreneurs to reach their customers and maintain those relationships which leads to a positive influence on the customer loyalty.

Weak digital infrastructure and risk

Digital entrepreneurship in developing countries is affected by the weak infrastructures supporting the access to start-up funds, the lack of protective and stimulating policies, the weak digital infrastructure, and deficiencies in digitally competent human resources (Biclesanu *et al.* 2021). Enhancing physical and institutional digital infrastructure requires a collaborative effort involving governments, private sectors, international economic organizations, industrial associations, and foreign partners to create a sustainable and pro-business environment for private sector growth (Luo 2022). Investigation shows that digital connectivity offers obvious advantages in terms of administrative efficacy, resilience, and ubiquity of access for all citizens (Song, Xiao and Zhou 2023).

Lack of policies and regulations that protect and support e-commerce and digital entrepreneurs

Commercial law and practice differ across global markets. Nations that are pro-entrepreneurs create clear and constructive environments to make it easier for entrepreneurs to set up businesses (Sabry 2023). The African private sector levels coordinated laws for taxation of cross-border online traditional as the most significant regulation needed to enhance intra-regional e-commerce, trailed by consumer protection protocols for building digital trust and electronic trade facilitation (Banga *et al.* 2021). Cross-border e-commerce faces obstacles due to unreliable online payment systems, particularly problems involving local providers on internationally hosted websites. The primary hurdles to cross-border e-commerce include: (1) challenges with postal services, delivery, and transportation costs; (2) taxation issues, such as foreign taxation, double taxation, and VAT regulations; (3) the absence of dependable payment solutions; (4) limited knowledge of national and regional regulations; and (5) customs duties and procedures (Abendin and Duan 2021). Goods are predominantly imported and exported through informal channels via a network of buses, offering cost-effective and quicker parcel delivery than courier services, yet this informality leads to disjointed logistics, restricting online sales to towns where bus companies have offices (Banga *et al.* 2021).

Deficiency in digitally competent and experienced labour capital

Another potential obstacle could be the scarcity of skilled and experienced digital labour resources (Samara and Terzian 2021). The importance of specific digital skills and competencies among employees was emphasized in a digital workspace, including proficiency in areas like Search Engine Marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, and social selling (Samara and Terzian 2021). The rapid expansion of the market has led to a shortage of digital expertise on a global scale (Klein and Todesco 2021). To establish an effective digital team, companies should evaluate their digital capabilities, either acquire new talent or provide training in digital technologies for their existing workforce, as contemporary organizational success greatly depends on a deep understanding of digital technologies, with digitally competent employees playing a pivotal role in sharing this knowledge (Soltanifar, Hughes, and Göcke 2021).

The implementation of digital technologies

Digital technologies may be defined as the occupational-related use of ICT solutions such as smartphones apps – can profit a business in numerous ways, for instance, through reduced costs, increased returns and the chance to construct new business models by using digital technologies, additionally establishments can produce firm value and construct competitive advantages (Soluk, Kammerlander and Darwin 2021).

Organizations that have the capability to digitize information-heavy processes, such as those involving a lot of data, can eliminate manual tasks, leading to more efficient operations (Clausen 2023). Consequently, a comprehensive digitalization approach empowers emerging businesses to monitor processes in real-time, enhancing transparency in workflows (Reinbold, Sappanen and Peltokorpi 2020). This not only facilitates quicker decision-making but also enables the identification of processes that could be improved, potentially resulting in cost savings (Rosin *et al.* 2020).

As established earlier in 2.3. paragraph 6, digital entrepreneurship coupled with e-commerce and ICTs offer entrepreneurs and customers increased accessibility. While the success of a physical store can be influenced by its location, online businesses are accessible from customers' homes (Muafi *et al.* 2021). This broader accessibility means that the initial potential customer base for an entrepreneurial venture is larger, although it may require more advertising to attract website traffic (Elia, Margherita and Passiante 2020). This aspect enables smaller operations to compete with bigger companies for customers without needing to reach the same scale as their competitors (Muafi *et al.* 2021).

Furthermore, digital marketing offers various significant benefits, such as bolstering brand loyalty and boosting online sales. In this context, the study delved into the utilization and effectiveness of digital marketing tools in building brand awareness for companies; this is because social media marketing excels in cost reduction and broadening reach by connecting with a larger customer base, thereby contributing to business growth (Melović *et al.* 2020).

Additionally, scalability in digital entrepreneurship involves growing a business by initially targeting a specific market or developing a product or service, then expanding to a wider audience after achieving a certain level of success, with digital markets

enabling entrepreneurs to scale their companies in a productive and cost-effective manner (Cavallo, Cosenz and Noto 2023).

Technology offers cost-effective opportunities, spurs innovation, disrupts traditional practices, and enables digital enterprises to improve processes, create new products, and engage with stakeholders (Beliaeva *et al.* 2019). These opportunities arise from digital medium users who can now receive support, respond to messages, and provide valuable feedback and suggestions, which organizations can leverage to their advantage (Antonizzi and Smuts 2020). Subsequently, digital entrepreneurship brings profitability allowing the online business to increase its earnings by generating revenue from online commercials receiving a fraction of the profit each time a customer interacts with the advertisement (Park *et al.* 2021). With a good website, digital entrepreneurs may upload content marketing the product or service which will result to the implementation of subscription payment procedures for services or renewable products, which can help secure a consistent customer base (Purbasari, Muttaqin and Sari 2021).

Modular technology systems provide an appealing environment for rapidly evolving and advancing technological landscapes. Digital components that are loosely connected and can be assembled into customized configurations offer a high degree of flexibility for entrepreneurs (Kraus *et al.* 2019). It is apparent to the study that digital entrepreneurship comes with feasible advantages such as, but not limited to, opportunities for both entrepreneurs and consumers, reduced costs and broader customer reach.

Entrepreneurial skills and digital competency

Entrepreneurial skills and digital capabilities are the basic skills in the public's education in the 21st century (Prendes-Espinosa, Solano-Fernandez and GraciaTudela 2021). Digital skills are somewhat skills that provide individuals the ability to find, assess, apply, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet (Livingstone, Mascheroni and Stoilova 2022). Reflecting on the arguments above, the study sought to investigate other skills needed to start or venture into digital entrepreneurship and show the advantages that come with them. The following are the skills needed for starting an online business:

Automation

Automation is frequently considered as the main purpose for the use of technologies in businesses and allow flexibility (Gartner, Maresch and Tierney 2022). Scholars predict that the automation skill of artificial intelligence and its predictive abilities will affect opportunity detection, evaluation, and manipulation (Kollmann *et al.* 2022). Digital skills may help entrepreneurs through the automation of some of the administrative tasks there by freeing up their time, giving them a chance to be more productive by dedicating other tasks like email sequences and social media posts (Ahmed and Ganapathy 2021). Automation may help entrepreneurs when starting out their businesses without funding and traction to hire personnel to help get the business venture off the ground (Göcke and Weninger 2021). This will allow them to save costs and time giving them higher chances of being successful as an entrepreneur.

Branding

Social media platforms are highly effective channels for enhancing brand recognition (Ebrahim 2020). Whether through Instagram marketing strategies or the development of a comprehensive business presence on Facebook, establishing a robust social media footprint is imperative for garnering visibility and stimulating discourse around a brand (Malesev and Cherry 2021). The management of social media profiles and the cultivation of a substantial following significantly influence an enterprise's success (Sahaym, Datta and Brooks 2021). While inbound marketing stands out as an efficient method for driving targeted traffic to a website, characterized by its relevance and conversion potential, social media serves as a valuable complement to this approach (Lopes and Casais 2022). Relying solely on inbound marketing confines an enterprise to its existing consumer base or those already familiar with its market or brand (Lady *et al.* 2023). By dedicating additional resources to social media promotion, an enterprise can tap into a broader audience, attracting highly targeted inbound visitors and securing more inbound links (Salcido 2021).

Knowledge of running a website

The website functions as the digital representation of an online entrepreneurial venture, playing a crucial role in its success (Butticè and Vismara 2022). Website visitors and customers expect a seamless browsing experience, informative content, uncomplicated transactions, and cross-device compatibility (Ali 2023). Proficiency in

meeting these requirements not only allows for swift adjustments but also leads to substantial cost savings (Ali 2023). Developing web design expertise is a timeintensive process that adds significant value, warranting a premium (Larsen and Becker 2021). Accessing resources like YouTube tutorials on page builders such as Elementor can provide practical and cost-effective capabilities for the business (Allred 2022).

Marketing skills

Digital skills are crucial for modern entrepreneurship, particularly in marketing (Sariwulan *et al.* 2020). Digital skills are invaluable for various aspects of marketing including entrepreneurship and they include: identifying the target audience which entails that online market research and tools like Google Trends enable the identification of target markets, facilitating tailored marketing strategies, additionally, proficient digital skills can extend the reach to global audiences (De Jong *et al.* 2021); driving traffic to the business's online platform which requires digital skills that allow the analysis of website traffic and visitor behaviour, aiding in optimizing online presence to attract more visitors (Chaffey and Smith 2022); and customer interaction in a sense that customers can effectively engage on social media and websites, crucial for relationship building and word-of-mouth marketing (Ali, Hussin and Dahlan 2020).

Marketing involves creating value through product or service distribution, utilizing channels like advertising, public relations, social media, and email marketing (Suleiman *et al.* 2020). Essential digital entrepreneurship skills for effective digital marketing include Search Engine Optimization, Search Engine Marketing, Social Media Marketing and Email marketing (Gani and Faroque 2021). Key components of digital marketing entail: (1) Identifying the target audience through defining ideal customers and understanding their needs (Redjeki and Affandi 2021). (2) Creating buyer personas to comprehend customer needs and purchasing behavior (Cruz and Karatzas 2020). (3) Utilizing storytelling to engage and capture audience attention (Coker, Flight and Baima 2021). (4) Employing tools like Google AdWords, Hootsuite Insights, Moz, and KISSmetrics to reach the target market and gain insights into website visitors (Velu 2021).

Online communication skills/ Networking skills

Effective communication is a fundamental aspect of any business enterprise (Obrenovik *et al.* 2020). For entrepreneurs, the ability to communicate proficiently with their team, clientele, and associates is indispensable (Tomec and Gričar 2023). While the art of written communication predates the digital era, the modern online landscape necessitates a distinction between conventional written skills and expertise in online communication (Kurniullah 2023). Proficiency in online communication is particularly valuable in addressing dissatisfied customers and maintaining diplomatic interactions and this encompasses written forms like email and social media, as well as oral exchanges such as presentations and telephonic conversations (Tomec and Gričar 2023). Without the capacity to articulate one's vision, products, and services to others, the prospects of establishing a thriving business are greatly diminished (Kandampully *et al.* 2021).

Furthermore, an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural disparities are imperative. The manner in which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds are engaged can significantly impact the outcome of business negotiations (Canestrino *et al.* 2020). Thus, digital entrepreneurs must acquaint themselves with these cultural nuances and develop the skills necessary to effectively communicate with a global audience, as this proficiency can determine the success or failure of a business endeavour (Phakamach, Panjarattanakorn and Onsampant 2023).

Finances

As a digital entrepreneur, understanding and managing finances is crucial. This involves skills like bookkeeping, budgeting, financial planning, and a basic grasp of accounting and taxes (Thande 2020). These financial skills are among the most important for entrepreneurship:

- Accounting, which is essential for developing financial acumen and understanding the company's financial health (Susan 2020).
- Budgeting where an entrepreneur creates and track budgets for projects, products, or services, aiding in resource allocation and decision-making (Wellem 2022).

- Financial planning which requires a clear understanding of your financial goals, necessitating a business plan, financial roadmap, and smart resource investment (Klontz, Chaffin and Klontz 2022).
- Tax knowledge is crucial, including understanding and complying with tax laws, filing taxes, paying taxes, and maximizing deductions. Staying updated on tax changes is important to minimize tax liability (Saarah-Mensah 2020).
- Finally, basic investment knowledge is beneficial, encompassing understanding different investment types and choosing the right ones based on goals and risk tolerance (Mankuroane 2021).

It is apparent to the study that entrepreneurship is influenced by various factors, including cognitive, demographic, educational, environmental, and contextual/situational factors. Cognitive factors, such as biases and learning experiences, can impact entrepreneurial behaviour and intentions. Demographic factors, like gender, play a role in entrepreneurial intentions, with women often exhibiting lower intentions to start businesses compared to men. Educational factors, including entrepreneurship education, can encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and self-efficacy among students, reducing the impact of social norms on entrepreneurial intentions. Environmental factors, such as economic, technological, social, and political conditions, also influence entrepreneurship.

Contextual or situational factors, such as political, legal, economic, technological, environmental, social, and cultural elements, play a crucial role in influencing the uptake of entrepreneurship. In developed countries, governmental programs often focus on identifying entrepreneurial opportunities, reinforcing the perception of entrepreneurship as a professional career among adults. However, in developing countries, inefficient government interventions with emphasis on legal and tax regulations can create a hostile environment for potential entrepreneurs.

Digital entrepreneurship brings unique challenges and opportunities, including issues related to trust, security, and customer loyalty. Factors such as weak digital infrastructure, lack of policies and regulations, and deficiency in digitally competent labour capital can hinder the uptake of digital entrepreneurship in developing countries. However, digital technologies offer cost-effective opportunities, spur

innovation, and enable entrepreneurs to improve processes, create new products, and engage with stakeholders.

Entrepreneurial skills and digital competency are crucial for success in digital entrepreneurship. Skills such as automation, branding, knowledge of running a website, advertising, online communication/networking, and financial management are essential for starting and running an online business. Overall, understanding and navigating these factors are essential for aspiring entrepreneurs in both traditional and digital spaces.

2.6 Theoretical framework: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

As established earlier, there is growth in online shopping and entrepreneurs are moving into the digital space. Facebook Market, Amazon, Ali-express, Instagram shop and other online shopping platforms are popularly used to sell fashion and beauty products among other things (Barbosa, Saura and Bennett 2022; Park *et al.* 2021). Given the arguments above, this section focuses on using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to present the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students. The study adopted the Davis (1986) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM was relevant to this study to ascertain the intention to adopt digital entrepreneurship since the study got to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university. Alwabel and Zeng (2021) defines TAM as a model that is used to predict the acceptability of a technological invention and find ways to modify it to make it acceptable to users.

TAM has three factors which are Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and Attitude Towards use (Burgess and Worthington 2021; Kelly and Palaniappan 2023). The study sought provide the explanation of each:

Perceived Usefulness:

Perceived usefulness is an evaluation of the benefits offered by technology to make it easier for operators and users to obtain the desired services (Limna, Kraiwanit and Jangjarat 2023). Dowpiset and Nuangjamnong (2023) believe that Perceived usefulness, a key element of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), refers to an individual's belief in the ability of a system to enhance their job performance when

used. Perceived Usefulness, whereby a person believes that the use of the system will improve his performance (Kelly and Palaniappan 2023).

Perceived Ease of Use:

Perceived Ease of Use refers to a user's willingness to use a system that requires no effort on his or her part. The term "easy to use" refers to the level of difficulty in understanding and the duration of use (Limna, Kraiwanit and Jangjarat 2023). Another study believes Perceived Ease of Use where a person believes that the device will be effortless (Burgess and Worthington 2021).

Attitude Towards Use:

Attitude toward technology use has been studied in different models that attempt to describe individuals' intention for technology use, including Technology Acceptance Model (Pan 2020). In addition, Attitude Towards Use helps to evaluate user attitude toward technological advances from a mobile shopping perspective (Kasilingam 2020).

Related studies on TAM:

TAM is one theory commonly used to study online business use among Small Medium Enterprises (Putra and Santoso 2020). Dillon (2023) conducted a study on 'Digital marketing technology adoption by fashion retail small and medium enterprises (SME's) in the context of the pandemic: an analysis based on the diffusion of innovations theory'. The author's results suggested that SMEs should focus on understanding and improving their return-on-investment measurement on Instagram and Facebook, while continuing to leverage Search technology in response to consumer preferences. Koksalmis and Gozudok (2021) conducted a study on 'Assessing using TAM, the factors influencing social-media-based entrepreneurship prospect among female students in China and TPB' and found that perceived usefulness and trust have an important and absolute impact on behavioural intention to use technology. However, there were some unexpected results, such as price saving not being a significant determinant of satisfaction for Generation Z. Limna, Kraiwanit and Jangjarat (2023) conducted a study on Adopting the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to 'Explore online purchase intention via facebook live streaming: empirical evidence from Bangkok, Thailand' and found the highlight of the significance of perceived usefulness

and ease of use in influencing customers' intentions to make online purchases via Facebook Live streaming. The author's findings indicated that customers' perception of usefulness and ease of use of Facebook Live streaming influences their purchase intention. The ease of interacting with the host through comments and receiving responses enhances the shopping experience and affects decision-making. Additionally, informative content has a positive impact on customers. TAM has been used in studies on 'Affecting the behavioural intention to use mobile shopping fashion apps in Sweden' by Miladinovic and Hong (2016) and the findings suggested several managerial implications for increasing the usage of mobile shopping fashion apps. It is important to consider factors that influence behavioural intention to use these apps in order to enhance their usage. Hubert *et al.* (2017) 'Examined the acceptance of smartphone-based mobile shopping: mobile benefits, customer characteristics, perceived risks, and the impact of application context' and the results showed that 410 smartphone shoppers, accept the predictors are linked to ease of use and usefulness, which influence intentional and behavioural outcomes. The impact of risks and benefits on ease of use and usefulness is influenced by three contextual characteristics. These findings offer insights for managers developing mobile shopping applications, highlighting factors to consider and their relevance in various application contexts. A study by Bonfanti *et al.*

(2023) on the 'Antecedents of the technology acceptance model in microentrepreneurs' intention to use social networking sites' confirms that perceived usefulness and attitude toward using social networking sites for business are the strongest predictors of intention to use social media sites for business activities. Additionally, extraversion, openness to experience, and perceived risk significantly affect these predictors; Ha (2020) on the 'Impact of perceived risk on consumers' online shopping intention: an integration of TAM' found that 'perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude and subjective norm had positive effects on consumers' online shopping intention. While the factor of perceived risk had a negative effect on consumers' online shopping intention'. Emmanuel *et al.* (2022) conducted a study on the 'Factors influencing social-media-based entrepreneurship prospect among female students in China' and found that variables like social influence, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, attitude toward social media, and social media behaviours are significantly related. This suggests significant entrepreneurial

opportunities, particularly in social-media-based ventures, for young women in emerging nations. The results indicate that social media has a positive attraction for women entrepreneurs in emerging countries.

Based on the literature on TAM, it is apparent to the study that the three factors which are Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and Attitude Towards use are generally used to check the behaviour of the chosen populations with accepting or adopting the new technological advances. However, the study also noticed that extraversion and openness to experience can also be considered when measuring behaviours of acceptance to technology.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

To sum up this chapter, its primary aim was to elucidate the concept of entrepreneurship within the scope of the digital landscape. It accomplished this by explaining various principles that contribute to comprehending digital entrepreneurship founding that entrepreneurship is a viable option for young entrepreneurs around the globe. Further on, the terms around digital entrepreneurship like e-commerce, ICT and online buying and selling were explained resulting in the study establishing that they are interlinked with digital entrepreneurship. Moreover, the chapter explored the extent of interest for engaging in digital entrepreneurship in developed, developing and under-developing countries guided by the first objective of the study in which literature showed the interest in digital entrepreneurship and how the fashion beauty industry is slowly shifting into the digital space. The vital aspects to factor in when considering participation in this domain which was directed by the second objective of the study where the study explored the factors that affect the uptake entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship, and finally the theoretical framework which was guided by the third objective of the study in which TAM was explained and its' relation to this study. The following chapter will focus on the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature on the concept of digital entrepreneurship. This chapter elucidates the research methodology undertaken to achieve the aim and objectives of the study. It clarifies the research paradigm and research approach utilized in the study. The selected research design for this investigation is expounded upon, the research study site is described, as is the defined target population. Furthermore, the chapter provides interpretation and description of both the sampling method and the data collection tool employed in the study. Reliability and validity of the study were explained as well as the process of pre-testing. The chapter outlined the limitations of the study, administration of the research instrument, clarifying the ethics considered for the study and explaining the data analysis. Lastly, the chapter is summarised.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is the first procedure in the research methodology of a study. It refers to the constellation of abstract principles and assumptions that form how a researcher perceives the world, and just how they interpret and act within that world (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). A research paradigm clearly frameworks the path to investigate a specific topic bringing clarity and improving the quality of the study's methods and analysis (Carcary 2020). A research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs and agreements among scientists about how problems or issues should be addressed and understood (Brown and Dueñas 2020). There are numerous paradigms in the social science research. Some of the common paradigms in social science research are positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism as well as pragmatism (Brown and Dueñas 2020; Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). Positivism means that the data collected should be objective and it is used to seek laws of cause and effect that determine behaviour and measure patterns (Ugwu, Ekere and Onoh 2021; Buckler and Walliman 2016). Post positivism, also known as critical realism, is defined as a philosophy whereby it is believed that that all observations are imperfect, fault and all theory is changeable (Williams 2020; Saleem and Kamboh 2014). Critical theory is defined as an organised analysis of social experiences and different systems of human beings to ascertain visible and invisible factors which constrain, hinder, inspire, or

improve personal freedom (Britannica 2023; Mishra 2016). Constructivism is a learning theory that believes that people get knowledge through their experiences, contact with the world and their perceptions of the world around them (Sakarneh and Al-Swelmyeen 2020). Pragmatism is best defined as a viewpoint that deals with issues realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than hypothetical concerns (Wills and Lake 2020).

Positivism was the research paradigm preferred for this study. Positivism was chosen to study the inclination toward fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship among final-year Diploma students at a South African university. This approach was suitable for understanding and rationalizing the observed phenomenon (Buckler and Walliman 2016), which was influenced by the students' perceptions in the Fashion and Textiles and Somatology departments (Yates et al. 2021). The concept of digital entrepreneurship was observable and measurable in the essence that numerical data was obtained and could be justified in a practical way.

3.3 Research approach

A research approach is the second process and strategy of a research methodology that explains the steps from wide assumptions to comprehensive methods of data collection, breakdown of the data and interpretation (Tracy 2019; Mohajan 2018). There are various common research approaches which include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Taherdoost 2022; Datt and Chetty 2016). Quantitative is the process of gathering and examining numerical data which can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, and generalize results to broader populations (Mohajan 2020). Qualitative is the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting non-numerical data such as language which can be used to understand different perspectives on a particular subject (Mulisa 2022). Mixed methods involve gathering, examining and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data for the same study or sequence of studies that investigate the same fundamental phenomenon (McNabb 2020).

This study employed the quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach was selected because quantitative research is engrossed in generating numerical data that can be analysed statistically to provide systematic and objective perceptions into various phenomena, relationships, and patterns (Scharrer and Ramasubramanian

2021; Cooper 2011). In addition, quantitative research often engages in collecting data from a moderately large number of participants in this regard the study was allowed to generalize the data obtained (Scharrer and Ramasubramanian 2021). That is to say that the quantitative approach is suitable for this study because the results were presented numerically noticing patterns; the study was anticipating a large number of participants in Fashion and Textiles as well as Somatology Departments and the results obtained were generalised.

3.4 Research design

A research design constitutes the third step in research methodology, outlining the structure of a research project that unifies all its elements—such as data collection, analysis, and data interpretation (Clark *et al.* 2021). Unlike a research approach, a research design encompasses the entirety of a study, incorporating processes, procedures, and tools used for data collection and analysis (Mishra and Alok 2022). The study aimed to explore a quantitative research design, aligned with a quantitative research approach. In a quantitative study, the research design revolves around collecting and analysing numerical data (Pandey and Pandey 2021). There are five distinct types of research designs in quantitative research: descriptive research, exploratory research, correlational research, quasi-experimental research, and experimental research design (Ghanad 2023).

An exploratory research design signifies a flexible research method employed to articulate a problem for a clearer study; the research process is unstructured, allowing surveys as a means of conducting exploratory research and utilizing non-probability sampling (Clark *et al.* 2021). The exploratory research design was employed in the study to enhance understanding of the problem's nature. Pandey and Pandey (2021) support the idea that exploratory research design aims to probe research questions without providing definitive solutions to existing problems, but rather aids in gaining a better understanding of the problem.

The research design comprised primary data collected through a survey and secondary data obtained from online research and other sources such as books and journals. Exploratory research, often qualitative due to its departure from standardized methods, occasionally integrates quantitative data collection and generalization for larger samples through surveys and experiments (Mohajan 2020). In this context, a

survey was chosen due to its applicability across groups and its use of statistical techniques to identify patterns in the process (Biffignandi and Bethlehem 2021). The administration of a survey is simple, reliable, and cost-effective (Cherry 2019).

3.5 Research study site

The selection of where the study will take place plays an important role in a study because the results and their interpretation may depend on it. Research study site refers to the place under the control of the establishment where the study is conducted, this could include universities, schools, hospitals, field research sites and more (Kilicoglu *et al.* 2020; Editage Insights 2020). This study was conducted at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), having seven campuses across Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The specific study sites were the Department of Fashion and Textiles in the Faculty of Arts and Design, and the Somatology Department in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The Fashion and Textiles Department and the Somatology Department were both chosen for training who upon graduation may venture into fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship. The earlier can explore careers as retailers and/ buyers, pattern technologists and trend forecasters and the latter can focus on general wellness and aesthetic appearance, and both are encouraged to venture into entrepreneurship throughout their course (DUT 2020). This is relevant to the study to find out if they are interested in going into digital entrepreneurship.

3.6 Target population

The selection of a target population plays a pivotal role in the design and execution of any study, serving as the fundamental group from which participants are chosen or the central focus of investigation (Pandey and Pandey 2021). As emphasized by Casteel and Bridier (2021), the significance of identifying a target population encompasses three key aspects: delineating the study's scope and objectives, characterizing distinctive variables pertinent to the individuals eligible for study participation, and providing a foundation for establishing the required sample size. The current study targeted all twenty-nine final year students in the Fashion Design Diploma and sixty-five final year students in the Somatology Diploma at the Durban University of Technology. Given that they are on the verge of finishing their studies, it was deemed they are likely to branch out to entrepreneurship in the fashion and beauty industry. The study had an inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion and exclusion criteria control which members of the targeted population can or cannot participate in a

research study (Aguinis, Ramani and Alabduljader 2023). The study included 3rd year students in the Fashion and Textiles as well as Somatology departments since they are at the brink of completing their studies and looking for employment or consider entrepreneurship in the fashion and beauty industry.

3.7 Sampling procedures

Sampling describes the method for choosing study participants (Pace 2021). Sampling refers to taking a part of a group from the population that the study has targeted (Conlon *et al.* 2020). Sampling can be categorised into two groups which are probability and non-probability sampling (Kalton 2023). There are five different types of probability sampling which are simple random, systematic, stage and multi-staged, cluster, and stratified sampling (Latpate *et al.* 2021). Similarly, non-probability sampling has five different types of sampling which are convenience, purposive, quota, dimensional and snowball sampling (Pace 2021).

This study did not sample instead participants were identified through a census. Unlike probability and non-probability sampling where sampling is needed, census does not require sampling as it includes everyone in the population (Davis 2021). A census is employed when a study attempts to collect information about the chosen population and every member in the population participates (Cantwell 2011). The census was suitable for this study because the population was easily accessible and manageable (South Africa, Department of Statistics South Africa 2019). A census reduces bias and sampling errors (Else and Perkel 2022; Damico 2016). Census was advantageous to the study because it improved the response rate and the reliability of data.

3.8 Data collection tools

For the study to collect data, a data collection tool/ method is an important device to be considered and prioritized. A data collection tool, such as a questionnaire, is a carefully constructed instrument that can boost the reliability and validity of the data (Taherdoost 2021). Mohajan (2020) suggests that there are many data collection tools that can be used to collect data, but the most common ones used in a quantitative study are questionnaires, observation, and document review. The present study saw it suitable to use a questionnaire to collect data. This was because a questionnaire afforded the numerical analysis of obtained data as well as speeding up the time that

the participant would take answering the questionnaire (Cooper 2011). The questionnaire was composed of largely closed-ended questions.

The questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of 3 pages. The 1st page explained the purpose and the importance of the study, assured anonymity of the participant and asked for full consent of the participant. The 2nd and 3rd pages consisted of the questions of the questionnaire divided into 2 sections which were demographic profiling and context questions.

Close ended questions were largely used in the questionnaire and participants were given a set of answers to choose from. The questions in the questionnaire were constructed in a manner that would expand the response rate, meaning that they were short and simple words were used to make them easy to understand and answer. The questionnaire was thoroughly checked and corrected for grammatical errors.

The study also used open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Open-ended questions were used to uncover relationships between data and requires thematic analysis.

3.9 Reliability and validity

In a study, it is of importance to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument to supply evidence of the value of the research (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen 2019). The validity and reliability of the research instruments used in the study are important factors that allow the research to yield valuable and accurate results (Sürücü and Maslakçi 2020). In a quantitative study, the validity aspect in a study is about the valuation of the accuracy of the measure of data or results, while the reliability aspect is about the consistency of a measure of outcomes or data (Ahmed and Ishtiaq 2021). Reliability in research is a concept describing if the study is reproducible or repeatable and the validity of research is to evaluate the accuracy of the study; describes the degree to which the study measures what it intends to measure (Carroll 2022). The study made sure that the questionnaires were understandable and cleaned after they were administered improve reliability and validity of the findings.

3.10 Pre-testing

Pre-testing a questionnaire is an important stage in the survey because a pretesting is a simple technique to measure in advance whether a questionnaire causes problems

for respondents or interviewers (Ikart 2019). Pre-testing a questionnaire is basically giving out a questionnaire to the population to check for the validity of the study, assessing clarity of the questionnaire and suitability to the participants (Sanda *et al.* 2021).

The study pre-tested the questionnaire to check if there are grammatical errors and if there are difficult questions to answer for people who are new to the concepts mentioned in the introduction. The questionnaire was pre-tested on five students in the Fashion Design and five Somatology Postgraduate Diploma at DUT of which are not going to be included in the study. The number pretested on was sufficient and revealed spelling errors and adjusted certain terms like included so that it is easier for the participants to understand what was required of them.

3.11 Limitations of the study

The limitation was difficulty collecting data because most of the students were not willing to participate in the study. The study attempted to overcome that by administering the questionnaires twice to ensure if there are more participants willing to participate in the study. With that being done, the study still obtained a low response rate.

3.12 Administration of research instrument

The procedure of collecting and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established orderly manner that enables one to participate in answering stated research questions, test, hypotheses and evaluate outcomes is known as the data collection procedure (Taherdoost 2021; Thakur 2021). Permission was requested to conduct a survey at DUT by obtaining ethical clearance. After the research was cleared ethically, the Departments of Fashion and Textiles and Somatology were notified through their Heads of Departments of the intention to carry out the study and sought their approval. The study then had a sampling frame obtained from the class list where the study could keep track to reduce duplication and being left out. In the Fashion Design 3rd year class, the lecturer was available and asked the students to participate in the study. The questionnaire was then administered to the students who were willing to participate. The arrangements with lecturers to administer the questionnaire after classes were done. The study then was referred to class representatives of the

Somatology 3rd year class, gave out questionnaires and a brief explanation of the study to the willing participants. The latter process was repeated twice.

3.13 Ethical considerations

Ethics are a logical inquiry of the moral life; it refers to the portion of philosophy which deals with changing aspects of decision-making concerning what is correct and what is wrong (Fouka and Mantzorou 2021). It is of paramount importance for the study to have ethical considerations to protect the parties involved. In this study, permission was sought from both the institution and the respondents prior to distributing questionnaires. The study obtained an ethical clearance form from DUT. The study then notified the Department of Fashion and Textiles as well as Somatology before handing out questionnaires. After that, the respondents got a questionnaire accompanied with a consent form, a letter of information and the appendix of the ethical clearance form. The respondents were also asked verbally to participate in the study, and the questionnaire was explained upon consent. Participation was completely voluntary; the respondents were also allowed to renounce from participating in the study at any point should they feel uncomfortable. The study ensured anonymity by not revealing the identity of the participants. The study also ensured confidentiality by only using the data collected for the purposes of the study. The storage and disposal of the questionnaires was in accordance with the rules governing the storage and disposal of research data at DUT.

3.14 Data analysis

Since the study was largely quantitative in nature, a quantitative data analysis technique was employed. Analysing quantitative data means one must deal with numbers and use mathematical operations (Buckler and Walliman 2016). There are two types of quantitative data analysis procedures which are descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Mertler, Vannatta and LaVenja 2021). The study used descriptive statistics in which the data collected was summarized and patterns were found using percentages and frequencies (Oh and Pycszak 2023; Bhatia 2017). The study chose descriptive statistics because it provided detailed insights into numerical patterns, which in turn enhances understanding and enables further research on the subject matter (Riahi *et al.* 2021). The study also used quantitative thematic analysis for the few open-ended questions. Thematic analysis can be used to analyse quantitative data sets to identify patterns and themes (Creswell and Clark 2018).

Descriptive statistics served a simple but important part in this study by describing the details in the data set of the specific population of the study depending on the study's objectives (Pandey and Pandey 2021). Before analysing data, the study made sure that the data collected is valid, checked whether there is any data that might hinder accuracy and assembled the data according to findings to specific questions in the questionnaire (Sharma 2023). The data collected was presented in tables and figures.

3.15 Summary of the chapter

This chapter reflected upon the research methodology adopted by the study, offering rationales for its selection. In this chapter the study firstly established that positivism was chosen for this study as the research paradigm, employed a quantitative research approach and the exploratory research design. The study then established the study site as DUT, Department of Fashion and Textiles, and the Somatology Department. The study then described the targeted population which were the 3rd year students in Fashion design and Somatology and identifying them through a census. The research instrument chosen was a questionnaire. Reliability and validity were assured by minimising errors and making sure that the questions were understandable. Pretesting was performed to make sure the questionnaire has less errors. The study also provided a limitation where there was unwillingness to participate in the study by the population. Administration of research instrument was presented, ethical considerations were highlighted showing how the study got the ethical clearance to conduct the study and lastly, data analysis was explained revealing that the study used descriptive data analysis. The following chapter proceeds to analyse and discuss the study's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology of the study. This chapter analyses and discusses findings. The chapter is structured as follows: it begins with presenting the response rates and participants' demographic profiles followed by outlining the procedures followed for the analysis of data. The chapter, then analyses findings organised by the objectives of the study. Under the first objective are the following headings: Consideration of entrepreneurship after completing studies; Circumstances/ reasons that would make one opt for entrepreneurship; The nature of the business if the participants chose entrepreneurship after their studies; Forms of entrepreneurship and Probability to start a traditional fashion/beauty business. The second objective consists of the following headings: Factors that would make one choose partial and/or digital entrepreneurship; Factors that would hinder the uptake of that form of entrepreneurship; The need for necessary skills to start a fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship and Skills needed to pursue digital entrepreneurship. The third objective consists of two headings which are: Likelihood to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty and Assessing using TAM constructs to determine the intention to venture into digital entrepreneurship. Lastly, the chapter is summarised.

4.2 Presentation of the response rates for the study populations targeted and their demographic profiles

To measure data quality and to gain background information of the participants, the study sought to present the response rates and the demographic data (Ziegenfuss *et al.* 2021).

The respondents were all final 3rd year students of the two selected departments at DUT. Having chosen a census to capture and provide information in small areas and sub-population groups without any sampling errors (South Africa, Department of Statistics South Africa, 2022). Studies with low response rates must be considered on their facts as they may precisely represent the outlooks of the population (Sammut, Griscti and Norman 2021; Meterko *et al.* 2015).

Response rate was presented in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Response rate of the population

Populations	Expected number of participants	Number of participants	Demographic profile					
			Age		Gender		Race	
			Ranges	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency
Fashion and Textiles Department	29	21	20–25	18	Females	18	Black	18
			26-30	6	Males	3	Indian	1
					Non-binary	1	White	2
Somatology Department	65	19	20–25	17	Females	17	Black	19
			26-30	1	Males	2		
			31 +	1				
Total	94	40 $40/94 \times 100 = 43\%$						

As shown in Table 4.1, forty students out of ninety-four participated in the survey, giving a 43% response rate. This study made use of all forty questionnaires. twenty-one out of twenty-nine students responded from the Fashion and Textiles department which is 72% while from the Somatology Department was a low nineteen out of sixty-five third-year students achieving a 29% response rate.

The study further sought to gather the demographic profile of the selected departments. With regards to the distribution by age for the respondents, in the Fashion and Textiles Department, 18 participants were in the ages ranging from 20 – 25 years while the 26-30 age range only had 3 participants. In the Somatology Department, an above average number of 17 participants were from the ages 20–25, 26-30 and 31 and above both had 1 each. The finding shows that the respondents were made up of young people, the youth in line with the youth ages in South Africa range from 15 years to 34 years and in 2021, 968 109 were enrolled in South African universities (South African Market Insights 2023).

Regarding the distribution by gender for the participants, in the Fashion and Textiles Department, a large number of 18 respondents were females while only 3 were males and only 1 were non-binary. In the Somatology Department, a total of 17 respondents were females and only 2 were males. The findings show that there were more females

who participated in the survey which agrees with literature suggesting that women are persuaded towards self-hiring due to organizational skills and personal abilities (Shah, Hashmi and Sadaf 2023).

In terms of the racial distribution of the respondents, in the Fashion and Textiles Department, 18 participants were Black, 1 was Indian and 2 were White. In the Somatology department, all 19 participants were black. The study shows that most of the respondents identified with the racial classification of African Black. Statista Research Department (2023) reveals that 74% of the students enrolled in South African universities are Black, while 7% are Coloured, 4% are Indian and 15% are White.

4.3 Procedures followed for the analysis of data

The data analysis determines the relevance, validity, quality, and accuracy of the data obtained and helps make educated decisions in drawing appropriate conclusions (Johnson, Adkins and Chauvin 2023).. The study followed four steps of analysing quantitative data. Firstly, the study collected data from the said respondents. Secondly, all 40 questionnaires were checked for errors, duplicates and left out questions, this helped to clean the data set received, to ensure the data received was accurate, consistent, and relevant before it was time to analysing (Sharma 2023). Further on, the study then transformed data into suitable format, for an example, encoding categorical variables and scaling numerical variables, this helped with preparing the data for analysis (Galli 2022). Thirdly, the study produced frequencies along with percentages and created tables and figures, which was useful for providing convenient data synopses which aided in interpreting trends among the respondents, particularly where the number of distinct values for a variable is comparatively small (Kent 2020; Willard 2020). Lastly, the findings were presented in tables and figures respectively; and summarised clearly and concisely (Oh and Pyrczak 2023).

The questionnaire included close-ended and open-ended questions. For close-ended questions, the study checked the replies and grouped them accordingly, after that the study would count according to the responses and would write down the numbers acquired which would be regarded as frequencies. From the frequencies, the study sought to produce percentages by dividing the total number of responses by 100 and multiplying the value by the number of responses obtained from a specific question

asked in the questionnaire. From the frequencies and percentages, the study then formulated tables and figures from values. The values were presented in tables and figures; the findings were also briefly explained.

For open-ended questions, the study analysed using a thematic system where the study had to come with themes/ topics to fit the answers and then generated numerical data. The study followed six steps of thematic analysis. The first step was the study familiarising itself with the data set; this helps with obtaining the overview of the findings (Naeem *et al.* 2023). The second step was the study formulating codes from the text by highlighting parts of the texts to come with shorthand labels to describe the content moreover the themes represent the ideas and feelings expressed by the respondents (Ataro 2020). The third step was to generate themes from the codes formulated, the study then checked for codes that do not appear very often and discarded them, this helps with eliminating irrelevant and vague codes (Naeem *et al.* 2023). The fourth step was to review the themes to check if the themes accurately represent the data (Xu and Zammit 2020). The fifth step was to define themes where the study provided a clear definition to understand the data, the study also named the themes with what could be easily understood (Majumdar 2022). The sixth step was to present the data where the study outlined the data obtained with frequencies and percentages. The key findings of this section were based on the ideas of the participants gave permission to be included in the survey.

4.4 Analysis of data by objectives

Data analysis aims to present correct and reliable data. In this section, the study analysed the data collected from the survey guided by the study objectives.

As organised by the objectives of the study, the survey questions were as follows:

4.4.1 To establish the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students

Continuous technological advancements have resulted in the current unprecedented transformation of economic and social activities, giving rise to digital entrepreneurship (Berger, von Briel and Kuckertz 2021). In that light, the goal of this sub-section was to gauge chosen DUT final-year Diplomates' interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship

in the fashion and beauty industries. This purpose is addressed by the following questions, which range from 4.4.1.1 to 4.4.1.6:

4.4.1.1 Consideration of entrepreneurship after completing studies

N = 40

Young people are interested in starting their own businesses (Dzomonda and Fatoki 2019). In this regard, the survey intended to ascertain whether the populace would undertake digital entrepreneurship after completing their Fashion Design and Somatology Diplomas at DUT. Participants were asked to tick the box next to 'yes' or 'no'. There were 38 (95%) 'yes' responses and 2 (5%) 'no' responses. This demonstrates that most of the respondents were interested in digital entrepreneurship. The findings are consistent with the literature, which indicates that digital entrepreneurship is on the rise and that young people are interested in it (Olanrewaju *et al.* 2020; Palalic *et al.* 2020; Turan and Kara 2018).

4.4.1.2 Circumstances/ reasons that would make one opt for entrepreneurship N=40

Digitalization exemplifies a source of new challenges to the strength of socioeconomic systems and comes with new risks or unexpected circumstances; on the one hand, it comes with opportunities (Satalkina and Steiner 2020). The study then asked the question to know of the circumstances/reasons that would make the respondents opt for entrepreneurship. Themes were formulated out of the responses obtained. The respondents were required to write reasons that would make them opt for entrepreneurship.

The study found common answers such as 'financial stability' at 3 (8%), 'unemployment' at 4 (10%), 'creating jobs' at 4 (10%), 'independence' at 8 (20%), 'bringing fresh and new products and styles' at 2 (5%) and 'to leave a legacy' at 2 (5%) while 1 (3%) believed that the circumstances that would lead them to entrepreneurship was exposure to the industry. The study found that most of the respondents would choose entrepreneurship to gain independence and to have employment.

The findings are in concurrence with literature that South African youth opt for entrepreneurship because of the unemployment rate (Dawson 2021). It also

corresponds with literature about entrepreneurship creates jobs, brings independence, and boosts the individual finances (Laing, van Stel and Storey 2022).

4.4.1.3 The nature of the business if the participants chose entrepreneurship after their studies **N=38**

Because of high levels of unemployment, entrepreneurship could serve as an incentive for unemployed individuals to pursue full-time self-employment due to limited job opportunities and a desire to increase their income through alternative means. (Laing, van Stel and Storey 2022). As a result, the study sought to answer the question on the nature of business to determine the type of business that the respondents would they choose should they consider entrepreneurship. The inquiry was a follow-up to 4.4.1.1

Participants were invited to choose between 'full time' and 'part-time'. The study revealed that 24 (63%) of the respondents, or the majority, would pursue entrepreneurship full-time, while 14 (38%) would pursue it part-time. This result indicates that most participants are interested in full-time entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty. It is consistent with literature in which South African youngsters consider entrepreneurship for various reasons. This data, however, supports claims that digital entrepreneurship and ecommerce are on the upswing (Thaslim 2019; Varela *et al.* 2017). As a result, the youth are more inclined to pursue business after acquiring their qualifications.

4.4.1.4 Forms of entrepreneurship **N=40**

A study by Dabija and Lung (2019) reveal that older generations still prefer shopping in traditional stores to online shopping, while Gen Z mostly prefer shopping online with their smartphones. In that regard, the study found it necessary to ask the form of entrepreneurship the respondents would prefer should they consider entrepreneurship. The question probed to find out the incorporation of technology in their business. Respondents were asked to choose between traditional, partial, virtual/digital fashion/beauty entrepreneurship and other. The findings were presented in Table 4.2. below:

Table 4.2 Forms of entrepreneurship

Form of entrepreneurship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Traditional fashion/beauty entrepreneurship	16	40%
Partial fashion/beauty digital entrepreneurship	14	35%
Virtual/digital fashion/beauty entrepreneurship	10	25%
Total	40	100%

Table 4.2 reveals, that the respondents who prefer practicing traditional fashion/ beauty entrepreneurship are peaking at 16 (40%) followed by 14 (35%) respondents who would practice partial fashion/ beauty digital entrepreneurship and 10 (25%) respondents who would go virtual /digital with their entrepreneurship. The finding shows that most of the respondents preferred the traditional ways of entrepreneurship. In terms of entrepreneurship being an option for the youth, the response was positive, meaning that the respondents would most likely choose entrepreneurship after getting their qualifications. This attests to the literature where it highlights entrepreneurship as a disparity between poverty and wealth (Sutter, Bruton and Chen 2019; Dy, Marlow, and Martin 2017).

4.4.1.5 Probability to start a traditional fashion/beauty business

N=40

Online retail has become popular and is growing rapidly in fashion and beauty among young people (Ma and Kwon 2021). In that respect, the study sought to establish the likelihood of the respondents to start a traditional fashion/beauty business with the intention to find how much of the respondents is likely to start the normal fashion/beauty business. The participants were asked to choose in a scale ranging from 'extremely unlikely' to 'extremely likely'. The findings are presented in Figure 4.1 below:

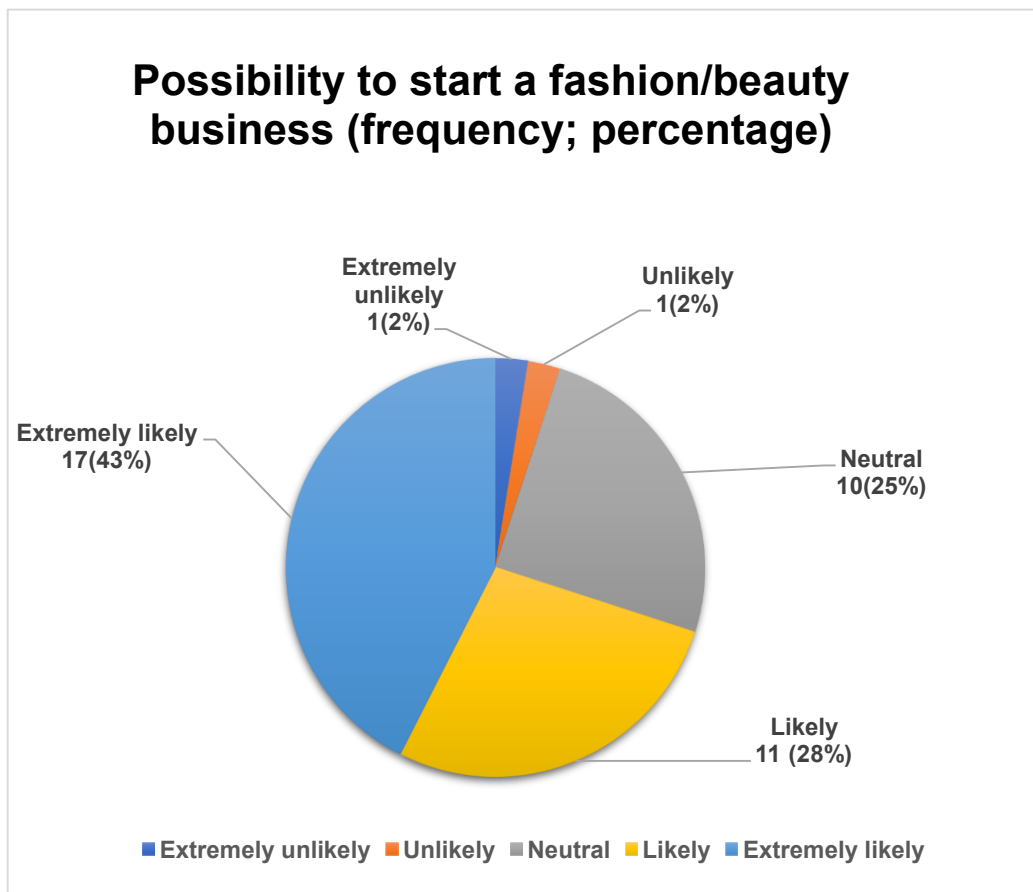


Figure 4.1 Possibility of the respondents to start a fashion/ beauty business

Figure 4.1. indicates that 17 (43%) of the respondents were extremely likely to start a brick-and-mortar fashion/beauty business including 11 (28%) of the respondents who were likely to start a traditional fashion/beauty business. The respondents seemed to have responded positively over starting a traditional fashion/beauty business. This shows that even though online retail has grown rapidly, a quarter of respondents still prefer opening traditional shops for fashion and beauty. This finding in conjunction with the literature that reveals that millenials still prefer shopping in traditional stores to online shopping (Dabija and Lung 2019).

4.4.2 To determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty by selected final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology

N=40

Previous studies found that the elements influencing interest in online business were a lack of structure, trust, security, loyalty, customer happiness, and transactional costs (Palalic *et al.* 2020; Nawi *et al.* 2017). In that respect, the goal of this sub-section is to identify characteristics that influence selected final-year diplomates at DUT's adoption of digital entrepreneurship with a focus on fashion and beauty. This intent is addressed by the following questions, which range from 4.4.2.1 to 4.4.2.4:

4.4.2.1 Factors that would make one choose partial and/or digital entrepreneurship

N=40

The benefits of entrepreneurship may motivate one to opt for it. Digital entrepreneurship offers numerous advantages, such as faster and more cost-effective business initiation, heightened brand awareness, expanded customer reach, increased information dissemination, niche market targeting, and global accessibility (Soni *et al.* 2020). This question was asked as a follow-up to 4.4.1.4, in which respondents were asked how much technology they would incorporate into their future company. The goal was to discover the variables that would lead people to choose either partial digital entrepreneurship or virtual/digital entrepreneurship. Respondents were asked to select any of the following variables shown in Figure 4.2: 'Growth in online selling,' 'Unemployment,' 'Growth in online purchasing,' 'Online store operates faster than traditional shop,' 'Broader clientele/market reach,' 'Reduced overhead costs,' and 'Extended hours.' The findings are presented in Figure 4.2:

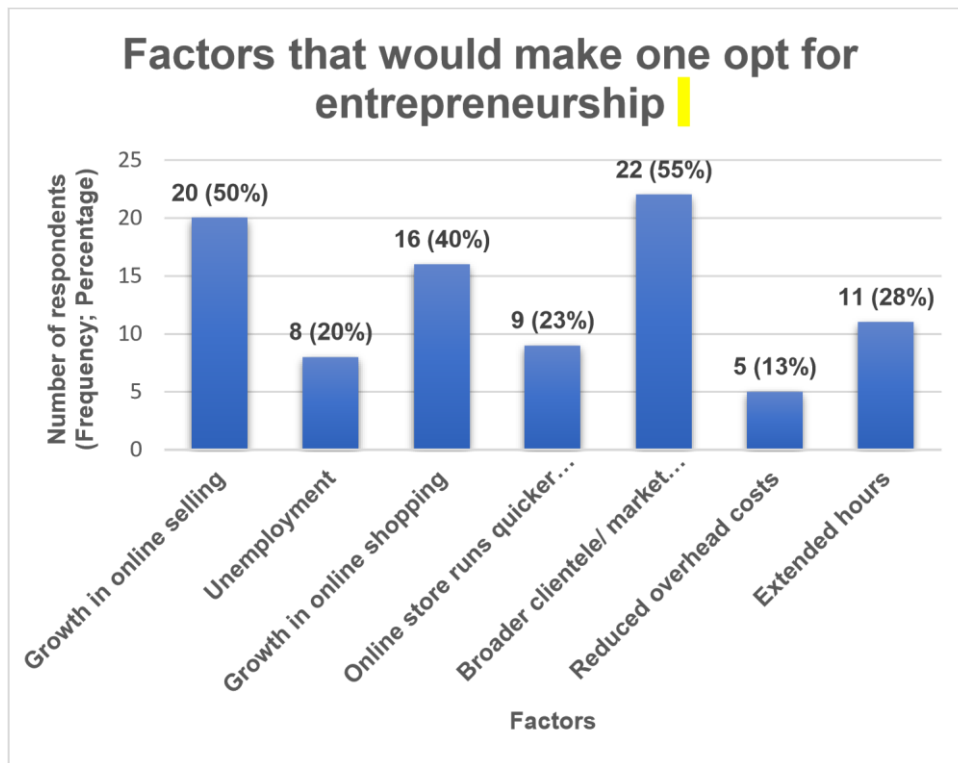


Figure 4.2 Factors that would make one choose partial and/or digital entrepreneurship

Figure 4.2 shows that out of all the factors provided, 22 (55%) respondents chose Broader clientele/ market reach followed by 20 (50%) respondents who chose 'Growth in online selling' which were the uppermost numbers. This finding shows that they would benefit with digital entrepreneurship in a way that it offers a wider customer reach and there is rapid growth in online selling.

4.4.2.2 Factors that would hinder the uptake of that form of entrepreneurship if partial digital entrepreneurship or virtual/ digital entrepreneurship were chosen in 4.4.1.4

N=40

Disadvantages of digital entrepreneurship may cause one to doubt partaking in online selling. Literature highlighted the factors to consider before partaking in digital entrepreneurship (Palalic *et al.* 2020; Nawi *et al.* 2017). This section meant to identify the circumstances that would hinder the uptake of digital entrepreneurship. The respondents were asked to tick the circumstances that applied to them. The circumstances were 'security', 'trust', 'failures due to fast growth', 'customer satisfaction' and 'loyalty'. The findings are presented in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Factors that would hinder the uptake of entrepreneurship

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Security	10	25%
Trust	16	40%
Failures due to fast growth	8	20%
Customer satisfaction	19	48%
Loyalty	12	30%

In Table 4.3 above, 'Customer satisfaction' along with 'trust' seem to be the two common worries that hinder the respondents to practice digital entrepreneurship at 19 (48%) and 16 (40%) respectively. 'Failures due to fast growth' was at a low 8 (20%). This shows that customer satisfaction holds more weight in discouraging the uptake of digital entrepreneurship.

4.4.2.3 The need for necessary skills to start a fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship

N=40

With DUT teaching entrepreneurship, the study sought to find out whether the respondents needed to learn skills to start an online fashion or beauty business. The respondents were required to choose between 'yes', 'no' and 'not sure'.

The results arose with many 26 (65%) respondents who replied with 'yes', followed by 8 (20%) respondents who replied with 'not sure' and then a very low number of 6 (15%) respondents replied with 'no'. This shows that majority of the respondents need skills to equip themselves with being entrepreneurs.

4.4.2.4 Skills needed to pursue digital entrepreneurship

N=9

The study sought to ask the question on pursuing digital entrepreneurship in continuation of 4.4.2.3. The intention was to ask the skills they need to start a

fashion/beauty online business to the respondents who replied with 'no' the skills they would need to pursue digital entrepreneurship.

The findings indicate that the respondents had a tie between needing administrative function and advertising skills, both were both reflected by 4. Knowledge of running a website was at 3 and entrepreneurship skills at 2. This shows that the most important skill to the respondents were administrative function and advertising.

4.4.3 To assess using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students

TAM has been used in studies on the affecting the behavioural intention to use mobile shopping fashion apps in Sweden by Miladinovic and Hong (2016) and Hubert *et al.* (2017) that examined the acceptance of smartphone-based mobile shopping: mobile benefits, customer characteristics, perceived risks, and the impact of application context'. In that respect, the study sought to using TAM as a framework to asses the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship amongst DUT's diplomates in fashion and beauty. This subsection is divided into the following 2 questions which are 4.4.3.1 and 4.4.3.2:

4.4.3.1 Likelihood to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty

N=40

The significance of online platform in e-commerce businesses especially in the fashion and beauty industry has been highlighted in literature thus, giving rise to the interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship (Thaslim 2019; Varela *et al.* 2017). The study sought to establish the likelihood of pursuing digital entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty. The participants were asked to tick on a scale of 5 ranging from 'extremely unlikely' to 'extremely likely'. The findings were presented in Figure 4.3 below:

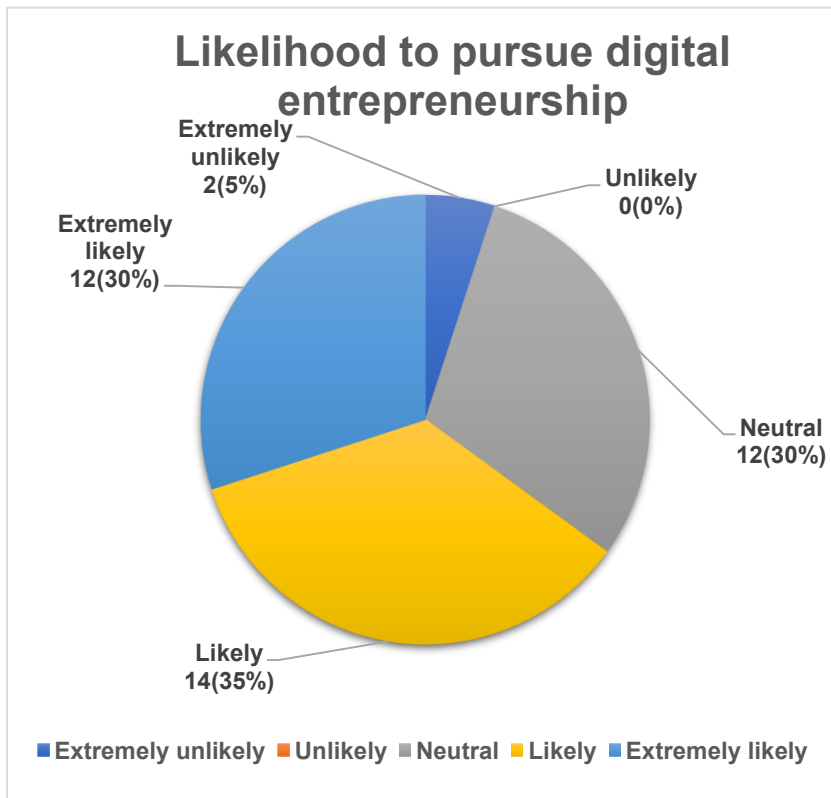


Figure 4.3 Likelihood to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty

Figure 4.3 indicates that most of the respondents were likely to pursue digital entrepreneurship after their studies. Fourteen (35%) of the respondents were likely to pursue digital entrepreneurship followed by the 12 (30%) who is extremely likely, another 12 (30%) for the neutral respondents and a low 2 (5%) of the respondents who were extremely unlikely to pursue digital entrepreneurship. The findings concurs with literature where online retail was claimed to be growing rapidly in fashion and beauty among the youth (Ma and Kwon 2021). The finding also corresponds with literature where digital entrepreneurship was deemed to be developing in the fashion and beauty industry (Pereira and Fernandes-Marco 2021). This finding is in concurrence with literature claiming that digital entrepreneurship is on the rise (Berger, von Briel and Kuckertz 2021). The study found that most of the respondents were most likely to pursue digital entrepreneurship after their studies.

4.4.3.2 Assessing using TAM constructs to determine the intention to venture into digital entrepreneurship

N=38

TAM was used in this study to ascertain the intention to adopt digital entrepreneurship since the study got to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital

entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university. Alwabel and Zeng (2021) define TAM as a model that is used to predict the acceptability of a technological invention and find ways to modify it to make it acceptable to users. The question on the intention of the respondents to pursue digital entrepreneurship was asked to see the respondents' attitudes toward adopting digital entrepreneurship. This was continuation of question 4.4.3.1. to the respondents who indicated 'extremely likely' 'likely' and 'neutral'.

The data on the intention to venture into DE is presented in Figure 4.4 below:

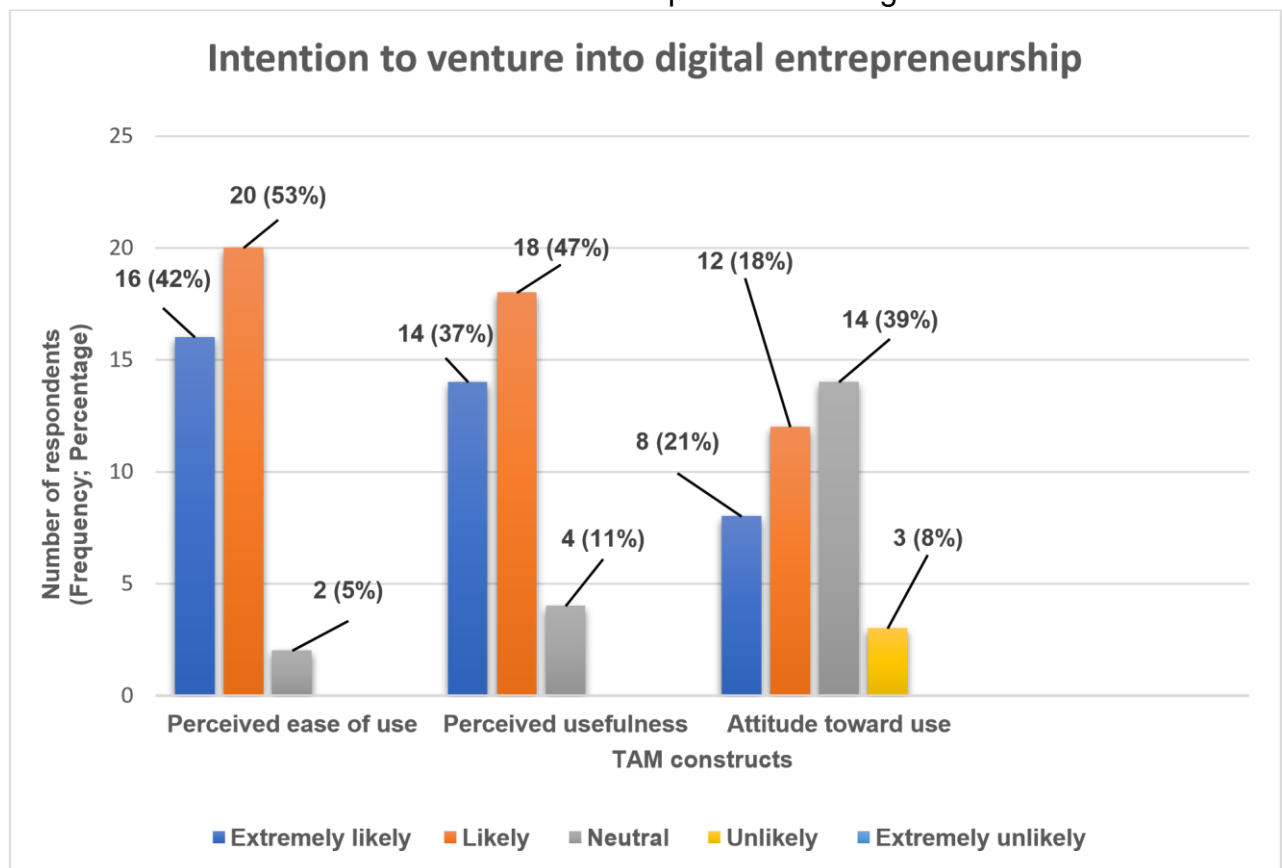


Figure 4.4 Intention to venture into digital entrepreneurship

In Figure 4.4 above, the study observed a trend where respondents would venture into digital entrepreneurship because of Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness. It found that 20 (53%) respondents were likely to venture into digital entrepreneurship because of Perceived Ease of Use, making it the most preferred factor. This was followed by 18 (47%) respondents who were likely to do so because of Perceived Usefulness, the second-highest preference. 14 (39%) students were on the fence when it came to the Attitude towards use. The study also noted that this trend aligns

with existing literature on Perceived Usefulness, where individuals believe that using a system will enhance their performance (Kelly and Palaniappan, 2023), and on Perceived Ease of Use, where individuals believe that using a device will be easy (Burgess and Worthington, 2021).

4.5 Summary of the chapter

In closing to this chapter, analysis and discussion of findings were highlighted. The study presented the response rate and procedures of analysing findings. The findings revolved around the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship and the factors that influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship. Under the first objective the study found: the results showing a positive result with the respondents' interests in undertaking entrepreneurship; unemployment to be the most common reason for opting for entrepreneurship; that the respondents would practice entrepreneurship fulltime, and they would open a traditional form of business. Under the second objective the study found: 'broader clientele reach' to be the most common factor that would make one choose partial and/or digital entrepreneurship; customer satisfaction to be the most common factors that would hinder the uptake of that form of entrepreneurship; the respondents showed a positive response towards skills necessary to start a fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship resulting in the respondents choosing administrative function and advertising skills as skills needed to pursue digital entrepreneurship. In the third objective the study found that most of the respondents are most likely to pursue digital entrepreneurship. the study then analysed using TAM the reasons the participants would opt for or reject digital entrepreneurship. The following chapter will provide summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed and discussed the findings of the study. This chapter summarises findings organised by the objectives of the study, provides a conclusion and recommendations to the study. The chapter is then summarised.

5.2 Summary of findings organized by objectives of the study

The following are the summary of findings by objectives:

5.2.1 To establish the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students

The discussion on the first objective focused on young individuals' interest in entrepreneurship, particularly in the fields of Fashion Design and Somatology. The study aimed to determine if graduates from DUT with Fashion Design and Somatology diplomas were inclined towards digital entrepreneurship. The results revealed that most of participants expressed their willingness to pursue digital entrepreneurship, aligning with previous research highlighting the growing popularity of digital business among young people. This trend was observed in the aftermath of the increased unemployment rates, which severely affected the South African economy and led financial challenges.

The study also explored the motivations behind considering entrepreneurship as a response to youth unemployment and economic uncertainties. Participants cited reasons such as seeking financial stability, addressing unemployment, creating jobs, achieving independence, introducing innovative products, and leaving a legacy.

The investigation delved into participants' choices for the nature of entrepreneurship, whether traditional brick-and-mortar businesses or digital ventures. While a majority leaned towards traditional fashion and beauty entrepreneurship, a significant proportion also showed interest in various forms of digital entrepreneurship, reflecting the evolving entrepreneurial landscape.

5.2.2 To determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students

The second objective was to determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty. The study showcased respondents' preferences for broader market reach through digital entrepreneurship, highlighting its potential for wider customer engagement and growth in the online market. However, the prevalence of apprehensions related to 'Customer satisfaction' and 'trust' underscores the significance of addressing these concerns to encourage greater uptake of digital entrepreneurship. Overall, the findings reflect the dynamic landscape of considerations and opportunities associated with digital entrepreneurship among the surveyed respondents.

The study also noted that most of the respondents agreed to needing skills to start an online business. In continuation, the study further inquired about the specific skills needed for starting a fashion/beauty online business among those who initially responded with 'no'. The analysis unveiled that respondents saw a tie between the importance of administrative functions and advertising skills, both receiving most preference. This suggests that within this subset of the population, administrative functions and advertising skills were deemed the most crucial competencies for their entrepreneurial endeavours.

5.2.3 To assess using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students

The third objective assessed using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the inclination to use technology infrastructure with regards to digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students. The study aimed to assess whether respondents were most likely to choose digital entrepreneurship and are willing to use digital infrastructure to operate their businesses, given DUT's emphasis on teaching entrepreneurship. Respondents presented a positive response on the Perceived ease of use and Perceived usefulness but showed uncertainty on the Attitude towards use.

5.3 Conclusions

The aim of the study was to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university.

The investigation into the first objective revealed a notable inclination among participants to explore digital entrepreneurship, particularly within the fields of Fashion Design and Somatology. The results showcased a prevailing willingness among the surveyed individuals to embrace digital business ventures, which is consistent with the overarching global trend towards digital entrepreneurship. This enthusiasm emerged in the aftermath of the 2020 COVID lockdown, a period that brought economic challenges and heightened unemployment, underscoring the relevance of entrepreneurial avenues.

The second objective focused on the factors influencing the uptake of digital entrepreneurship in the fashion and beauty sectors. The study emphasized the potential of broader market reach through digital platforms, while also highlighting concerns around 'Customer satisfaction' and 'trust.' These findings underscore the importance of addressing these apprehensions to further encourage the adoption of digital entrepreneurship. Furthermore, among those who initially expressed no perceived need for additional skills, the subsequent inquiry revealed the significance of administrative functions and advertising skills, indicating the practical competencies that are sought after for successful digital entrepreneurship ventures.

The third objective to assess using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) the inclination to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion and beauty amongst selected final year Diploma students. The study unveiled a positive revelation towards adopting technology.

This study contributes to the discourse on youth entrepreneurship, particularly within the evolving landscape of digital business ventures in the domains of fashion and beauty. The participants' receptiveness to digital entrepreneurship aligns with broader trends, highlighting the potential for economic growth and innovation. Addressing concerns and ensuring skill acquisition can play pivotal roles in nurturing this enthusiasm, ultimately fostering a generation of skilled and successful digital entrepreneurs. Overall, the study reinforced the importance of entrepreneurship as a

solution to youth unemployment and economic challenges in South Africa. It highlighted the allure of digital entrepreneurship, its potential for innovation and economic growth, and the diverse pathways that young individuals are exploring within the entrepreneurial sphere. The findings contribute to the ongoing conversation about youth entrepreneurship and shed light on the intricate choices and motivations shaping their entrepreneurial aspirations. The study concludes that young people from a South African university are inclined to pursue digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty.

5.4 Recommendations

The study's recommendations are presented in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Recommendations for the study

Issue	Recommendation
The restriction of movement during the pandemic accelerated the use of online options for work, teaching and learning including business enterprises.	Based on the results for the first objective the study recommends that young people should be encouraged to consider entrepreneurship by South African universities.
Factors to take in consideration when venturing into entrepreneurship.	Based on the results of the second objective the study recommends the youth to get familiar with digital entrepreneurship and seek education and knowledge in that regard so that they can weigh the advantages and disadvantages in their respective fields.
Acquiring skills for digital entrepreneurship.	Based on the third objective the study recommends that young people to acquire the necessary skills to venture into digital entrepreneurship so that it becomes a success because of them are most likely to venture into digital entrepreneurship.

Limitations of the study

This study was only able to focus on 3rd year fashion and beauty students. With that said, the study recommends that other researchers could look into other sectors of the economy and other levels of study in a University.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of information

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study : The inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Ezile Maphanga, Btech OMT

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:

- Dr S P Moyane, PhD LIS
- Mr N Nkomo, M LIS

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Good day! I hope this finds you well.

I am a 5th year student at DUT doing research for my Master's in Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management. I would like to invite you to participate in the research about '**The inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year Diploma students in a South African university**'. Over the years people have accepted the concept of running an online business thus entrepreneurs have exploited the opportunity and started incorporating technology or starting online businesses. One of the industries that have started to migrate online are the fashion and beauty industries.

The aim of the research is to examine the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology. While the objects of the study are:

- To establish the level of interest in pursuing digital entrepreneurship with regards to fashion and beauty by selected final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology.
- To determine factors that would influence the uptake of digital entrepreneurship with reference to fashion and beauty by selected final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology.

The questionnaire takes approximately 5 minutes to complete. Should you feel to quit filling out the questionnaire at any point, you may do so.

Please bear in mind that your identity and answers will be kept confidential and only be used for research purposes. Your participation will be highly appreciated. Thank you!

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Please contact the researcher 081 899 2415, my supervisor 031 373 6879 or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Dr L Linganiso on 031 373 2577 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

Appendix B: Consent form

CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: The inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology

Names of Researcher/s: Ezile Maphanga 21551706

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Ezile Maphanga Student number 21551706 about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____
- I have also received, read, and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____	
Full Name of Participant Thumbprint	Date	Time	Signature /	Right

I, Ezile Maphanga herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature

Appendix C: Questionnaire



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

APPENDIX C: Questionnaire for collecting data on the inclination to pursue fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship amongst selected final year diplomates at the Durban University of Technology

Instructions for responding to the questionnaire

- Please answer every question as frankly as possible.
- Please select the appropriate box. (insert tick or cross).
- Should you make a mistake, a new questionnaire will be given to you.

Section A: Demographic data

1. In which age range do you belong?

19 and below 20 - 25 26 – 30 31 and above

2. What gender do you identify with?

Female Male Non-binary

3. Please indicate your race classification

Black White Coloured Indian
Other, please specify _____

4. Please indicate your department

Fashion Department Somatology Department

Section B: Level of interest in pursuing fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship

5. Would you consider entrepreneurship after completing your studies?

Yes No

6. What circumstances/ reasons would make you opt for entrepreneurship?

7. If your answer to question 5 is Yes, please indicate the nature of your business commitment:

Full time Side hustle

1. With the increased incorporation of technology in businesses nowadays, please indicate the form of entrepreneurship you would consider:

Traditional fashion/ beauty entrepreneurship	
Partial fashion beauty digital entrepreneurship	
Virtual/ digital fashion/beauty entrepreneurship	
Other, please specify	

2. If your answer in question 8 was partial digital entrepreneurship or virtual/ digital entrepreneurship, which of the below circumstances would make you opt for that form of entrepreneurship? (please tick all applicable to you)

Growth in online selling	
Unemployment	
Growth in online shopping	
Online store runs quicker than traditional shop	
Broader clientele/market reach	
Reduced overhead costs	
Extended hours	

3. If your answer in question 8 was partial digital entrepreneurship or virtual/ digital entrepreneurship, which of the below circumstances would hinder the uptake of that form of entrepreneurship? (please tick all applicable to you)

Security	
Trust	
Failures due to fast growth	
Customer satisfaction	
Loyalty	

4. In your view, you equipped with necessary skills to start your fashion/beauty digital enterprise? (Please tick applicable to you)

Yes No Not sure

5. If your answer to question 11 is No, what skills do you feel you need to pursue digital entrepreneurship? (Please tick all applicable to you)

Entrepreneurial skills	
Administrative function	
Knowledge of running a website	
Advertising skills	

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Extremely likely
1. How likely are you to pursue digital entrepreneurship in fashion/beauty?					
2. How likely are you to start a normal fashion/beauty business?					

15. Perceived Usefulness is whereby a person believes that the use of the system will improve his performance while Perceived Ease of Use is where a person believes that the device will be effortless, What are the reasons that would make you to choose or not choose DE? (this question applies to those who ticked 'Extremely likely', 'Likely' and 'Neutral').

TAM constructs	Extremely likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
Perceived ease of use					
Perceived usefulness					
Attitude towards use					

Appendix D: Ethical clearance letter



Faculty Research Office
Durban University of Technology
Date: 20 September 2021

Student: Ezile Maphanga
Student Number: 21551708
Degree: Master of Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management
Email: 21551708@dut4life.ac.za
Supervisor: Dr SP Moyane
Supervisor email: smangelem@dut.ac.za

Dear Miss Maphanga

ETHICAL APPROVAL: LEVEL 2

I am pleased to inform you that the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) following feedback from two reviewers has granted preliminary permission for you to conduct your research 'The feasibility of fashion and beauty digital entrepreneurship being pursued selected final year Diplomates at the Durban University of Technology'.

When ethics approval is granted:

You are required to present the letter at your research site(s) for permission to gather data. Please also note that your research instruments must be accompanied by the letter of information and the letter of consent for each participant, as per your research proposal.

This ethics clearance is valid from the date of provisional approval on this letter for one year. A student must apply for recertification 3 months before the date of this expiry.

Recertification is required every year until after corrections are made, after examination, and the thesis is submitted to the Faculty Registrar.

A summary of your key research findings must be submitted to the FRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Dr Mogiveny Rajkoomar
FREC Chair
Faculty of Accounting and Informatics
Durban University of Technology
Ritson Campus
Durban, South Africa
4001