

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
INSTITUTE FOR SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES

A Systematic Literature Review on the Digital Technology Adoption of Women Entrepreneurs

Ian Jester M. de Vera, DProf
Nova Z. Navo
Melanie V. Cabotaje
Danica Q. Pacardo

Background

- As digital technology increasingly becomes ubiquitous and significant in many spheres of daily living, discourses on gender are brought to the fore, especially on the disparities in digital technology adoption between men and women as well as the factors these disparities can be attributed to.
- Discussions in this field have become relevant considering that even now, despite increased efforts particularly from governments in pushing for gender equality, categorisations persist in occupations where women are delegated to doing more 'feminine' jobs like care work but less in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM-related professions.
- The enduring gender gap is aggravated by the digital divide that exists at the personal level and extends from the national to global levels. This is reflected in the inequality observed between men and women's access to technology, the knowledge to maximise its use, the availability and reliability of technological infrastructures present in urban and rural areas, as well as the level of technology available in first-world and third-world countries.
- Whilst there are some evidence that show how technology poses threats to women and may in some instances amplify the gender bias and marginalisation, the advantages of digital technology could not be underemphasised.
- Considering the significance of the topic to both theory and practice, this study intends to surface themes focusing on the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs from the extant literature using the systematic literature review (SLR) approach.

Research Questions

Given this dearth of studies related to the topic, this study seeks to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What is the corpus of research related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs?

RQ2: What are the major foci of studies related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs?

Methods

- For this paper we considered electronic research databases Scopus and Web of Science as the primary sources for selecting articles that would be included in this systematic review.
- The following keywords were used in filtering the articles that will be selected for this review: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("women" AND digital technolog*). 'TITLE-ABS-KEY' refers to the sections of the articles where the search key terms must appear. [Figure 1]
- Filters were added to refine the search and select final or completed journal and conferences papers written in the English language only. The query generated a total of 860 titles. [Figure 1]
- Using the web-based SLR tool Rayyan, duplicates, and papers not related to the topic being studied were excluded.
- The final screening returned a total of 63 articles that would comprise the systematic review in this study. [Figure 1]
- The final papers were subjected to bibliometric data analysis using the software VOSviewer. Figure 2 shows the cluster of keywords or the co-occurrence of terms appearing in the titles, abstracts and text of the documents.

Year	Number
2022	10
2021	12
2020	7
2019	10
2018	6
2017	1
2016	6
2015	2
2014	1
2013	1
2011	2
2008	1
2007	1
2006	1
2000	2
Total	63

Table 1
Number of publications per year

Findings

- The earliest publications that emerged from this systematic review were made in 2000. [Table 1]
- Most of the publications were written during the pandemic years 2021 and 2022, which produced a total of 10 and 12 papers respectively, followed by 2020 (7 publications) and 2019 (10 publications).

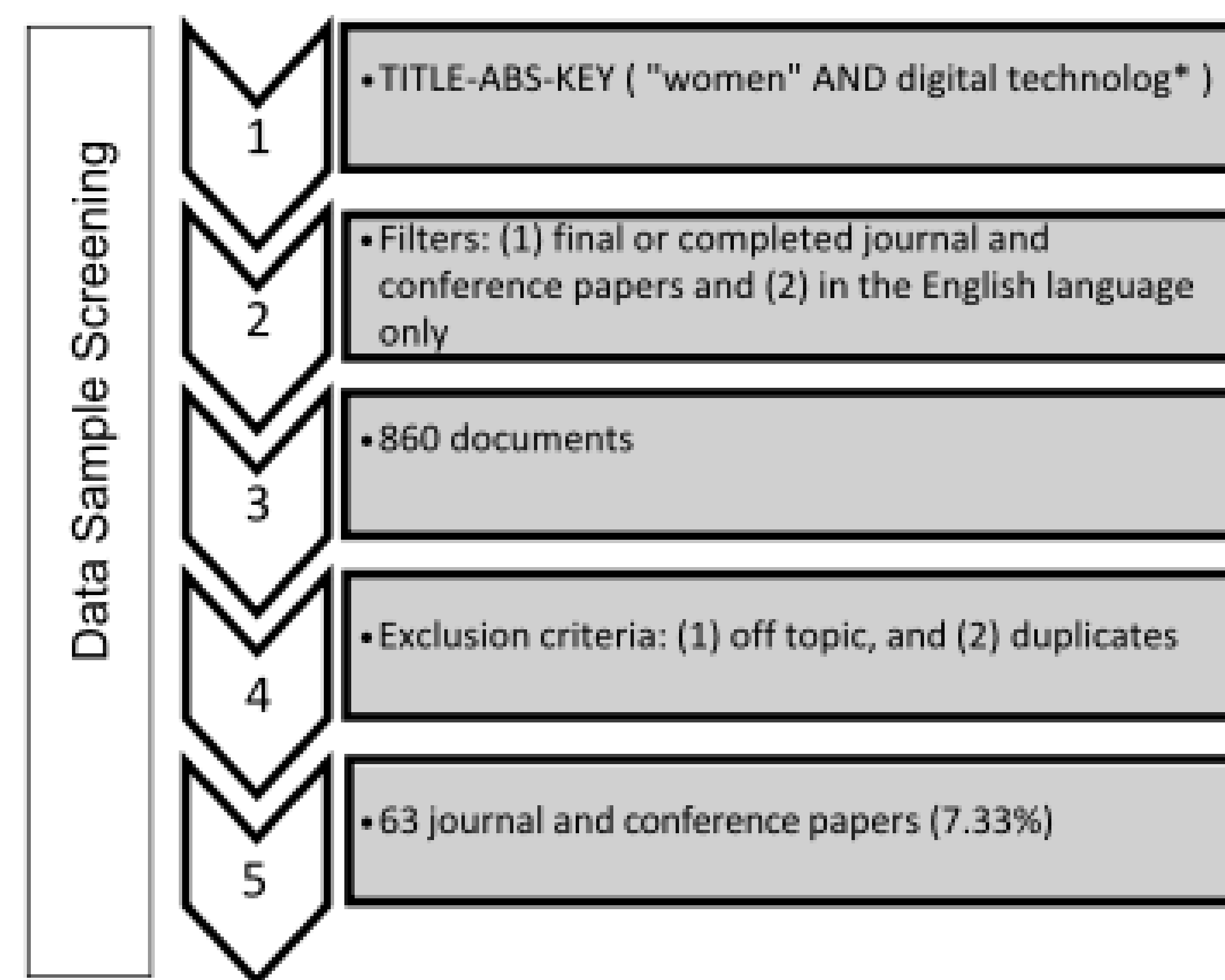


Figure 1
Schema of method used in screening and selecting studies

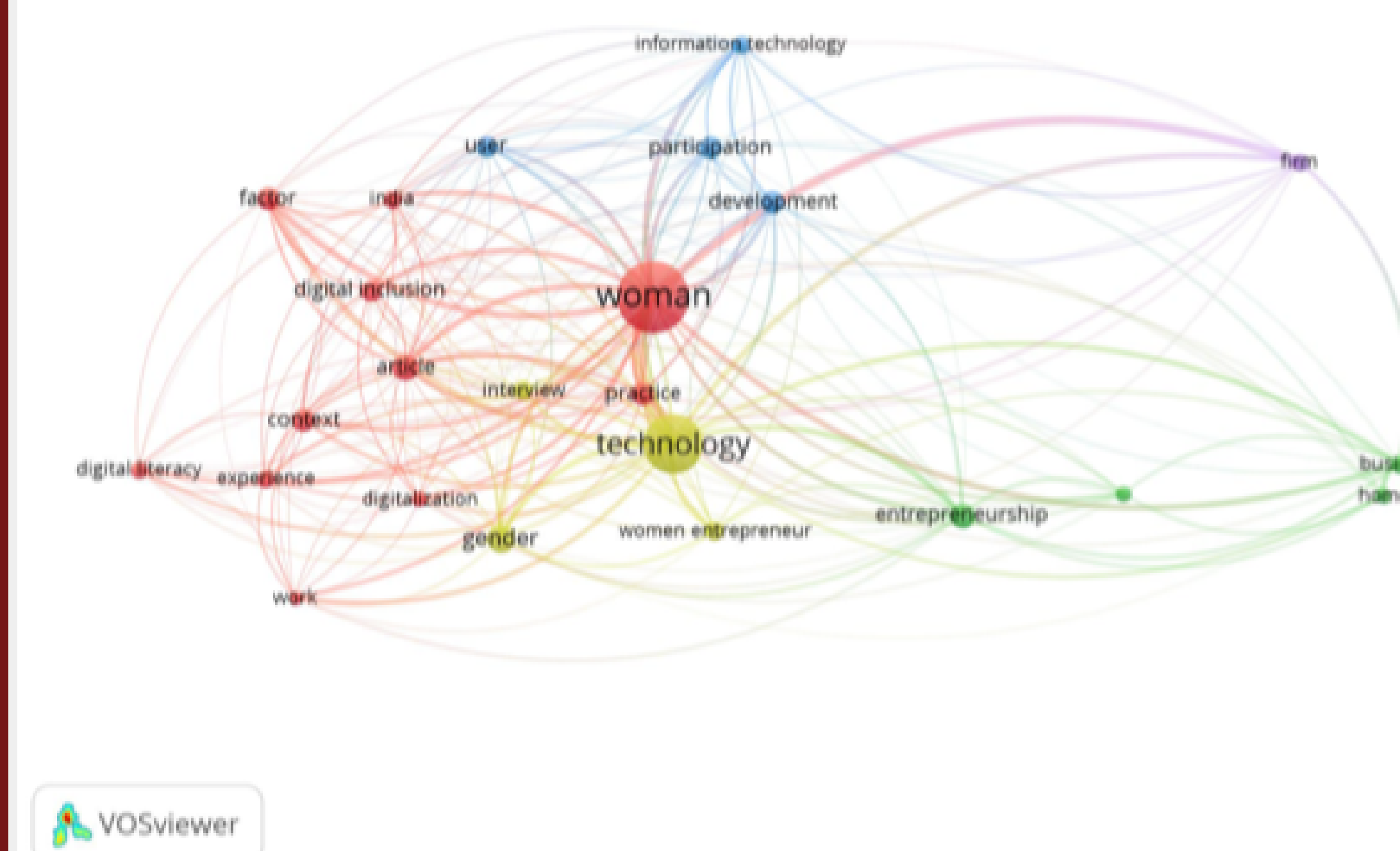


Figure 2
Network diagram of keywords co-occurring in the screened documents

Discussions

To further advance our discussion on the topic, we now turn to the RQs earlier developed in this paper, which were formulated after detecting the research gap from the literature:

RQ1: What is the corpus of research related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs?

The corpus of research related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs is limited. With only 63 studies that figured in this SLR, it is evident that there is so much to be explored on the topic. More investigations are therefore needed to expand our knowledge on the subject.

Further, the studies that are focused on the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs lack some cultural and geographical contexts. The scope of the studies selected in this systematic review is either too broad to be applicable to a certain locality or too narrow to be relevant to other locations.

RQ2: What are the major foci of studies related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs?

The major foci of studies related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs as far as the bibliometric analysis of the studies selected in this systematic review are as follows:

- how women in general use digital technology,
- the impact of its use on women,
- the extent of participation of women in the development of IT,
- how women entrepreneurs use digital technology, and
- factors influencing women entrepreneurs to adopt digital technology.

Conclusion and future directions

- With only a few studies that figured in this systematic review, discussions on the topic are found to be lacking.
- Besides exhausting the subject by expanding the area of research, future studies may explore cultural and geographical nuances related to the digital technology adoption of women entrepreneurs.