

“From Paradigm to Practice: Applying Kuhn’s Intellectual Framework to My Doctoral Research Journey”

Module: Advancing to Doctoral Research Stage

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My research title: Comprehending the Role and Extent of ICT and Business Support in Empowering Female Entrepreneurs in Nepal From Resource Based Perspective

Introduction

Women entrepreneur : women who starts, manages, and grows a business, taking financial and personal risks (Acharya & Pandey, 2018; Basnet, 2024).

Empowerment : A process that helps individuals develop control, critical awareness, and participation in community or organisational settings (Perkins and Zimmerman,1995).

In Nepalese Context ICT : Digital tools such as smartphones, computers, social media platforms, mobile banking apps, e-commerce sites, and internet-based communication tools that supports business Shrestha, Ransom & Bhattarai, 2022.

Business support : Training, mentoring, and financial assistance to improve women's knowledge, confidence (Mehta and Sinha, 2022).

Problem Statement

Women entrepreneurs facing challenges such as limited access to finance and technology, low levels of digital literacy, and inadequate institutional support systems (ILO, 2019; Adhikari, 2025).

Many Nepalese women entrepreneurs struggle to use advanced ICT, and it's unclear if they can apply it to improve their business (Shrestha, Ransom & Bhattarai, 2022).

Business Support programs such as training, finance and networking are not easily available for women entrepreneurs in Nepal (Basnet, 2024).



Source: fwean.org.np

Although female entrepreneurship is gaining recognition in Nepal, there remains limited research on how ICT and business support empower women in their entrepreneurial journeys.

From Resource based view, the link between support and women business success has not been studied in Nepal.



Nepali influencer Anjana Aryal went from homemaker to entrepreneur by sharing recipes on TikTok.

Source: Today Online

Objectives

General Objective

To investigate how ICT and business support resources empower female entrepreneurs in Nepal, using a Resource-Based Perspective.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the extent and types of ICT adoption among female entrepreneurs in Nepal.
- To evaluate the availability and effectiveness of business support services, including training, mentoring, and financial assistance.
- To assess the impact of ICT and business support on business performance, competitiveness, and entrepreneurial skills.
- To identify key challenges and barriers faced by female entrepreneurs in leveraging ICT and business support resources.
- To propose strategies for enhancing resource-based approaches to support and empower female entrepreneurs.

Research Questions

- What types of ICT are used by female entrepreneurs in Nepal, and how widely are they adopted?
- How available and effective are business support services, including training, mentoring, and financial assistance, for female entrepreneurs?
- How do ICT and business support influence business performance, competitiveness, and entrepreneurial skills?
- What are the main challenges and barriers faced by female entrepreneurs in using ICT and business support resources?
- What strategies can strengthen resource-based approaches to support and empower female entrepreneurs?

Significance of the Study

- This study is important because it examines how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and business support services contribute to the empowerment of female entrepreneurs in Nepal.
- Women entrepreneurs in Nepal often have limited access to key business resources such as finance, information, skills, and markets (UNDP, 2024). ICT and business support can help bridge these gaps and promote inclusive entrepreneurship..
- The findings of this study will be useful for policymakers, government agencies, NGOs, and development organizations to design effective ICT-based programs and business support initiatives that address the real needs of female entrepreneurs.
- This study also provides useful insights for future researchers interested in women entrepreneurship, ICT adoption, and resource-based theory in developing countries like Nepal.

Literature Review

ICT and Women Entrepreneurs

ICT helps women entrepreneurs to :

- access information
- communicate quickly
- make better decisions for their businesses (Bhowal,2020).

ICT enables women to :

- expand networks
- participate more actively in economic activities
- Improve decision-making power and business visibility (Fatima et al., 2025).

Mobile technology allow women to:

- Join training programs
- manage businesses while handling household responsibilities (Mullally et al.,2022)

Business Support Services

- Support improves women's knowledge, confidence, and tech-skills (Mehta and Sinha, 2022).
- Combining ICT with mentorship and financial support build skills and run sustainable businesses (Khabbaz and Kuran, 2024).
- Business support programs improve access to resources, operations, and competitiveness (Shrestha et al., 2024 ; Shrestha, P. et al., 2024).

Resource-base perspective

- Integrating ICT, social networks, and financial helps women sustain and grow businesses (Adam et al., 2022).

Challenges and Barriers

- Limited ICT access, poor digital literacy, financial constraints, and social barriers (Xheneti and Madden, 2025; Basnet, 2024).

THEORIES

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

- Organizations gain performance and long-term advantage with resources that are valuable, rare, hard to imitate, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991).
- ICT skills encourage creativity and help women adopt new digital business models that open opportunities beyond their local communities (Duong et al., 2024).
- Business support (training, finance, mentoring, and govt/NGO programmes) improves resource availability and business performance for women (Pashtoon, Mohamad and Hamid, 2024).

Empowerment Theory

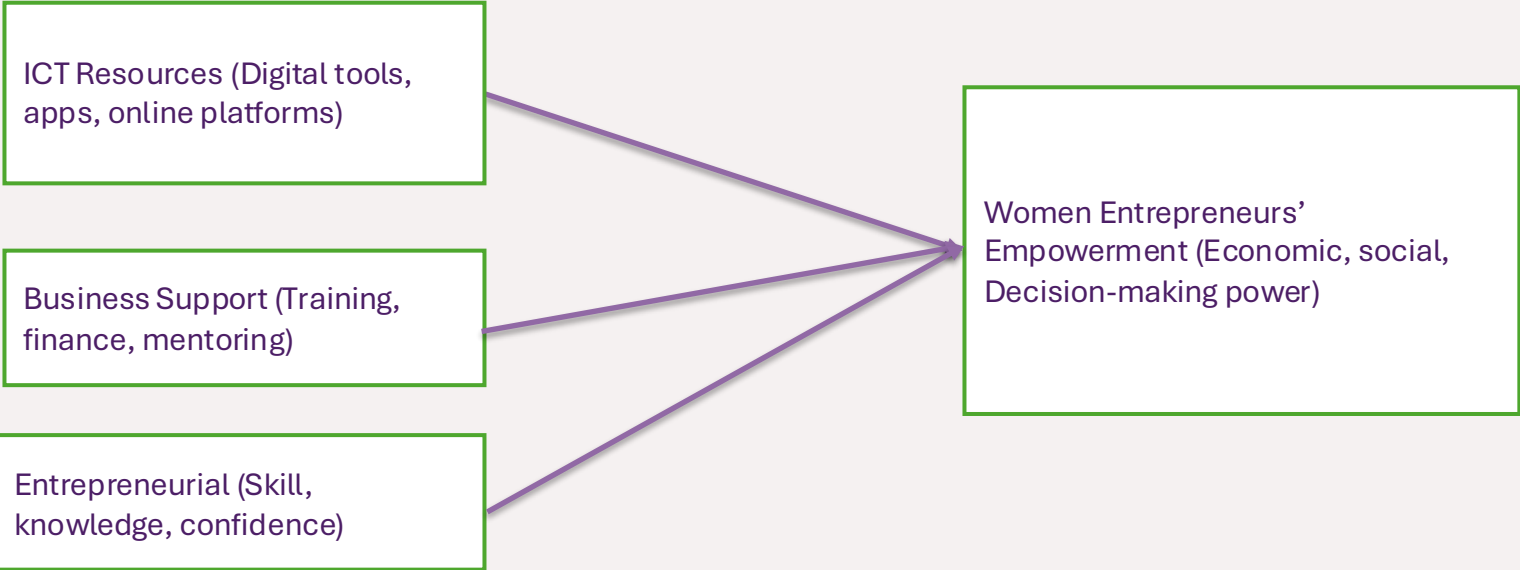
- Strengthening people's ability to make decisions, access opportunities, and act with confidence (Marlow, 2013).
- A process that builds control, critical awareness, and participation in community or organizational settings (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995)

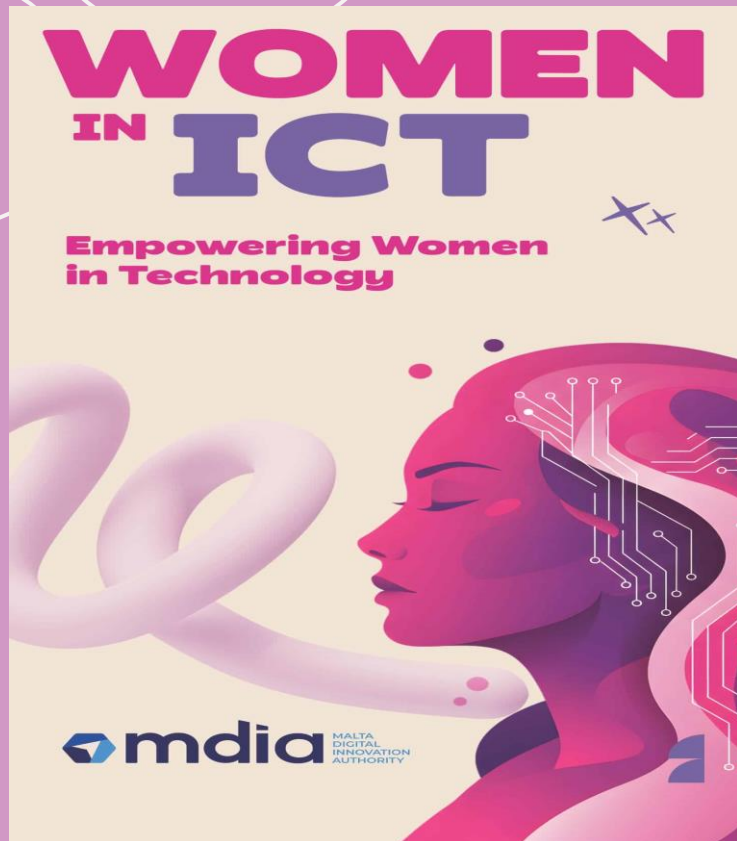
TAM Model

- TAM explains how women decide whether to use ICT based on usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989).
- Better ICT access → more digital engagement.
- Training increases digital confidence → higher PEOU.



Conceptual Framework





Independent Variables

ICT Resources

Digital tools, internet connectivity, mobile devices and technological infrastructure business use.

Business Support

Training programs, financial assistance, mentoring, advisory services, govt/NGO support, and networking opportunities.

ICT Skills / Digital Literacy

Ability to operate digital tools, use online platforms, engage in e-commerce, and apply technological solutions in business.

Dependent Variable

Entrepreneurial Empowerment

Economic independence, decision-making capability, confidence, business growth opportunities and control over entrepreneurial activities.

Stakeholders	Role	Contributions
Govt/ Policymakers	Design and implement policies for entrepreneurship, ICT access, and women's empowerment	Provide supportive policies, funding programs, and monitor implementation.
NGOs	Offer training, mentoring, and business support programs for women entrepreneurs	Facilitate skill development, provide resources, guide ICT/business support usage.
Female entrepreneurs	Main beneficiaries and data providers; implement ICT and business support in practice	Participate voluntarily, provide honest information, apply ICT/business support effectively.
INGOs	Provide funding, technical support, and ICT-based empowerment programs	Share expertise, implement programs, evaluate impact, provide access to digital tools.

Methodology

Research Design: Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods

The study adopts an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods (ESMM) design, beginning with quantitative data collection followed by qualitative analysis.

Population and Sampling Strategy

The target population of this study comprises female entrepreneurs and NGO in Kavrepalanchowk district, Nepal, who are engaged in micro and small enterprises. This includes women operating in sectors such as business and services, agriculture-based enterprises, home-based businesses, beauty parlours, and tailoring, who actively use or have access to ICT tools and business support services.

Sample Size: Approximately 100–200 participants.

Data Type	Data collection method	Purpose	Analysis
Quantitative	Structured questionnaire survey	To collect measurable data on ICT use, business support access, and performance indicators from a broad sample of women entrepreneurs.	Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, Standard deviation, percentage) to identify relationships between ICT adoption, business support, and empowerment.
Qualitative	Interviews	To explore women experiences, motivations, and barriers in adopting ICT and accessing support mechanisms.	Thematic analysis using manual coding to identify patterns, themes, and narratives related to empowerment, challenges, and opportunities

Kuhn's Paradigm Theory: A New Lens for Women's Entrepreneurship

- Thomas Khun (1962) defines a paradigm as a model of scientific thought and practice accepted by community.
- A *paradigm* is a shared way of thinking that guides what researchers' study and how they study it).
- Using Kuhn's theory helps us see whether traditional ideas about women's entrepreneurship are changing in Nepal.
- In Nepal, female entrepreneurs are now using ICT, business support, and social networks as resources, which may show a new way of thinking about entrepreneurship.

The Kuhn Cycle



Normal Science

Traditional method, limited ICT Used,
Basic training
They only based on face-to-face sales,
local market.

Model Drift

ICT emerges but women lack skills; old
support; low competitiveness; difficulty
accessing information; customers limited
market reach becomes less effective.

Model Crisis

Women fall behind digitally; limited
market access; old paradigm failed
because they faced challenges such as:

- Women without ICT skills lost customers.
- Business support programs outdated.
- Covid-19 increased digital dependence

Model Revolution

ICT training; digital finance; social media marketing support; online payment skills; access to digital finance and mobile banking; new model introduced

Paradigm Change

ICT+ Business support+ entrepreneurial capabilities seen as key resources for empowerment.
New paradigm forms

Paradigm Shift in my Research Design

Stage	Old Paradigm	New Paradigm (Your Study)
Focus	Finance, training only	ICT + Business Support+ Entrepreneurial Capabilities as key resources
Theoretical Lens	General Development Theories	RBV+ Empowerment Theory +TAM Model
Research Method	Single method (mostly surveys)	Mixed method (survey + interviews)

Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology in my research

Ontology- Ontological concerns the researcher's assumptions about what is real in the social world.

- Women entrepreneur's empowerment exists as a real phenomenon.
- It is shaped by ICT and business support.
- Empowerment is influenced by social structures and personal experiences.

Epistemology- Concerns how knowledge will be created and validated.

- Data will gather from women's entrepreneurs' real experiences and views - (surveys=interview).

Methodological- Focus on mixed method (Pragmatist)

- Non-Probability sampling
- Data collection through questionnaires and interviews

Ethical consideration and data protection

Ethical Consideration

- Clearly explain to female entrepreneurs the purpose of the research, how the data will be used, and their right to withdraw at any time.
- Be transparent about research goals and outcomes.
- Avoid causing stress or harm through questions.

Data collection

- Collect only necessary information.
- Store data securely (encrypted files, locked cabinets).

Ethical Approval

- The research will be conducted after obtaining ethical approval from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD).

Conclusion

Conclusion, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how ICT and business support empower women entrepreneurs in Nepal.

The findings can help policymakers, NGOs, and government agencies design better resource-based strategies to support women entrepreneurs.

Provides empirical data on the role of ICT and business support in Nepal, where limited research exists.

Can serve as a reference for future studies on women entrepreneurship and ICT in South Asia or other developing countries.

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Thanks!

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