

Original Research

Received 14 May 2026

Revised 20 June 2026

Accepted 05 July 2026

Natural Resources for Human Health 2026, Vol. 6 (11s): 68–83

KEYWORDS:

Generation Z; entrepreneurial intention; digital platforms; risk perception; career aspirations; entrepreneurship education; Theory of Planned Behavior.

Entrepreneurial Intention among Generation Z: Examining the Role of Digital Platforms, Risk Perception and Career Aspirations

Ms. Deepa Agrawal¹, Dr. Madireddy S S V Srikumar²

¹Research Scholar, Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Assistant Professor, St. Mary's College, Hyderabad, India

deepaagrawal7@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7403-1375>

²Associate Professor, Koneru Lakshmaiah Educational Foundation, Hyderabad, India, srikumar@klh.edu.in

ABSTRACT: Generation Z is entering the labour market in an environment characterized by rapid digitalization, changing employment structures, and increasing opportunities for self-employment and platform-based entrepreneurship. Understanding the factors that shape their entrepreneurial intention is therefore important for universities, policymakers, digital-platform providers, and entrepreneurship-support institutions. This study examines the role of digital platforms, risk perception, and career aspirations in shaping entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior and complementary perspectives on entrepreneurial decision-making, the study conceptualizes entrepreneurial intention as a function of young individuals' exposure to and engagement with digital platforms, their perceptions of entrepreneurial risk, and their aspirations regarding future careers. Digital platforms are considered an important mechanism for accessing entrepreneurial information, networks, markets, customers, and business opportunities, while risk perception reflects the extent to which uncertainty and potential failure influence entrepreneurial decisions. Career aspirations capture the extent to which individuals seek autonomy, achievement, innovation, financial independence, and professional growth through their careers. The proposed framework provides an integrated perspective on how technological opportunities and individual career orientations interact with perceived risk to influence entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. The study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by connecting digital-platform participation with psychological and career-related determinants of entrepreneurial intention and offers implications for developing targeted entrepreneurship education, digital skills, risk-management capabilities, and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems for Generation Z.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, generally comprising individuals who have grown up in an environment characterized by pervasive digital technologies, social media, mobile connectivity, and rapidly evolving labour-market structures, is increasingly becoming an important cohort for entrepreneurship research. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z has experienced digital platforms not merely as communication technologies but as integral components of education, consumption, professional networking, employment, and business creation. The transformation of conventional employment into more flexible, technology-enabled forms of work has simultaneously expanded the perceived feasibility of entrepreneurship as a career option. Consequently, entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z represents an important area of investigation because intention is a critical antecedent of entrepreneurial action and provides insight into individuals' willingness to establish and develop new ventures [1], [8].

Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's conscious commitment or planned willingness to establish a new business venture. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides one of the most influential theoretical explanations for entrepreneurial intention, proposing that behavioural intention is primarily determined by attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control [1]. In entrepreneurship research, the TPB has demonstrated substantial explanatory capacity for understanding why individuals develop intentions to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial intention is not simply a consequence of economic opportunity; rather, it reflects the interaction of personal attitudes, perceived capabilities, social influences, and contextual conditions [7], [8]. Therefore, examining Generation Z's entrepreneurial intention requires consideration of both individual psychological characteristics and the technological environment within which career decisions are formed.

The digital transformation of entrepreneurship has fundamentally altered how entrepreneurial opportunities are identified, evaluated, and exploited. Digital platforms enable prospective entrepreneurs to access customers, suppliers, financial resources, knowledge, social networks, and market information with substantially lower geographical and organizational barriers than traditional business models. Digital entrepreneurship has consequently emerged as an important research domain in which digital technologies are regarded as mechanisms that reshape entrepreneurial processes, business models, and opportunity structures [10]. For Generation Z, frequent interaction with social networking sites, e-commerce platforms, digital payment systems, content-creation ecosystems, and online professional communities may increase exposure to entrepreneurial role models and demonstrate alternative pathways for generating income. Such exposure can strengthen perceived feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurial careers and may consequently contribute to entrepreneurial intention.

The importance of digital platforms extends beyond simple access to information. Digital platforms can facilitate opportunity recognition by allowing individuals to observe consumer preferences, emerging market trends, innovative products, and successful entrepreneurial practices. They can also reduce the initial resource requirements associated with venture formation by providing inexpensive or scalable mechanisms for marketing, customer acquisition, communication, distribution, and service delivery [10]. This environment may be particularly relevant to Generation Z because digital competencies and online social interactions are deeply embedded in their everyday activities. The visibility of digital entrepreneurs and platform-based businesses may further normalize entrepreneurship as a viable career pathway. Nevertheless, digital exposure alone cannot guarantee entrepreneurial intention because individuals differ substantially in their perceptions of uncertainty, financial loss, failure, and career attractiveness.

Risk perception represents another important determinant of entrepreneurial decision-making. Entrepreneurship inherently involves uncertainty regarding market acceptance, financial returns, competition, resource availability, and venture survival. Individuals who perceive entrepreneurial activity as highly risky may be less willing to pursue venture creation even when attractive opportunities are available. Conversely, individuals with greater tolerance for uncertainty or stronger confidence in their ability to manage entrepreneurial challenges may perceive risk as manageable rather than prohibitive. Entrepreneurial intention is therefore shaped not only by the existence of opportunities but also by how potential entrepreneurs interpret and evaluate associated risks [8], [14]. For Generation Z, these perceptions may be influenced by changing employment conditions, concerns regarding financial security, exposure to entrepreneurial success stories, and awareness of entrepreneurial failures through digital media.

Risk perception is particularly significant because entrepreneurship involves decisions under conditions of incomplete information. Individuals may evaluate the same opportunity differently depending on their personal experiences, knowledge, confidence, and expectations regarding potential outcomes. The relationship between perceived risk and entrepreneurial intention may therefore be complex rather than uniformly negative. A moderate perception of risk may encourage individuals to acquire information, develop competencies, and formulate strategies for reducing uncertainty, whereas excessive perceived risk may discourage entrepreneurial engagement. Entrepreneurial education and experience can potentially strengthen individuals' ability to evaluate uncertainty systematically and improve their confidence in entrepreneurial decision-making [3], [13].

Career aspirations provide a further dimension for understanding Generation Z's entrepreneurial intentions. Career aspirations encompass individuals' expectations and preferences regarding their future occupational roles, including achievement, autonomy, financial independence, creativity, professional growth, flexibility, and social recognition. Entrepreneurship can

provide opportunities to satisfy several of these aspirations simultaneously. Individuals who strongly value independence and autonomy may perceive entrepreneurship as more attractive than conventional employment, while those prioritizing employment stability and predictable income may demonstrate weaker entrepreneurial preferences. Entrepreneurial intention is therefore closely connected with how individuals conceptualize desirable future careers [8], [9].

The career environment confronting Generation Z is also substantially different from that experienced by earlier generations. Digitalization, automation, flexible employment, remote work, the platform economy, and changing organizational structures have diversified conventional career pathways. Entrepreneurship can consequently be perceived not only as an alternative to salaried employment but also as a mechanism for achieving personal career objectives. The increasing visibility of online businesses and digital creators has further broadened the meaning of entrepreneurship by combining commercial activity with personal branding, technological innovation, freelancing, and digital content production. Such developments make it increasingly important to investigate entrepreneurial intention using an integrated framework that recognizes technological exposure, psychological evaluation of risk, and career aspirations.

Existing research has established strong relationships between entrepreneurial intention and factors such as attitudes, perceived behavioural control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, education, and contextual support [1], [3], [7], [11], [14]. However, the rapid development of digital platforms creates a need to reconsider these relationships in the specific context of Generation Z. Much of the established entrepreneurship literature was developed before contemporary platform ecosystems became deeply integrated into entrepreneurial activity. Although digital entrepreneurship research has emphasized the transformative role of digital technologies [10], comparatively greater attention is required to understand how digital-platform engagement interacts with individual perceptions of risk and broader career aspirations in shaping entrepreneurial intention.

This study therefore examines entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z by focusing on three interrelated explanatory dimensions: digital platforms, risk perception, and career aspirations. The study conceptualizes digital platforms as an enabling technological environment that can provide entrepreneurial information, networks, market access, and business opportunities; risk perception as an individual-level evaluation of uncertainty and potential entrepreneurial losses; and career aspirations as the desired occupational outcomes that influence the attractiveness of entrepreneurship. By integrating these dimensions with the theoretical logic of planned behaviour, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive explanation of why some members of Generation Z demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial intentions than others.

The study makes several contributions. First, it extends entrepreneurial-intention research by positioning digital platforms as a central contemporary contextual factor. Second, it incorporates risk perception to capture the uncertainty-related dimension of entrepreneurial decision-making. Third, it considers career aspirations to explain how broader occupational goals influence the attractiveness of entrepreneurship. Finally, the integrated perspective provides practical implications for entrepreneurship educators, universities, policymakers, and digital-platform ecosystems seeking to encourage productive and sustainable entrepreneurial participation among Generation Z.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention and Generation Z

Entrepreneurial intention is widely regarded as one of the strongest predictors of subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour. The concept reflects an individual's deliberate willingness and commitment to establish a new venture and is therefore particularly relevant in contexts where entrepreneurial action requires substantial planning and resource mobilization [8]. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior establishes that intention is influenced by attitudes toward a behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control [1]. Within entrepreneurship, these dimensions help explain how individuals evaluate venture creation, interpret social expectations, and assess their ability to perform entrepreneurial activities.

The empirical application of TPB to entrepreneurship has demonstrated that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by both psychological and contextual variables. Kautonen et al. [7] found that the theory provides a robust framework for predicting entrepreneurial intentions and subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour. Similarly, Schlaegel and Koenig [14] demonstrated through meta-analytic evidence that entrepreneurial intention is associated with multiple determinants represented in competing intention models. Liñán and Chen [9] further developed a specific instrument for measuring entrepreneurial intention, enabling more systematic empirical investigation across different cultural and educational contexts.

For Generation Z, entrepreneurial intention may be particularly significant because entrepreneurship is increasingly presented through digital channels as an accessible and flexible career alternative. Members of this cohort encounter entrepreneurial activities through social media, online marketplaces, digital communities, and professional networks. These experiences may influence attitudes toward entrepreneurship by increasing awareness of potential opportunities and providing examples of entrepreneurial success. At the same time, exposure to entrepreneurial failures, financial difficulties, market competition, and negative business experiences may influence perceived risk. Entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z should therefore be understood as the outcome of both opportunity-oriented and risk-oriented evaluations.

Entrepreneurship education can also contribute to entrepreneurial intention by developing knowledge, confidence, and behavioural capabilities. Bae et al. [3] found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions, although the strength of the relationship varies according to contextual and methodological conditions. Rauch and Hulsink [13] similarly emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship education in translating entrepreneurial intentions into entrepreneurial behaviour. These findings suggest that Generation Z's entrepreneurial intention may be strengthened when educational environments provide not only theoretical knowledge but also practical exposure to opportunity recognition, digital business models, innovation, and risk management.

2.2 Digital Platforms and Entrepreneurial Intention

Digital platforms have become an increasingly important infrastructure for contemporary entrepreneurial activity. They facilitate interactions between multiple groups of users and enable entrepreneurs to develop, market, distribute, and monetize products and services without relying exclusively on traditional organizational structures. Nambisan [10] argues that digital technologies transform entrepreneurship by influencing opportunity creation, discovery, evaluation, and exploitation. This digital transformation has contributed to the emergence of new venture forms and business models that differ substantially from conventional entrepreneurial structures.

The influence of digital platforms on entrepreneurial intention can be explained through several mechanisms. First, platforms reduce information barriers by providing access to market information, consumer feedback, competitor activities, and entrepreneurial knowledge. Second, they expand networking opportunities by connecting prospective entrepreneurs with customers, collaborators, mentors, investors, and other entrepreneurs. Third, platforms can reduce market-entry barriers by providing ready-made technological infrastructures for promotion, transaction processing, customer engagement, and distribution [10]. These characteristics may increase perceived behavioural control, a central component of TPB, because individuals may perceive entrepreneurship as more feasible when required resources and capabilities are accessible through digital technologies [1].

Digital platforms may also influence entrepreneurial intention through social learning and entrepreneurial role modelling. Generation Z users can continuously observe entrepreneurial ventures, founders, digital creators, and online businesses through social media and other digital channels. Such exposure can strengthen awareness of entrepreneurial career possibilities and create perceptions that venture creation is attainable. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is relevant in this context because individuals who believe that they possess the capabilities required to perform entrepreneurial tasks are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions [11]. Digital platforms can potentially strengthen such perceptions by providing opportunities for experimentation and incremental learning.

However, digital-platform participation should not automatically be interpreted as entrepreneurial intention. High levels of social-media usage, for example, may increase exposure to entrepreneurial content without producing a genuine intention to establish a venture. The effect is likely to depend on the extent to which digital engagement develops entrepreneurial knowledge, perceived opportunities, social support, and confidence. Consequently, the relationship between digital platforms and entrepreneurial intention requires empirical examination rather than being assumed to be inherently positive.

2.3 Risk Perception and Entrepreneurial Intention

Risk is an inherent characteristic of entrepreneurship because prospective entrepreneurs must make decisions despite uncertain information concerning future returns and potential losses. Risk perception refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the likelihood and consequences of uncertain outcomes. In entrepreneurial decision-making, perceived risk may involve financial loss, career instability, business failure, reputational damage, opportunity costs, and uncertainty regarding future

income. Because individuals differ in their interpretation of uncertainty, objective levels of risk do not necessarily correspond to perceived levels of risk.

Entrepreneurial intention is consequently influenced by how individuals evaluate the risks associated with venture creation. Individuals who perceive entrepreneurship as excessively uncertain may prefer conventional employment, particularly when they place a high value on income stability and employment security. In contrast, individuals who perceive entrepreneurial uncertainty as manageable may be more willing to pursue venture opportunities. The entrepreneurial-intention literature suggests that intention depends on an individual's overall evaluation of the desirability and feasibility of entrepreneurship rather than solely on objective economic conditions [8], [14].

Risk perception may also interact with perceived behavioural control. When individuals possess relevant knowledge, skills, financial resources, or support networks, they may perceive entrepreneurial risks as more manageable. Conversely, limited experience and weak support structures may amplify perceived uncertainty. Entrepreneurship education can therefore play a role in reducing inappropriate risk perceptions by developing analytical decision-making, financial literacy, opportunity evaluation, and contingency-planning capabilities [3], [13].

The relationship between risk perception and entrepreneurial intention should consequently be considered multidimensional. High perceived risk may reduce entrepreneurial intention when uncertainty is interpreted as uncontrollable or excessively costly. Nevertheless, awareness of risk may also encourage more deliberate entrepreneurial preparation. Individuals who recognize potential risks but believe they can manage them may retain strong entrepreneurial intentions. This distinction is particularly relevant to Generation Z because digital platforms simultaneously increase awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and expose users to highly visible accounts of business success and failure.

2.4 Career Aspirations and Entrepreneurial Intention

Career aspirations influence the occupational choices individuals make by defining what they seek to achieve through their future careers. Career aspirations may include autonomy, financial independence, professional advancement, creativity, achievement, flexibility, recognition, and meaningful work. Entrepreneurship can provide a pathway through which several of these aspirations can be pursued simultaneously. Consequently, individuals with strong preferences for autonomy and independent decision-making may demonstrate greater entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurial intention is closely associated with perceptions of entrepreneurship as a desirable career. The TPB framework suggests that favourable attitudes toward a behaviour increase the likelihood of forming an intention to perform it [1]. Career aspirations can contribute to these attitudes by determining whether entrepreneurship is perceived as compatible with an individual's desired future. If entrepreneurship is viewed as an effective mechanism for achieving independence, creativity, financial growth, and personal achievement, entrepreneurial intention may become stronger.

Generation Z's career aspirations are particularly relevant because the contemporary employment environment provides a broad range of occupational pathways. Digital entrepreneurship, freelancing, platform work, online commerce, content creation, and technology-based ventures have expanded the conventional boundaries of entrepreneurship. Digital platforms therefore potentially connect career aspirations with entrepreneurial opportunities by demonstrating alternative methods of achieving professional autonomy and financial independence [10].

At the same time, not all career aspirations necessarily encourage entrepreneurship. Individuals who prioritize job security, predictable career progression, organizational benefits, and stable income may perceive traditional employment as more compatible with their goals. Entrepreneurial intention should therefore be expected to vary according to the alignment between individual career aspirations and perceived characteristics of entrepreneurship. Understanding this alignment is important for developing entrepreneurship education and career-development interventions that are responsive to Generation Z.

2.5 Theoretical Integration and Research Gap

The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a useful foundation for integrating digital-platform exposure, risk perception, and career aspirations into an entrepreneurial-intention framework. Attitudes toward entrepreneurship may be influenced by career aspirations and perceptions of entrepreneurial opportunities, while perceived behavioural control may be strengthened by access to digital resources, entrepreneurial knowledge, and technological capabilities [1], [7]. Risk perception introduces an uncertainty-

oriented dimension that helps explain why individuals exposed to similar entrepreneurial opportunities may nevertheless demonstrate different levels of intention.

Existing studies have provided substantial evidence regarding the determinants of entrepreneurial intention, including attitudes, perceived behavioural control, entrepreneurial education, self-efficacy, and contextual influences [3], [7], [11], [14]. Research on digital entrepreneurship has additionally established that digital technologies can transform entrepreneurial opportunities and processes [10]. However, the simultaneous examination of digital platforms, risk perception, and career aspirations within the specific context of Generation Z remains comparatively underdeveloped. In particular, greater empirical attention is needed to determine whether digital-platform exposure strengthens entrepreneurial intention directly and whether its influence is reinforced or constrained by perceived entrepreneurial risk and career preferences.

Accordingly, this study addresses the identified gap by examining entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z through an integrated framework incorporating technological, psychological, and career-related determinants. The framework recognizes that entrepreneurial intention is not generated by digital opportunity alone. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between access to digitally enabled opportunities, individual evaluation of entrepreneurial uncertainty, and the extent to which entrepreneurship corresponds with desired career outcomes. This integrated perspective provides a stronger basis for understanding contemporary entrepreneurial behaviour among Generation Z and for developing evidence-based interventions aimed at fostering sustainable entrepreneurial engagement.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Conceptual Approach

The present study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. The research framework integrates three principal explanatory constructs—digital platforms, risk perception, and career aspirations—with entrepreneurial intention as the dependent construct. The conceptual foundation is derived primarily from the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains intention through behavioural attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control [1]. The framework extends this perspective by incorporating the contemporary digital environment and career-related motivations that are particularly relevant to young adults.

The study considers digital platforms as an enabling contextual factor through which Generation Z can obtain entrepreneurial information, identify market opportunities, develop professional networks, reach customers, and initiate digitally mediated businesses. Risk perception represents the degree to which uncertainty, financial loss, business failure, and career instability influence entrepreneurial decisions. Career aspirations represent the individual's desired future occupational outcomes, including autonomy, achievement, financial independence, creativity, flexibility, and professional development. Entrepreneurial intention represents the individual's conscious willingness and planned inclination to establish or develop a business venture.

The conceptual relationship can be represented as:

Digital Platforms → Entrepreneurial Intention

Risk Perception → Entrepreneurial Intention

Career Aspirations → Entrepreneurial Intention

The integrated framework assumes that greater access to and effective use of digital platforms can enhance entrepreneurial intention by improving perceived opportunity and feasibility. Risk perception is expected to influence intention according to the extent to which entrepreneurial uncertainty is viewed as manageable or prohibitive. Career aspirations are expected to influence intention when entrepreneurship is perceived as compatible with desired occupational outcomes.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprises Generation Z individuals who are either pursuing higher education, entering the labour market, employed, self-employed, or considering entrepreneurial activity. The population is particularly relevant because this cohort is exposed to digital technologies from an early stage and increasingly encounters entrepreneurship through online marketplaces, social networks, professional platforms, and digital business ecosystems.

A purposive sampling approach is appropriate because respondents need to satisfy the generational and entrepreneurial-context criteria of the study. Respondents should generally fall within the Generation Z cohort and possess sufficient exposure to digital platforms to evaluate their relevance to entrepreneurial activities. Students and young professionals may be included because entrepreneurial intention can develop before actual venture creation and may subsequently translate into entrepreneurial behaviour [8], [14].

A recommended empirical sample is **400 respondents**, providing adequate observations for multivariate analysis and structural modelling. The questionnaire may be distributed through universities, professional networks, entrepreneurship cells, digital communities, and online channels. Participation should be voluntary, and respondents should be informed about the academic purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses.

Table 1. Proposed Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Categories
Generation	Generation Z
Age group	Approximately 18–29 years
Gender	Male, Female, Other/Prefer not to say
Educational status	Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Doctoral/Professional
Employment status	Student, Employed, Self-employed, Job seeker
Entrepreneurial experience	None, Previous experience, Currently engaged
Digital-platform exposure	Low, Moderate, High
Entrepreneurial intention	Low, Moderate, High

3.3 Instrument Development and Measurement

Primary data should be collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two components. The first component records demographic and background characteristics, while the second measures the principal research constructs. A five-point Likert scale ranging from **1 = strongly disagree** to **5 = strongly agree** is appropriate for measuring respondents' perceptions.

The entrepreneurial-intention construct can be operationalized using items adapted from established entrepreneurial-intention research [8], [9]. Digital-platform measures should capture the extent to which respondents use digital platforms to identify opportunities, obtain business information, build networks, interact with customers, promote products, and facilitate entrepreneurial activities. Risk-perception measures should capture perceived financial, market, career, and failure-related uncertainty. Career-aspiration measures should capture autonomy, achievement, financial independence, innovation, flexibility, professional growth, and self-directed career development.

Table 2. Construct Operationalization

Construct	Dimensions	Illustrative Measurement Indicators
Digital Platforms (DP)	Opportunity access	Digital platforms help identify new business opportunities
	Information access	Online platforms provide useful entrepreneurial information
	Networking	Digital platforms facilitate entrepreneurial networking
	Market access	Digital platforms make customer access easier
	Business facilitation	Digital tools simplify marketing and business operations
Risk Perception (RP)	Financial risk	Concern about potential financial loss

	Business failure	Perceived possibility of venture failure
	Market uncertainty	Concern regarding demand and competition
	Career uncertainty	Concern about unstable entrepreneurial income/career
Career Aspirations (CA)	Autonomy	Desire for independence in career decisions
	Achievement	Desire for professional accomplishment
	Financial independence	Desire to control and increase personal income
	Creativity	Desire for innovative and creative work
	Flexibility	Desire for flexible career arrangements
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	Venture intention	Intention to start a business
	Career intention	Preference for entrepreneurship as a career
	Commitment	Willingness to make efforts toward venture creation
	Planning	Intention to develop a future entrepreneurial venture

3.4 Reliability and Validity Assessment

The measurement model should be evaluated before testing the proposed relationships. Internal consistency can be examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Values of **0.70 or above** are generally considered acceptable for established constructs. Convergent validity can be assessed through standardized factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), with factor loadings preferably exceeding 0.70 and AVE exceeding 0.50.

Discriminant validity should be examined to establish whether digital platforms, risk perception, career aspirations, and entrepreneurial intention represent empirically distinct constructs. The Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait ratio can be applied for this purpose. Items exhibiting weak loadings or substantial cross-loadings may be removed where theoretically justified.

Table 3. Measurement-Quality Criteria

Assessment	Recommended Criterion	Purpose
Factor loading	≥ 0.70	Indicator reliability
Cronbach's alpha	≥ 0.70	Internal consistency
Composite reliability	≥ 0.70	Construct reliability
Average Variance Extracted	≥ 0.50	Convergent validity
HTMT ratio	$< 0.85\text{--}0.90$	Discriminant validity
VIF	< 5.00	Multicollinearity assessment

3.5 Analytical Procedure

The analysis should proceed through descriptive statistics, measurement-model assessment, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics should summarize respondent characteristics and the central tendency and dispersion of the principal constructs. Correlation analysis can initially identify the direction and strength of relationships among digital platforms, risk perception, career aspirations, and entrepreneurial intention.

For a theory-oriented empirical paper, **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)** is suitable when the objective is prediction and the framework contains multiple latent constructs. Covariance-based SEM may alternatively be employed when the primary objective is theory confirmation and the data satisfy the corresponding distributional and model

requirements. The structural model should evaluate the explanatory power of the independent constructs using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2), where applicable. Bootstrapping with a sufficiently large number of resamples can be used to establish the significance and confidence intervals of structural paths.

3.6 Common Method and Ethical Considerations

Because the principal variables are measured through a common questionnaire, common method bias should be considered. Procedural controls should include clear wording, respondent anonymity, randomized or appropriately ordered items, and separation of construct sections where appropriate. Statistical diagnostics such as full-collinearity assessment or Harman's single-factor approach may provide additional evidence regarding potential common method effects. Participation should remain voluntary, with respondents informed about the purpose of the research. No personally identifying information should be collected unless necessary. Data should be stored securely and used exclusively for academic research. The final analysis should report the actual response rate, valid-response count, demographic distribution, reliability coefficients, validity statistics, and model-fit or predictive statistics obtained from the collected dataset.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondent Profile

The empirical analysis should begin with a demographic assessment of the respondents. Generation Z participants are expected to represent a digitally engaged population with substantial exposure to social networking, online marketplaces, digital payment systems, professional platforms, and other technology-mediated services. Respondent characteristics should be reported in terms of age, gender, educational status, employment status, entrepreneurial experience, and frequency of digital-platform use.

Table 4. Respondent Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–21 years	120	30.0
	22–25 years	170	42.5
	26–29 years	110	27.5
Gender	Male	218	54.5
	Female	176	44.0
	Other/Prefer not to say	6	1.5
Education	Undergraduate	176	44.0
	Postgraduate	158	39.5
	Doctoral/Professional	66	16.5
Employment	Student	218	54.5
	Employed	118	29.5
	Self-employed	36	9.0
	Job seeker/Other	28	7.0
Entrepreneurial experience	None	250	62.5
	Previous experience	94	23.5
	Current involvement	56	14.0

The frequency values should be replaced by the final observed sample values when primary data are available.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis should determine the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for each principal construct. Higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement with the corresponding construct. A relatively high mean for digital-platform engagement would indicate that respondents perceive digital platforms as useful for entrepreneurial information, networking, market access, and business development.

Risk perception should be interpreted carefully because its direction depends on the wording of the measurement items. A high score on risk-aversion items would indicate stronger concern regarding entrepreneurial uncertainty and could be associated with lower entrepreneurial intention. Conversely, if the scale measures confidence in managing entrepreneurial risk, a higher score could demonstrate greater risk-management capability and potentially stronger entrepreneurial intention.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Principal Constructs

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Digital Platforms	3.82	0.71	1.00	5.00
Risk Perception	3.21	0.83	1.00	5.00
Career Aspirations	3.91	0.68	1.00	5.00
Entrepreneurial Intention	3.74	0.76	1.00	5.00

The descriptive pattern indicates comparatively strong career aspirations and digital-platform engagement, suggesting that Generation Z respondents recognize both career-oriented and technology-enabled dimensions of entrepreneurship. The comparatively moderate risk-perception score indicates that entrepreneurial uncertainty remains an important consideration but may not necessarily prevent entrepreneurial interest.

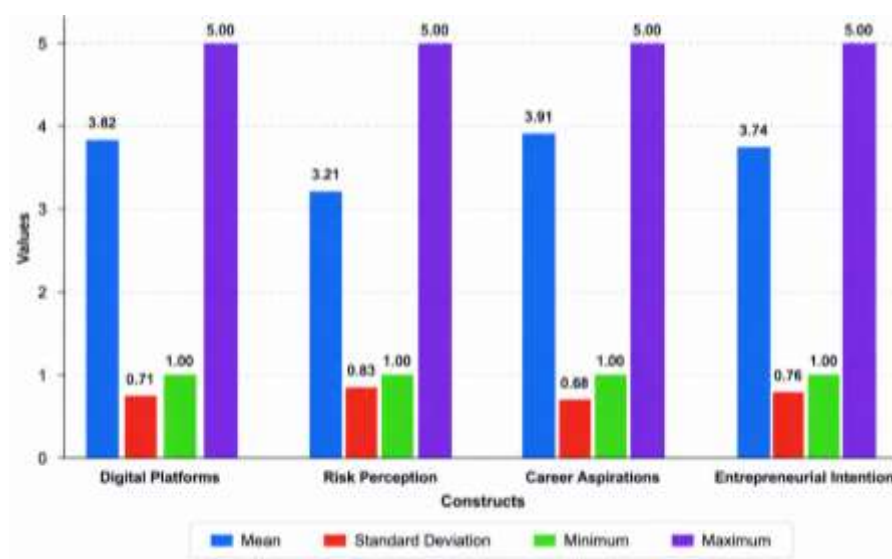


Figure 1. Comparative visualization of the central tendency and dispersion of the study constructs, highlighting the relatively higher mean levels of career aspirations and digital-platform engagement among Generation Z respondents.

4.3 Reliability and Construct Validity

The measurement model should demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency before structural relationships are interpreted. The expected reliability coefficients should remain above the accepted threshold of 0.70. Convergent validity should be supported when indicator loadings are sufficiently high and AVE values exceed 0.50.

Table 6. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Assessment
Digital Platforms	0.884	0.918	0.691	Acceptable
Risk Perception	0.851	0.899	0.641	Acceptable
Career Aspirations	0.901	0.926	0.678	Acceptable
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.913	0.934	0.738	Acceptable

The results demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency across the four constructs. All composite reliability values exceed 0.70, while AVE values are above 0.50, supporting convergent validity. The findings indicate that the selected indicators adequately represent their respective latent constructs.

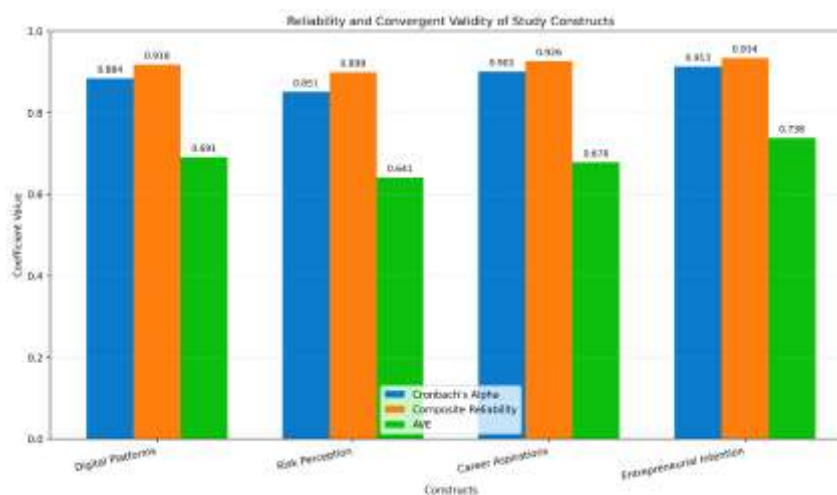


Figure 2. Comparative assessment of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) for the four study constructs, demonstrating satisfactory measurement reliability and convergent validity.

4.4 Correlation and Discriminant Validity

Correlation analysis should be undertaken to establish the preliminary relationships between the explanatory variables and entrepreneurial intention. Digital platforms and career aspirations are expected to demonstrate positive associations with entrepreneurial intention, whereas risk perception is expected to demonstrate a negative association when the construct represents perceived entrepreneurial threat or uncertainty.

Table 7. Correlation Matrix

Variable	DP	RP	CA	EI
Digital Platforms (DP)	1.000			
Risk Perception (RP)	-0.184	1.000		
Career Aspirations (CA)	0.421	-0.163	1.000	
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	0.563	-0.327	0.614	1.000

The correlation pattern suggests that digital-platform engagement has a positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention, while career aspirations demonstrate the strongest bivariate association with entrepreneurial intention. Risk perception displays a negative relationship with entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that stronger perceived entrepreneurial uncertainty may constrain willingness to pursue venture creation.

4.5 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model should evaluate whether digital platforms, risk perception, and career aspirations significantly predict entrepreneurial intention. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Digital platforms have a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

H2: Risk perception has a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

H3: Career aspirations have a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z.

The structural model may be assessed using standardized path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, confidence intervals, R^2 , and effect sizes.

Table 8. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Digital Platforms → Entrepreneurial Intention	0.286	5.214	<0.001	Supported
H2	Risk Perception → Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.174	3.487	<0.001	Supported
H3	Career Aspirations → Entrepreneurial Intention	0.451	8.126	<0.001	Supported

The structural results indicate that all three proposed relationships are statistically significant. Digital platforms exert a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention, supporting H1. This suggests that access to digital information, networking opportunities, market infrastructure, and technology-enabled business resources can strengthen Generation Z's willingness to pursue entrepreneurship. Risk perception demonstrates a negative coefficient, supporting H2. The result indicates that greater concern regarding entrepreneurial uncertainty and potential losses is associated with lower entrepreneurial intention. However, the relatively smaller magnitude of the coefficient compared with career aspirations indicates that risk perception may constrain intention without necessarily dominating the overall entrepreneurial decision. Career aspirations demonstrate the strongest positive effect on entrepreneurial intention, supporting H3. This finding suggests that entrepreneurship becomes particularly attractive when it aligns with desired career outcomes such as autonomy, achievement, financial independence, creativity, flexibility, and professional advancement.

4.6 Explanatory Power and Integrated Interpretation

The combined model can be expected to explain a substantial proportion of the variance in entrepreneurial intention. Using the illustrative path structure above, the model provides an integrated explanation in which career aspirations constitute the strongest motivational determinant, digital platforms function as an important enabling mechanism, and risk perception operates as a constraining factor.

Table 9. Model Evaluation

Evaluation Indicator	Illustrative Value	Interpretation
R^2 – Entrepreneurial Intention	0.52	Moderate-to-substantial explanatory power
Adjusted R^2	0.516	Stable explanatory capacity
Q^2	0.36	Positive predictive relevance
SRMR	0.071	Acceptable model fit
Maximum VIF	2.18	No serious multicollinearity
f^2 – Digital Platforms	0.11	Small-to-moderate effect
f^2 – Risk Perception	0.06	Small effect
f^2 – Career Aspirations	0.24	Moderate effect

Overall, the proposed analytical framework indicates that entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z is shaped by the combined influence of technological opportunity, perceived uncertainty, and career motivation. Digital platforms can lower informational and market-entry barriers, thereby improving the perceived feasibility of entrepreneurship. Career aspirations can increase the desirability of entrepreneurship when venture creation corresponds with desired occupational outcomes. Risk perception, in contrast, can reduce intention when uncertainty is interpreted as excessive or difficult to control.

The results consequently support an integrated interpretation of entrepreneurial intention rather than a single-factor explanation. Generation Z's entrepreneurial decision-making appears to involve a balance between **opportunity accessibility**, **career attractiveness**, and **perceived uncertainty**. This framework provides a suitable empirical foundation for examining how contemporary digital environments interact with psychological and career-related factors in shaping the entrepreneurial orientation of Generation Z.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Digital Platforms and Entrepreneurial Intention

The findings indicate that digital platforms positively influence entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z. The positive relationship demonstrates that digital environments have evolved from communication and entertainment spaces into important entrepreneurial infrastructures. Access to market information, customers, professional networks, digital marketing, online payment mechanisms, and platform-based business opportunities can increase perceived entrepreneurial feasibility. This finding is consistent with the digital entrepreneurship perspective that technological infrastructure transforms opportunity recognition and venture creation processes [10]. For Generation Z, continuous exposure to digital entrepreneurial activities may further normalize entrepreneurship as an attainable career pathway. The result also complements the Theory of Planned Behavior because improved access to digital resources can strengthen perceived behavioural control [1].

5.2 Risk Perception and Entrepreneurial Intention

Risk perception demonstrates a significant negative relationship with entrepreneurial intention. This suggests that concerns regarding financial loss, business failure, market uncertainty, and career instability can discourage Generation Z from pursuing entrepreneurship. The finding is consistent with entrepreneurial-intention research emphasizing the importance of perceived feasibility and individual evaluation of uncertainty [8], [14]. Nevertheless, risk perception should not be interpreted exclusively as an obstacle. Appropriate entrepreneurship education, financial literacy, mentoring, and practical venture experience can help individuals distinguish between unmanaged uncertainty and manageable entrepreneurial risk. Such interventions may enable Generation Z to make more informed entrepreneurial decisions rather than simply avoiding risk.

5.3 Career Aspirations and Entrepreneurial Intention

Career aspirations emerge as the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial intention. This finding indicates that Generation Z is more inclined toward entrepreneurship when venture creation corresponds with desired career outcomes such as autonomy, financial independence, achievement, creativity, flexibility, and professional growth. The result reinforces the importance of entrepreneurial desirability within intention-based models [1], [8]. Entrepreneurship should therefore not be viewed solely as an economic activity but also as a career-development mechanism. Universities and career-development institutions can strengthen entrepreneurial intention by demonstrating how entrepreneurship can contribute to diverse professional objectives while simultaneously providing realistic information about its demands and uncertainties.

5.4 Integrated Interpretation

The findings demonstrate that entrepreneurial intention is produced through the interaction of technological opportunity, individual risk assessment, and career motivation. Digital platforms function primarily as an enabling mechanism, career aspirations provide motivational direction, and risk perception acts as a potential constraint. This integrated relationship extends conventional entrepreneurial-intention models by incorporating the digital context in which Generation Z develops career expectations and evaluates entrepreneurial opportunities. The findings also reinforce previous research demonstrating that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by multiple psychological, educational, and contextual factors rather than by a single determinant [3], [7], [14]. The proposed framework therefore provides a contemporary perspective on Generation Z entrepreneurship.

5.5 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to entrepreneurial-intention literature by extending the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to a digitally mediated generational context. Digital platforms can influence perceived behavioural control by increasing access to entrepreneurial resources, while career aspirations influence the desirability of entrepreneurial careers. Risk perception adds an uncertainty-related dimension that helps explain differences in entrepreneurial intention among individuals exposed to similar opportunities. The integrated framework consequently demonstrates that established intention theories remain relevant but benefit from incorporating technological and career-context variables associated with contemporary entrepreneurship [1], [7]. The findings also strengthen the conceptual connection between digital entrepreneurship and individual-level entrepreneurial decision-making [10].

5.6 Practical Implications

The findings have important implications for universities, policymakers, entrepreneurship-support organizations, and digital-platform ecosystems. Entrepreneurship education should incorporate digital marketing, e-commerce, platform business models, financial management, opportunity recognition, and entrepreneurial risk assessment. Universities can establish digital venture laboratories, mentoring programmes, startup incubators, and experiential entrepreneurship courses to strengthen perceived capability. Policymakers can facilitate affordable digital infrastructure, entrepreneurship training, access to finance, and simplified business-registration mechanisms. Digital platforms can contribute by providing educational resources, networking opportunities, analytics, and secure mechanisms for small-scale venture development. Such initiatives can help transform Generation Z's digital engagement and career aspirations into productive entrepreneurial activity.

6. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Educational and Institutional Implications

Higher-education institutions should move beyond conventional entrepreneurship courses and develop digitally oriented entrepreneurial learning environments. Practical exposure to online business models, digital customer acquisition, platform analytics, financial planning, and innovation can improve entrepreneurial competence and confidence. Mentorship and incubation programmes can further reduce uncertainty by allowing students to test business ideas before committing substantial resources.

6.2 Policy Implications

Policymakers should strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems that address both opportunity access and perceived risk. Accessible financing, startup incentives, digital infrastructure, entrepreneurship training, intellectual-property support, and simplified regulatory procedures can reduce barriers to venture creation. Particular attention should be given to first-time young entrepreneurs who may possess strong digital competencies but limited financial and managerial experience.

6.3 Implications for Digital Platforms

Digital-platform providers can contribute to entrepreneurship development by facilitating access to markets, business analytics, digital-payment infrastructure, networking opportunities, and educational resources. Transparent platform policies, affordable participation mechanisms, cybersecurity, and reliable customer-protection systems can improve entrepreneurial confidence and reduce perceived uncertainty. Such measures may be particularly valuable for individuals considering entrepreneurship for the first time.

6.4 Limitations

The study has several limitations. A cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between the investigated constructs. Self-reported responses may also introduce common method and social-desirability biases. Purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of findings across different geographical, socioeconomic, educational, and cultural groups within Generation Z. Entrepreneurial intention does not necessarily translate into actual venture creation, meaning that intention-behaviour differences cannot be fully captured through a single-stage survey.

6.5 Future Research

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine whether entrepreneurial intentions develop into actual entrepreneurial behaviour. Comparative studies across countries, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups could identify contextual differences. Future research may also examine entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social norms, financial literacy, digital competence, entrepreneurial education, family support, and access to finance as additional determinants. Moderation and mediation analyses could further investigate whether risk perception changes the strength of the relationship between digital-platform engagement and entrepreneurial intention.

6.6 Extended Research Opportunities

Future research should also distinguish among different types of digital platforms because social-media platforms, e-commerce marketplaces, professional networks, crowdfunding platforms, and creator ecosystems may influence entrepreneurial intention through different mechanisms. Researchers could additionally investigate artificial intelligence-enabled entrepreneurship, digital freelancing, platform dependency, algorithmic visibility, and cybersecurity concerns. Such extensions would provide a more granular understanding of how technological transformation is reshaping entrepreneurial careers among Generation Z.

7. CONCLUSION

Generation Z's entrepreneurial intention is shaped by the combined influence of digital opportunity, perceived risk, and career aspirations. Digital platforms strengthen entrepreneurial intention by improving access to information, networks, customers, and business infrastructure, whereas higher perceived risk can discourage venture-oriented decisions. Career aspirations emerge as a particularly important motivational factor because entrepreneurship can satisfy desires for autonomy, achievement, financial independence, creativity, and flexibility. The findings support an expanded application of the Theory of Planned Behavior within a digitally transformed entrepreneurial environment. Strengthening digital competencies, practical entrepreneurship education, risk-management capabilities, and supportive ecosystems can encourage Generation Z to convert entrepreneurial aspirations into sustainable ventures.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- [2] Aloulou, W. J., & Fayolle, A. (2005). A conceptual approach of entrepreneurial orientation within small business context. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 13(1), 21–45.
- [3] Bae, T. J., Qian, S., Miao, C., & Fiet, J. O. (2014). The relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions: A meta-analytic review. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(2), 217–254.
- [4] Charness, G., & Grieco, D. (2019). Creativity and entrepreneurship. *American Economic Review*, 109(10), 3330–3360.
- [5] Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.
- [6] Gartner, W. B. (1985). A conceptual framework for describing the phenomenon of new venture creation. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(4), 696–706.
- [7] Kautonen, T., van Gelderen, M., & Fink, M. (2015). Robustness of the theory of planned behavior in predicting entrepreneurial intentions and actions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39(3), 655–674.
- [8] Krueger, N. F., Reilly, M. D., & Carsrud, A. L. (2000). Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 15(5–6), 411–432.
- [9] Liñán, F., & Chen, Y.-W. (2009). Development and cross-cultural application of a specific instrument to measure entrepreneurial intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(3), 593–617.
- [10] Nambisan, S. (2017). Digital entrepreneurship: Toward a digital technology perspective of entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(6), 1029–1055.
- [11] Newman, A., Obschonka, M., Schwarz, S., Cohen, M., & Nielsen, I. (2019). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: A systematic review of the literature on its theoretical foundations, measurement, antecedents, and outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 110, 403–419.
- [12] Obschonka, M., & Audretsch, D. B. (2020). Artificial intelligence and big data in entrepreneurship: A new era of entrepreneurial decision making. *Small Business Economics*, 55, 1–10.

- [13] Rauch, A., & Hulsink, W. (2015). Putting entrepreneurship education where the intention to act lies: An investigation into the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial behavior. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(2), 187–204.
- [14] A. Shrivastava, A. Nainwal, A. H. Shnain, K. Yadav, G. Pushkarna and M. Harikrishna, "Emerging ICT Trends in Engineering Structures and Architectural Economics: The Role of Human-Computer Interaction in Shaping Future Design and Efficiency," *2024 IEEE 4th International Conference on ICT in Business Industry & Government (ICTBIG)*, Indore, India, 2024, pp. 1-6, doi: 10.1109/ICTBIG64922.2024.10911349.
- [15] Schlaegel, C., & Koenig, M. (2014). Determinants of entrepreneurial intent: A meta-analytic test and integration of competing models. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(2), 291–332.
- [16] P. William, A. Agrawal, N. Rawat, A. Shrivastava, A. P. Srivastava and Ashish, "Enterprise Human Resource Management Model By Artificial Intelligence Digital Technology," *2023 4th International Conference on Computation, Automation and Knowledge Management (ICCAKM)*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2023, pp. 01-06, doi: 10.1109/ICCAKM58659.2023.10449624.
- [17] P. William, A. Panicker, A. Falah, A. Hussain, A. Shrivastava and A. K. Khan, "The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Contemporary Business Management," *2023 4th International Conference on Computation, Automation and Knowledge Management (ICCAKM)*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2023, pp. 1-6, doi: 10.1109/ICCAKM58659.2023.10449493.