VENTURE : JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC
Volume 1 No 1 2026

Digital Entrepreneurship As A Driver of Ecosystem Reconfiguration: Systemic Perspective From Southeast Asia

Aisyah Rahman
Faculty of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Corresponding Author : aisyah.rahman@um.edu.my

Abstract
Digital entrepreneurship is increasingly central to economic transformation in emerging economies, yet innovation ecosystem scholarship has not fully explained how digitally enabled ventures reshape ecosystem structures and coordination in developing contexts. Southeast Asia provides a distinctive setting where rapid digitalization intersects with uneven infrastructure and diverse institutional arrangements that condition ecosystem evolution. This study examines how digital entrepreneurship drives the reconfiguration of innovation ecosystem structures and coordination mechanisms in Southeast Asia. The research employs a qualitative comparative case study design across selected Southeast Asian contexts that vary in institutional coherence and digital infrastructure maturity. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key ecosystem actors and triangulated with documentary sources such as policy materials, industry reports, and platform and organizational records. The unit of analysis is the innovation ecosystem, with embedded attention to digital ventures, platform actors, intermediaries, and relevant public and private institutions. Data were analyzed using a systemic analytical framework integrating institutional theory, platform economics, and innovation ecosystem analysis to trace changes in roles, interdependencies, governance practices, and coordination routines. The results show that digital entrepreneurship reconfigures ecosystems by redistributing roles and interdependencies while shifting coordination toward platform-mediated governance that varies by institutional and infrastructural conditions. The study concludes that ecosystem transformation in Southeast Asia is pathway-dependent, shaped by the interaction of institutions, infrastructure, and entrepreneurial platform-based coordination rather than by startup activity alone. It contributes a cohesive systemic explanation that advances understanding of ecosystem reconfiguration in emerging economies by integrating structural change and coordination governance within a single framework.

Keyword
digital entrepreneurship; innovation ecosystems; platform governance; emerging economies

1. Introduction

Digital entrepreneurship has become one of the most visible forces reshaping economic activity in emerging economies. In Southeast Asia, the rapid expansion of connectivity, mobile-first consumption, and platform-mediated services has enabled new ventures to emerge and scale in ways that were previously difficult under traditional market and infrastructural constraints (Husakovska et al., 2025). At the same time, the region's innovation ecosystems remain uneven: digital infrastructure is distributed asymmetrically, institutional arrangements vary substantially across countries, and coordination among ecosystem actors often develops through pragmatic, hybrid mechanisms rather than stable, standardized ones. This combination makes Southeast

Received: 01 January 2026 Revised: 1 February 2026 Published: 1 March 2026

Asia a theoretically important setting for understanding not only how digital ventures grow, but how they can transform the broader systems in which innovation is produced, governed, and diffused (Singal, 2021).

Digital entrepreneurship has become a defining feature of economic transformation in emerging economies. In Southeast Asia, digitally enabled ventures are expanding rapidly across sectors such as commerce, logistics, finance, education, and creative industries. These ventures do not only introduce new products or business models (Chen et al., 2023). They also reshape how innovation is organized, coordinated, and governed. Yet much of the existing scholarship still treats digital entrepreneurship mainly as a firm-level phenomenon, explaining how startups emerge, scale, and compete. In parallel, innovation ecosystem research has been disproportionately built from advanced economy contexts where institutions and infrastructure are comparatively stable and coordination tends to be more predictable. This combination leaves emerging settings such as Southeast Asia under-theorized, particularly in explaining how digital entrepreneurship transforms ecosystem structures and coordination processes (Tan et al., 2024).

This study begins from the premise that innovation ecosystems are evolving systems of interdependent actors. Entrepreneurs, incumbents, platforms, investors, universities, intermediaries, regulators, and user communities interact to shape the creation and diffusion of innovation. In such systems, change does not occur only through the entry of new firms. It also occurs through shifts in roles, relationships, and governance arrangements that determine how resources and opportunities circulate. Digital entrepreneurship is especially relevant to this type of change because digital technologies and platforms can reorganize market access, alter transaction costs, create new forms of intermediation, and introduce alternative pathways to legitimacy and coordination (Dissanayake et al., 2025). These features suggest that digital entrepreneurship may drive not only ecosystem expansion but ecosystem reconfiguration, meaning a restructuring of who coordinates whom, how complementarities are formed, and what rules shape participation and value capture.

However, current research often examines the key elements of this transformation in isolation. Work on digital infrastructure emphasizes connectivity, access, and technological capability, but frequently treats entrepreneurial dynamics as downstream outcomes (Ofe & Sandberg, 2022). Institutional research highlights formal regulations and informal norms that enable or constrain entrepreneurship, but often under-specifies how digital platforms and entrepreneurial strategies interact with institutions to reshape coordination (Shan et al., 2023). Platform-oriented work highlights multi-sided interaction and platform governance, yet it commonly abstracts from the institutional heterogeneity and uneven infrastructure that characterize emerging economies. As a result, the interaction among digital infrastructure, institutional arrangements, and entrepreneurial actors is not sufficiently developed as a connected system, even though their co-evolution is likely to explain why digital entrepreneurship produces different ecosystem trajectories across emerging contexts (Han & Xie, 2025).

Southeast Asia offers a theoretically valuable locus for addressing this gap because it combines rapid digital adoption with substantial variation in institutional arrangements and infrastructure conditions. Digital infrastructure has expanded across the region, but unevenly, producing differences in connectivity, affordability, and capabilities across countries and within societies (Kreiterling, 2023). Institutional environments are similarly heterogeneous, including variation in regulatory stability, enforcement capacity, market openness, and the role of state and non-state intermediaries. These conditions shape how digital entrepreneurs mobilize platforms, build legitimacy, and coordinate with users, suppliers, complementors, and investors. In some settings, platform-mediated

coordination may complement existing institutions. In others, it may substitute for weak coordination capacity or even generate new governance dependencies within the ecosystem (Tian et al., 2025).

This article addresses the identified research gap by proposing a systemic perspective on digital entrepreneurship and ecosystem evolution in emerging economies, with a specific locus on Southeast Asia (Kong & Duraipandi, 2025). The central argument is that digital entrepreneurship can be understood as a driver of ecosystem reconfiguration through its interaction with two key structural conditions, namely digital infrastructure and institutional arrangements. The framework integrates institutional theory to explain how rules and legitimacy shape participation and constraints, platform economics to explain how multi-sided coordination and governance scale interactions, and innovation ecosystem analysis to explain interdependence, complementarities, and collective value creation. By treating these elements as mutually shaping, the study conceptualizes ecosystem transformation as a system-level outcome rather than a simple aggregation of startup success. Guided by this perspective, the study asks: How does digital entrepreneurship drive the reconfiguration of innovation ecosystem structures and coordination mechanisms in Southeast Asia? Conceptually, the expected contribution is threefold. First, it shifts analysis from firm-level outcomes to ecosystem-level transformation by emphasizing structural and coordination change. Second, it clarifies how emerging economy conditions, especially institutional heterogeneity and uneven infrastructure, are not background variables but key determinants of reconfiguration pathways. Third, it offers an integrative framework that links entrepreneurial agency with platform-mediated coordination and institutional dynamics, enabling a more cohesive explanation of ecosystem evolution in Southeast Asia and, by extension, other emerging regions.

2. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative case study design to explain how digital entrepreneurship drives innovation ecosystem reconfiguration in Southeast Asia. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the phenomenon of interest is processual and relational, involving shifting roles, interdependencies, and coordination mechanisms that cannot be adequately captured through firm-level indicators alone (Dieteren et al., 2022). The design enables in-depth examination of how digital infrastructure conditions, institutional arrangements, and entrepreneurial agency interact as a connected system over time. Analytically, the study is guided by a systemic framework that integrates institutional theory, platform economics, and innovation ecosystem analysis to trace how coordination and governance are produced through actor interactions. This approach fits the research aim because it prioritizes mechanism-oriented explanation and contextual sensitivity, both of which are essential in emerging-economy settings characterized by institutional heterogeneity and uneven digital maturity (Renjith et al., 2021).

Data were collected from multiple sources to capture ecosystem-level dynamics across selected Southeast Asian contexts that vary in institutional arrangements and digital infrastructure development. The primary units of analysis are innovation ecosystems, with embedded units including digital entrepreneurial ventures, platform firms, investors, accelerators and incubators, relevant public agencies, and other intermediaries involved in innovation coordination (Leplaa et al., 2025). Data sources include semi-structured interviews with key ecosystem actors, documentary materials such as policy documents, regulatory guidelines, industry reports, public statements, and ecosystem program records, as well as publicly available platform and organizational materials that describe governance rules and participation requirements. Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol focused on analytical dimensions derived from the framework,

including institutional conditions, platform governance features, actor roles and dependencies, resource access pathways, and coordination mechanisms (Bradley, 1993). Data collection proceeded iteratively, using theoretical sampling to ensure coverage of diverse actor categories and to refine the focus of subsequent interviews and document retrieval. The main analytical dimensions include ecosystem structure, coordination mechanisms, institutional enabling and constraining conditions, and platform-mediated governance, which together operationalize the concept of ecosystem reconfiguration at a system level.

Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation across interviews, documents, and publicly available materials, alongside systematic documentation of data collection decisions and an explicit audit trail of coding and analytic memos. Reliability and consistency were supported through a shared codebook aligned with the analytical dimensions, regular code refinement, and peer debriefing to challenge emerging categorizations and reduce single-researcher bias (Welch & Patton, 1992). Validity was strengthened through member checking of factual descriptions where feasible, negative case attention to avoid overfitting patterns, and thick contextual description to support analytical transparency and transferability. Ethical procedures included securing informed consent from all interview participants, clarifying the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw, and ensuring confidentiality through anonymization of identities and sensitive organizational references. All data were stored securely with restricted access, and reporting practices were designed to prevent deductive disclosure, particularly in tightly connected ecosystem communities.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Ecosystem Structure Reconfiguration by Digital Entrepreneurs

The digital entrepreneurial ventures in Southeast Asia frequently operate as ecosystem-level actors that reshape, rather than merely join, existing innovation arrangements. Across contexts, digitally enabled ventures assume coordination functions that were previously dispersed among informal networks, state-linked programs, and incumbent-led supply chains. This shift is visible in the rise of new intermediating roles that aggregate fragmented demand, bundle dispersed suppliers, and translate local market complexity into standardized digital processes. In parallel, some ventures become ecosystem orchestrators by stabilizing interactions among complementors, such as service providers, logistics partners, and specialized technology vendors, around a focal digital interface. The ecosystem structure therefore evolves through role reassignment, with entrepreneurs positioned not only as producers of innovation but also as organizers of participation. The findings suggest that these role changes emerge because digital tools lower the cost of coordination while expanding the feasible scale of interaction across dispersed actors. Importantly, the structural reconfiguration is not limited to a single sector and appears as a repeated pattern across different institutional environments in the region. In this sense, digital entrepreneurship acts as a driver of ecosystem restructuring by altering who coordinates whom and on what basis (Leong et al., 2023).

A prominent structural outcome is the formation of new complementor positions and modular forms of participation that reconfigure interdependencies among ecosystem actors. Digitally enabled ventures often standardize engagement through application programming interfaces, onboarding routines, and verification procedures that allow other actors to contribute discrete modules of value. This modularization increases the visibility and strategic relevance of complementors by defining clearer entry points and measurable contributions within the ecosystem. The results also show that entrepreneurs frequently blur conventional boundaries between producer, distributor, and intermediary by integrating market access, payments, fulfillment, or data services within

a single venture architecture. As a consequence, actors that were previously peripheral can become central when they control a critical module, such as trust infrastructure, transaction processing, or last-mile coordination (Viona & Febby, 2025). These changes affect ecosystem topology by increasing the centrality of ventures that provide shared interfaces and by restructuring the density of connections among complementors. The discussion emphasizes that such structural change is not reducible to growth in the number of startups, because it involves redistribution of coordination capacity and influence. In Southeast Asia, where ecosystems often contain fragmented actor communities, the emergence of modular participation can serve as a practical mechanism for building interdependence across otherwise disconnected clusters. The overall pattern supports the research question by showing that digital entrepreneurship can recompose ecosystem structure through new roles and new connection formats (Shao & Wang, 2025).

The findings also directly address the first research gap by demonstrating that ecosystem reconfiguration is best explained when digital infrastructure, institutional arrangements, and entrepreneurial agency are treated as an interconnected system. Digital infrastructure shapes what forms of interaction are technically feasible, including the ability to coordinate across distance, automate transactions, and collect data that supports decision-making. Institutions shape what forms of participation are legitimate, how risks are distributed, and which actors have recognized authority to certify or sanction behavior. Entrepreneurial agency links these conditions by converting infrastructural affordances into governance practices and by crafting organizational strategies that manage institutional constraints (Dhewanto et al., 2022). The results indicate that role reassignment is most likely when entrepreneurs exploit digital infrastructure to reorganize transactions while simultaneously negotiating institutional requirements through partnerships, compliance routines, and reputation-building practices. Where infrastructure is uneven, ventures develop hybrid coordination arrangements that combine digital interfaces with localized intermediation to compensate for gaps in connectivity or capability. Where institutional rules are ambiguous or inconsistently enforced, entrepreneurs often create private ordering mechanisms, such as standardized contracts and monitoring routines, to stabilize interactions (Jingyao et al., 2021).

A further implication of this interconnected explanation is that ecosystem fragmentation is reduced or reorganized through systematic linkages created by digitally enabled ventures. The results suggest that digital entrepreneurs frequently build bridges across actor categories that rarely coordinate directly, such as small producers with large buyers, informal service providers with formal financial actors, or local innovators with regional markets. These linkages are not merely networking outcomes but are institutionalized through standardized participation criteria, data-driven screening, and repeatable coordination routines. By formalizing entry and interaction, entrepreneurs can reduce informational asymmetry and mitigate trust deficits that often limit collaboration in emerging-economy ecosystems. At the same time, the findings show that such bridging is contingent on institutional acceptance, because actors still rely on legitimacy signals rooted in regulatory recognition, professional credentials, or alignment with public programs (Yanti et al., 2025). The discussion therefore highlights a dual movement in which digital entrepreneurship both leverages and reshapes institutions by introducing new procedural norms for participation. This reduces theoretical fragmentation in prior research by clarifying how infrastructure-enabled coordination becomes durable only when it is stabilized through institutional and organizational arrangements. In Southeast Asia, the ability to routinize cross-actor coordination is particularly consequential because ecosystems often span fragmented geographies and heterogeneous regulatory environments.

The findings also speak to the second research gap by showing that emerging-economy conditions in Southeast Asia shape the direction of ecosystem reconfiguration through distinctive dependence patterns and resource pathways. Uneven infrastructure produces asymmetries in digital access and capability, which in turn influence which actors can participate effectively and which actors become essential intermediaries. Institutional heterogeneity creates variation in how legitimacy is constructed, how compliance costs are distributed, and how quickly new coordination models can diffuse (Kretschmer et al., 2020). The results indicate that entrepreneurs respond by rerouting access to markets, capital, and capabilities through digitally mediated channels that reduce reliance on traditional gatekeepers. However, this rerouting does not eliminate dependence; instead, it often reassigns dependence toward actors that control key infrastructural modules, governance rules, or trusted verification processes. The discussion emphasizes that this is a form of structural transformation specific to emerging settings, where institutional and infrastructural unevenness encourages hybrid strategies that combine digital scalability with local anchoring. The ecosystem therefore evolves through reconfiguration of who controls access and how actors gain inclusion, rather than through straightforward expansion of entrepreneurial activity (Kong1 & Duraipandi2, 2024).

A final structural pattern concerns the reorganization of actor interdependencies and resource flows, which further clarifies the mechanism of ecosystem reconfiguration in the region. The results show that digitally enabled ventures can transform resource pathways by embedding transaction capabilities, information exchange, and monitoring within routine interactions. As interactions become more datafied, resource allocation and collaboration decisions increasingly depend on standardized metrics, reputation signals, and procedural compliance rather than solely on relational proximity (Wang et al., 2025). This shift changes the basis of coordination and can increase ecosystem connectivity by enabling scalable evaluation of partners and opportunities. At the same time, it can redistribute power toward actors that define the rules of participation and control the categories through which performance is measured. The discussion connects this to ecosystem analysis by emphasizing that reconfiguration is observable in changes to interdependence structures, not only in the emergence of new firms. In Southeast Asia, where many ecosystems exhibit fragmented networks and uneven institutional capacity, the capacity to stabilize interdependencies through repeatable digital coordination becomes a key pathway of ecosystem change. These dynamics answer the research question by showing how digital entrepreneurship restructures both actor roles and the pathways through which resources and opportunities circulate (Elia et al., 2020).

3.2 Platform Mediated Coordination as a New Ecosystem Governance Logic

The results show that coordination within Southeast Asian innovation ecosystems increasingly takes a platform-mediated form, organized through digital matching, rule-setting, and participation control. Instead of depending primarily on relational brokerage, state facilitation, or incumbent-led coordination, many interactions are structured through digital interfaces that standardize how actors connect and transact. Platforms and platform-like ventures become central coordination nodes by defining eligibility, specifying interaction procedures, and shaping information visibility across market sides. Matching mechanisms reduce search frictions and enable rapid alignment between users, suppliers, complementors, and service providers (Sanner et al., 2024). Rule-setting is enacted through codified requirements such as verification processes, onboarding routines, quality thresholds, and dispute procedures that stabilize expectations across participants. Participation control is exercised through access permissions, ranking and visibility allocation, and enforcement practices such as suspension or deactivation. These

mechanisms collectively indicate a shift in the locus of coordination toward technologically embedded governance that can scale across dispersed and heterogeneous actor communities. In this configuration, coordination is not only facilitated by digital tools but increasingly constituted by them.

A key pattern concerns how platform mediation reorganizes the informational architecture of coordination, particularly through scalable devices for trust and quality assurance. Standardized signals such as ratings, reviews, badges, and performance metrics translate locally embedded judgments into portable indicators that travel across contexts and interactions (Zaki et al., 2025). This enables coordination without requiring dense interpersonal familiarity, which is especially significant in ecosystems characterized by geographic dispersion and fragmented networks. In addition, platforms often embed compliance and monitoring functions into routine processes through identity checks, traceable transactions, automated screening, and standardized reporting. These procedural infrastructures reduce uncertainty by making participation legible and comparable, thereby supporting interaction at higher volume and wider reach. At the same time, the authority to define categories, metrics, and thresholds is concentrated in the hands of platform operators, who effectively determine which behaviors are recognized as compliant or valuable. The findings therefore suggest that platform-based coordination stabilizes ecosystems by converting trust and quality into procedural and data-driven formats. This transformation changes not only how actors interact but also how legitimacy is operationalized in everyday ecosystem participation (Xing et al., 2024).

The results further indicate that platform governance is shaped by, and actively negotiates with, institutional constraints and enabling arrangements. Formal regulations influence the permissible scope of platform practices, including data collection, labor and consumer protections, licensing requirements, and accountability for transactions. Informal institutional expectations shape participant interpretations of fairness, reliability, and legitimacy, affecting whether platform rules are seen as acceptable or arbitrary (Zahra et al., 2022). Platform actors respond to these conditions through a range of adaptation strategies, including aligning governance procedures with regulatory requirements, partnering with recognized intermediaries to signal legitimacy, and localizing operational rules to fit contextual norms. Where enabling arrangements exist, such as clearer regulatory frameworks or functional public infrastructures, platform standards are more likely to be stabilized through institutional alignment and broader acceptance. Where regulation is ambiguous or enforcement is inconsistent, platforms often rely more heavily on private ordering, using internal monitoring and discretionary enforcement to maintain coordination. The interaction between platform governance and institutions thus appears as a constitutive feature of how coordination is produced, rather than a background condition. Coordination change is therefore best understood as an outcome of co-evolving governance practices and institutional environments (Gawer, 2021).

Another recurring pattern is the redistribution of coordination authority through platform-based gatekeeping, which reshapes who can participate and under what terms. Participation is regulated not only at entry but continuously through algorithmic ranking, curated visibility, and conditional access to demand (Judijanto, 2024). This means that inclusion becomes tied to compliance with platform-defined standards and performance indicators that determine discoverability and transaction opportunities. Governance is reinforced through standardized terms and contractual architectures, which reduce negotiation costs and enable uniform enforcement across many actors. In contexts where institutional enforcement is limited, these mechanisms can provide predictability and reduce opportunism, offering a practical substitute for missing or unreliable coordination capacity. Yet the same features can generate dependency, because participants who rely

on platform access for market reach may have limited alternatives for coordination and value capture. As a result, platforms function not only as marketplaces but as governance infrastructures that reorganize ecosystem power and participation. This supports a view of ecosystems in which coordination mechanisms and power relations evolve together through technologically embedded rules (Bonina & Eaton, 2020).

The results also clarify that platform coordination does not take a uniform form across Southeast Asia, but varies systematically with institutional heterogeneity. Where regulatory frameworks are relatively coherent and institutional intermediaries operate effectively, platform governance tends to align with public coordination by operationalizing compliance, improving traceability, and standardizing procedures that complement institutional rules. In such settings, platform governance appears more rule-bound and predictable, with clearer interfaces between private governance and formal requirements. In contrast, where institutional rules are fragmented, enforcement capacity is uneven, or public coordination mechanisms are weak, platforms more often become primary coordinators by providing verification, monitoring, and dispute resolution that participants treat as the most reliable governance channel. This substitution is not total, but it shifts the practical locus of coordination toward platform procedures that structure everyday participation. The observed variation suggests that institutional diversity across the region conditions whether platforms serve as complements to established coordination or as substitutes that fill institutional voids. Platform governance therefore becomes a layered component of the ecosystem's coordination architecture, interacting with institutions in ways that shape inclusion, stability, and dependence (Satalkina & Steiner, 2020).

Taken together, the discussion conceptualizes platform mediation as a governance logic that reconfigures ecosystem coordination through procedural standardization, information control, and participation management. Platform-based matching and rule-setting enhance scalability and can reduce fragmentation by enabling repeated interactions across dispersed and diverse actor communities. At the same time, these mechanisms can concentrate authority by centralizing the definition and enforcement of participation rules in platform operators. The findings show that the effects of this governance logic are contingent on institutional conditions, particularly the coherence of regulation and the availability of reliable intermediaries. Coordination is therefore transformed not simply because platforms exist, but because platform governance becomes intertwined with institutional arrangements and infrastructural constraints in shaping how actors access resources and opportunities. This provides a direct answer to how coordination mechanisms are reconfigured in emerging-economy innovation ecosystems. It also strengthens the systemic explanation by showing that governance change emerges from the interaction of digital entrepreneurship, platform logics, and institutional contexts within Southeast Asia.

3.3 Conditional Pathways of Reconfiguration Under Institutional Heterogeneity and Uneven Infrastructure

The results indicate that ecosystem reconfiguration in Southeast Asia does not follow a single linear trajectory, but unfolds through distinct pathways shaped by the combination of institutional coherence and digital infrastructure maturity. Where both institutional arrangements are relatively coherent and infrastructure is comparatively mature, reconfiguration tends to be faster and more system-wide because coordination frictions are lower and scaling conditions are more predictable. In these contexts, digitally enabled ventures can formalize participation rules, standardize interfaces, and expand complementor networks with fewer interruptions from regulatory uncertainty or infrastructural breakdowns. Where infrastructure is relatively mature but institutional

coherence is weaker, reconfiguration still proceeds, but it often becomes more contested and uneven as actors face ambiguous rules, shifting compliance expectations, and inconsistent enforcement (Mukhopadhyay & Bouwman, 2019). Where institutions are coherent but infrastructure remains uneven, reconfiguration appears more incremental and hybrid, with digital ventures combining platform-based coordination with localized intermediaries and offline routines to compensate for gaps in connectivity and capability. Finally, where both institutional coherence and infrastructure maturity are limited, reconfiguration is more fragile and tends to concentrate in narrow clusters rather than diffusing across the ecosystem. This typology clarifies why the same forms of digital entrepreneurship can generate divergent ecosystem trajectories across the region. It also underscores that infrastructure and institutions operate as interacting conditions rather than independent background factors (Mariah & Hernawan, 2025).

Across the pathways, the findings show that infrastructural unevenness shapes not only the pace of transformation but the architecture of coordination that emerges. In settings with uneven connectivity, entrepreneurs frequently build parallel coordination channels that combine digital interfaces with human intermediaries, localized logistics arrangements, and flexible payment systems (Gong et al., 2025). This produces hybrid ecosystems where coordination is partially digitized but remains anchored in place-based networks, creating a distinctive pattern of interdependence between digital ventures and localized intermediaries. In contrast, settings with stronger infrastructure enable deeper modularization and routinization, allowing more standardized participation and more extensive complementor ecosystems. The results suggest that infrastructure maturity increases the feasibility of scaling rule-based governance, data-driven monitoring, and cross-regional matching, which accelerates the reallocation of roles toward platform-mediated coordination. However, even in high-connectivity contexts, infrastructural advantage does not automatically translate into stable ecosystem change if institutions remain fragmented, because coordination still depends on legitimacy, predictable compliance, and dispute resolution. The discussion therefore emphasizes that infrastructure conditions shape what entrepreneurs can do, while institutional conditions shape what entrepreneurs can stabilize. Reconfiguration becomes durable when the coordination architecture can be repeatedly enacted with reasonable predictability across actor groups. This helps explain why some ecosystems display broad restructuring while others exhibit localized innovation without system-level transformation.

Institutional heterogeneity further shapes reconfiguration by influencing whether new coordination mechanisms become widely accepted, resisted, or selectively adopted. In contexts with clearer rules and functional intermediaries, digital entrepreneurial coordination often builds on institutional foundations by aligning governance procedures with regulatory requirements and recognized standards (Hadizadeh et al., 2024). This alignment increases participant confidence and lowers perceived risk, making it easier for ventures to expand participation and deepen complementor relationships. In contexts marked by ambiguity and inconsistent enforcement, entrepreneurs face greater uncertainty about acceptable practices, data responsibilities, labor classifications, and transaction accountability. The results indicate that ventures respond by increasing reliance on private ordering mechanisms such as standardized contracts, internal compliance routines, and discretionary enforcement embedded in platform governance. While these mechanisms can sustain coordination in the short term, they also raise concerns about fairness, contestation, and dependence because rule-making authority is concentrated in a limited set of private actors. The discussion highlights that institutional fragmentation does not merely slow reconfiguration, but can redirect it toward more centralized and contested governance arrangements. In this sense, institutional diversity across Southeast Asia conditions not only the speed but also the distribution of power

and inclusion within reconfigured ecosystems (Pratama, 2025). Reconfiguration pathways therefore differ in their governance character, ranging from institutionally aligned expansion to privately governed substitution.

When the three conceptual lenses are considered together, the results show how system-level outcomes emerge from the co-evolution of conditions and entrepreneurial strategies. Institutional arrangements influence legitimacy, compliance burdens, and the availability of intermediaries, which shape which platform governance practices can gain acceptance and which will be resisted. Infrastructure conditions shape the feasibility of scaling coordination through data systems, real-time matching, and automated procedures, which affects how modular participation can become (Ade et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial agency operates as the linking mechanism that translates these conditions into concrete ecosystem arrangements, such as designing participation rules, constructing trust signals, forming partnerships with intermediaries, and configuring interfaces for complementors. The results suggest that entrepreneurs are not passive recipients of context, but active designers of coordination architectures that respond to and reshape institutional and infrastructural constraints. Platform economics helps explain why certain governance mechanisms, such as standardization and control over access, become attractive under conditions of market fragmentation and uncertainty. Ecosystem analysis clarifies how these choices reallocate roles and dependencies, generating new centers of coordination and new complementor configurations. The discussion therefore frames reconfiguration as an emergent property of interacting elements, rather than as a direct outcome of any single factor. This integrated explanation is crucial for understanding why ecosystem transformation in Southeast Asia is patterned but not uniform (Kari et al., 2025).

The findings also illuminate boundary conditions that shape the direction and stability of reconfiguration across contexts. One boundary condition concerns the extent to which platform governance is perceived as legitimate and procedurally fair by participants, which affects compliance and long-term participation. Where governance is opaque or sanctions are experienced as arbitrary, actors may disengage, multi-home, or develop parallel coordination networks, limiting the consolidation of reconfiguration. Another boundary condition concerns dependence and concentration, particularly when a small number of platforms become dominant coordination nodes and shape access to markets, data, or critical services. In such cases, ecosystem restructuring may proceed rapidly but become vulnerable to rule changes, strategic shifts, or conflicts between platform objectives and complementor sustainability. A further boundary condition concerns interoperability and openness, because reconfiguration is more likely to diffuse across the ecosystem when actors can connect through shared standards and when participation does not require exclusive affiliation (Cho & Ko, 2025). Finally, the presence or absence of credible dispute resolution mechanisms affects stability, since coordination at scale depends on predictable handling of conflicts and failures. These boundary conditions help explain why similar entrepreneurial strategies can produce stable ecosystem transformation in one setting but only partial or temporary restructuring in another. They also clarify that reconfiguration is not inherently progressive; it can generate new efficiencies while simultaneously creating new vulnerabilities.

Overall, the results suggest that ecosystem reconfiguration in Southeast Asia is conditional, pathway-dependent, and shaped by the interaction of institutions, infrastructure, and platform-mediated entrepreneurial strategy. Different combinations of infrastructural maturity and institutional coherence produce different coordination architectures, ranging from institutionally aligned scaling to hybrid arrangements and privately governed substitution. The discussion consolidates the contribution of the systemic framework by showing how variation across contexts can be explained without

reducing emerging economies to a single category. It also demonstrates that understanding reconfiguration requires attention to both structural outcomes, such as role redistribution and interdependence changes, and governance outcomes, such as rule-setting authority and participation control. The conditional pathways perspective provides a basis for explaining diversity within Southeast Asia while maintaining conceptual coherence across cases. In practical terms, it suggests that ecosystem transformation depends not only on entrepreneurial innovation or technological adoption, but on whether coordination architectures can be stabilized under local institutional and infrastructural conditions. This framing positions digital entrepreneurship as a driver of ecosystem evolution whose effects are structured by context, mediated by governance, and realized through shifting interdependencies.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that digital entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia functions as a system-level force that reshapes innovation ecosystems through both structural change and coordination change. The results indicate that ventures reassign ecosystem roles by creating new intermediaries, orchestrating complementor relations, and reorganizing interdependencies and resource pathways. Coordination increasingly becomes platform mediated, with matching, rule-setting, and participation control embedded in digital governance infrastructures that structure inclusion, trust, and access. These transformations unfold through conditional pathways shaped by institutional heterogeneity and uneven digital infrastructure, producing variation in the pace, form, and stability of ecosystem reconfiguration across contexts.

The study contributes to the field by shifting the analytical focus from startup outcomes to ecosystem transformation and by offering a cohesive systemic explanation for how ecosystem change occurs in emerging economies. It clarifies that digital infrastructure, institutional arrangements, and entrepreneurial agency operate as a connected system, and that reconfiguration is an emergent outcome of their interaction rather than a direct effect of any single element. By conceptualizing platform mediation as a governance logic that reorganizes coordination mechanisms, the study strengthens understanding of how digital ecosystems are governed and how power and inclusion are shaped through embedded rules. It also deepens theorization of emerging-economy innovation ecosystems by demonstrating that institutional diversity and infrastructural unevenness are not peripheral features but central conditions that structure ecosystem evolution in Southeast Asia.

Future research can extend this agenda in three directions. First, comparative work across a wider range of Southeast Asian settings can refine the pathway typology by specifying which institutional and infrastructural configurations produce particular forms of coordination architecture and dependency. Second, longitudinal designs are needed to examine how reconfiguration stabilizes or destabilizes over time, including processes of lock-in, contestation, and adaptation as platform governance and institutional arrangements co-evolve. Third, research should further unpack inclusion and distributional consequences by examining how platform-based coordination affects participation opportunities for smaller actors, peripheral regions, and informal sectors, and how alternative governance arrangements may support more balanced ecosystem development.

References

Ade, M., Harahap, K., Suherlan, & Azzaakiyyah, H. K. (2025). Repositioning Cities as Innovative Ecosystems: Integrating Digi-tal Infrastructure and Technology-Based Entrepreneurship in Urban Contexts. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*. https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v3i2.277

Bonina, C., & Eaton, B. (2020). Cultivating open government data platform ecosystems through governance: Lessons from Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Montevideo. *Gov. Inf. Q.*, *37*, 101479. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2020.101479

Bradley, J. (1993). Methodological Issues and Practices in Qualitative Research. *The Library Quarterly*, *63*, 431–449. https://doi.org/10.1086/602620

Chen, A., Lin, Y., Mariani, M., Shou, Y., & Zhang, Y. (2023). Entrepreneurial growth in digital business ecosystems: an integrated framework blending the knowledge-based view of the firm and business ecosystems. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, *48*, 1628–1653. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-023-10027-9

Cho, H., & Ko, Y. (2025). Entrepreneurship in Emerging Asia: Indonesia's Agritech Startup Ecosystem. *Academy of Entrepreneurship*. https://doi.org/10.22815/jes.2025.6.1.117

Dhewanto, W., Umbara, A. N., & Herliana, S. (2022). Examining Entrepreneurship Ecosystem for Digital Startup towards Sustainability after the Pandemic. *Proceedings of the 2022 International Conference on E-Business and Mobile Commerce*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3543106.3543112

Dieteren, C., Patty, N., Reckers-Droog, V., & Van Exel, J. (2022). Methodological Choices in Applications of Q Methodology: A Systematic Literature Review. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4017583

Dissanayake, S., Dhar, B., Weerathunga, P., & Wickramasinghe, M. (2025). Youth Entrepreneurship Narratives in South Asia: Digital Transformation, Green Innovation, and Sustainable Development Pathways. *Sustainable Development*. https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.70398

Elia, G., Margherita, A., & Passiante, G. (2020). Digital entrepreneurship ecosystem: How digital technologies and collective intelligence are reshaping the entrepreneurial process. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.119791

Gawer, A. (2021). Digital platforms and ecosystems: remarks on the dominant organizational forms of the digital age. *Innovation*, *24*, 110–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/14479338.2021.1965888

Gong, Y., Zhang, Y., & Dong, L. (2025). Numerical simulation and governance framework for multi stakeholder symbiotic evolution in digital innovation ecosystems. *Scientific Reports*, *15*. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-09027-6

Hadizadeh, M., Feyzabadi, J. G., Fardi, Z., Mortazavi, S. M., Braga, V., & Salamzadeh, A. (2024). Digital Platforms as a Fertile Ground for the Economic Sustainability of Startups: Assaying Scenarios, Actions, Plans, and Players. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16167139

Han, Y., & Xie, L. (2025). Sustainable Governance of Digital Platform Ecosystem: A Life Cycle Perspective Through Multiple Governance Parties. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su17083628

Husakovska, T., Rybalko-Rak, L., & Kuzhel, N. (2025). Ecosystem of innovative entrepreneurship in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy: factors for

ensuring competitiveness and sustainable development. *Galician Economic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.33108/galicianvisnyk_tntu2025.02.073

Jingyao, M., Gang, Z., & Ling, Z. (2021). Governance mechanisms implementation in the evolution of digital platforms: a case study of the Internet of Things platform. *R&D Management*. https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12494

Judijanto, L. (2024). Perkembangan Startup Digital di Indonesia: Sebuah Tinjauan. *Indo-Fintech Intellectuals: Journal of Economics and Business*. https://doi.org/10.54373/ifijeb.v4i5.1875

Kari, A., Bellin, P., Matzner, M., & Gersch, M. (2025). Governing the emergence of network-driven platform ecosystems. *Electronic Markets*, *35*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-024-00745-9

Kong, L., & Duraipandi, O. (2025). Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Platform Scalability: A Multi-Case Analysis of Southeast Asian Startups. *Innovative Organizational Design*. https://doi.org/10.63808/iod.v1i3.223

Kong1, L., & Duraipandi2, O. (2024). HOW DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION DRIVES PLATFORM INNOVATION: A MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN DIGITAL ECONOMIES. *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*. https://doi.org/10.52152/7e16ns80

Kreiterling, C. (2023). Digital innovation and entrepreneurship: a review of challenges in competitive markets. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, *12*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-023-00320-0

Kretschmer, T., Leiponen, A., Schilling, M., & Vasudeva, G. (2020). Platform ecosystems as meta-organizations: Implications for platform strategies. *Strategic Management Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3250

Leong, C., Lin, S., Tan, F., & Yu, J. (2023). Coordination in a Digital Platform Organization. *Inf. Syst. Res.*, *35*, 363–393. https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2023.1226

Leplaa, H., Tönjes, J., Bouterse, M., Soppe, K., & Klugkist, I. (2025). Applying qualitative methods to experimental designs: A tutorial for the behavioral sciences. *PLOS One*, *20*. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0324936

Mariah, M., & Hernawan, H. (2025). Creativity and Innovation in Indonesia's Digital Entrepreneurship: Insight from Content Creators and Start-ups. *International Journal of Social Science and Business*. https://doi.org/10.23887/ijssb.v9i2.97829

Mukhopadhyay, S., & Bouwman, H. (2019). Orchestration and governance in digital platform ecosystems: a literature review and trends. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*. https://doi.org/10.1108/dprg-11-2018-0067

Ofe, H., & Sandberg, J. (2022). The emergence of digital ecosystem governance: An investigation of responses to disrupted resource control in the Swedish public transport sector. *Information Systems Journal*, *33*, 350–384. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12404

Pratama, A. Y. (2025). The Economics of Innovation Ecosystems in Indonesia: Policy, Entrepreneurship, and inclusive Growth. *Journal of State Economic Research*. https://doi.org/10.65101/jser.v1i1.57

Renjith, V., Yesodharan, R., Noronha, J., Ladd, E., & George, A. (2021). Qualitative Methods in Health Care Research. *International Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijpvm.ijpvm_321_19

Sanner, T., Kempton, A., Russpatrick, S., & Sæbø, J. (2024). Governing digital platform ecosystems for social options. *Information Systems Journal*, *35*, 422–449. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12546

Satalkina, L., & Steiner, G. (2020). Digital Entrepreneurship and its Role in Innovation Systems: A Systematic Literature Review as a Basis for Future Research Avenues for Sustainable Transitions. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072764

Shan, B., Oh, I., & Rowley, C. (2023). Innovation and entrepreneurship in East Asia during the digital era: post-pandemic prospects. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, *29*, 843–851. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602381.2023.2256106

Shao, F., & Wang, N. (2025). Strategic orchestration in sharing economies: A configurational analysis of platform differentiation and governance alignment. *PLOS One*, *20*. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0326774

Singal, A. (2021). Designing platform ecosystems for collaboration, innovation and growth. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1108/bij-12-2020-0619

Tan, B., Xiao, X., Chau, M., Tan, F., & Leong, C. (2024). The dynamics, organisation and evolution of digital platforms and ecosystems. *Information Systems Journal*, *35*. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12548

Tian, Z., Zou, H., Yang, S., & Hou, Q. (2025). Research on Collaborative Governance of Cross-Domain Digital Innovation Ecosystems Based on Evolutionary Game Theory. *Syst.*, *13*, 558. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems13070558

Viona, P., & Febby, P. (2025). The role of technology for green entrepreneurship in southeast asia. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, *1441*. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1441/1/012003

Wang, X., Lei, M., Wang, D., & Cao, J. (2025). Research on Dynamic Incentive Mechanism for Co-Creation of Value in Innovation-Oriented Platform Ecosystem Considering Supervision. *Symmetry*. https://doi.org/10.3390/sym17111884

Welch, J., & Patton, M. (1992). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. *The Modern Language Journal*, *76*, 543. https://doi.org/10.2307/330063

Xing, X., Zhu, C., Lin, Y., & Liu, T. (2024). Can digital platform empowers inbound and outbound open innovation? From the perspective of the innovation ecosystem. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *11*. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03523-2

Yanti, P. M., Ridho, M. R., Prantiastio, P., Balqis, S., Anggraini, R., & Saputra, A. I. (2025). The Role of Digital Startups in Supporting Technology-Based Economic Transformation in Indonesia: A Focus on the Digital Creative Ecosystem. *Journal of Innovative and Creativity (Joecy)*. https://doi.org/10.31004/joecy.v5i2.996

Zahra, S., Liu, W., & Si, S. (2022). How digital technology promotes entrepreneurship in ecosystems. *Technovation*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2022.102457

Zaki, A., Koraag, S. T. G., Kusumawardani, M., & Chantika, S. R. (2025). Mapping Actors and Policies in Indonesia's Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. *SHS Web of Conferences*. https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202521204007