

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ENHANCING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of digital transformation in enhancing economic development within single-parent families. The study investigates how digital technologies contribute to economic empowerment, financial stability, and opportunities for single parents, ultimately influencing their overall economic well-being. The study also identifies challenges related to digital divides, access barriers, and the need for digital literacy among single-parent families. Literature review is conducted in this study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of digital transformation on economic development in single-parent households. Overall, the research emphasizes that the digital transformation empowers single-parent families by providing access to flexible work, educational opportunities, financial tools, and social support networks, which may lead to improved economic outcomes and well-being. Recommendations for policymakers, organizations, and digital technology providers include promoting digital inclusion initiatives, expanding access to affordable digital services, and enhancing digital literacy programs tailored to the needs of single-parent households.

Keywords:

Digital Transformation; Economic Development; Single-Parent Families; Well Being;

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital transformation has emerged as a critical driver of economic growth and societal change (Krauss, Jones, Kailer, Weinmann, Chaparro-Banegas, & Roig-Tierno, 2021; Xia, Baghaie, & Sajadi, 2024). This technological revolution has touched every aspect of our lives, from how we work and communicate to how we access goods and services. One area where digital transformation is making a significant impact is in single-parent families, fundamentally altering their economic landscape and opening new opportunities for financial stability and growth (Rashid, Muhamad, Hussain, Akhir, Ahmat, & Yulita, 2022). The digital transformation, especially in the economy, cannot be separated from the presence of e-commerce, which increasingly facilitates and impacts economic development. Regarding the mapping of e-commerce in Indonesia, Central Bureau of Statistics conducts data collection on household and company-based e-commerce to obtain an overview of e-commerce businesses in Indonesia. The results of the e-commerce survey conducted until September 15, 2022, showed that 34.10% of businesses engaged in e-commerce activities (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Digital transformation has given a lot of benefits towards people nowadays, especially people who face many challenges, such as single-parent families. Single-parent families often face unique economic challenges compared to traditional family structures (Ananat & Michaels, 2008; Lichter, Qian, & Mellot, 2006; McLanahan & Percheski, 2008; Musick & Mare, 2004; Nieuwenhuis & Maldonado, 2018; Rees, Beeber, Sampson, & Lietz, 2023). With only one income earner in the household, financial stability can be

precarious, especially in the face of unexpected expenses or economic downturns. Historically, single parents, often mothers, have had to juggle multiple responsibilities, including childcare, household management, and work, without adequate support systems in place (Arumugam, 2023).

Research shows that single-parent families, especially families with a single-mother, often face financial difficulties due to having a single income source (Stack & Meredith, 2018). Studies have shown that single parents are more likely to experience poverty and economic hardship compared to two-parent households (Parolin & Lee, 2022). This financial strain can affect their ability to provide basic necessities, access healthcare, and afford childcare. Research also indicates that single parents often have limited time and energy to devote to both their careers and caring for their children (Meier, Musick, Flood, & Dunifon, 2016). This can lead to stress, exhaustion, and feelings of guilt about not being able to give enough attention to their children or excel in their jobs. Single parents may experience heightened levels of emotional and psychological stress due to the demands of parenting alone. Research suggests that single-parents are at a higher risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Liang, Berger, & Brand, 2019; Agnafors, Bladh, Svedin, & Sydsjo, 2019). Factors such as social isolation, lack of support, and stigma can also contribute to these challenges. Another research highlights that single parents often face challenges in accessing adequate social support, which can include emotional support, practical assistance with childcare, and financial help (Parkes, Sweeting, & Wight, 2015; Glendinning, Smith, & Kadir, 2015; Floyd & Ray, 2016). Building and maintaining

supportive relationships can be challenging for single parents, especially if they lack extended family or community support (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023).

Digital transformation has brought about a paradigm shift in how individuals and families interact with the economy. Several ways in which digital technologies have influenced economic development in single-parent families are flexible work opportunities, access to education and training, entrepreneurship and gig economy, financial management tools, and access to social support (Rashid, Muhamad, Hussain, Akhir, Ahmat, & Yulita, 2022).

One of the most significant benefits of digital transformation is the rise of remote work and flexible job opportunities. Single parents can now access a wider range of jobs that offer flexible hours or the ability to work from home. This flexibility enables them to balance work and family responsibilities more effectively (Cortesi, Berionni, Veeckman, Leonardi, Schiavo, Zancanaro, Cescon, Sangiuliano, Tampaki, & Falelakis, 2022; Nagy, 2020). Furthermore, digital platforms also have democratized access to education and skills training (Kaputa, Loučanová, & Tejerina-Gaite, 2022; Blayone, VanOostveen, Barber, DiGiuseppe, & Childs, 2017; Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, & Suman, 2022). Single parents can acquire new skills or pursue higher education through online courses and programs, enhancing their employability and earning potential. Digital platforms have facilitated the growth of the gig economy, allowing individuals to work as freelancers or start their own small businesses with minimal overhead. Single parents can explore entrepreneurial ventures or take on freelance work, creating additional income streams. In addition, digital tools and apps have revolutionized financial

management, making it easier for single parents to budget, track expenses, and save money. These tools provide greater financial visibility and empower individuals to make informed financial decisions. Online communities and support networks also play a crucial role in providing emotional support, resources, and information to single-parent families (Yamashita, Isumi, & Fujiwara, 2022). Digital platforms connect individuals with similar experiences, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of community.

While digital transformation offers immense potential for economic development in single-parent families, several challenges and considerations must also be addressed. These challenges are digital divide, skills and digital literacy, work-life balance, and support systems. First, not all single-parent families have equal access to digital technologies and high-speed internet, leading to disparities in opportunities (Afzal, Khan, Daud, Ahmad, & Butt, 2023). Bridging the digital divide is crucial to ensure inclusivity and equal access to digital benefits. Second, some single parents may lack the necessary skills or digital literacy to fully leverage digital opportunities (Barnes & Potter, 2020). Investment in digital education and training programs is essential to equip individuals with the skills needed for success in the digital economy. Third, while digital technologies offer flexibility, they can also blur the boundaries between work and personal life (Marsh, Vallejos, & Spence, 2022). It's important for single parents to establish healthy work-life boundaries to avoid burnout and stress. Lastly, digital tools cannot replace the importance of strong support systems, including affordable childcare, social services, and community support networks. Comprehensive support systems complement

digital initiatives and enhance overall well-being.

In conclusion, digital transformation has the potential to significantly impact economic development in single-parent families by providing opportunities for increased income, skill development, empowerment, and resilience. However, addressing digital inequalities and ensuring a supportive environment are crucial steps in maximizing the benefits of digital transformation for all members of society, including single-parent households. In this study, the research question is “how does digital transformation enhance the economic development of single-parent families?”.

This research was conducted because there has been no research that specifically discusses how digital transformation can improve the economic conditions of single parent families. In general, previous research only discusses how digital transformation can benefit people in general.

METHOD

This study uses a literature review method to examine the impact of digital transformation in single parent families. It is conducted by searching literatures that related to the benefits of digital transformation and single-parent families’ challenges. The research question guiding this review is how digital transformation give impacts on the economic development of single parent families. A systematic search strategy was used to identify relevant studies published in peer-reviewed journals and academic databases. Data extraction and critical appraisal were conducted to assess the quality and reliability of the included literature. The synthesis of findings revealed the nuanced ways in which digital

transformation contributes to the economic development of single parent families, highlighting both the benefits and challenges. The study discusses implications for educational policies, practices, and future research directions in the context of promoting and supporting digital initiatives that empower single-parent households and promote inclusive economic growth.

DISCUSSION

1. Digital Transformation

Globalization in recent decades has placed increasing pressure on businesses to change. This requires businesses to efficiently integrate to not only stay alive but thrive in competitive environments. Efficient integration can only be achieved through digital processes and collaborative tools (White, 2012).

Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technology into all areas of business and society, fundamentally changing how organizations operate and deliver value to customers. It encompasses a cultural shift that requires organizations to continually challenge the status quo, experiment with new technologies, and adapt to changing market conditions. This transformation is characterized by the adoption of digital tools and platforms, such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT), which enhance operational efficiency, drive innovation, and create new business models. In the broader societal context, digital transformation impacts how individuals interact, access services, and participate in the economy, ultimately shaping a more connected and automated world.

2. Single-Parent Family

A single-parent family is a household where a parent lives with their child or children without the presence of a spouse or partner (Lindwall, Bailer, & Daly, 2011). This family structure arises from various circumstances such as divorce, separation, the death of a partner, or an individual's choice to have and raise a child independently. Single-parent families face unique challenges and dynamics, including the responsibility of balancing work, childcare, and household duties solely on the shoulders of one adult. These families often navigate financial constraints, social stigma, and the emotional demands of raising children alone, but they also exhibit resilience and strength in creating nurturing and supportive environments for their children.

The adversities of single parenthood are commonly explained as high financial costs, missing career opportunities, undermined coping resources and social support, and struggles with an ex-partner over custody in cases of divorce or even selection bias, with unhappy individuals being “predisposed” to single parenthood (Davies, Avison, & McAlpine, 1997; Lee, Law, & Tam, 1999). Some studies have even shown that the commonly reported negative effect of parenthood on well-being is actually restricted to single parents (Angeles, 2010; Evenson & Simon, 2005; Shields & Wooden, 2003).

3. The Impacts Of Digital Transformation On Single-Parent Family

The research conducted on the impact of digital transformation on single-parent families yielded significant insights into how digital technologies can contribute to economic development, empowerment, and improved

well-being within these households (Dharmayanti, Fatkar, & Ratnasari, 2022; Lechman & Paradowski, 2021). The results highlight various aspects of digital transformation and its positive effects on single-parent families:

a. Increased Access to Flexible Work Opportunities

Digital transformation has facilitated increased access to remote work and flexible employment options for single parents. The research found that a significant percentage of single parents were able to engage in remote work arrangements, allowing them to balance work and caregiving responsibilities more effectively. This increased flexibility in employment has led to higher job satisfaction and improved work-life balance among single parents (Dunn, Munoz, & Jarrahi, 2023).

b. Enhanced Skills and Educational Opportunities

Single parents have leveraged digital platforms for online education and skill development, leading to enhanced employability and career advancement. The research identified that many single parents enrolled in online courses, certifications, and vocational training programs to acquire new skills or upgrade existing ones. Digital education has contributed to breaking barriers to education and empowering single parents to pursue higher-paying jobs and entrepreneurial ventures (Kaputa, Loučanová, & Tejerina-Gaite, 2022; Blayone, VanOostveen, Barber, DiGiuseppe, & Childs, 2017; Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, & Suman, 2022).

c. Improved Financial Management and Stability

Digital financial tools and platforms have played a crucial role in improving financial management and stability among single-parent households. The research revealed that single parents who utilized budgeting apps, online banking, and financial literacy resources reported better financial planning, reduced debt, and increased savings. Digital transformation has enabled single parents to track expenses, manage budgets, and make informed financial decisions, leading to greater economic resilience (Budiasih, 2024).

d. Access to Social Support Networks

Online communities and social support networks have provided valuable emotional support, resources, and information to single parents. The research highlighted that single parent who engaged with online support groups and forums reported reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence, and a sense of belonging. Digital platforms have facilitated peer-to-peer support, mentorship opportunities, and access to community services, enhancing overall well-being and social connectedness (Yamashita, Isumi, & Fujiwara, 2022).

e. Challenges and Considerations

Despite the positive impact of digital transformation, challenges such as digital divides, technological barriers, and the need for digital literacy were identified. The research emphasized the importance of addressing these challenges through targeted interventions, educational programs, and policies aimed at promoting digital inclusion and equity. Continued efforts are needed to ensure that all single-parent families have equal access to digital opportunities and can

fully benefit from digital transformation in economic and social aspects (Afzal, Khan, Daud, Ahmad, & Butt, 2023; Barnes & Potter, 2020; Marsh, Vallejos, & Spence, 2022).

In conclusion, the research results demonstrate that digital transformation plays a vital role in empowering single-parent families by providing access to flexible work, educational opportunities, financial tools, and social support networks. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to promote digital inclusion and support digital initiatives that contribute to economic development and well-being in single-parent households.

4. Challenges in Digital Transformation

Digital transformation holds great promise in empowering individuals and households with new opportunities for economic growth, education, and social connectivity. However, single-parent families face specific challenges that can hinder their access to and utilization of digital technologies. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies to promote digital inclusion and support within this demographic group.

a. Digital Divide and Infrastructure

Single-parent families, particularly those from low-income backgrounds or rural areas, may face challenges due to the digital divide (Afzal, Khan, Daud, Ahmad, & Butt, 2023; Gu, 2021; Correa & Pavez, 2016; Ye & Yang, 2020; Candrasari, Lestari, Claretta, & Sumardjijati, 2021). Limited access to high-speed internet, affordable devices, and digital infrastructure can hinder their ability to fully participate in digital transformation

initiatives. Rural areas and underserved communities often lack adequate broadband infrastructure, making it difficult for single parents and their children to access online education, remote work opportunities, and essential digital services.

b. Financial Constrains

Affordability is a significant barrier for single-parent families when it comes to acquiring digital devices, internet subscriptions, and software/services. Limited financial resources may prioritize basic needs over investing in technology, especially for families facing economic hardships (Thomas et al., 2018 in Zirakbash, Savic, & Cook, 2023). The cost of digital literacy programs, training courses, or upgrading technology skills can also be prohibitive for some single parents, limiting their ability to fully engage in digital transformation efforts.

c. Digital Literacy and Skills Gap

Many single-parent families may lack adequate digital literacy skills and knowledge to navigate complex digital platforms, applications, and online resources effectively (Zirakbash, Savic, & Cook, 2023). This digital skills gap can impact their ability to access online education, job opportunities, and financial management tools. Learning how to use digital devices, software, and internet services efficiently requires training and ongoing support. Single parents may face challenges in finding accessible and tailored digital literacy programs that meet their specific needs and schedules.

d. Time and Work-Life Balance

Balancing work, childcare responsibilities, and personal time can be challenging for

single parents, leaving limited time for exploring and adopting digital technologies (Marsh, Vallejos, & Spence, 2022; Brennan & Poertner, 1997). Engaging in online learning, seeking remote work opportunities, or managing finances digitally may require additional time and effort that single parents may struggle to allocate. Lack of affordable and reliable childcare options during digital training sessions or work-from-home arrangements can further complicate the integration of digital transformation into single-parent households.

e. Access to Support and Training Program

Single-parent families may lack access to tailored support programs, workshops, and community resources focused on digital skills development and technology adoption (Ayllon, Holmarsdottir, & Lado, 2023). These programs can provide hands-on training, mentorship, and networking opportunities crucial for navigating digital challenges. Language barriers, cultural considerations, and accessibility issues (such as disability accommodations) can also impact the effectiveness of digital training and support programs for single-parent families.

Addressing the challenges in accessing digital transformation by single-parent families requires a multifaceted approach that considers infrastructure development, affordability, digital literacy programs, work-life balance support, and inclusive community initiatives. Collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, nonprofits, and private sector partners is essential to create a supportive ecosystem that empowers single-parent families to harness the benefits of digital

technologies for economic, educational, and social advancement.

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation offers a pathway to increased economic development and resilience in single-parent families. By leveraging digital work opportunities, online education, financial tools, and social support networks, single parents can enhance their skills, manage finances effectively, and access flexible employment, ultimately leading to improved economic outcomes and well-being. Policymakers, businesses, and community organizations play a vital role in supporting digital initiatives that empower single-parent households and promote inclusive economic growth.

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